

CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

2026 State Legislative Priorities



Support for Safe Use of E-Bikes and E-Motorcycles/E-Dirt Bikes

The City supports the use of regulatory and law enforcement strategies to promote the safe and appropriate use of e-bikes and e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes.

- Support for expanded State regulations to address the rising popularity of e-bikes and e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes among youth to ensure safe use while promoting sustainable transportation.
- Add a definition for e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes in state code. As e-motorcycles/e-dirt bikes are distinct from both e-bikes and traditional electric motorcycles, a clarifying statewide definition will ensure these emerging technologies are correctly classified and uniformly regulated to ensure public safety and responsible use.

Support for Public Safety

The City support law enforcement strategies that protect our community and businesses.

Priorities include:

- Create state funding for cities to adopt public safety technologies such as body worn cameras, automatic license plate readers, and evidence processing software systems.
- Increase state support and funding for indigent defense services to meet existing needs as well as the new lower caseload mandates ordered by the Washington Supreme Court. Enhance state support for increasing the indigent defense workforce with incentives and programs to encourage more public defenders.
- Review new funding tools created in HB 2015 to ensure that they are effective and accessible for communities of all sizes.

Increase Resources for Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Prevention

The City is a direct provider of behavioral health services through community- and school-based programs while also relying on regional public health infrastructure for specialized care and crisis response. Priorities include:

- Increased prevention and intervention resources targeting Fentanyl and other substances.
- Funding to expand community- and school-based mental health services for youth.
- Support continued and expanded operational grant funding, as well as dedicated ongoing operational funding for co-response, municipal therapeutic courts, community courts, and diversion programs.

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Support for Affordable Housing

The City champions a proactive stance on housing, using innovative tools and incentives to enhance housing supply and affordability. Priorities include:

- Growing State investment in affordable housing. Cities need new tools and incentives to meet the needs for affordable housing construction, operations, and preservation.
- Increase State investments and low-interest loans to strengthen local infrastructure such as sewer and water systems, which is essential for expanding affordable housing opportunities.
- Support continued partnership and investment with ARCH to build affordable housing throughout East King County. The City opposes unilateral state measures that would undermine this proven, coordinated local effort to increase access to safe shelter and housing across Washington communities.
- Cities need additional time from the state to implement recently adopted housing legislation before new requirements are added.

Balanced and Collaborative Approach to Wastewater Management

The City shares the state's commitment to protecting the health of the Puget Sound but has serious concerns with the Department of Ecology's current approach to nutrient regulation for municipal wastewater treatment plants. The proposed regulatory path would require costly facility upgrades, estimated in the billions statewide, and lead to significant increases in utility rates for Mercer Island residents. The City supports AWC's budget request to fund a collaborative, science-based process that engages all affected parties in developing a solution that safeguards the Puget Sound while remaining financially sustainable for ratepayers.

Preserving and Protecting the Environment

The City supports legislation, partnerships, and funding opportunities that advance the implementation of the City's adopted Climate Action Plan. This includes initiatives for clean energy, emissions reduction, electrification of public assets, and innovative practices that promote resilience and protect natural resources.