



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND 2017-2018 CITY COUNCIL GOALS & WORK PLAN

The City's Comprehensive Plan states, "Mercer Island is not an island unto itself." While we are part of a complex regional system, we strive to maintain local control, preserve our safe, livable residential community, continuously provide and improve quality municipal services, foster fiscal responsibility, value excellence in education, act as stewards of the environment, and endeavor to be open and transparent and to balance the economic, environmental and social well-being of our entire community.

The City Council holds an annual planning session, where they discuss successes over the past year and identify priorities and goals ("the what") for the upcoming year. The Leadership Team takes that direction and creates a work plan ("the how"). Through a collaborative process, the Leadership Team develops budgets, capital improvement plans, departmental work plans, and special projects aimed at accomplishing the community's vision and Council goals.

Goal 1. Preserve I-90 Access and Mobility and Prepare for Light Rail

In 2008 Mercer Island voters supported the Sound Transit 2 funding package by 58%. While the City looks forward to the benefits of light rail, we must address the changes in the project, which directly affect residents and businesses who count on appropriate access to I-90. These project impacts have far-reaching consequences to pedestrian and cyclist safety and traffic congestion through school zones, neighborhoods, and Town Center, to sustaining our economic vitality, and preserving our exceptional quality of life.

Action Steps:

1. Initiate litigation and defend the City against litigation
2. Resume negotiations with Sound Transit and WSDOT to identify appropriate mitigation
3. Work with the State Delegation and Congressional Representatives to identify and implement state and federal remedies
4. Implement a transportation concurrency ordinance, amend the P-zone to allow light rail use of the corridor and adopt an essential public facilities code
5. Partner with the community to identify resources, strategies, and mitigation
6. Provide ongoing communication to the community and region regarding the impacts and changes
7. Pursue funding for the Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan
8. Convene a design charrette of agencies and stakeholders to design the traffic flow in the North Mercer Way Park & Ride area, and to address bicycle, pedestrian, vehicular and transit interactions on streets surrounding the light rail station.
9. Evaluate fire-life safety systems and operational impacts for the light rail system
10. Review and evaluate Sound Transit's Transit Oriented Development policies and past projects and determine if appropriate for Town Center

Goal 2. Maintain the City's Residential Character

Mercer Island is principally a low-density, single-family residential community. It is largely built out and significant new development opportunities are centered in the Town Center. However, as the region grows and Mercer Island's housing stock ages, property owners and investors are seeking opportunities to either remodel or tear-down-rebuild single-family houses, which are having impacts on the character of our neighborhoods.

Action Steps:

1. Complete the Residential Development Standards Code Update Project
2. Implement the Town Center Plan
3. Monitor activities related to establishing new growth targets

Goal 3. Enhance Communications and Opportunities for Community Engagement

The Council and staff value having an active and engaged community. Ensuring that residents and businesses are well-informed on a range of issues and projects can be a challenge in our rapidly changing "attention economy." Finding creative ways for communicating and seeking broad input is a goal worth striving for.

Action Steps:

1. Meet with key stakeholders and conduct social media poll to evaluate the City's communications program and identify areas for improvement
2. Initiate website update project by assessing websites to model and identifying vendors, costs and timeline
3. Launch a podcast, vlog, or other platform to promote the City's programs and services, highlight civic leaders and organizations, and share the talents of the community
4. Conduct the biennial citizen satisfaction survey
5. Ensure that significant initiatives include a robust community outreach component (i.e., Sound Transit, residential development code, solid waste contract, etc.)

Goal 4. Maintain Quality of Life Services by Addressing the City's Financial Challenges

The City faces projected operating budget deficits as well as aging infrastructure and other capital needs. This is largely due to the 1% annual growth limitation on property taxes and other revenues remaining flat. Having revenues keep pace with increasing operational expenses is a challenge, especially in delivering services that shape Mercer Island's quality of life.

Action Steps:

1. Convene a Citizen Advisory Committee to evaluate programs, services, and capital investments and consult on revenues and/or reductions
2. Respond to legislative changes that may adversely impact the City's revenues
3. Prepare rate studies for the City's utilities (water, sewer, storm water, and EMS)
4. Grow Thrift Shop sales 5% per year
5. Create the staffing support for the MIYFS Foundation infrastructure needed to increase revenues through fundraising over the next three biennia.

Goal 5. Strengthen and Realign City Manager Role and City Council-Staff Relations

Governance of a City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy and priorities, and City staff, who analyze problems and issues, make recommendations, and implement and administer the Council's policies and priorities. Having a well-balanced distinction between policy-making and management roles fosters mutual trust and confidence and is paramount to maintaining an effective working relationship and an efficient government.

Action Steps:

1. Update and amend the City Council's Rules of Procedure (last updated 2006)
 - a) Re-evaluate Council subcommittee structure
 - b) Establish quarterly workshop (operational) meetings with Council and staff
 - c) Increase the use of study sessions and consent calendar for agenda items
2. Establish Council Candidate orientations and restructure Councilmember-Elect orientations
3. Prepare and distribute Staff-Council Communications Guidelines
4. Seek opportunities for joint Council and Commission/Board meetings and trainings

Goal 6. Address Outdated City Codes and Practices

When an organization is reactive and driven to put out the latest "fire," it means there is little energy or time left to put in place current policies and practices, redesigned processes, and technology solutions that help to prevent and avoid "fires." Addressing outdated codes and practices has now turned from a "nice to do" to a "must do," and requires the attention of Council and staff.

Action Steps:

1. Update and amend the following Mercer Island Codes and Policies:
 - a) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Code (last updated 2009)
 - b) Code Enforcement code provisions
 - c) Appeals and Processes code provisions
 - d) City's purchasing policy
 - e) Critical Areas Ordinance (last updated 2005)
2. Address obsolete systems and implement best practices throughout the organization:
 - a) Enterprise Asset Management System
 - b) Electronic document management and legislative system
 - c) Public records request tracking software
3. Initiate the Employee Handbook update (last updated 2012)
4. Implement and train staff on the newly adopted Information Security Policy
5. Update and implement the General Sewer Plan (last updated 2003)

Adopted April 2017