

Town Center Parking Study
Draft Strategies
September 22, 2022

This document provides a summary of potential strategies to address Town Center parking issues. The list describes potential near-term, long-term, and ongoing policies, management, and design alternatives that could be considered for implementation in the Town Center. These strategies will be discussed with the Mercer Island City Council during a Study Session on the Town Center Parking Study scheduled for Monday, October 3, at 5pm.

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- Revise parking time limits and implement stronger enforcement: Adjust parking time limits to meet the needs of intended users (customers, employees, commuters, etc.) and boost the education/enforcement tactics necessary to improve compliance.
- Revisit the use of parking permit areas: Consider eliminating the commuter permit 7-9am area due to redundancy with the official Park & Ride and incompatibility with the objective of designating most on-street parking for short-term Town Center parking.
- Implement wayfinding improvements to destinations: Improve the wayfinding to various parking areas as well as wayfinding to Town Center destinations to boost the viability of “park once” behavior and decrease the traffic generated by people circulating for parking.
- Expand short-term pickup/drop-off areas: Explore new locations for both on-street and off-street pickup/drop-off zones to accommodate a demonstrated demand for rideshare, food delivery, and other quick parking needs
- Improve biking and walking conditions around Town Center and to transit: This is both a near- and long-term strategy, with near-term steps including “quick fix” pilot projects that could include crosswalk painting, curb extensions, traffic speed control devices, bike parking, and other pilots.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Reconfigure some streets to include parking / use parking as traffic calming: Consider options to redesign 77th Ave SE, SE 27th Street, and other locations with new on-street parking, lane and/or road reconfigurations, traffic calming, improved bikeways, and streetscape improvements.
- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs with new development and employers: Consider pursuing partnerships with new projects to encourage reduced drive-alone mode share (potentially linked to reduced parking requirements, promotion of transit and walk/bike use, and related parking demand-shifting methods).
- Pilot the use of paid parking and parking monitoring: Implement paid parking using parking technology (e.g. smart meters, license-plate-recognition, etc.) in high-demand locations to improve compliance and promote parking space turnover.
- Add bicycle parking: Increase the supply of public and private bicycle parking to make bike trips to Town Center more appealing.
- Monitor Park & Ride use and anticipate further parking management steps once light rail opens: Provide greater access to transit for residents by improving bus or shuttle connections; avoid premature anticipation of increased demand.
- Create more community gathering spaces: Maximize use of existing and consider creating new community gathering spaces near busy business areas to promote economic activity and livability.

ONGOING STRATEGIES

- Support shared parking agreements: The City should devote resources toward creating a simple, viable shared parking framework that can allow multiple businesses and destinations to share parking supply across users (e.g. daytime and nighttime users).
- Provide flexibility in parking requirements for new and modified development: Continue to fine-tune base parking requirements for different uses in Town Center (for example reducing or eliminating parking requirements for restaurants).
- Review parking design to create a comfortable and safe parking environment.