



## **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES GROUP**

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**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Evan Maxim, Planning Manager

**DATE:** August 16, 2017

**RE:** 2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendments - Introduction

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### Overview

The State Growth Management Act and local regulations (MICC 19.15.050) establish a multi-step, multi-year process for amending a Comprehensive Plan. The first step—establishing a preliminary list or docket of potential amendments—occurs in October-November of the previous year. This list is then reviewed by the Planning Commission and decided upon by the City Council.

The second step—establishing the final list or docket of amendments—occurs in November-December of the previous year. The amendments currently before the Planning Commission were proposed in 2016 and became part of the final docket in 2016. On November 21, 2016 the City Council created the Final Docket of proposed 2017 Comprehensive Plan amendments by means of passing Resolution 1526 (attached to this memo). No additional items can be added to this docket. However, new ideas for amendments can be proposed in September 2017 for docketing this fall and formal consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2018.

The third (and current) step is the technical and environmental review of the proposed amendments that are on the final docket. This step involves:

- A. Staff analysis and recommendation for each proposed amendment based on current Comprehensive Plan policy and applicable decision criteria in MICC 19.15.050;
- B. Consideration of the environmental impact of the amendments, taken as a whole, resulting in a State Environmental Policy Act environmental determination;
- C. Planning Commission consideration of the proposed amendments, including a public hearing, and recommendation to the City Council; and
- D. City Council consideration of the proposed amendments and decision on the proposed amendments.

This memo is intended to provide the Planning Commission with:

- A) An overview of the proposed 2017 Comprehensive Plan amendments;
- B) A review of the applicable criteria for the Planning Commission to use as a basis for the eventual recommendation to the City Council; and
- C) The proposed schedule for Planning Commission review and recommendation.

Following review of the above items on August 16, staff will also be seeking any feedback from the Planning Commission on additional information that will be necessary for the review of the Comprehensive Plan amendments. No decisions or recommendations are needed on August 16.

## Proposed 2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Since passage of the preliminary docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments, two of the proposed amendments have been removed from the list.

Item 6 on the preliminary docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments was a placeholder for any possible amendments to the Comprehensive Plan related to the ongoing update to the Residential Development Standards. Following review of the proposed amendments to the Mercer Island City Code, staff has concluded that no amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are needed and has withdrawn this docketed item.

Item 7 on the preliminary docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments was a placeholder for any possible amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to support requested zoning code amendments by the Mercer Island Center for the Arts (MICA). MICA has since withdrawn their application for the Comprehensive Plan amendment (attached).

### Docket Item 1 – Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan

Staff is proposing that the Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan be amended to remove language describing the process for amending the Comprehensive Plan; this language has been replaced by new language within the Mercer Island City Code. The proposed amendment is to eliminate this duplicative, and out of date language in the Introduction.

### Docket Item 2 – Update Appendix B

Appendix B to the Comprehensive Plan describes how the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan is consistent with other regional planning documents (for example, the King County Comprehensive Plan, the Puget Sound Regional Council plans, etc.), which is a requirement of the Growth Management Act. However, with the adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan in 2016, Appendix B was not updated to reference the correct version of regional planning documents. Please note that although it does not provide an accurate cross reference, the adopted Comprehensive Plan is consistent with other regional documents. This proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is primarily an update to correct cross references and citations.

### Docket Item 3 – Update Appendix C

Appendix C to the Comprehensive Plan incorporates the Mercer Island School District’s (MISD) six-year Capital Facilities Plan, which is also required by the Growth Management Act. MISD updates their Capital Facilities Plan annually, which necessitates an annual update to the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency between the two documents. This proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment will incorporate language and information that MISD has adopted.

### Docket Item 4 – Land Use Element (Trail Easement)

The Parks department has requested an update to the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate policy language into either Land Use Goal 11 or 19. The proposed language would support the signing of a Trail Lease Agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to create a trail from Luther Burbank Park to the Town Center. This language is required by WSDOT prior to entering into a lease agreement with the City.

### Docket Item 5 – Amend the Land Use Designation Map (Kite Hill / West Hill)

Kite Hill, which is located immediately to the west of the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC), is currently designated as “Public Facility” on the Mercer Island Land Use Designation Map. At one time this area was considered for a proposed Park and Ride, however the Council has since determined this is not the appropriate location. The proposed amendment to the map would change the Land Use designation for this area as “Park”, further reducing the potential for non-park uses on this site.

### Docket Item 8 – Amend the Land Use Designation Map (Cohen Amendment)

The City of Mercer Island controls a piece of property located on the southwest corner of the intersection of 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street. The property is currently designated on the Land Use Designation map as Linear Park / I-90. Leon Cohen, who is the property owner immediately adjacent (the Freshy’s Restaurant location), has requested that the City re-designate this property to Town Center. The proposed land use map re-designation could allow for future development opportunities on that corner.

This docket item will also require a rezone from “P” (Public Institution) to “TC” (Town Center) and amendments to the Mercer Island development regulations (i.e. the Mercer Island zoning map and the text and maps in Chapter 19.11 MICC). Pursuant to MICC 19.15.050(F) “In cases where both a comprehensive plan amendment and a rezone are required, both shall be considered together...” Staff will prepare these additional materials for review by the Planning Commission concurrent with review of this proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

## Review Criteria for Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Mercer Island City Code (MICC) establishes criteria that should be evaluated by the Planning Commission, prior to formulating a recommendation to the City Council. Pursuant to MICC 19.15.020(G)(1), a recommendation should be approved if:

*a. The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the county-wide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies; and:*

*i. There exists obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan; or*

*ii. The amendment addresses changing circumstances of the city as a whole.*

*b. If the amendment is directed at a specific property, the following additional findings shall be determined:*

*i. The amendment is compatible with the adjacent land use and development pattern;*

*ii. The property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning; and*

*iii. The amendment will benefit the community as a whole and will not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare.*

For your public hearing on the proposed amendments, staff will prepare an analysis of how each amendment request relates to these criteria. Please note that docket items 1 through 4 are only subject to the criteria in section “a.”, while docket items 5 and 8 are subject to the criteria in both “a.” and “b.”. Based upon a preliminary review of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, staff anticipates recommending that the Planning Commission recommend approval of all the proposed amendments to the City Council.

The Planning Commission may also want to identify aspects of each proposed amendment, related to the above criteria that warrant additional discussion or information.

## Proposed Schedule for Planning Commission Recommendation

The proposed amendments to the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan appear to be relatively straightforward, not requiring an extensive review schedule. The following proposed schedule would allow for City Council review and action by the end of the calendar year pursuant to MICC 19.15.050(C)(2):

- August 16, 2017 (tonight) – Overview of Comprehensive Plan amendments and review criteria
- September 20, 2017 – Public Hearing and deliberation / recommendation
- October 4, 2017 (if needed) – additional date for deliberation and recommendation