



# Repealing the Code of Ethics for Officials

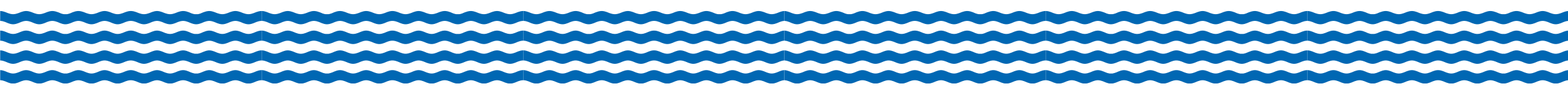
(Ordinance No. 24C-22, First Reading)

AB 6588 | December 3, 2024



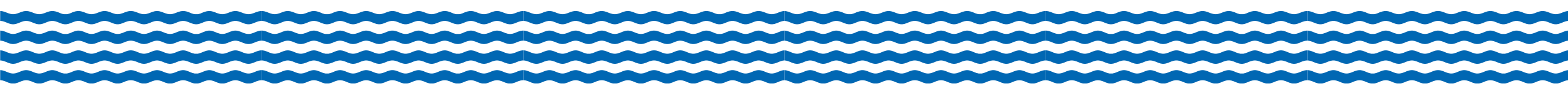
# Purpose

- To consider Ordinance No. 24C-22 to repeal Chapter 2.60 Mercer Island City Code (MICC) relating to the Code of Ethics for Officials and rely on state law to govern the conduct and ethics of officials
- “Official” includes all members of the city council, the City's boards and commissions, and other council-appointed task groups or committees of the City of Mercer Island.



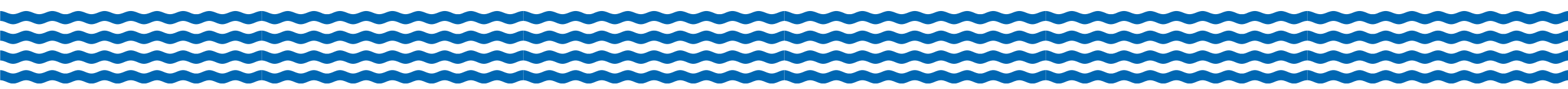
# Background

- In 2018, the City Council adopted a Code of Ethics providing guidance for members of the City Council and the City's boards and commissions ("Officials") in their roles with the City.
- In November 2019, the City Council requested amendments to the Code of Ethics, after the filing of complaints earlier that year led to issues with the process for reviewing and investigating complaints and determining disposition of violations.
- In 2021, the Code of Ethics was amended to further refine the process for responding to a complaint.



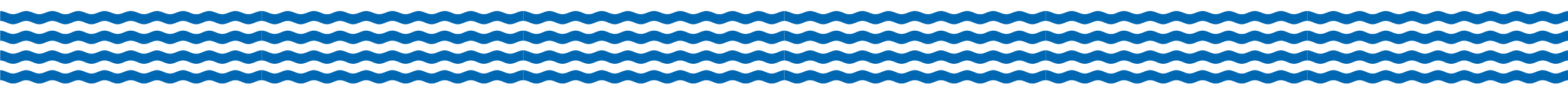
# State Law

- Title 42 RCW provides ethics and conflict of interest laws for public officers and agencies including:
  - Campaign disclosure and contribution (Chapter 42.17A RCW);
  - Misconduct of public officers (Chapter 42.20 RCW); and
  - Code of ethics for municipal officers – Contract interests (Chapter 42.23 RCW).
- Other state laws and the constitution prohibit conflicts of interest and unethical conduct of public officials.



# Issue

- The administration and enforcement of the code of ethics has become unreasonably costly and burdensome on the City.
- The code of ethics has been used to express mere disagreement with various officials' decisions where no actual ethics violation exists, which undermines the purpose and intent of Chapter 2.60 MICC.
- Because sufficient authority exists in state law to govern the conduct and ethics of public officials, the City has determined that Chapter 2.60 MICC should be repealed.



# Recommended Action

Set Ordinance No. 24C-22 for a second reading and adoption on January 7, 2025.

Or alternatively:

1. Suspend the City Council Rules of Procedure 6.3, requiring a second reading for an ordinance.
2. Adopt Ordinance No. 24C-22 repealing chapter 2.06 MICC, Code of Ethics

