



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 7016
October 20, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 7016: Animal Control Code Update (Ordinance No. 26C-15, First Reading)	☐ Discussion Only ☒ Action Needed: ☒ Motion ☐ Ordinance ☐ Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Schedule Ordinance No. 26C-15 for second reading and adoption on November 3, 2026.	

DEPARTMENT:	City Manager
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Robbie Cunningham Adams, Senior Management Analyst Mike Seifert, Police Commander Bio Park, City Attorney
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Ordinance No. 26C-15, Animal Control Code Update
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 Ordinance No. 26C-15 (see Exhibit 1) for first reading to update the Mercer Island Animal Control Code and to set the Ordinance for second reading on November 3, 2026.

- The City of Mercer Island receives animal licensing and control services from King County through the [Regional Animal Services of King County \(RASKC\) interlocal agreement \(ILA\)](#). The [current ILA with RASKC](#) is in effect until December 31, 2027.
- Per the adopted ILA with RASKC, the City is obligated to “enact an ordinance or resolution that includes license, fee, penalty, enforcement, appeal, impound/redemption and sheltering provisions that are substantially the same as those of Title 11 King County Code as now in effect or hereafter amended.”
- In 2023, the [King County Council adopted, updated, and reorganized their animal control code](#). See [Title 11 of King County Code](#).
- Regulations pertaining to animals within Mercer Island is governed by [MICC Chapter 7.04 – Animal Code](#).
- Mercer Island’s animal code needs to be amended to align with King County’s 2023 update to KCC Title 11, per the requirements of the ILA.

- At the September 15, 2026 City Council meeting, the proposed animal control code updates were introduced for City Council discussion and feedback ([AB 6985](#)). During the meeting, the City Council instructed staff to include the transfer of the dangerous and potentially dangerous animal appeal process from the City's Hearing Examiner to RASKC in the ordinance.

BACKGROUND

Interlocal Agreement with Regional Animal Services of King County

The City of Mercer Island receives animal licensing and control services from King County through the [Regional Animal Services of King County \(RASKC\) interlocal agreement \(ILA\)](#) that was last updated and adopted by the City in 2018 ([AB 5238](#)). It is in effect until December 31, 2027.

Mercer Island and 25 other cities contract with King County for regional animal services, which include animal control, shelter care, adoption, and pet licensing services. Under the terms of the ILA the City assists the County by informing residents about animal code requirements and provides pet license applications at the Community Center front desk.

Revenues and Costs Related to Animal Control and RASKC ILA

King County's Regional Animal Services provide a cost-effective solution for cities that would otherwise need to operate their own animal services programs. Costs are allocated among participating RASKC cities and unincorporated King County based on usage (80 percent) and population (20 percent). Costs to the City of Mercer Island are offset by pet licensing revenue collected from Mercer Island residents. The City pays the remaining costs for animal control services.

Additionally, while the services provided under the RASKC ILA include administering appeals of dangerous dog designations under the King County Hearing Examiner, Mercer Island code currently requires that the City is responsible for administering dangerous dog appeals with the City's own hearing examiner rather than the King County hearing examiner. This means costs related to these appeals are currently borne by the City. This is one area that is recommended to be changed.

Table 1 shows revenue and expenses related to pet licensing revenue, costs of the RASKC ILA, Mercer Island Hearing Examiner costs, and costs related to outside legal support services for dangerous dog appeal cases. Pet license revenue goes directly to King County. Costs net of the pet license revenue is paid for by the City General Fund. Pet license revenue does not cover all of the City's costs related to the ILA and hearing examiner costs.

Table 1 – Pet Licensing Revenue

Description	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals
Revenues		
King County Pet Licenses	\$66,800	\$63,500
Expenses		
RASKC Interlocal Agreement	73,000	77,100
Hearing Examiner (<i>dangerous dog appeals</i>)	600	9,600
Outside Legal	14,400	61,500
Expenses Subtotal	\$88,000	\$148,200
Net Cost to City General Fund	\$21,200	\$84,700

Council Feedback on the Introduction of Animal Control Code Update

At the September 15, 2026, City Council meeting, the proposed animal control code updates were introduced for City Council discussion and feedback ([AB 6985](#)). This agenda item included summaries of code sections requiring substantive change. During the meeting, City Council instructed staff to include the transfer of the dangerous and potentially dangerous animal appeal process from the City's Hearing Examiner to RASKC in the final ordinance.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Regulations pertaining to animals within Mercer Island is governed by [MICC Chapter 7.04 – Animal Code](#). This chapter covers pet dog licensing and tag/collar requirements, unlawful conduct of pets, designation of off-leash areas, and policies and procedures related to regulating dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs. The chapter additionally adopts several state codes related to animals and livestock.

Per the adopted ILA with RASKC, the City is obligated to “enact an ordinance or resolution that includes license, fee, penalty, enforcement, appeal, impound/redemption and sheltering provisions that are substantially the same as those of [Title 11 King County Code](#) as now in effect or hereafter amended”.

In 2023, the [King County Council adopted and updated and reorganized animal control code](#). The changes updated the code to reflect current state law and included a substantial update of the process and procedures for declaring dogs to be “potentially dangerous” and the due process appeal protections. Mercer Island's code needs to be updated to align with King County's 2023 update to KCC Title 11, per the requirements of the ILA, and to address discrepancies between the County's and City's codes that make it more difficult for the County to enforce animal care and control laws in the City of Mercer Island.

Updating City Animal Control Code to Align with King County Animal Control Code

Staff recommend adopting the King County animal control code by reference. This is the approach most commonly used by cities that contract with RASKC. RASKC will continue to be the primary body enforcing animal control on Mercer Island, with assistance from the Mercer Island Police Department as appropriate. Additionally, staff recommend several changes and additions to modernize and clarify areas of the City animal code. These proposed code changes are included in the draft ordinance as Exhibit 1.

King County requires that City's animal control code be “substantially the same” on the policies related to licensing, fees, penalties, enforcement, appeals, impound/redemption and sheltering provisions. The City may continue to establish local policies on matters outside these areas, including off-leash areas and Mercer Island-specific conduct requirements.

Staff recommend scheduling Ordinance No. 26C-15 (Exhibit 1) for second reading on November 3, 2026.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Schedule Ordinance No. 26C-15 for second reading and adoption on November 3, 2026.