



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6242
March 21, 2023
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6242: Draft Town Center Parking Study Report Handoff	<input checked="" 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:	Receive the draft Town Center Parking Study report and provide recommendation on next steps.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Town Center Parking Study Report
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 bill is to handoff the draft Town Center Parking Study report to City Council and discuss next steps. The draft report is included as Exhibit 1.

Please note, there are many bills still pending in the legislature that may have an impact on parking regulations and planning in the Town Center. For that reason, the staff are recommending further work on the Town Center Parking Study be suspended until the legislative session concludes.

- City Council approved \$80,000 in the 2021-2022 Biennial Budget to conduct a new Town Center Parking Study (50% funded by General Fund via the Street Fund and 50% funded by Sound Transit Mitigation dollars for study elements related to mitigation impacts).
- On July, 19, 2022, the City Council reviewed the preliminary findings of the Town Center Parking Study and provided feedback on preferred alternatives ([AB 6118](#)).
- On October 3, 2022, the City Council reviewed and provided feedback on the list of proposed strategies and recommendations to support the goals for the Town Center parking system ([AB 6161](#)).
- During the presentation at the Council Meeting, staff will give an overview of the draft report and discuss next steps.
- The staff recommendation is to suspend work on the Town Center Parking Study until the legislative session concludes given the potential impacts on parking regulations in the Town Center.

- Should the City Council wish to proceed, staff will commence a public outreach process for about four weeks, concluding with a public hearing on April 18, 2023.

BACKGROUND

In March 2022, the City retained Walker Consultants to conduct a Town Center Parking Study with the following goals:

1. Create a parking program that activates Town Center, supports small businesses, and enhances the Town Center visitor experience.
2. Ensure Mercer Island residents have priority access to public transportation.
3. Determine if on-site commercial and multi-family residential parking is adequately supplied and utilized. Identify options for increasing and/or regulating its use.

Over the last year, the City collected Town Center parking inventory and usage data as well as engaged the community to develop the draft Town Center Parking Study report (Exhibit 1). Methods to collect community feedback included seven virtual focus groups, a brief online survey open to the public (232 responses received), and discussion and mapping exercises on [Let's Talk](#). The draft report also considers relevant community feedback provided via the City's Economic Development Vision survey conducted in June 2022 (644 total responses; 72% of responses related to the parking study).

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

The draft Town Center Parking Study report features five main sections and four supporting appendices:

Sections

- A: Project Overview** – Introduces the project goals and summarizes the recommendations.
- B: Parking Inventory & Utilization** – Presents parking inventory, parking utilization, length of stay analysis, and other data collected in June 2022.
- C: Community Outreach Activities** – Summarizes the community outreach methods, number of participants, and key findings.
- D: Strategies & Recommendations** – Outlines three strategies for managing the Town Center parking system and the associated recommendations, actions, and support.
- E: Implementation** – Includes an implementation matrix with timing and anticipated resource impacts as well as guidance for ongoing monitoring.

Appendices

- A: Community Engagement Plan** – Public participation plan scoped for this project.
- B: Detailed Community Engagement Findings** – Documents all comments, mapping activity inputs, and survey responses as well as aggregates responses from focus group participants.
- C: Background Studies and Current Programs Review** – Summarizes review of background plans, studies, and documents related to Town Center parking, mobility, and planning.
- D: Mercer Island Park and Ride User Surveys** – Includes Park and Ride data collected by Sound Transit in 2014 and 2015.

At Tuesday’s meeting, staff will provide an overview of the draft Town Center Parking Study, focusing on the Strategies & Recommendations listed below and further explained starting on page 19 of Exhibit 1.

Strategies & Recommendations	
Strategy #1: Manage the on-street public parking supply.	
1a	Revise on-street parking time limits to be two-hours throughout Town Center.
1b	Monitor the RPD and Town Center Parking permit programs. Modify them as needed to prepare for future parking impacts caused by increases in commuter traffic and the opening of the East Link Extension.
1c	Create additional 30-minute loading and 3- and 10-minute pickup/drop-off spaces on-street.
1d	Add more ADA parking on-street.
1e	Implement additional enforcement of Town Center’s on-street parking regulations, including education and marketing campaigns.
1f	Consider paid parking in Town Center and deploy technology to create easier use and enforcement.
Strategy #2: Improve the convenience and efficient supply of parking.	
2a	Improve awareness of and navigation to Town Center’s range of parking options.
2b	Promote agreements for public use of currently underutilized private parking.
Strategy #3: Expand travel mode choices through programs and infrastructure investments.	
3a	Add bicycle parking.
3b	Study options to allow more flexibility related to parking requirements for new businesses.
3c	Implement a proactive Transportation Demand Management Program for new development.
3d	Study options to reconfigure some Town Center streets with considerations for adding parking and loading, improving walking and bicycling facilities, improving wayfinding and access, and ensuring area streets are calm and safe for all users.
3e	Create more community gathering spaces.

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Washington State Legislature is currently in session and anticipated to conclude their work near the end of April 2023. There are several bills under consideration that may have an impact on parking in Town Center. Specifically, [SB 5466](#) as currently drafted, will prevent cities from requiring parking as part of future Town Center development projects. The passage of this bill in its current form will impact the City’s future parking strategy. The City is actively engaged with legislators on SB 5466 and other bills and is strongly opposing any bill language that preempts the City’s ability to regulate parking.

The staff recommend suspending work on the Town Center Parking Study until the legislative session concludes. This will ensure that the final outcomes recommended in the Town Center Parking Study are aligned with State law.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Should the City Council decide to proceed with the planning process, the staff will commence a public outreach process at the conclusion of the Council meeting. The community will be invited to comment on the draft report through April 18, 2023 via the Let's Talk page. The City Council will also hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 18, 2023.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps will be informed by the City Council discussion.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1: Move to suspend work on the Town Center Parking Study until the conclusion of the Washington State Legislative Session.

Option 2: Move to commence the public outreach period on the draft Town Center Parking Study, concluding with a public hearing on April 18, 2023.