



Code of Ethics

Abbreviated Training

February 9, 2021

Background

- Code of Ethics adopted 2018; amended December 2019
 - Officials comply with the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
 - Official be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
 - Public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and
 - Public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility
- Code of Ethics amended and adopted December 2019
 - Improved the process for responding to a complaint, and added guidance on the acceptance of gifts, conflict of interest, representation of third parties, and misuse of public position and resources.
- Mercer Island City Code [2.60](#).



City Council Direction

- At the January 19, 2021 meeting, the City Council directed staff to:
 - Update the Code of Ethics for officials
 - Email all Board and Commission Members of the option to seek an informal opinion from the City Attorney on the applicability of the Code of Ethics to “hypothetical circumstances and/or situations solely related to the official making the request.”
 - Attend all Board and Commission meetings to review the informal opinion purpose and process.
 - Develop and deliver training on the revised Code of Ethics for all Board and Commission Members by April 2021.*

*Training date is dependent on adoption of revised code of ethics.



City Attorney – Informal Opinions

- Board and Commission Members may seek an informal opinion from the City Attorney
 - Applicability of the Code of Ethics to “hypothetical circumstances and/or situations solely related to the official making the request.” (MICC 2.60.060)
 - Wondering whether certain actions violate the Code of Ethics, contact City Attorney Bio Park (bio.park@mercerisland.gov), and submit your inquiry in writing.
 - The City Attorney will follow up with you if he needs additional information to give his opinion and advise you on the matter, or he may forward your inquiry to City’s Ethics Officer for an advisory opinion.
 - **NOTE:** Your communication seeking informal opinion from City Attorney may not be protected under attorney-client privilege.



Next Steps

- Code of Ethics Revisions
 - Your comments or suggestions are welcome – Contact Chief of Administration Ali Spietz at ali.spietz@mercerisland.gov
 - Discussions with City Council on code revisions will begin in March
- Code of Ethics Training
 - Board & Commission Members training on the revised code of ethics is anticipated to begin no later than April 2021*

*Training date is dependent on adoption of revised code of ethics.

