



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PRC 26-01
January 8, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PRC 26-01: E-Bikes in Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve policy statement, as written in Exhibit 1, and direct staff to work with the Parks and Recreation Commission's Chair and Vice Chair to develop handoff memo to the Mercer Island City Council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
STAFF:	Amelia Tjaden, Management Analyst Ryan Daly, Recreation Manager Sam Harb, Parks Operation Manager	
EXHIBITS:	1. E-Bikes and E-Scooters in Parks & Open Spaces Policy 2. E-Bike Public Comment Submissions	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to seek approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) on Exhibit 1, the proposed policy for e-bikes and e-scooters in parks and open spaces.

- Mercer Island has seen an increase in usage of e-bikes, electric scooters (e-scooters), and electric motorcycles/electric dirt bikes (e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes) over the past two years.
- E-bikes are bicycles that are assisted by an electric motor. There are three classes of e-bikes, distinguished by the e-bike's maximum assisted speed and how electric assistance is provided.
- E-motorcycles are distinct from e-bikes because they are larger and heavier, have a motor with a higher power output and can reach much greater speeds. In September 2025, the Mercer Island City Council adopted Ordinance No. 25C-24 establishing regulations for e-motorcycles ([AB 6772](#)).
- In November 2025, staff conducted a study session with the PRC and the OSCT to discuss regulations for e-bikes and e-scooters in parks and open spaces on the Island ([PRC 25-17](#)).
- Following the input received at the November 2025 meeting, staff proposes the adoption of a policy that prohibits class 1 and class 2 e-bikes, and e-scooters within open spaces or parks except on paved trails; and prohibits all class 3 e-bikes in open spaces or parks.

BACKGROUND

Mercer Island has seen an increase in usage of electric bikes (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), and electric motorcycles/electric dirt bikes (e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes) over the past two years. Many of the riders are 12-15 years of age and often demonstrate unsafe riding behaviors, creating a danger to themselves and others.

On May 2025, the City Council amended the 2025-2026 Work Plan to include the development of an ordinance regulating the operation of e-bikes and e-motorcycles on the Island ([AB 6688](#)).

In September 2025, the Mercer Island City Council adopted Ordinance No. 25C-24 establishing regulations for e-motorcycles ([AB 6772](#)).

In November 2025, staff conducted a study session with the PRC and the OSCT to discuss regulations for e-bikes and e-scooters in parks and open spaces on the Island ([PRC 25-17](#)). Notice of the meeting and a request

for community input on the topic was posted on social media and included in the MI weekly. Two community members spoke during the public comment period during the meeting and the City received a number of public comments, which have been included as Exhibit 2. (Exhibit 2 contains comments received up until publishing this agenda bill, comments received after publishing will be added and the packet will be updated following the meeting.)

Currently, RCW [46.61.710](#) prohibits e-bikes and e-scooters on trails marked as non-motorized and trails with a natural dirt surface. In effect, this means e-bikes and e-scooters cannot be ridden in Pioneer Park, Upper Luther Burbank Park, Island Crest Park ravine, or anywhere where posted signs prohibit motorized vehicles. The City has other specialized facilities, like the Skate Park and Bike Skills Area, that have rules developed specifically for these locations.

E-Bikes

Under [RCW 46.04.169](#), e-bikes are bicycles that are assisted by an electric motor. There are three classes of e-bikes, distinguished by the e-bike's maximum assisted speed and how electric assistance is provided.

- Class 1 e-bikes assist up to 20 mph and only provide electric assistance when the rider is pedaling.
- Class 2 e-bikes assist up to 20 mph but can propel the bike without pedaling using a throttle.
- Class 3 e-bikes assist up to 28 mph using a pedal assist and/or a throttle. These e-bikes have additional rules, including a minimum age of 16.

Currently, class 1 and class 2 e-bikes can be ridden anywhere traditional bikes are permitted – including mixed-use trails, bike lanes, and roads – unless otherwise noted. Class 3 e-bikes can be ridden on roads and paved trails that allow motorized vehicles but are not allowed on soft surface trails. Class 3 e-bikes are also prohibited on sidewalks and on shared-use paths.

E-Scooters

Under RCW [46.04.336](#), e-scooters are scooters powered by an electric motor that have a maximum speed of 20mph. E-scooters are subject to many of the same laws as e-bikes, however, e-scooters cannot be ridden on sidewalks or soft-surface trails, an operator must be 16 years old to ride an e-scooter, and the speed limit for e-scooters is 15 mph on any roadway or bicycle lane.

E-Motorcycles

Under MICC 10.53, an e-motorcycle means a motorcycle, as defined by [RCW 46.04.330](#), which is powered by an electric motor and:

- Is not equipped with fully operable pedals capable of propelling it. Foot pegs are not considered pedals; or
- Has a motor with a power output that exceeds 750 watts; or
- Has a motor that continues to provide assistance when the vehicle reaches the speed of twenty-eight miles per hour.

E-motorcycles, like other motorized vehicles, are only allowed in parks on roads and in parking lots if they are properly licensed. Violations of these regulations are civil infractions, subject to impound and financial penalties.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Staff recommend the PRC and the OSCT approve the proposed policy for e-bikes and e-scooters in parks and open spaces, as shown in Exhibit 1. In the summary, the policy proposes the following regulations:

- Class 1 and class 2 e-bikes, and e-scooters, are not allowed within open spaces or parks except on paved trails, or as otherwise posted.

- Class 3 e-bikes are not allowed in open spaces or parks.

This policy largely follows the approach that King County adopted, allowing class 1 and class 2 e-bikes are on regional trails and paved pathways within park areas, and prohibiting class 3 e-bikes are from any trails or pathways within park areas ([KCC 7.12.315](#)).

Additionally, [MICC 9.30.220](#) gives the Parks and Recreation Director the authority to adopt rules and regulations pertaining to the operation, management and use of the parks. In other words, staff will be able to address areas that may have conflicts between trail users not covered under this policy. For example, the Parks and Recreation Director could establish site specific rules to address specific situations.

Aubrey Davis Park & I-90 Trail

While the City manages Aubrey Davis Park and the Mercer Island segment of the I-90 trail, this area is owned by WSDOT. Under [RCW 46.61.710](#), class 1 and class 2 e-bikes are allowed on shared-use paths; however, class 3 e-bikes are not allowed on shared-use paths meaning WSDOT already does not allow class 3 e-bikes on the I-90 trail. Moreover, under the RCW, local regulation of class 3 e-bikes on a shared use path that crosses jurisdictional boundaries of two or more local jurisdictions, must be consistent for the entire shared use path for the local regulation to be enforceable. The policy proposed in Exhibit 1 maintains consistency of existing regulations.

If the City were to adopt regulations that were inconsistent with WSDOT policy and the RCW, the City would need to seek approval from WSDOT.

South Mercer Playfields & MISD

While the City manages the South Mercer Playfields, the Mercer Island School District (MISD) has the authority and responsibility to establish the regulations for their properties. MISD has expressed that it is supportive of the staff recommended policy and their intent to adopt the same policy for e-bikes and e-scooters at South Mercer Playfields as the policy for these vehicles for City park facilities.

Enforcement

Staff developed the proposed policy for e-bikes and e-scooters in parks and open spaces, as shown in Exhibit 1 in coordination with the Mercer Island Police Department. MIPD supports this policy direction and will be at the meeting provide input and answer questions. That said, direction on enforcement mechanisms or penalties for violations will come from the City Council. Input toward enforcement or penalties may be included in hand off memo.

NEXT STEPS

Should the policy be adopted, staff will work with the PRC's Chair and Vice Chair to develop handoff memo to the Mercer Island City Council. Staff will return to the PRC and OSCT at their regularly scheduled meetings to approve the hand off memo. Staff will then use this memo to prepare an ordinance establishing regulations for e-bikes for City Council consideration.

Finally, following the adoption of regulations by the City Council, staff will coordinate with the MISD to develop signage and educate users of the South Mercer Playfields.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Parks and Recreation Commission

- Approve the policy statement, as written in Exhibit 1, and direct staff to work with the Parks and Recreation Commission's Chair and Vice Chair to develop handoff memo to the Mercer Island City Council for approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission at a future meeting.

Open Space Conservancy Trust

- Adopt the same standards for e-bikes and e-scooters as the Parks and Recreation Commission.