



City of Mercer Island, Washington
Commute Trip Reduction
4-Year Plan Update 2025-2029

City of Mercer Island Commute Trip Reduction Four-Year Plan Update 2025-2029

Benefits of CTR

1. Describe the local land use and transportation context and objectives

a. Describe the setting in the jurisdiction as it is today or will be in the near future

Mercer Island is situated on Lake Washington, with close proximity to Seattle to the west and Bellevue to the east. Incorporated in 1960, the Island is home to over 26,000 residents and includes Town Center to the north and a small commercial business district to the south. Mercer Island has historically been a residential community; most of the Island's approximately 6.2 square miles of land area is developed with single family homes.

The resident work force tends to be employed in high-wage jobs and is highly educated. Most people employed on Mercer Island commute from outside the City. In 2019, 87 percent of workers employed on Mercer Island lived outside the City. Only about 13 percent of workers employed in the City also live on Mercer Island. On the other hand, 91 percent of workers living on Mercer Island commuted to jobs outside the City in 2019.

b. Describe the features of land use and transportation facilities and services that affect commuters (focus on what exists now or will exist by 2029; draw on analysis in the comprehensive plan)

The Sound Transit Light Rail station is scheduled to open in 2025. Fourteen miles long, the entire East Link Extension includes ten stations from Seattle's International District to Judkins Park, across I-90 to Mercer Island and South Bellevue, and through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red area to Redmond Technology Station. The Sound Transit Light Rail station has the potential to be one of the most transformative transportation developments on Mercer Island since the construction of the first bridge to the Island.

Mercer Island is primarily a residential community. One multifamily development began construction in Summer 2024, but otherwise the City has not seen new multifamily developments in many years. The City is exploring options to increase density in the Town Center, adjacent to where the Sound Transit Light Rail station will open. The people who live in Town Center will have access to transit and alternate modes for their commute trips.

Riot Games, a prominent video game development company, relocated its US headquarters to Mercer Island in 2024. The company has stated that it plans to hire more than 400 new employees for the Mercer Island office. Although the City of Mercer Island is identified in WAC 468-63-020 (2) as a CTR-affected city, it has not had CTR-affected worksites in the past few years; the opening of the Riot Games office space will establish the first CTR-affected site on the Island in several years.

Moreover, many transportation improvement projects are focused on completing the infrastructure systems for all transportation modes, which will facilitate commuter access to non-drive alone modes. These projects include:

- Completing sidewalks and trails throughout the City.
 - Updating the Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities Plan.
 - Implementing complete streets treatments on street upgrade projects.
 - Improving connections for all modes to the light rail station.
- c. *Describe whether and how commuting patterns have changed in the past few years (what are the implications for CTR?)*

One of the changes prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic is the transition to more work-from-home options for commuters. The extent to which commuting workers will spend their workdays on-island instead of traveling to work off-island remains unclear. What seems increasingly likely is that workers will commute less often than they did before the pandemic. Changes in commuting could lead to new demand for different services in the City's commercial areas or increased demand for existing services.

Moreover, Mercer Island has been affected by a decrease in service from King County's Metro transit due to a lack of bus drivers. Residents have experienced less frequent bus routes than in previous years.

The implications for CTR from these changes include:

- The increase in remote work means a reduction in commute trips, a goal of the CTR program.
 - The changes in bus service have made bus service around the Island less reliable, meaning workers are more likely to drive alone than to take transit.
- d. *List the most important land use and transportation objectives from your city or county's plans that commute trip reduction most directly affects.*
- Support the development and preservation of income-restricted housing that is within walking distance of planned or existing high-capacity transit, promotion of bicycle and pedestrian networks, completion of the multi-modal infrastructure systems, and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions are well supported by the CTR program.
 - Create a mixed-use Town Center with pedestrian scale and connections. A walkable mixed-use core should be located adjacent to a regional transit facility and be of sufficient size and intensity to create a focus for Mercer Island.
 - Be convenient and accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists. Town Center streets should provide for safe and convenient multi-modal access to existing and future development in the Town Center.
 - 77th Avenue SE should serve as the primary bicycle corridor connecting the regional bicycle network along I-90 and the planned light rail station with Mercerdale Park and the rest of the Island south of the Town Center.
 - Encourage improved access to transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and shared parking facilities to reduce trip generation and provide transportation alternatives, particularly for secondary trips once users reach the Town Center.
 - Prioritize Town Center transportation investments that promote multi-modal access to regional transit facilities.
- e. *Describe critical aspects of land use and transportation that should be sustained and key changes that should be considered to improve commute trip reduction's contribution to the land use and transportation objectives you reference.*

The City should accelerate land use and transportation improvements to meet sustainability, livability, and economic development goals. Increases in density of new housing and the capital improvement projects to build out multi-modal networks are going the right direction to support commute trip reduction. The City is continuing to develop a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities plan. The plan, which was originally approved in 1996 and updated in 2010, guides investments and other actions related to the Island's trails, crosswalks, bike lanes and sidewalks. In 2024, the City received a grant to update this plan.

An example of this work is the multi-year road shoulder upgrade program covering the entire perimeter of Mercer Island, that provides space for bicycles and pedestrians along East, West and North Mercer Way streets. The projects outlined in this plan are constructed as budget allows and based on Council priorities.

2. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction's land use and transportation objectives

- a. Describe how and to what extent your CTR program will help your city or county achieve the land use and transportation objectives reference in question 1.*

The CTR program, and the City's focus on increasing housing density and completing the multi-modal networks are mutually reinforcing. By encouraging people to commute via non-drive-alone modes the CTR program supports the market for higher density housing close to transit and the demand for multi-modal networks. In turn, the higher density housing near transit and the multi-modal networks offer more opportunities for people to commute via non-drive-alone modes.

3. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction's environmental objectives.

- a. Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction greenhouse gas reduction efforts.*

Mercer Island's [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP), adopted in 2023, outlines several environmental objectives and goals for the City to achieve by 2030, 2040, and 2050. In the CAP, the City has targets for reducing community and municipal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including a 50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. As of 2022, transportation accounted for 43% of community GHG emissions in the City, revealing a major focus for the City's efforts to meet its reduction goals. A specific action in the CAP is to increase CTR participation and incentives, and to encourage Mercer Island employers to offer work from home and flexible work schedules for employees to reduce drive alone trips, and thus GHG emissions.

- b. Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction environmental objectives in addition to greenhouse gas emissions reductions.*

As stated in the CAP, some of Mercer Island's environmental objectives include:

- Reduce overall community and municipal GHG emissions, integrate climate considerations into City reporting and decision-making, and encourage community members to participate in local climate action.
- Reduce GHG emissions from transportation by transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs), expanding multimodal transportation options, and improving cycling and pedestrian networks.

- Foster climate resilient natural landscape by protecting vital habitats, ecosystems, and conserving water resources.

Moreover, as drive-alone trips shift to transit, rideshare, and non-motorized options, the demand for new roadways decreases and more land area can be left in a natural, unbuilt state which helps preserve vital habitats and the Island's tree canopy. Reducing the number of gas-powered vehicles on the roads of Mercer Island also improves the local air quality.

4. Describe how your CTR program will help achieve regional and state objectives.

- Summarize the local, regional, and state benefits that would be gained if you achieve your CTR targets.*

[Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation Plan](#)

Goal: For a clean, integrated multimodal system for a rapidly growing region.

Objectives:

- Move people and goods.
- Improve air and water quality.
- Achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.
- Strengthen the region's economy.
- Advance equity.
- Invest in neighborhoods.
- Foster innovation.

[WA State CTR Draft Plan](#)

Objectives:

- Improve delivery of CTR programs.
- Expand CTR market to address equity.
- Produce more useful transportation behavior data.
- Expand investment and service to advance equity and environmental justice. • Respond to shifting mobility patterns.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Summary of benefits:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions: The state and region both have the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Each commute trip that is shifted to a non-drive alone mode through the City's CTR program reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Advance equity: By focusing particular attention on the Russian Community neighborhood and the northeast neighborhood (Pacific Islanders concentration) the City's CTR program is redressing past neglect and bringing these neighborhoods up to par with the rest of the City thereby advancing equity, which is a goal of the region and the state.
- Improve delivery of CTR programs: The **emphasis** in the capital improvement plan on building out non-motorized network infrastructure will improve connections for all modes of travel. This in turn will make all the CTR actions more productive and easier to deliver. This aligns with the region's and state's CTR goals.
- Foster interagency collaboration: The requirements of the CTR program to consider state, regional and adjacent community goals naturally foster interagency collaboration which, in turn,

yields a more integrated and robust multimodal transportation system that better meets the travel needs of all citizens.

b. List adjacent CTR-affected cities and counties.

- Seattle, WA
- Bellevue, WA
- Kirkland, WA
- Redmond, WA
- King County, WA

c. Describe the top few cross-border and regional transportation issues that affect your jurisdiction.

By 2050, the Puget Sound region will grow by another 1.6 million people, the equivalent of another two Seattles. In 2023, Seattle had the second worst congestion and third worst traffic in the country. The average Seattle-area driver spent 58 hours in traffic delays in 2023, a 12-hour increase from 2022. The worst congestion in the area is on the major freeways, including I-5, I-90, I-405, and SR-520.

The Puget Sound region's regular transit system is built upon the backbone of an extensive bus transit system with an expanding high-capacity transit system. However, the region currently struggles to connect the suburban cities with the Seattle and Bellevue city centers via transit.

d. Describe the strategies you, adjacent cities and counties, and your region have agreed to use to address the top issues described in the previous bullet (projected changes in transportation system performance, projected reductions in emissions of pollutants, projected reductions in energy consumption, and projected benefits for economic development).

- The City of Mercer Island is a member of the Eastside Transportation Partnership whose goals are:
 - Develop and adopt a package of transportation priorities based on adopted land use plans that improve overall mobility for people, freight and goods, and addressing peak hour congestion on the Eastside.
 - Jointly implement adopted priorities through leadership, education, and advocacy within communities, cities and the region.
 - Adopt and implement a strategy for increasing funding for transportation improvements and programs.
- Connectivity: The City is working with King County Metro and Sound Transit to expand transit and travel choices, thus completing a multimodal transportation network.
- Transit oriented development: Locating most of the new growth near transit leverages the region's investment in regular transit and provides new opportunities for nonmotorized access. Ensuring that long-term affordable housing is incorporated into transit-oriented communities will help to ensure that people with low incomes, people with disabilities and others who experience mobility challenges have easy access to the high-capacity transit system

Performance Targets

5. List your jurisdictions CTR performance target(s)

- a. *List performance targets that reflect only CTR-affected worksites*

Weighted average drive-alone rate of 60 percent or less for CTR-affected worksites at the jurisdictional level.

- b. *List any additional performance targets.*

None.

6. List the base value you'll use for each performance target.

- a. *For each performance target, provide the number you'll use as the baseline. You'll measure the difference between this number and your results to report performance.*

Performance targets will be tied to the CTR survey. As the City did not have a CTR affected worksite until mid-2024, the City will establish a base value during the 2025-2027 survey cycle and measure progress using 2027-2029 survey results.

7. Describe the method you used to determine the base value for each target.

- a. *Provide the source for each base value listed.*

Performance targets will be tied to the CTR survey. As the City did not have a CTR affected worksite until mid-2024, the City will establish a base value during the 2025-2027 survey cycle and measure progress using 2027-2029 survey results.

8. Describe how you'll measure progress toward each target.

- a. *List the method you'll use to measure progress for each target (CTR survey).*

The City will measure progress using 2027-2029 survey results.

9. List your jurisdictions CTR-affected worksites.

Riot Games and City of Mercer Island

10. List a performance target for each CTR-affected worksites.

Base year performance targets will be established during the 2025-2027 survey cycle.

11. List the base value you will use for each site.

Base year performance targets will be established during the 2025-2027 survey cycle.

Services and Strategies

12. Describe the services and strategies your jurisdiction will use to achieve CTR targets.

- a. *Strategies may include: modifications of local policies and regulations, investments in services and facilities, and marketing and incentives.*

The City is pursuing the following actions alongside its CTR program.

- Promote commute options at wellness fairs, sustainability fairs, and other employee engagement events.
- Update the Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities Plan in 2026.
- Implement First/Last Mile strategies including:
 - Deploy additional bike racks in Town Center.
 - Consider future infrastructure needs like electric vehicle charging, e-bike charging and bike lockers.
- Manage the on-street parking supply and ensure parking is available for commuters leaving Mercer Island.
 - Increase the parking citation fee to promote turnover of parking spaces in Town Center.
 - Implement an on-street parking system in Town Center where a motorist would register their vehicle for 2-hours of free parking and have the option to extend this parking up to 4-hours for a paid fee by Q4 2025.
 - Construction and opening of the Commuter Parking Project that will create ~40 parking spaces adjacent to the future light rail station.
- Explore options and impacts for allowing and encouraging development project applicants to submit a proactive Transportation Demand Management plan outlining steps to reduce vehicle trips and subsequent parking demand and/or spread those trips across larger time frames as a means of reducing peak roadway demands.
- Work with King County Metro to offer additional services to accommodate the arrival of Riot Games on the Island and to support City staff traveling to and from facilities.

13. Describe how jurisdiction services and strategies will support CTR affected employers.

- Increasing number of transit stops and optimizing locations of new transit stops to support CTR affected worksites would reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles.
- Ensuring that people commuting from Town Center have the ability to park their vehicle once would encourage them to take transit.
- Implementing a parking registration/payment will encourage people to find other means of traveling to Town Center.

14. Describe the barriers your jurisdiction must address to achieve CTR targets.

- a. *Describe how you'll address these barriers.*

Transit service: the City is limited by the number of transit routes that service the Island.

- Addressing by working with King County Metro to provide bus service near affected sites to have more connections to the future light rail station.

Non-motorized access is incomplete: City employees have limited access for non-motorized modes to report to their duty station due to gaps in the non-motorized infrastructure networks (sidewalks, trails, bikeways, safe crossings.)

- Addressing by prioritizing non-motorized infrastructure in the Capital Improvement Plan and updating the Pedestrian Bike Plan.

15. Describe the transportation demand management technologies your jurisdiction plans to use to deliver CTR services and strategies.

- Ordinances and development conditions.
- Incentives for transit and alternate modes.
- Disincentives for driving, like managing the parking supply and implementing paid parking.

16. Link to your local CTR ordinance.

[Mercer Island City Code Chapter 10.71 - COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION \(CTR\) PLAN](#)

17. Describe your financial plan.

a. Describe the estimated average costs of your plan.

Activity	Estimated Average Annual Cost
Administration*	\$15,650

* Includes financial and program management; CTR for City employees; involvement in comprehensive, regional transportation, and transit planning; transportation demand management technical assistance to capital projects.

b. Describe likely funding sources, public and private, to implement your plan.

Source of Revenue	Estimated Average Annual Revenue
WSDOT	\$15,650

Because the City of Mercer Island was not included in the 2023-2025 Funding Formula, for funding to be awarded from WSDOT, a few actions that would have to occur first including, but not limited to:

- The City of Mercer Island would need to survey Riot Games, and the results of the survey data would impact funding.
- The TDM Technical Committee would need to add Mercer Island to the 2025-2029 Funding Formula (Mercer Island is not included in the 2023-2025 Funding Formula.)
- WSDOT and the City of Mercer Island would need to execute a CTR grant contract.

18. Describe your implementation structure.

a. Describe who will conduct the activities listed in your plan.

The Sustainability Program Manager in the Public Works department is the CTR Program Administrator for the City of Mercer Island. Activities listed in this plan will involve the collaboration of various departments, including Public Works, Finance, the City Manager’s Office, and Police.

b. Indicate who will monitor progress on your plan. List job title, department, and name.

The Sustainability Program Manager in the Public Works department is the CTR Program Administrator for the City of Mercer Island.

19. List your implementation schedule.

a. Provide the timeline for anticipated projects.

	1st Biennium July 2025- June 2027	2nd Biennium July 2027-June 2029
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide commute and other employee transportation coordinator services to City employees. • Identify worksites and employee transportation coordinators. • Train and provide technical assistance to employee transportation coordinators. • Review employer CTR plans. • Assure conduct of worksite surveys and provision of program reports. • Conduct financial and program management. • Engage in comprehensive, regional transportation, and transit planning. • Provide transportation demand management technical assistance to capital projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide commute and other employee transportation coordinator services to City employees. • Identify worksites and employee transportation coordinators. • Train and provide technical assistance to employee transportation coordinators. • Review employer CTR plans. • Assure conduct of worksite surveys and provision of program reports. • Conduct financial and program management. • Engage in comprehensive, regional transportation, and transit planning. • Provide transportation demand management technical assistance to capital projects. • Undertake development activities for 2029-2033 four-year CTR plans.

20. Describe the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees.

a. Describe the services, programs, information, and other actions your city or county put in place to help its employees reduce their drive alone commute trips.

The Sustainability Program Manager in the Public Works department is the CTR Program Administrator for the City of Mercer Island, and thus also serves as the employee transportation coordinator for the City in its role as a CTR-affected site.

The Sustainability Program Manager administers the program elements required of the employer including:

- Regular distribution of information to employees regarding alternatives to single-occupant vehicle commuting.

- A regular review of employee commuting and reporting of progress toward meeting the single occupant vehicle reduction goals to the City consistent with the method established in the commute trip reduction plan and the rules established by the department of transportation under RCW 70A.15.4060.
- Implementation of the following measures designed to achieve the City’s commute trip reduction goals:
 - Administer CTR surveys and report results to the City Council and City leadership.
 - Produce City of Mercer Island program report.
 - Serve as commuter advisor to employees.
 - Publicize promotional challenges and campaigns.
 - Provide briefings to various employee groups on the program and its benefits.

21. Describe how the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees contributes to the success of the overall plan.

a. Describe how the plan for jurisdiction employees reinforces the success of the jurisdiction plan.

The actions included in the City of Mercer Island CTR plan indicate the City’s commitment and are similar to those included in all the CTR-affected work site plans. Thus, they create a mutually reinforcing community focused on CTR. Employers know that the City is involved and committed to CTR along with them. The City connects with employee transportation coordinators and foster relationships through sharing experiences and best practices, providing a place for mutual problem solving and support. This strengthens the program at all affected sites in the City.

Alignment with Plans

22. List the transit agencies the provide service in your jurisdiction.

- King County Metro
- Sound Transit

23. List the transit plans you review while developing this plan.

- Puget Sound Regional Council - 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan
- Sound Transit - Transit Development Plan 2023-2028 and 2022 Annual Report
- King County Metro - Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031

24. Describe how this CTR plan support the transit plans.

- Employer engagement and promotion: Increases use of transit through awareness and increased availability of subsidized transit passes.
- Marketing: Makes people more aware of transit options.
- Engagement in the planning process: Increases awareness of and support for transit and other travel modes

25. Describe any comprehensive plan updates that are needed and when they will be made.

Mercer Island is in the process of updating and adopting the Comprehensive Plan. All known changes have been included in this update.

Engagement

26. Describe stakeholder engagement.

a. Who did you talk to?

City staff created a Commute Trip Reduction [webpage](#) on its community engagement platform, Let's Talk, to engage the broader Mercer Island community. Moreover, the City sent the Commute Trip Reduction 4-Year Plan to Riot Games, the only CTR-affected worksite on the Island, as well as Sound Transit and King County Metro.

b. When did you talk to them?

The engagement platform for the Commute Trip Reduction 4-Year Plan was open for six weeks, between September 20 and October 31, 2024.

c. What did they have to say?

- Creating safe bicycle infrastructure and making bike commuting to the Mercer Island Town Center should be prioritized.
- Other communities around Lake Washington are investing in improving their non-automobile infrastructure, including access to light rail. Mercer Island needs to join in this effort to reduce automobile commuting trips.

d. How did what they said influence the plan?

City staff are considering ways to address the barriers for Mercer Island residents to get to and from public transportation and how these solutions would intersect with the commuting needs of Riot Games.

27. Describe the vulnerable populations considered.

City staff considered the following populations when creating this plan:

- Senior and elderly population, particularly seniors living alone,
- People with disabilities,
- Immigrant and new immigrant communities, and
- Youth.

Older adults are a large share of the Mercer Island population. 27% of the population was 60 years or older in 2022. 33% of people 65 and older live alone on Mercer Island. Elderly residents on Mercer Island face isolation, exacerbated by the pandemic and a need for transportation options.

Moreover, Mercer Island is experiencing a shift in its population demographics, with notable growth in diversity, particularly in the Asian population and individuals identifying with multiple races. From 2017 to 2022 there was a 36% increase in the foreign-born population. The largest increase was in residents from Asia, with a small increase in those from Europe. As Mercer Island's population changes, there has been a notable shift in the share of residents speaking only English at home from 81% in 2010 to 76% in 2022.

Finally, in affluent communities such as Mercer Island, the challenges for students who are not as financially privileged are heightened. Over the past eight academic years, the number of students from households with low incomes has increased in the Mercer Island School District even as total student enrollment has dropped. Roughly 7% of Mercer Island youth (i.e., residents under the age of 19) are with Medicaid or other means-tested public coverage

28. Describe engagement focused on vulnerable populations.

a. Who did you talk to?

- Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS), who primarily serve residents with lower incomes with acute needs.
- Seniors Living Alone on Mercer Island

b. When did you talk to them?

- City staff met with representatives from MIYFS on October 1, 2024.
- MIYFS staff sent information about the 4-Year Plan via email to the Living Alone group and mentioned it at their monthly meeting on October 8, 2024.

c. What did they have to say?

- On Mercer Island, the public transportation system is very limited. The existing transit service is focused on the Town Center area and transporting people on/off I-90. Vulnerable populations have a difficult time accessing the transit system. The bus routes only go through the center of the Island. The Island is not always walkable due to hills and lack of sidewalks. More people on the Island would utilize public transportation if they had means to get to/from the bus stops.
- Island residents anticipate that the lack of on-Island transit and the anticipation that the Park & Ride will be full for anyone who is not part of a workday commute will limit the ability for people to use the Sound Transit Light Rail when it opens.
- For older adults to use public transportation, restrooms need to be available for use. Not having restrooms available presents a large barrier for seniors.
- There is an expressed need from Chinese adult parents for resources in Mandarin for their older adult parents, as existing resources are inaccessible due to language barriers.

d. How did what they said influence the plan?

City staff are considering ways to address the barriers for Mercer Island residents to get to and from public transportation and how these solutions would intersect with the commuting needs of Riot Games.

29. List employers suggestions to make CTR more effective.

Riot Games did not provide suggestions to make CTR more effective.

30. Describe the results of engagement focused on vulnerable populations that will be provided for use in comprehensive plan and transit plan updates.

- On Mercer Island, the public transportation system is very limited. The existing transit service is focused on the Town Center area and transporting people on/off I-90. Vulnerable populations have a difficult time accessing the transit system. The bus routes only go through the center of the Island. The Island is not always walkable due to hills and lack of sidewalks. More people on the Island would utilize public transportation if they had means to get to/from the bus stops.
- Island residents anticipate that the lack of on-Island transit and the anticipation that the Park & Ride will be full for anyone who is not part of a workday commute will limit the ability for people to use the Sound Transit Light Rail when it opens.