



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6762
September 2, 2025
Consent Agenda

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6762: Interagency Connection Agreement with King County for the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program	<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:	Authorize the City Manager to sign the interagency connection agreement with King County for the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program.	

DEPARTMENT:	Police
STAFF:	Michelle Bennett, Interim Police Chief Jeff Magnan, Police Services Commander
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Interagency Connection Agreement with King County's Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program
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 authorize the City Manager to sign an interagency connection agreement with King County for the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

- AFIS is an interconnected system of stored criminal arrest and biometric database to store fingerprint records and compare them for identification purposes.
- The AFIS program is funded through a property tax levy with the first levy being approved in 1986.
- The program serves all 39 cities and unincorporated areas in King County.
- This regional approach of providing enhanced criminal identification services promotes greater public and officer safety through information sharing, at a minimal cost to the individual taxpayer.
- The AFIS levy renewal on the April 22, 2025 ballot passed and will fund the program's operations for seven years from January 2026 through the end of 2032
- Mercer Island must enter into an interlocal agreement to participate in the program.

BACKGROUND

The King County Regional AFIS Program, funded by a county-wide, voter-approved property tax levy, provides fingerprint identification services to the various agencies throughout King County. Utilizing advancements in biometric identification technology and time-tested techniques of fingerprint analysis, the AFIS program is a critical component to criminal investigations across the county. This report provides the reader with a comprehensive, yet barely scratching the surface, overview of the work, projects, and positive impacts on law enforcement efforts throughout the region.

The Regional AFIS Program promotes public safety and contributes to crime reduction by providing fingerprint identification services and technology to agencies throughout King County: The AFIS serves two primary purposes:

- To quickly identify individuals, resolve identity related issues, and ensure criminal history records are accurately attributed and reported.
- To collect and identify crime scene related finger and palm prints to aid investigations and provide evidence in court

The King County AFIS database currently holds over 3 million finger and palm prints for comparison. The AFIS also stores over 67 thousand unsolved crime scene prints which are compared to all incoming records, alerting examiners whenever a potential cold-case print may have a match.

The AFIS levy, which funds this program, was first approved by voters in 1986 and has been renewed 6 times – most recently in 2018. The most recent levy expired at the end of 2024, and the program has been able to extend funds an additional year without collecting monies from taxpayers. The levy renewal passed at the April election.

On average, this levy will collect \$27 million per year for seven years. The levy renewal will maintain the status quo of the program. It would continue to fund and refresh existing technology, staffing, and services - including crime scene response teams and the processing laboratory approved by voters in the 2012 levy.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

As part of the levy renewal, the City must enter into a new agreement for AFIS services. The interagency connection agreement for the King County AFIS Program is attached as Exhibit 1. By entering into this agreement, the City will receive access to the following resources:

- **LIVESCAN Services** – Computerized capturing devices and services provided with LIVESCAN devices such as (but not limited to) AFIS database searches, fingerprint capture, booking/demographic import. Livescan fingerprinting stations – Kiosks which are used to record and transmit booking and applicant fingerprints to the AFIS computer for identity verification.
- **Mobile ID Devices** - Handheld fingerprint devices used for fingerprint searches in the field with probable cause allow officers to make identity determinations at a scene rather than detaining and transporting subjects to a jail or police department for Livescan fingerprinting. Devices can also be used to identify injured or incapacitated individuals who cannot identify themselves.
- **Staffing** for the AFIS program consists of 117 positions between the King County and Seattle AFIS units. These positions are grouped into Identification, Forensics, Technology, and Administration Sections. Duties include responding to crime scenes to collect fingerprint evidence, processing evidence in the laboratory, fingerprinting in King County jails, identifying arrested individuals prior to release, training officers on techniques and technology, responding to hospitals and Medical

Examiner's office to assist in identifying individuals who are not capable of identifying themselves, and assisting with identity theft issues.

The regional King County AFIS Program approach provides technology and services at a reduced cost by sharing resources. By state law, police agencies are obligated to handle their own criminal identification services or depend on the Washington State Patrol. Funding biometric technology and forensic examiners would be large investments for local agencies to support on their own, especially when the volume of work does not justify the expense. State systems tend to have different priorities and goals than local agencies.

The AFIS Program not only provides criminal justice services, but it also assists in a variety of civil related functions, including:

- Assisting in the identification of deceased individuals for the King County Medical Examiner's Office.
- Helping people with identity theft issues where someone has established a criminal history under their name.
- Responding to area hospitals to assist social workers in identifying patients that cannot identify themselves.
- Using Mobile ID devices in the field to identify impaired or injured individuals.
- Using Livescans to take and submit fingerprints for a variety of licenses and background checks.
- Presenting on forensic topics to schools or community groups.

This agreement replaces any previous interlocal agreements between the King County and the City and continues until the status of services changes.

NEXT STEPS

Following approval of this agreement, Mercer Island will receive new equipment during the implementation of AFIS' Livescan Replacement Project later this year.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize the City Manager to sign the interagency connection agreement with King County for the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program.