



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6666
April 15, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6666: First Reading of Ord. No. 25C-03, regarding Town Center Parking Regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Schedule Ordinance No. 25C-03 for second reading and adoption on May 6, 2025.	

DEPARTMENT:	City Manager
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Robbie Cunningham Adams, Senior Management Analyst Amelia Tjaden, Management Analyst
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Ordinance No. 25C-03 – <i>Exhibit added 4/11/25</i> 2. Map of Proposed Changes to Town Center Parking Regulations – <i>Exhibit added 4/11/25</i>
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	1. Engage the qualified expertise necessary to provide the guidance to enable the development of a comprehensive long-range plan for Town Center which recognizes, addresses, and balances business, housing, and parking uses

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to conduct a first reading of Ordinance 25C-03 (Exhibit 1), establishing the framework for a parking payment and registration system in Town Center.

- The Town Center Parking Plan was adopted by the City Council in November 2023 ([AB 6369](#)).
- The Sound Transit Light Rail Station (the Station) is anticipated to open in late 2025. Parking demand in Town Center and at the Park & Ride will likely increase when the Station opens.
- On March 18, 2025, the City Council directed staff to implement an on-street parking program in Town Center where a user would receive two hours of free parking upon registration with a mobile application. These parking regulations would be in effect from 8:00AM to 10:00PM Monday through Saturday ([AB 6603](#)).
- Additionally, City Council directed staff to implement a parking program for the new Town Center Parking Area where a motorist would register their vehicle for two hours of free parking and have the option to extend their parking up to a fourteen hour maximum for a paid fee. Under this system, the City would charge \$2.50 per hour for parking beyond two hours, up to a daily maximum rate of \$12.50. These parking regulations would be in effect from 8:00AM to 10:00PM every day ([AB 6603](#)).

- Implementing a parking payment/registration system with a mobile application will significantly improve how parking enforcement is conducted, increasing both the consistency and efficiency of enforcement.
- Exhibit 2 includes a map showing how Ordinance No. 25C-03 would establish the framework for a parking payment and registration system.

BACKGROUND

Well-planned and sufficient parking is vital to the success of Mercer Island's Town Center economy and the experience of residents, businesses, and visitors. The Town Center Parking Plan was adopted by the City Council in November 2023 ([AB 6369](#)).

On July 16, 2024, the City Council received a presentation and provided feedback on potential actions to update the Town Center parking regulations ([AB 6514](#)). On September 17, 2024, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 24C-14, increasing the parking citation fee and sunsetting the Town Center Commuter Parking Permit Program ([AB 6543](#)). On January 1, 2025, the parking citation fee increased from \$20.00 to \$54.00, and the parking spaces previously reserved for the permit program were converted to unrestricted parking.

On-Street Parking in Town Center

On March 18, 2025, the City Council directed staff to implement an on-street parking system in Town Center where a user would receive two hours of free parking upon registration with a mobile application ([AB 6603](#)). This parking system would be in effect from 8:00AM to 10:00PM Monday through Saturday. Exhibit 2 shows a map of where these parking regulations would take effect in Town Center.

Town Center Parking Area (at the former Tully's Site)

Construction began on the new Town Center Parking Area at the former Tully's site (project 90.20.0024 in the 2025-2026 Capital Improvement Program) in February 2025. Construction of the new parking area will be substantially completed by July 2025.

On March 18, 2025, City Council direct staff to implement a parking program for the new Town Center Parking Area where a motorist would register their vehicle for two hours of free parking and have the option to extend their parking up to a fourteen hour maximum for a paid fee. Under this system, the City would charge \$2.50 per hour for parking beyond two hours, up to a daily maximum rate of \$12.50. These parking regulations would be in effect from 8:00AM to 10:00PM every day ([AB 6603](#)). Under this approach:

- A motorist who registers their vehicle for 0-2 hours would receive free parking.
- A motorist who registers their vehicle for 2-7 hours of parking would receive two hours of free parking and pay \$2.50 per each additional hour.
- A motorist who registers their vehicle for 8-12 hours of parking would receive two hours of free parking and their total would be \$12.50, the daily maximum rate.

Sound Transit Light Rail Station

The Sound Transit Light Rail Station (Station) is anticipated to open in late 2025, likely increasing the demand for on-street parking in the Town Center.

From 2010-2017, the Park & Ride frequently reached 100% occupancy on weekdays according to the [2017 Park & Ride Utilization Report](#). Occupancy counts conducted in February 2025 showed that the Park & Ride

averaged 82% occupancy at noon. Staff anticipate that on weekdays the Park & Ride will reach 100% occupancy once the Station opens.

Managing the parking supply to ensure parking is available for both commuters and patrons of Town Center businesses will be crucial to the success of Town Center. Transportation Goal 11.3 of the [Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan](#) is to “support business development in the downtown area by prioritizing on-street parking spaces in the Town Center for short-term parking and encourage the development of off-street shared parking facilities for long-term parking in the Town Center.”

Enforcement

The Mercer Island Police Department has limited staffing available to enforce parking. The Police Support Officer (PSO) is predominantly responsible for parking enforcement, in addition to performing their other duties including animal control and performing transports. The PSO works four, ten-hour days per week.

Currently, parking enforcement is conducted in the Town Center by circling through at various time intervals to physically chalk tires and then return to issue citations for parking violations. Additionally, the City has three police vehicles equipped with Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras that can track parking duration. However, because City Code does not specify how far a vehicle must move to be considered reparked, and the ALPR location-detection capabilities are accurate to around 30 feet, the Mercer Island Municipal Court is currently unable to process parking citations generated using the ALPR cameras. This enforcement issue is intended to be addressed with the new ordinance.

Patrol officers assist with parking enforcement when the department receives complaints about unlawful parking and when capacity allows. Usually, the patrol officers respond to complaints of a blocked roadway, parking illegally in an accessible parking space, or violations of the 72-hours limit. Currently, patrol officers are limited in their ability to consistently enforce time-limited parking due to needing multiple touchpoints with the vehicle. The two-touch enforcement system (e.g. chalking tires) is labor intensive and inefficient.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

On March 18, 2025, the City Council directed staff to implement an on-street parking system in Town Center where a user would receive two hours of free parking upon registration with a mobile application ([AB 6603](#)). The City Council also directed staff to implement a parking program for the new Town Center Parking Area where a motorist would register their vehicle for two hours of free parking and have the option to extend their parking up to a fourteen hour maximum for a paid fee.

Ordinance No. 25C-03

Ordinance No. 25C-03 (Exhibit 1) would establish the framework for a parking payment and registration system. The ordinance would make the following changes to Chapter 10 of the Mercer Island Municipal Code.

- Adds a definition for ‘block’ and establishes that a vehicle may not repark on either side of the same block to extend the vehicle’s parking time beyond the time limits established.
- Adds a definition for a ‘parking payment device.’ If adopted, these changes will require the use of a mobile application to be implemented.
- Removes language that specifies parking restrictions on each block face and gives the City the authority to erect official signs that establish time limits.

Mobile Application

Implementing the parking payment/registration system will require the use of a mobile application. Staff recommend using ParkMobile for its mobile application. ParkMobile has a large presence in King County through Diamond Parking. On Mercer Island, the Island Square garage uses the Park Mobile app for parking registration.

For the on-street parking in Town Center, the City will incur a monthly subscription fee of \$500 for use of the ParkMobile system. This fee was provided for five years and will be subject to renegotiation. The annual costs for the on-street parking system will be covered by the revenue generated from the new Town Center Parking Area.

At the Town Center Parking Area, ParkMobile would not charge a transaction fee for the first two hours of free parking. Motorists would be charged the \$0.45 transaction fee when there is a paid parking session. There is no additional fee from ParkMobile for this area.

In addition, with the transition to Park Mobile in the Town Center, the City will transition the boat launch parking to this application as well.

Enforcement

Payment/registration data would be integrated with the City's existing enforcement software and the ALPR camera system. This means that an Officer would drive around Town Center and receive alerts when a vehicle has not registered to park or if they have overstayed their parking. In other words, the Officer would only need 'one touch' with vehicles parked illegally to issue a citation. The change to a parking payment/registration system would greatly increase the efficiency at which the Police Department can conduct parking enforcement, would support the work of the Police Support Officer (PSO), and allow patrol officers to more consistently participate in parking enforcement.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the City Council in May, for the second reading of Ordinance No. 25C-03. At this meeting, staff will also present a resolution that amends the Fee Schedule to establish the provision of free parking with registration and the rates for parking at the Town Center Parking Area. The resolution would make the following changes to the 2025 Fee Schedule.

- Establish that a user will receive two hours of free parking upon registering with the City's selected mobile application for the on-street parking in Town Center.
- Specify that a user will receive two hours of free parking upon registering with the City's selected mobile application at the Town Center Parking Area.
- Establish the rate of \$2.50 per hour for parking beyond two hours and the daily maximum rate of \$12.50 at the Town Center Parking Area.

Should Ordinance No. 25C-03 be adopted, staff will implement the new parking program for both the on-street parking in the Town Center and at the Town Center Parking Area.

Mobile Application

Staff will begin the implementation of a mobile application for the new parking program for the on-street parking and at the new Town Center Parking Area. Estimated time to launch is 60 days. Staff intend to switch

the mobile application at the Boat Launch to ParkMobile during this process.

Community Engagement & Outreach Campaign

Staff will implement a comprehensive outreach campaign to communicate the changes to the Town Center Parking regulations. Staff will attend community events, like Summer Celebration, to educate residents on the upcoming changes to Town Center and how to use the mobile application. Staff will also post updates on the [Town Center Parking Plan](#) Let's Talk page, provide outreach to the business community and the Chamber of Commerce, promote information on social media, and in the MI Weekly.

Parking Signage

The City will need to install new signage on most block faces in Town Center. Additional signage providing directions on how to register a vehicle using ParkMobile will be installed in the right-of-way by City crews as part of the signage update.

Revenue from Paid Parking

Staff recommend that revenue generated from the parking program at the new Town Center Parking Area first be directed to covering the costs of the mobile application for the on-street parking. Additional revenue from the paid parking area is recommended to be directed to support parking enforcement (equipment, signs, etc.) and this policy recommendation will be subject to City Council approval.

Parking Enforcement

Once implemented, it would be under the discretion of the Police Department to issue warnings before citations for violations of the new parking regulations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Schedule Ordinance No. 25C-03 for second reading and adoption in May 2025.