

BACKGROUND

In 2025, WSDOT began discussions with local jurisdictions and agencies about participating in a Virtual Coordination Center organized and managed by WSDOT. The VCC is a real-time traffic incident communication and collaboration tool to help create region-wide situational awareness, improve response efforts, and streamline information sharing between agencies and jurisdictions during large incident responses.

Since introducing this opportunity, several agencies and jurisdictions have signed onto the ILA including:

- Washington State Patrol
- Sound Transit
- King County Metro
- City of Gold Bar
- Eastside Fire and Rescue
- Medina PD
- City of Sultan
- City of Marysville
- City of Lake Stevens
- Seattle Fire Department
- NORCOM
- Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue
- Seattle Office of Emergency Management*
- City of Newcastle*
- Snohomish County Emergency Management*
- Seattle Department of Transportation*
- South County Fire*
- City of Bonney Lake*
- Seattle City Light*
- Seattle Police Department*
- Seattle Information Technology Department*
- Port of Tacoma*

**Indicates pending agreements*

Jurisdictions have the option of joining the ILA as one entity or as separate departments; Mercer Island would participate as one entity, encompassing multiple departments and teams including but not limited to Police, Emergency Management, and Public Works.

Enhancing Incident and Traffic Management, Improving Safety, and Supporting Communication Efforts

The VCC creates a real-time, regional picture of traffic incidents and emergency responses. It serves to identify region-impacting incidents more quickly, improve safety by clearing incidents faster, effectively guide first responders to incident sites, and ensure regional movement continues during major traffic incidents.

The VCC has been activated for collisions, extended road closures, police incidents, road construction events, regional activities, flooding events, and many other incidents.

WSDOT's goal for the VCC is to support multi-agency management and coordination of complex incidents that stress the transportation system and require interagency collaboration. Agencies have been invited to partner with WSDOT to utilize the VCC to enhance existing modes of operation and communication.

How the VCC Works

The VCC is a coordination platform that allows users to both access and share information about traffic incidents in real time. The platform is cloud-based, and the interface is a secure web application that integrates data from partner agencies in support of collaborative awareness, operations, and improved communications.

An incident happens and a “model” is created in the Virtual Coordination Center when an incident escalates to a larger closure that impacts several agencies. Multiple agencies can then coordinate response and share information within the incident model as the incident is ongoing.

By collaborating with WSDOT and other regional agencies and partners through the VCC, Mercer Island staff will have access to incident information for situations that affect the I-90, I-405, and I-5 regional corridors, ultimately impacting Mercer Island residents.

This shared system allows responding agencies to synchronize the deployment of emergency and traffic responses as well as public communications.

Additionally, the VCC includes a communication component that allows the lead response agency to share clear messaging about the incident, detours, closure times, etc. This ensures that all partner agencies can swiftly and effectively disseminate information to the community.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

To join the VCC, the City would enter into an interlocal agreement with the State of Washington, managed by WSDOT. There is no cost for the agreement, and it is in effect until it is terminated by either WSDOT or the City with 30 calendar day written notice.

NEXT STEPS

If the City Council authorizes the ILA with WSDOT, City staff will coordinate with counterparts at WSDOT to complete required access training and receive access to the VCC.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize the City Manager to execute the interlocal agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation for participation in the Virtual Coordination Center (VCC) as attached as Exhibit 1.