



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6911
April 21, 2026
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6911: GMA Compliance – Legislative Review Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the Planning Commission legislative review schedule and direct staff to initiate Planning Commission review of proposed GMA compliance amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and the new Station Subarea Plan.	

DEPARTMENT:	Community Planning and Development
STAFF:	Jeff Thomas, Community Planning and Development Director Alison Van Gorp, Community Planning and Development Deputy Director
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Legislative Review Schedule
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the legislative review schedule (see Exhibit 1) to address Growth Management Act (GMA) compliance under the Growth Management Hearing Boards Order (GMHB Order).

- The City completed a periodic review and update of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted by the City Council on November 19, 2024 (see [AB 6573](#)).
- The 2024 Comprehensive Plan was appealed to the GMHB on the grounds that the Comprehensive Plan did not adequately plan for and accommodate future affordable housing needs (GMHB Case No. 25-3-0003). On August 1, 2025, the GMHB issued a final decision and order (GMHB Order).
- The GMHB Order found that the City must make changes to its Comprehensive Plan to comply with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). Specifically, the City must amend its Comprehensive Plan to address the following four issues:
 - Land Capacity: Analyze residential land capacity at each housing affordability level and close any identified gaps.
 - Adequate Provisions: Adopt incentives, mandatory provisions, and planned actions (“aka adequate provisions”) that will increase the supply of affordable housing.

- Station Subarea Plan: Adopt a subarea plan for the area around the transit station.
- Anti-Displacement Measures: Adopt anti-displacement measures to address the potential displacement that can occur with changes in zoning.
- The City Council has provided direction on compliance with the GMHB Order, including a two-phase strategy with initial compliance actions focused on the Town Center and adjacent multi-family zones.
- The staff have prepared a legislative review schedule that includes the necessary steps for Planning Commission and City Council review of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code as well as adoption of a Station Subarea Plan to comply with the GMHB Order (see Exhibit 1).

BACKGROUND

GROWTH MANAGEMENT HEARINGS BOARD FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

Cities and counties in Washington State are required to adopt a comprehensive plan under the GMA. The comprehensive plan is a statement of goals and policies that detail how a county or city will manage and accommodate future growth. The goals and policies of the comprehensive plan are implemented through capital investments, development regulations, and programs. The GMA requires cities and counties to periodically review and update their comprehensive plans on a ten-year cycle. Mercer Island most recently completed a periodic review and update of its Comprehensive Plan in 2024 (see [AB 6573](#)).

The 2024 adoption of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan periodic review and update was appealed to the GMHB on the grounds that the Comprehensive Plan did not adequately plan for and accommodate future affordable housing needs (GMHB case number 25-3-0003). On August 1, 2025, the GMHB issued a Final Decision and Order (GMHB Order) and remanded the Comprehensive Plan to the City for revisions due by July 31, 2026.

The Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2024 remains in effect during the remand, but the City must complete work to update the plan and comply with the timeline established by the GMHB Order (RCW 36.70A.300(3)(b)). The compliance timeline is one year from when the GMHB issued its decision; work must be completed by July 31, 2026. Failure to comply with the GMHB Order may result in sanctions against the City (RCW 36.70A.340).

The GMHB Order requires the City to address four issues:

1. Land Capacity: Analyze residential land capacity at each housing affordability level and close any identified gaps.
2. Adequate Provisions: Adopt incentives, mandatory provisions, and planned actions (“aka adequate provisions”) that will increase the supply of affordable housing.
3. Station Subarea Plan: Adopt a subarea plan for the area around the transit station.
4. Anti-Displacement Measures: Adopt anti-displacement measures to address the potential displacement that can occur with changes in zoning.

A more in-depth description of the GMHB Order and its implications is provided in [AB 6838](#), which was presented to the City Council on January 16, 2026.

COMPLIANCE PROCESS

On March 17, 2026, the City Council reviewed a work plan, including a summary of the expected amendments required to comply with the GMHB Order ([AB 6894](#)). These include amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Capital Facilities and Economic Development Elements. In

addition, amendments will be required across several sections of the Development Code, and a new Station Subarea Plan must be adopted.

To adopt these amendments, the City must follow the processes outlined in the Mercer Island City Code (MICC) Chapter 19.15 for Comprehensive Plan and Development Code amendments ([MICC 19.15.230](#)). This includes providing public notice, holding a public hearing, a Planning Commission recommendation, and City Council adoption of each ordinance.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Exhibit 1 provides a schedule for Planning Commission legislative review of the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and adoption of the Station Subarea Plan. The Planning Commission is expected to hold 7 meetings, beginning on April 29. The Planning Commission must complete their recommendation by June 10, 2026 to allow the City Council to complete its review in a timely manner. The City Council will then take up final review of the ordinances beginning on June 16 and concluding with ordinance adoption on July 21, 2026.

NEXT STEPS

Once the legislative review schedule is approved, Planning Commission legislative review will commence.

Master Schedule

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|---------------------|---|
| April 29 – June 10: | Planning Commission legislative review, public hearings and recommendations for City Council. |
| June 16 – July 21: | City Council review of Planning Commission recommendations, deliberation, and adoption. |
| July 31: | GMHB Order deadline. |
| September 15: | Compliance hearing on GMHB Order. |

BACKGROUND MATERIALS & REFERENCES

Background materials and previous agenda information is provided on the City's Let's Talk page (see [Comprehensive Plan GMA Compliance](#).) Summary of previous agenda materials:

January 16, 2026

- [AB 6838](#): Compliance with [Growth Management Hearings Board Final Decision and Order](#) related to the City of Mercer Island Periodic Update to the Comprehensive Plan Overview of City Council Planning Session.

February 17, 2026

- [AB 6865](#): Compliance with Growth Management Hearings Board Final Decision and Order Related to the City of Mercer Island Periodic Update to the Comprehensive Plan
- [AB 6866](#): GMA Compliance Public Engagement Plan
- [AB 6871](#): Legislative Review Alternatives to Help City Meet GMHB Order Compliance Deadline (Ordinance No. 26C-03 First Reading)

March 3, 2026

- [AB 6893](#): Compliance with Growth Management Hearings Board Order – Follow-Up Discussion on Financing Affordable Housing
- [AB 6890](#): Legislative Review Alternatives to Help City Meet GMHB Order Compliance Deadline (Ordinance No. 26C-03 Second Reading)

March 17, 2026

- [AB 6888](#): Final Approval of the Modified Station Subarea Boundary
- [AB 6894](#): Update on the Growth Management Hearings Board Order – GMA Compliance Work Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the Planning Commission legislative review schedule in Exhibit 1 and direct staff to initiate Planning Commission review of the proposed GMA compliance amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and the new Station Subarea Plan.