

AB 6359 Town Center Parking Study Draft Review

Exhibit 5: City Council Q&A Matrix

10/16/2023

Log #	Councilmember	Comment/Question	Staff Response
Received prior to March 21, 2023, City Council meeting			
1	Reynolds	The summary refers to 51% of off-street spaces being used. What is the denominator here? Public spaces? All spaces? Actually, I have this same or a similar question re all data, such as when they quote 1,492 total public spaces, in the survey. (I won't repeat each example here.)	<p>The parking inventory counts provided on page 5 of the report refer to all publicly available parking spaces located on-street (i.e., public ROW spaces) and off-street (i.e., public spaces located in surface lots, parking garages, etc.). The inventory for each is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-street public parking spaces: 253 spaces • Off-street public parking spaces: 2,492 spaces <p>Utilization analysis uses the above inventory counts as each denominator for the analysis.</p>
2	Reynolds	Are there any public spaces that require a fee? Where? How much?	<p>In Town Center, the only <u>on-street</u> public parking spaces subject to a fee are permit-regulated spaces, but the permit requirement is only applicable during the specified permit hours (i.e., 7-9am, M-F; refer to map on page 6 of the report).</p> <p><u>Off-street</u> spaces designated as public parking (e.g., surface lots, parking garages, etc.) are also free of charge and have various regulations (e.g., no walk-off parking, free for first two hours, etc.).</p> <p>Island Square (2758 78th Ave SE) instituted a pay-by-app system that requires parkers to register using their phone and a payment method. The first two hours of parking are free; parkers who stay longer than two hours are charged \$3 per additional hour to park in the public spaces. Island Square contracts with Diamond Parking Services to monitor parking restrictions in the garage.</p>
3	Reynolds	What "quick wins" would the consultant recommend now, while we wait for study completion?	<p>Here are a few work items that could be started prior to final adoption of the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a methodology and schedule, including coordinating with Sound Transit to monitor the Mercer Island Park & Ride and conduct Town Center/North Mercer Restricted Parking District (RPD) permit program space counts. • Conduct spot checks of ADA parking use in on- and off-street locations to get a better sense of ADA parking congestion and to identify areas for additional or relocated ADA parking spaces. • Evaluate the current parking ticket fine and consider revising. • Install signage and promote availability of public parking in mixed-use buildings. • Conduct annual bike counts to set a baseline for bicycle traffic in the Town Center. Also consider re-locating existing unused bicycle racks in Town Center and monitor use as part of bike counts. • Using the results of additional parking counts, begin converting on-street parking spaces to two-hour limits. This could be phased in depending on where parking congestion is observed and/or the City sees lack of turnover.

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4	Reynolds	What downsides are there to the public comment idea about banning street parking between midnight and 5 AM?	Eliminating street parking between midnight and 5am could impact employees of Town Center businesses with early work crews. Town Center residents may also have trouble finding overnight parking if they do not reserve parking spaces in their building or otherwise have access to off-street parking through their residence.
5	Reynolds	How many parking tickets does MIPD give out in a year?	The number of parking citations has been approximately 425 per year over the past 5 years.
6	Reynolds	The parking ticket fees seem crazy low. What are regional norms for such ticket fees?	<p>Most parking tickets in Bellevue and Seattle carry a fine of \$47. Kirkland’s parking tickets range from \$35 to \$45.</p> <p>Permit costs and penalty fees for the Town Center and North Mercer Restricted Parking District (RPD) permit parking programs are outlined in the City’s fee schedule and adopted as part of the City budget process. The City Council last passed a resolution to set permit parking penalties in November 2001 (Resolution No. 1285). The permit penalties have not been updated since that resolution.</p> <p>MICC 10.18 Traffic Violations Bureau outlines process and responsible bodies for traffic violations throughout Mercer Island. MICC 10.18.080 Parking offenses – Payment and processing states:</p> <p><i>In cases where a notice of traffic infraction has been issued for a parking violation involving overtime parking or parking in violation of posted parking restrictions, the notice of infraction shall be filed with the King County District Court, Bellevue Division, Mercer Island Department, and the court shall thereafter have jurisdiction over the parking violation. The monetary penalty for such parking infraction shall be set by resolution by the city council from time to time.</i></p> <p>As far as staff can find, the penalties for parking infraction fees subject to MICC 10.18.080 have not been updated in at least a decade.</p>

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7	Reynolds	It seems if we reduce requirements for parking with new development, we simultaneously make it cheaper to build a development (good, if the savings is passed on to tenants, admittedly a bold supposition) but also exacerbate the parking shortage. What can the consultants tell us has been the effect of such programs in other cities? How have the positives and negatives balanced? Is there any evidence that it leads to construction of more retail space or lower rents?	<p>Yes, the consultant team has seen parking reductions and eliminations lead to more retail and other development. Examples are provided below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunnyvale, CA (suburban community, 150k population): Sunnyvale has a downtown shared parking district with no minimum requirements and that policy not only permitted the “Main Street first floor retail” to develop but also led to new housing, office, and commercial development (several hundred thousand square feet). Walker Consultants developed the shared parking policy and parking studies for all new developments (developers still built parking based on the market need). Throughout the process, developers stressed that a parking reduction was important to make new development financially feasible. Walker also worked with some retail shops, who communicated they would not have signed leases if they had been required by code to provide on-site parking. • Healdsburg, CA (destination community in CA wine country, 11k population): The consultants worked with the City of Healdsburg to create a parking in-lieu fee for new development and changes of use. In Healdsburg, CA we worked with the City to create a parking in-lieu fee for new development and change of use. We then helped redevelop a vacant site on the Plaza that could otherwise not be developed without the parking reduction and in-lieu fee (this site is right on the Healdsburg Plaza, some of the most valuable land in N. California and the parking requirements made it impossible to redevelop (and it sat vacant). It’s now a restaurant, rooftop bar, and bookstore. <p>Additionally, Walker is currently working with California communities to navigate the impacts of AB 2097, which prohibits public agencies from requiring parking minimums within ½-mile of public transit (signed into law in 2022). In Sunnyvale, a developer building a mixed-use property adjacent to a transit station wanted to include a coffee shop on-site for residents, commuters, and office workers. Prior to the passage of AB 2097, the project would’ve been held up by parking requirements, so the developer abandoned the plan to include a coffee shop. With the elimination of the parking requirement because of the new law, the coffee shop has been added back to project.</p>
8	Reynolds	The count showed 59% of vehicles parking more than 4 hours doing so illegally. How many of these were ticketed?	This data is not available.

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9	Reynolds	If the 33 vehicles parking over limit is typical, and we hired a parking officer who gave out (say) \$50 tickets, and the officer were on duty for 200 days a year, this would generate \$330,000 a year gross. Would this pay for a parking enforcement officer after allowing for necessary overhead and equipment? Need a parking enforcement officer be a commissioned police officer, or are less expensive options available? What third party providers could the city contract with to provide such services and at what cost? (Since presumably if we do this right, the number of violators will rapidly drop off, so the long-term revenue might not be sustainable.)	<p>The generation of \$330,000 in annual revenue from parking fines seems unrealistic, given that the assumption is the number of daily parking violations would remain constant at 33. Further analysis would need to be completed.</p> <p>Changing the parking citation to another amount would require City Council action (see #6 above), but the staff concur that the fee should be evaluated and updated.</p> <p>Parking enforcement is currently performed by members of the police department. Changes or removal of these duties would require bargaining with the police union.</p>
10	Reynolds	Utilization data is given for the town center permit areas, but how many of the users had a permit?	This specific data is not available, as the parking utilization counts did not differentiate cars with permits from those without permits. This could be further studied through parking counts.
11	Reynolds	Are town center permits available only for residents, or also for non-resident employees of Island businesses?	Town Center permits are only available to Mercer Island residents. Three Town Center businesses located on 80th Ave SE were grandfathered in when the permit program started, and they have permits for their staff to park on the street.
12	Reynolds	What does an ADA street parking space look like?	A priority for accessibility is locating the parking spaces where the street is level, free from obstructions, and, ideally, at the end of a block face with access to existing curb ramps. Requirements for size/space etc. must meet specific requirements set forth by the ADA.

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13	Reynolds	<p>For the facility / facilities that require using an app:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this consistent with our parking agreement with the facility? (It <u>seems</u> inconsistent with the idea of first come, first served, which seems to be part of the agreement, since it imposes an additional requirement.) Is a credit card required to be entered in the app even if staying under two hours? 	<p>Island Square (2758 78th Ave SE) is the only mixed-use building that has instituted a pay-by-app process for paying for public parking beyond the required “Free public parking” timeframe. Parkers can register their car in one of three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Download the ParkMobile app. Scan the QR code posted on-site. Text “Park” to 77223 and follow the prompts to register. <p>Parkers are required to register their car regardless of whether they plan to park for under or over two hours. The app requires a credit card or Apple Pay to complete registration. Additionally, signs posted on-site state:</p> <p><i>Unregistered vehicle subject to parking notice fee or impound.</i></p>
14	Reynolds	<p>More generally, are all parking agreements with the Hadley / Mercer / etc. being complied with? Are sites marked in compliance with agreement? Are the required number of spaces available?</p>	<p>As with other code compliance concerns, enforcement is done on a complaint basis. The City does not proactively monitor compliance with parking agreements.</p>
15	Reynolds	<p>Who has the power to enforce the 2-hour parking limits in underground garages? Police? Building management? Is it being done?</p>	<p>MIPD does not enforce parking regulations on public spaces available on privately owned lots, except for violations of ADA parking spaces. Enforcing parking limits is the responsibility of the property owner. Usually, a third party is contracted for that purpose, but, in smaller residences, building management may handle enforcement.</p>
16	Reynolds	<p>Appendix A defines a community engagement plan. Which steps here have been done already?</p>	<p>The community engagement plan has been fully executed.</p>
17	Reynolds	<p>Other than finalizing the report in response to council comments and questions, what remains to be done on this project? Has all data been gathered? All analysis been done? All community engagement complete?</p>	<p>Finalizing the report in response to City Council / community comments and questions is the last step of this project. No additional data collection or community engagement (outside of collecting public comment on the report) is planned.</p>

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18	Reynolds	Town center parking requirements appear to be mostly ranges. The AB indicates that the code official can impose a requirement within the range based on a parking study. Do all town center developments require such a study? How does this inform the selection of a number? Do studies typically say in their conclusion something like “we believe 17 spaces are required”, or does the code official make that determination based on study results? How?	Yes, a parking analysis/study is required for any Town Center project that is adding more than 10% to the gross floor area on the site. The parking analysis calculates the number of spaces needed based on the proposed uses (e.g. the number of spaces needed per residential unit, and per square foot for restaurant and retail space). Typically, applicants use the King County Right Size Parking Calculator to estimate the number of residential spaces. Commercial parking is typically based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation rates. These guidelines are used to propose the number of parking spaces and the proposal must be reviewed by the Design Commission and approved by the code official. It is common for applicants to propose the minimum number of required spaces per the ranges in MICC 19.11.130 .
Received prior to October 17, 2023, City Council meeting			
19	Reynolds	For the counted off street parking spaces, how many are open to the public?	For off-street parking spaces, the Study did not differentiate between spaces that are open to the public (i.e. free of cost, allows “walk-off” parking, etc.) versus designated for specific commercial establishment served by those parking lots.
20	Reynolds	For those open to the public, what is the distribution of maximum parking time? (E.g., 90 pct are 2 hour, 7% are 3 hour, and 3% are 30 minutes.)	See response provided above – this information was not compiled as part of this Study. If the City Council would like this data to be collected and analyzed to inform future policy work, the Council can direct staff to pursue a more comprehensive analysis of the off-street parking supply as an action item/next step upon adoption of the Study.
21	Reynolds	Do the consultants have SPECIFIC recommendations for how to increase awareness of off-street parking options?	The recommendations in the plan primarily focused on wayfinding to improve awareness of the off-street parking lots. The following details for wayfinding were provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include markers for publicly available parking both on- and off-street throughout Town Center, with new signage beginning at key entry points to Town Center and guiding people all the way to parking locations (installed and maintained by the City). • Add external, high visibility signs at and near shared-use lots and garages to help public parkers know about availability and time limits. • Consider a more specific and comprehensive wayfinding evaluation for Town Center.
22	Reynolds	What leverage, if any, does the city have to encourage / force private lot owners to broaden access to their lots?	The Study recommends pursuing shared parking agreements with private parking owners to facilitate more options and better distribution for commuter and other types of parking. Incentives may/could come in the form of compensation for parking use and/or other benefits to the property owner.
23	Reynolds	How many parking tickets does the city give in a typical year?	Response provided in March: The number of parking citations has been approximately 425 per year over the past 5 years.

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24	Reynolds	At current rates, are tickets self-supporting or does the cost of collection exceed the revenue collected? How much would it cost to hire one more parking officer and manage the collection process?	<p>The revenue the City collects from parking tickets does not cover the cost of the staff time it takes to do the enforcement. Parking enforcement is done primarily by the Police Support Officer who is paid at a rate of 75% of a fully commissioned police officer.</p> <p>The PSO divides their time between three main duties: parking enforcement, prisoner transports, and leash law education/enforcement.</p> <p>If there is an interest in hiring a civilian / private company to do parking enforcement on public streets, such a change would have to be negotiated with the police union.</p>
25	Reynolds	It sounds like only one officer is focused on parking studies and 3 vehicles have ALPR. Given this, why did the consultant recommend getting more ALPR?	The report does not recommend adding more ALPR patrol cars. Rather, it recommends equipping all existing ALPR vehicles with the parking ticket software (a different software that integrates into the ALPRs) so that all three vehicles could monitor parking.
26	Reynolds	The RPD sounds very underutilized. Even if EVERYONE who has a permit parked at the same time we would have 19 spaces left over. Are there spaces that would be more suitable than others for public parking or are they too far away from town center to meet an identified need?	RPD parking spaces located on 81st Ave SE in between North Mercer Way and SE 24th Street could be candidates for conversion to on-street public parking given their proximity to Town Center and existing infrastructure (sidewalks, etc.)
27	Reynolds	Do we have any sense WHY people are still paying for commuter parking permits when the park and ride is only half full? Is it likely really people that work or live in town center?	A survey of commuter parking permit holders was not conducted as part of this Study.
28	Reynolds	How many tickets do we give in a year for parking in the permit area without a permit? Are cars supposed to display a permit or have a registered plate such that this would be practical? Is ALPR aware of the registered list so it could automatically detect cars parked without a permit?	Identifying the number of parking tickets that were written specifically for permit violations will be provided by the October City Council meeting. That said, the PSO works to educate as the first option rather than issue citations. People are supposed to display a parking permit when parking in the Town Center’s parking zone. If the City were to require everyone to pay for parking via a parking app, the ALPR could sync with the app which would allow the ALPR to notify the officer if the vehicle’s owner had paid for the parking. This would simplify enforcement. As part of this parking study, the City is looking into the different capabilities of parking apps that would allow for registering license plates that have purchased permits for specific areas.

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29	Reynolds	I note several references to 3-minute parking. Are these really practical? Best practice? There aren't many transactions I can think of that would really take that little time other than just picking people up. I guess maybe an ATM stop or a dry-cleaning pickup. But even those things seem optimistic. Is there any point to having 3-minute vs 30-minute parking other than hoping it will inspire people? It seems so short as to be impossible to enforce.	Anecdotally, staff know that the 3-minute pick-up zones implemented during the pandemic were used regularly, but they may be less effective now as the City continues to emerge from pandemic conditions. Implementing this recommendation would include further evaluation of the best locations to deploy short-term (e.g. 3-minute, 10-minute, 30-minute) parking options, including piloting different locations/time limits and adjusting based on use/need.
30	Reynolds	Please describe / explain "channelization" and "overlay" as referenced in recommendation 3d.	<p>Those two capital projects referenced in the recommendation are identified in the 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and are included with this recommendation to note opportunities for coordinating work with existing/future workplan items. The CIP project descriptions for each project are provided below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SP0110 SE 27th Street Overlay (from 76th Ave SE to 80th Ave SE): This project will resurface SE 27 Street from 76th Avenue SE in the Town Center with a hot-mix asphalt overlay. Work will consist of pavement repairs, pavement gridding, asphalt paving, ADA ramp replacements, raising utility castings to grade, and new pavement markings. [Overlay is used in the context of asphalt overlay here and is defined as a layer of new asphalt applied over the existing base layer.] ● SP0136 77th Ave SE Channelization Upgrades (from SE 32nd Street to North Mercer Way): This project will modify existing channelization to provide on-street parking from SE 32nd to SE 27th Streets in Town Center and provide sharrows in the north/southbound travel lanes to connect to the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail (I-90 Trail). [Channelization is defined as the use of secondary roads to separate certain flows of traffic from the main traffic lanes.]
31	Reynolds	In 3d, are they proposing parallel parking or angle parking? What is best practice for how to safely combine parallel parking with bike lanes to avoid bicycle / door collisions? Would it be wise to consider two-way bike lanes on one side and parking only on the other side?	The recommendation is to study different options for reconfiguring 77th Ave SE and/or SE 27th Street to add more on-street parking. The team did do some rough, conceptual/exploratory work in developing this recommendation; the configurations noted that parallel parking could work on 77th Ave SE and parallel or angled parking could work on SE 27th Street. However, City staff have not completed additional work to study these or other on-street parking configurations yet.

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32	Reynolds	Reference is made to the 2400+ subscribers to MI Weekly. Please remind me how people get on, and off, that list. In particular, do we have any way of purging people when they die or leave the Island? Or anyway of knowing how many are actually people that still live here?	As of September 2023, we have 4,003 subscriber contacts to the MI Weekly. Of these, 1,271 are considered “most engaged” which equates to very frequent opens and clicks when they receive our emails. Our average open rate across the board is 65% which is substantially higher than the industry average. We do not have a way to purge contacts when the subscriber dies, but we can purge contacts that have not opened our emails in a set amount of time. There is no way to know if a subscriber lives on the Island.
33	Reynolds	Not a question but two comments about things that might merit correction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sarah is (incorrectly I think) identified as economic development coordinator b. Bus route 216 was suspended indefinitely effective 9/2. 	Noted. These and other outstanding typos, corrections, etc., will be addressed prior to adoption of the Study.