



AGENDA
DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
City Council Chambers
21630 11th Avenue S, Suite C
Des Moines, Washington
Thursday, May 21, 2026 - 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PROCLAMATIONS

- Item 1. **National Public Works Week Proclamation - 5 Minutes**
Motion: "I move to approve the proclamation recognizing the week of May 17-23, 2026 as National Public Works Week."

CORRESPONDENCE NOT PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

REGIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

CITY MANAGER REPORT/PRESENTATIONS/BRIEFINGS

- Item 1. **Presentation by Nelson\ Nygaard on the Findings from the Ferry Pilot Evaluation and Alternatives - 40 Minutes**
- Item 2. **Website Update - 30 Minutes**
Staff Presentation:
Bonnie Wilkins, Director of Administrative Services
- Item 3. **Update on SB6002 Implementation - 10 Minutes**
Staff Presentation:
Ted Boe, Police Chief
- Item 4. **Recology Annual Update - 30 Minutes**
Staff Presentation:
Tyler Beekley, Surface Water/Environmental Engineer

CONSENT AGENDA

- Item 1. **Approval of Vouchers**
Motion: "I move to approve the payment vouchers through May 6th in the attached list and further described as follows:"

EFT Vendor Payments	#13583 - #13639	\$1,459,672.46
Wires	#13583 - #13639	\$631,678.39

Total Checks and Wires for A/P:	\$2,091,350.85
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- Item 2. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion: "I move to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2026, City Council meeting."
- Item 3. **Des Moines Farmer's Market 2026-2028 Agreement**
Motion: "I move to authorize the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market to conduct the Farmers Market at the Des Moines Marina during the 2026, 2027, and 2028 market seasons, including the Holiday Market, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement substantially in the form as attached."
- Item 4. **Resolution Acknowledging Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update**
Motion: "I move to pass Draft Resolution No. 26-044, Acknowledging the City of Des Moines' Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update Requirements Under the Washington State Growth Management Act."
- Item 5. **North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project Condemnation**
Motion: "I move to pass Draft Ordinance No. 26-045 to a second reading to consider directing the City Attorney to prosecute the eminent domain action in King County Superior Court in a manner provided by law to condemn, take, damage and appropriate real property."

NEW BUSINESS

- Item 1. **Residential Conversions Ordinance - 1st Reading - 20 Minutes**
Staff Presentation:
Rebecca Deming, Community Development Director
Motion: "I move to pass Draft Ordinance No. 26-035 to a second reading on June 11, 2026."
- Item 2. **Resolution No. 26-050, City of Des Moines Opportunity Zone Application - 5 Minutes**
Staff Presentation:
Rebecca Deming, Community Development Director
Motion: "I move to pass Draft Resolution No. 26-050, expressing support for the city's Opportunity Zone application to the Washington State Department of Commerce and authorizing the Community Development Director to submit the application."

Item 3. **New Agenda Items for Consideration - 10 Minutes**

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

(4 minutes per Councilmember) - 30 minutes

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NEXT MEETING DATE

June 04, 2026 Committee of the Whole and Study Session

ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public who wish to provide comment during the meeting via Zoom must register in advance. To register, please email cityclerk@desmoineswa.gov by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Wednesday before the meeting.

City Council meeting can be viewed live on the City's website, Comcast Channel 21/321, on the City's [YouTube](#) channel or via [Zoom](#).

[Projected Future Agenda Item](#)

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA**

SUBJECT: National Public Works Week Proclamation - 5 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. National Public Works Week Proclamation

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Administration

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 11, 2026

CLEARANCES:

City Clerk

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is to recognize the week of May 17-23, 2026 as National Public Works Week.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to approve the proclamation recognizing the week of May 17-23, 2026 as National Public Works Week."

Background

The year 2026 marks the 66th Annual National Public Works Week, sponsored by the American Public Works Association. This observance recognizes and celebrates the dedicated public works professionals, engineers, managers, and employees who play a vital role in protecting public health and safety and enhancing the quality of life for the residents of Des Moines.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, public works professionals focus on infrastructure, facilities, and services that are of vital importance to sustainable and resilient communities and to public health, high quality of life, and well-being of the people of **Des Moines**; and,

WHEREAS, these infrastructure, facilities, and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals, who are engineers, managers, and employees at all levels of government and the private sector, who are responsible for rebuilding, improving, and protecting our nation's transportation, water supply, water treatment and solid waste systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities essential for our citizens; and,

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest for the citizens, civic leaders, and children in **Des Moines** to gain knowledge of and maintain an ongoing interest and understanding of the importance of public works and public works programs in their respective communities; and,

WHEREAS, the year 2026 marks the 66th annual National Public Works Week sponsored by the American Public Works Association/Canadian Public Works Association,

NOW THEREFORE, THE DES MOINES COUNCIL HEREBY PROCLAIMS the week of May 17–23, 2026, as National Public Works Week. The Council urges all citizens to join with representatives of the American Public Works Association and government agencies in activities, events, and ceremonies designed to pay tribute to our public works professionals, engineers, managers, and employees and to recognize the substantial contributions they make to protecting our national health, safety, and advancing quality of life for all.

SIGNED this 21st day of May, 2026

Yoshiko Grace Matsui

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Presentation by Nelson\ Nygaard on the Findings from the Ferry Pilot Evaluation and Alternatives - 40 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Nelson Nygaard Ferry Report
2. Des Moines Ferry Pilot Evaluation PowerPoint

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Administration

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 11, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this item is for the City Council to receive the final report from Nelson \ Nygaard regarding the Ferry Pilot Evaluation and Alternatives market analysis as part of the Washington State Department of Commerce grant.

Background

On October 24, 2024, the City Council accepted a \$160,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce to fund a Community Engagement Study, an Economic and Environmental Analysis Study, and an evaluation of secondary transportation options related to potential Electric Water Taxi service between Des Moines and downtown Seattle, as well as other possible routes.

At the October 23, 2025 City Council meeting, Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding with King County Metro regarding the sharing of work products generated through the grant. At the same meeting, Council authorized a contract with Nelson\Nygaard to review prior ferry and transit planning efforts, evaluate transportation demand and the 2022 Ferry Pilot program, conduct community and stakeholder engagement, analyze potential transportation alternatives and impacts, and develop recommendations regarding the feasibility and implementation of regular ferry service in Des Moines.

Discussion

Nelson\Nygaard completed a comprehensive market and transportation analysis evaluating the feasibility of potential passenger ferry service from Des Moines within the

broader context of regional mobility and transit connectivity. The work included reviewing prior ferry and transit studies, analyzing regional travel patterns and demographic data, evaluating the 2022 Ferry Pilot Program, assessing existing and planned transit investments, and identifying potential transportation markets and alternatives. The study also included extensive stakeholder and community engagement, including interviews with regional transportation agencies, City representatives, business and community stakeholders, focus groups, and a public survey designed to better understand transportation challenges, travel patterns, and interest in future ferry service.

The analysis found that Des Moines demonstrates meaningful underlying transit demand and strong regional travel connections to areas such as SeaTac, Kent, Auburn, and SoDo. However, the study concluded that current travel patterns and ridership demand do not support operationally sustainable passenger ferry service between Des Moines and downtown Seattle at this time. The report notes that relatively few trips occur between the Des Moines Marina area and downtown Seattle, while existing regional transit investments—particularly Sound Transit’s Link light rail system and the Kent-Des Moines Station—already provide competitive and frequent connections to Seattle and other major destinations. The study further concluded that while future ferry service could become more viable over time as the Marina and surrounding waterfront continue to evolve as a regional destination, substantial development, sustained demand growth, and significant ongoing subsidy would likely be necessary to support long-term ferry operations.

The report attached to this item is a draft, and will be updated following the Council presentation and once final public engagement results are concluded. Representatives from Nelson\Nygaard will attend the meeting to present the study findings, review the primary takeaways and recommendations, and answer questions from the Council.

Financial Impact

The study was funded 100% by a Washington State Department of Commerce grant.



May 2026

Des Moines Ferry Pilot Evaluation

City Council Presentation

Project Team



Greg Nordin
Project Manager



Tim Payne
Project Advisor



Ian Kolesinskas
Deputy Project Manager



Dan Eernisse
Eernisse Consulting



Today's Agenda

- 1 Introductions
- 2 Project Scope
- 3 Market Analysis
- 4 Ferry Pilot Evaluation
- 5 Engagement
- 6 Recommendations and Alternatives





Project Scope

Des Moines Ferry Pilot Study Background

- Background
 - Ferry pilot operated between August 10 and October 9, 2022
 - WA Dept of Commerce Grant awarded in October 2024
 - Contract for this study approved in December 2025
- Three components of Study
 1. Evaluation of ferry pilot and market analysis (this study)
 2. Public engagement through stakeholder interviews, online survey, and focus groups (in process)
 3. Economic development impacts (in development by BERK)
- Goals of the study
 - Encourage City public transportation partnerships
 - Assist King County Metro Marine Division service evaluation
 - Strengthen future City grant applications

Overview of Study Process

Market Analysis

- Provides insight into the demand for public transportation in Des Moines



Ferry Pilot Evaluation

- Evaluates the performance of the 2022 Ferry Pilot connecting Des Moines and Seattle



Stakeholder Engagement

- Interviews with major stakeholders and the Des Moines community



Recommendations and Alternatives

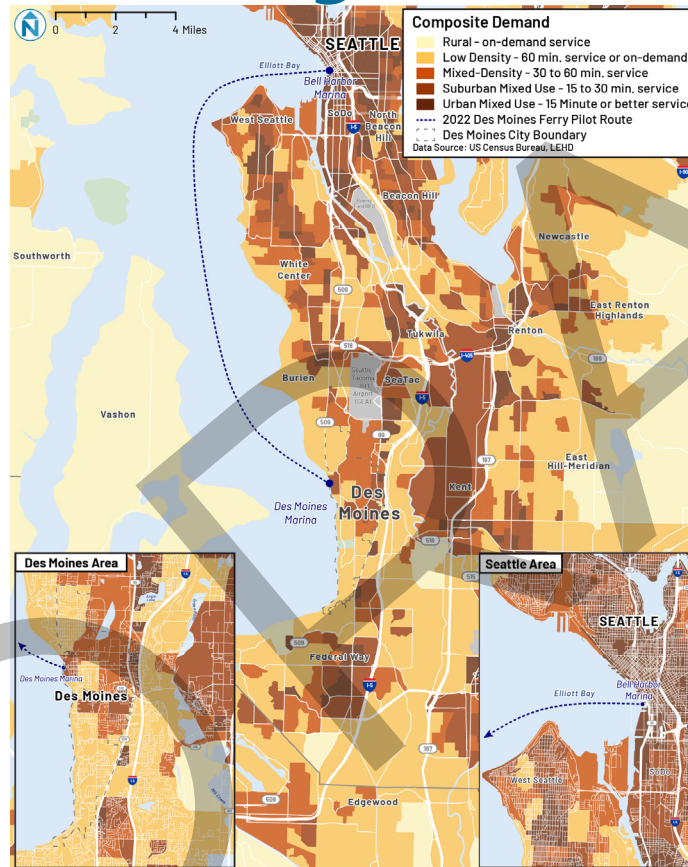
- Identifies clear strategies for advancing improved mobility outcomes



Market Analysis

Understanding the Propensity for Public Transportation Usage

- Population Density
- Job Density
- Demographic analysis
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Vehicle ownership
 - Country of origin
 - Household income



- This map demonstrates that a demand for public transportation exists within Des Moines, even if those needs are not currently met.
- If meaningful transit connections to popular destinations are provided, it is likely that these services would be well-utilized.
- Latent demand only translates to ridership when service design reflects
 - Where people want to go
 - When they want to go there, and
 - The experience is as convenient and affordable as other options.

Regional Travel Flow Analysis

- Travel to/from Des Moines by hour
 - Commuter patterns
 - Non-work patterns
- Regional destinations tend to be focused in southern King County with major destinations identified as:
 - Southcenter
 - SeaTac
 - Kent
 - Federal Way
 - Auburn
- Non-commute trips occur at a rate that is 4-6 times greater than commute trips, and occur throughout the day, not just during peak travel periods

Top Regional Travel Flows

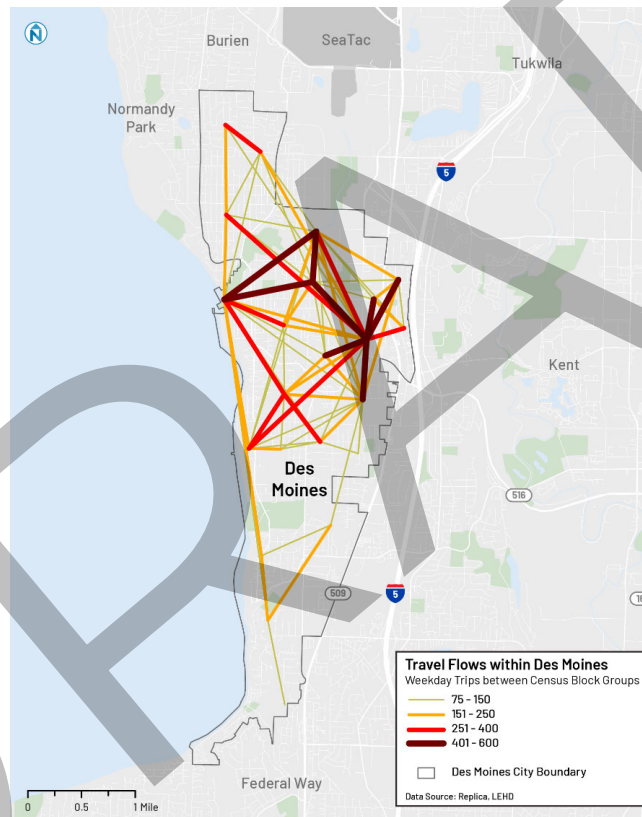


Local Travel Flow Analysis

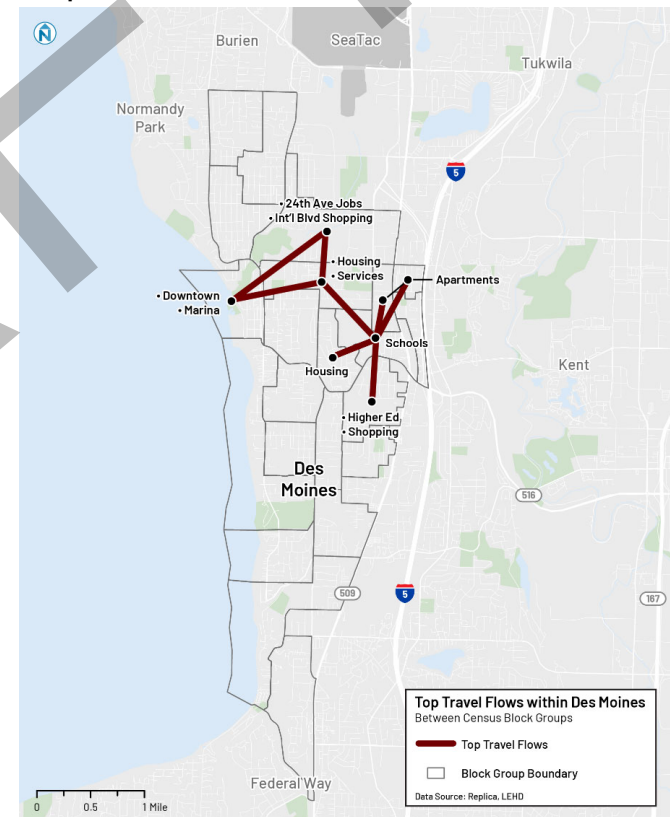
Key local destinations include

- Highline College
- Mount Rainier High School
- Downtown Des Moines
- Marina

All Local Travel Flows



Top Local Travel Flows



Major Findings

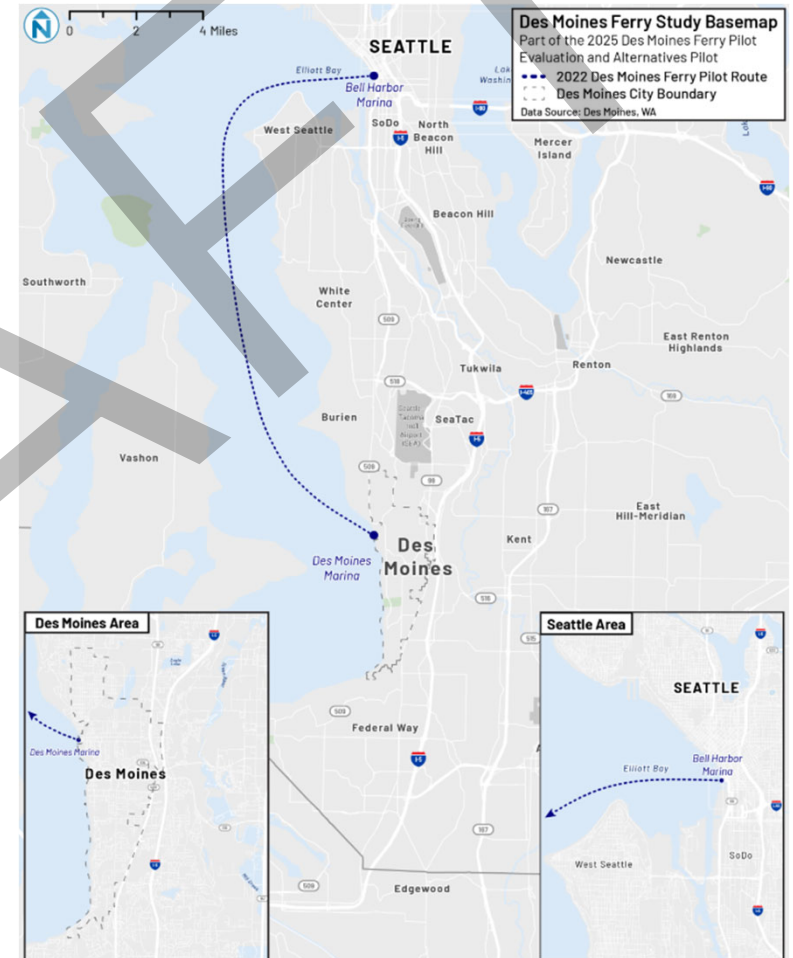
- The underlying market for a ferry connection between Des Moines Marina and Bell Harbor Marina in Seattle is limited.
 - While Seattle itself is a major travel market, fewer than 50 trips per day occur between the Des Moines Marina area and within ½-mile of Bell Harbor Marina
 - Indicates travels will require first/last-mile connections that will make ferry less attractive for most travelers
 - Commuter travel is primarily oriented towards major employment centers that are inland and is focused during peak travel periods.
 - Non-work travel tends to be more local and distributed throughout the day.
 - This indicates that any transit solution will need to include service hours across the entire day.



Ferry Pilot Evaluation

Des Moines Ferry Pilot

- Operated between August 10 and October 9, 2022
 - Prior to the expansion of ST's Link Line 1 extension
- 5 days per week (Wednesday-Sunday)
- 4 round trips per day
 - 10:00 AM – first departure to Seattle
 - 5:00 PM – last departure to Des Moines
- \$10 per one-way trip
 - Discounted fares for seniors and military
 - Youth under 13 rode free



Ferry Pilot Outcomes

- 16,996 boardings in total over the duration of the pilot
 - ~375 average daily boardings
- \$89,456 total fare revenue
- Total operating cost between \$793,676-\$976,936* for pilot duration
- Cost per trip: \$2,205
- Cost per passenger: \$46.70
- Revenue per passenger: \$6.28

*variance in total cost due to contracted expenses across multiple projects. Some cost can be attributed to the ferry pilot, but this amount is undetermined.

From the Ferry Pilot Evaluation

Pilot demonstrated demand for passenger-only ferry service between Des Moines and downtown Seattle, but the observed demand is unlikely to translate to long-term sustainable ridership.

- Primary travel purpose was identified as leisure travel
 - Consistent ferry usage would be limited without expanding service to meet commuter needs
- Ferry pilot also operated during time of year advantageous for ferry travel
 - Demand may be limited during off-peak months and during inclement weather
 - Boating season begins first weekend in May
- Limited duration and promotional fare period may have induced demand
 - Modal novelty may not sustain ridership if introduced permanently

From the Ferry Pilot Evaluation

- Competitive travel times are hindered by more expensive cost and long wait times between trips
 - Link Line 1 service operates every 8 minutes with \$3.00 fare, providing highly-frequent, cost-effective regional connections
- With a total operating cost of \$976,936 and total revenues of \$89,456, fares would need to be set at \$40 per one-way trip for the ferry service to have been self-sustaining
 - Ridership levels are unlikely to be sustained at this fare, indicating ferry is unlikely to be financially self-sustaining under current market



Engagement

Stakeholders Interviews

INTERVIEWED 17 STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

City of Des Moines

- Community Development
- City Manager
- Des Moines Marina
- Public Works
- Administrative Services

Chamber of Commerce

King County Metro

Kitsap Transit

WSDOT

Stakeholder Feedback

TOPICS INCLUDED:

Pilot operations

Future ferry
operational
considerations

Potential future
service
modifications

Local
transportation
challenges and
gaps

Connectivity to
existing
transportation
infrastructure

Feedback From Stakeholders

Operational Challenges

- Short to mid-term space constraint in Seattle
- Long-term vessel procurement, storage, and maintenance

Governance and Funding

- Potential for external operational funds are limited and already highly-constrained
- Des Moines would need to identify long-term operational funding locally
- Recent investments in light rail may complicate political interest in developing a new modal connection

Transportation Priorities

- Southern Des Moines has identified need for better transit connectivity, but would not benefit directly from ferry
- Minimal existing active transportation infrastructure
 - Street safety and topography challenges
- First/last-mile gaps to light rail stations
- Concern about bandwidth for multiple transportation priorities
- Gateway opportunities for other ferry connections, including Vashon Island

Resident Survey and Focus Groups

Public survey promoted through various outlets

Launched April 20, 2026
• Still active

178 respondents
(as of May 13, 2026)

Questions to better understand
• key challenges of the current transportation network
• Interest in future ferry service



Des Moines Public Survey

The City of Des Moines, WA wants residents and visitors to be able to commute and travel around the city safely, efficiently, and affordably. The City of Des Moines is asking the public about their travel habits and preferences to inform plans for our community. Your thoughtful feedback on this survey will help city leaders make more informed decisions about transportation needs in Des Moines. The city may share these results with partner agencies like Sound Transit and King County Metro.

* Where do you live in Des Moines?

- Downtown's Marina District neighborhood
- North Hill neighborhood near Normandy Park
- Central Des Moines or North Central Des Moines neighborhoods
- Pacific Ridge neighborhood or near Pacific highway
- Zenith neighborhood between the Marina and Saltwater Park
- South Des Moines neighborhood near Highline College
- Woodmont neighborhood around Woodmont Elementary
- Redondo neighborhood near Federal Way
- I don't live in Des Moines, but I work or visit here often

From Community Outreach

- **Top destinations** for travel from Des Moines:
 - Burien/White Center; Southcenter/Tukwila; Federal Way; Kent
- In past 6 months, about **30% used transit** and **80% drove alone**
 - Around **90% of transit users took Link** Light Rail to get around, over 75% of all people have used it
- **To get to a Link station**, about 50% drove alone, 40% took transit or got a ride, and **0 people biked**
- 1 in 3 people said Link station **access challenges mean they will only drive** or be dropped off
- Around **80% said they would use a ferry to Seattle for pleasure**, and 8% said to commute
- **Top transportation improvement preferences:**
 - Bus/shuttle to train stations and nearby communities; bus/shuttle around Des Moines; Sidewalks around Des Moines (followed by ferry and bike lane options)
- **Top places people would visit more** if transportation were easier:
 - Downtown Des Moines; Marina District
- **Respondents** were primarily White, 65 or older, and had high incomes

From Community Outreach - Survey

Emphasis added

If transportation were easier, how would it change the types of jobs you could pursue?

*"It would change everything. It takes over 45 minutes for me to walk to the light rail. The bus is no faster and can take even longer. **It's so close and too far.**"*

Which places would you visit more if transportation was made easier?

*"The marina district... I wish there was a shuttle or metro **route where I could hop on closer to home.** I miss the metro route that went all the way to Seattle...I wish there was **better bike infrastructure.**"*

*"**Downtown Des Moines** - please improve active transportation infrastructure! We love living in Des Moines, but we **desperately need sidewalks and bike lanes.**"*

If Des Moines had more reliable or connected transportation options, would it change how often you visit local businesses?

*"If we improved the walking or biking infrastructure, I would be more inclined to **visit downtown Des Moines by walking or biking, rather than driving to other communities.**"*

*"My kids are not able to get to work without a ride! ...They need **reliable, safe ways to get to the Marina district for work and to the light rail!** There are no sidewalks...to GET to Highline college or the light rail."*



Recommendations and Alternatives

Recommendations

- The current market for connections between Des Moines and Seattle **does not support the development of future ferry services.**
 - High operational costs and limited market potential indicate future ferry service would require a high degree of subsidy, with limited opportunities for funding external to the City of Des Moines.
 - Developing meaningful service that serves commuter markets with consistent ridership will include expanding service days/hours, which will require additional fleet and crew, significantly increasing costs.
 - Recent investments in regional light rail offer competitive travel times. Future ferry service would need to improve its frequency of service to remain competitive, further increasing operational cost.
- Creating the volume of bi-directional travel needed to support long-term ferry operations requires **transformation of the Des Moines Marina into a regional destination.**

Alternatives

- Investments in **first/last-mile connectivity** within Des Moines and to light rail stations will provide greater mobility benefit than investing in future ferry service.
- Priority should be given to making improvements to **vital transportation infrastructure and destinations** including light rail stations, Mount Rainier High School, Highline College, downtown Des Moines, and the Marina.
 - On average, people can travel between Des Moines and Southcenter in 16 minutes by automobile. The same trip takes 55 minutes on public transportation.
 - Travel between Des Moines and Kent (Valley) averages 12 minutes for automobile drivers, 55-60 minutes for transit riders.



Feedback

Thank you!



Greg Nordin

gnordin@nelsonnygaard.com



Des Moines, WA, Ferry Pilot Evaluation and Alternatives Executive Summary & Recommendations

May 2026 - DRAFT

N NELSON
NYGAARD

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the City of Des Moines, Washington launched a seasonal passenger-only ferry pilot connecting the Des Moines Marina to the Bell Harbor Marina in Seattle. Operated on Wednesdays through Sundays between August 10th and October 9th, 2022, the Des Moines-Bell Harbor Ferry provided four daily round trips. Over the duration of the pilot period, the Des Moines Ferry pilot provided nearly 17,000 passenger trips, or approximately 375 trips each service day. To better understand the effectiveness of the ferry pilot and the underlying market for ferry service connecting Des Moines to Seattle, the City of Des Moines has funded this study to help guide future investments in ferry service for the community. This Executive Summary and Recommendations will identify high-level findings from the Market Analysis, Stakeholder Engagement Summary, and Ferry Pilot Evaluation reports as well as explore new alternatives and recommendations for the City of Des Moines.

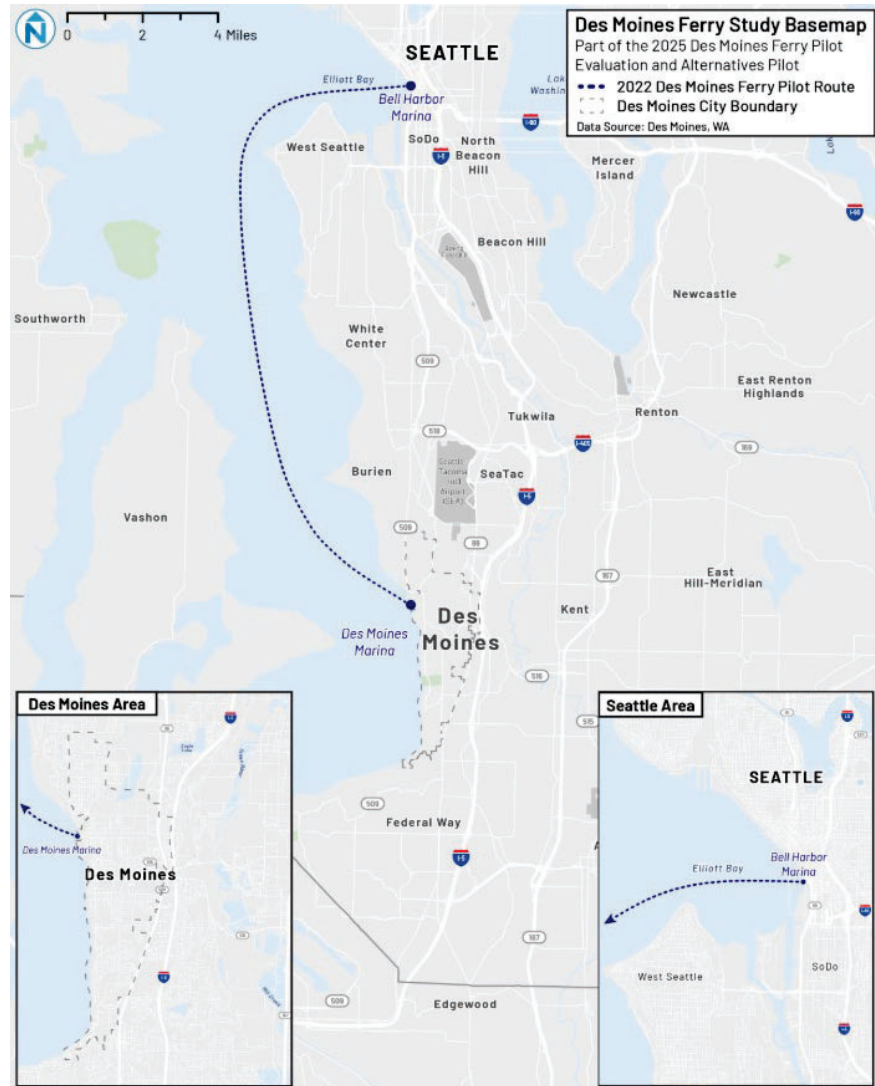


Figure 1 Des Moines Ferry Study Basemap

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Market Analysis

Understanding the underlying market for ferry connections between Des Moines and Seattle is a critical part of developing service that meets the needs of passengers and ensures the long-term fiscal sustainability of such service. Key findings from the Market Analysis include:

- The City of Des Moines has demographic characteristics that demonstrate a meaningful underlying demand for public transportation.
 - Residential and employment densities suggest investment in public transportation would be utilized, if available.
- Key destinations with consistent demand include Southcenter, SeaTac, industrial centers in Kent and Auburn, SoDo, and locally within Des Moines, suggesting demand for public transportation both within neighboring communities and locally.
- Work-commute demand occurs primarily during peak travel times, while non-work travel is more dispersed throughout the day. Potential public transportation options should consider service in both peak and off-peak travel periods to accommodate both work commutes and non-work travel.
- Recent extension of Sound Transit’s Link 1 Line greatly improves regional travel between Seattle, SoDo, SeaTac, Des Moines, and Federal Way.
 - These improvements have occurred after the 2022 ferry pilot. Regional transit connectivity has changed significantly since the pilot operated, offering Des Moines residents access to frequent, cost-effective regional connections.
- Demand for a ferry connection between Des Moines and Seattle is limited.
 - Travel volumes north of SeaTac are not high enough to warrant ferry connections.
 - Most regional travel destinations are inland. Ferry services would not be able to meaningfully serve these connections.
- A market for future ferry service could be developed, but would require significant effort and time to build the conditions that would support long-term ferry operations, including significant residential and commercial development of Des Moines’ Marina and downtown areas.

Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders and the public was conducted to better understand the underlying market for ferry service as well as provide context for long-term feasibility and operational considerations. The project team interviewed 17 stakeholders about the ferry pilot. In addition, a public survey was made available throughout April and May 2026.

Stakeholder Interviews

Seventeen stakeholders were interviewed throughout January and February 2026 to better understand the environment around the ferry pilot of 2022, its operations, and the potential for future ferry service. Interview participants included City of Des Moines City Council members, City of Des Moines employees, Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce, King County Metro, Kitsap Transit, and Washington State Ferries. Complete feedback from the interviews can be found in the Engagement Summary, but major themes include:

- Operations
 - Docking space constraints in Seattle are a limiting factor for long-term ferry operations and service increases, with existing ferry docks already tightly programmed. However, Kitsap Transit is actively exploring construction of a new passenger ferry terminal.
 - The ferry pilot did not address long-term operational considerations, including need for spare vessels, vessel storage, inclement weather, and maintenance.
- Governance and Funding
 - Regional transit operations funding is incredibly limited and already programmed out by transportation providers. Adding ferry service in Des Moines would require new or reprioritized funding, which would necessitate regional trade-offs.
 - Long-term operational funding would most likely need to be identified locally.
 - Extension of the Link 1 Line has created new opportunities for regional connectivity. Interest in developing new modal connections, such as proposed ferry service, before maximizing benefits of existing investments may be a limiting factor.

- **Transportation Priorities**
 - There is a perception that southern Des Moines warrants better transit connectivity, but ferry service would do little to provide benefit to this area of the community.
 - Active transportation infrastructure within Des Moines could be better developed to address street safety and topography challenges that limit walking and cycling today.
 - New light rail stations may have first/last-mile gaps.
 - Investment in a ferry will require significant bandwidth of City staff resources, creating concern that other transportation priorities that might be more productive or effective will lose importance.
 - While viable ferry routes to Seattle may be limited, future ferry opportunities may include other regional connections such as Vashon Island. However, this would position Des Moines as a gateway rather than a destination or origin point.

Public Survey

A public survey was developed to better understand the transportation habits and preferences of current Des Moines residents and visitors. Over 28 questions, the survey solicited data on population

Ferry Pilot Evaluation

Evaluating Des Moines' Ferry Pilot provides clarity about the pilot's success and helps better understand operational details required for long-term sustainable ferry operations. Key findings from the Ferry Pilot Evaluation include the following:

- The pilot demonstrated there is demand for passenger-only ferry service between Des Moines and downtown Seattle, but the observed demand is unlikely to translate to long-term sustainable ridership due to the type of travel reported.
 - Through a survey administered during the course of the pilot, the primary purpose of travel was identified as leisure travel. Leisure travel, due to its casual nature, tends to be less reliable and consistent over the long term. To create reliable daily travel, ferry service would need to be expanded by time of day and day of week to provide better commuter access.
 - The ferry pilot also operated during a time of year that is advantageous for ferry travel (August-October). Ferry service during other times of year may have limited demand and be impacted by inclement weather.
 - The limited duration of the pilot may have induced demand. Passenger demand may have been inflated due to the desire to try the service before it ended.
- While the ferry pilot demonstrated competitive travel times in comparison to other modes, long wait times between trips make service less attractive, especially for trips where the trip itself is not the objective. Trips making needed transportation connections will benefit from more frequent service.
 - Link Line 1 service operates seven days per week, for more than 21 hours per day, and with trips running as frequently as every 8 minutes, for a \$3.00 fare. This service provides regional connections that are convenient and highly cost-effective. While ferry travel times are more competitive (35 minutes travel time in comparison to 45 minutes on Link Line 1), the convenience and cost-effectiveness of Link service will likely sway most riders.
- Total operating costs for the ferry pilot were \$793,676 with revenues of \$89,456. To have been cost neutral, fares would need to be around \$40 per one-way trip. However, \$40 fares would have inhibited demand significantly, which indicates there would be no way to achieve financial sustainability without significant and continuing operational subsidy.
- Expansion of service to meet commuter market needs will require additional fleet, crew, storage, and maintenance costs, indicating the operational costs for the pilot under-predict long-term operational costs.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Based on the findings of the Market Analysis and Ferry Pilot Evaluation, the City of Des Moines should focus on transportation solutions that improve travel connections that are frequently used today, both locally and regionally. Improving transportation connections for non-automotive travelers that are already popular will incentivize transit, bike, and pedestrian access to those locations, improving access for all roadway users, and further strengthening these connections.

DRAFT

Key Regional Travel Flow Travel Times

Comparing automobile and transit travel times between Des Moines and key regional destinations highlights a significant competitiveness gap that helps explain existing travel behavior and points to where future transit investments may be most impactful. Across the highest-volume travel markets, transit travel times are consistently longer than comparable auto trips, and often by large margins. For example, trips to Southcenter, which represent the largest travel flow at approximately 5,000 daily trips, take roughly 16 minutes by car but approximately 55 minutes by transit. Similar disparities exist for other major destinations, including both the Valley and West Hill of Kent, and Auburn, where transit travel times are typically two to three times longer than driving. While transit riders are a minority percentage of travel between these destinations, they often bear the burden of significantly increased commute times.



Figure 2 Top Travel Flows to/from Des Moines

Table 1 Automobile and Transit Travel Times

Destination (to/from Des Moines)	Weekday Trips to and from Des Moines	Percent Auto Trips	Percent Transit Trips	Peak Auto Travel Time (minutes)	Off-Peak Auto Travel Time (minutes)	Peak Transit Travel Time (minutes)	Off-Peak Transit Travel Time (minutes)
Southcenter	5,000	96%	2%	16	16	55	55
SeaTac	3,700	86%	9%	14	12	25	25
Kent (Valley)	3,300	80%	3%	12	12	55	60
Kent (West Hill)	3,200	76%	2%	12	12	32	45
Federal Way	1,400	94%	4%	16	16	17	18
Auburn	1,100	95%	3%	24	20	65	55

*Peak times based on average travel times on Wednesdays at 8:30 AM. Off-Peak times based on average travel times on Wednesdays at 12:30 PM.

Local Walkshed Access Gaps

Just over half (53%) of Des Moines residents do not have access to transit within a 1/4-mile walk. King County Metro transit routes operate in the northern and central parts of Des Moines, and only along SR 509 along the southeastern boundary of the city. The Link 1 Line operates along the eastern boundary of Des Moines in central Des Moines and only has access for Des Moines residents at the Kent/Des Moines Station.

Residents of southern Des Moines do not have access to the Star Lake Link 1 Line station via transit and would have to access it through an alternative mode, such as walking, biking, or driving/rideshare. While some residents have access to KCM's RapidRide A-Line that operates along SR 509, this route does not provide any crosstown connections or connection to the nearby Star Lake station.

Enhancing local residents' ability to access nearby transit would improve transit travel times between key travel pairs, especially by providing more direct access to high frequency transit options, such as the RapidRide A-Line and the 1 Line.

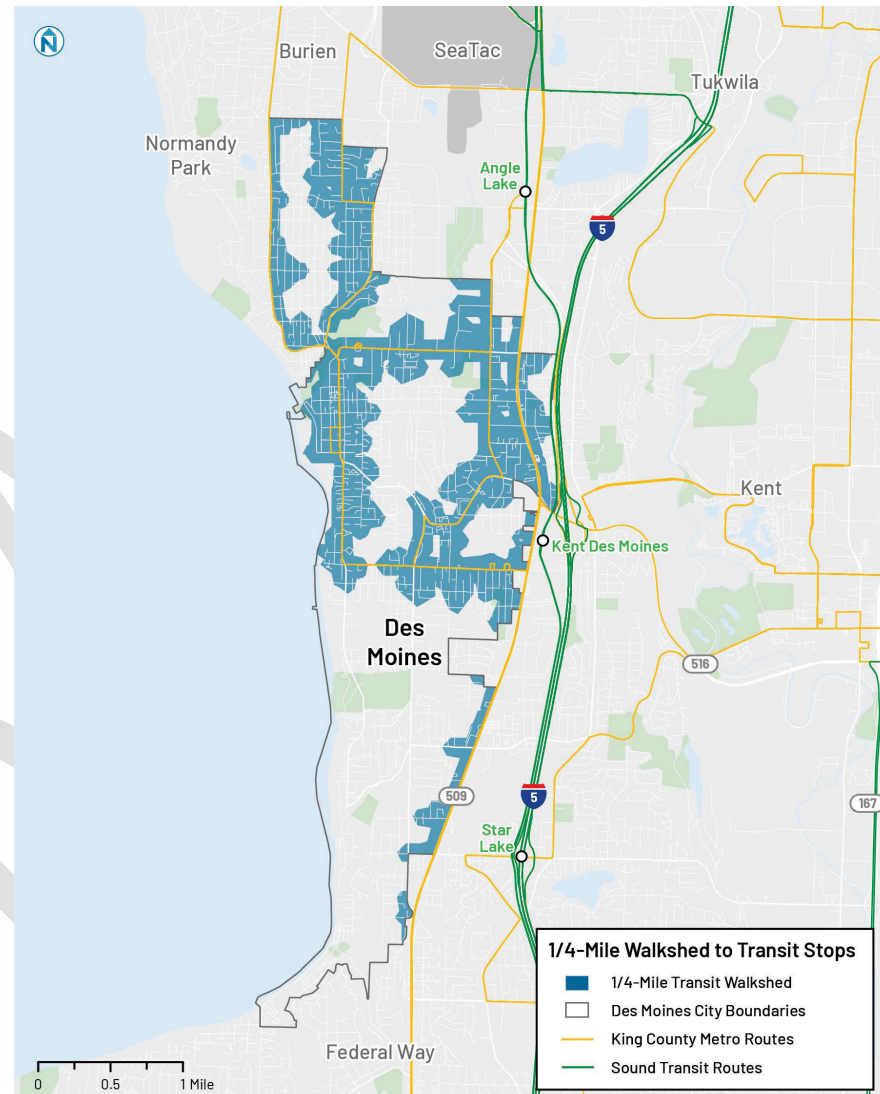


Figure 3 1/4-Mile Walkshed to Transit Stops in Des Moines

Suzie

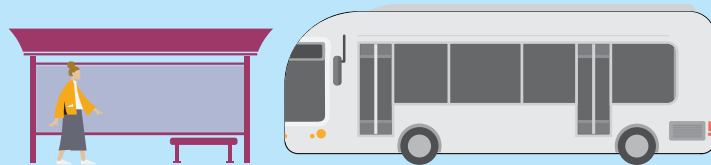


Suzie lives near the Des Moines Marina and commutes to the Southcenter Mall five days per week. Her commute to work includes:

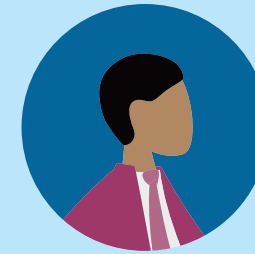
- Walk 10 minutes to Marine View Drive, where she catches Bus Route 165 and rides for 13 minutes to Burien.
- In Burien, she transfers to the F Line (average 5 minutes wait), where she will ride for 20 minutes.
- Walks from the bus stop to work, 3 minutes away.

Trip Summary

Her daily commute takes her five miles from home and averages about 55 minutes each way, or 1 hour and 50 minutes daily.



Francois

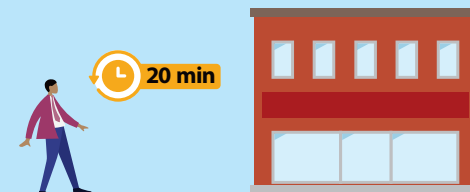


Francois lives near the Des Moines Marina and travels two times per week to care for his aging mother, who lives in the West Hill neighborhood of Kent. His commute includes:

- Francois walks 10 minutes to Marine View Drive, where he catches Bus Route 165 headed towards Kent.
- After a 14-minute ride, Francois exits the bus near the Kent Park and Ride east of I-5.
- Because there is no transit option to take him farther south, Francois completes the journey on foot, walking an additional 20 minutes along Military Road to reach his mother’s apartment.

Trip Summary

In total, Francois’ travel time to visit his mother averages 45 minutes each way to travel a distance of 2.5 miles.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the market analysis and the evaluation of the 2022 ferry pilot, the current market for connections between Des Moines and Seattle does not support the development of ferry service. Low sustainable demand, coupled with high operational costs, indicate that ferry service will require a high degree of subsidy to be operationally sustainable. However, by focusing on improving popular transportation connections today, the City of Des Moines can create mobility outcomes that more efficiently and effectively use the existing transportation network to move people within and around Des Moines. In the longer term, opportunities for Des Moines to develop as a regional gateway for communities to the west, to provide improved connections to many of the same areas where Des Moines exhibits high demand.

Key recommendations are:

- Policies – Adopting land use policies that reinforce a multimodal approach to community development will create opportunities for improved economic development and mobility both within Des Moines and regionally. Policies include updates to Des Moines’ zoning codes, and/or adoption of complete streets policies in local road design.
- Strategies – Regular coordination with external partners about transportation priorities is recommended to ensure consistency across plans and work programs. In particular, the City of Des Moines should consider regularly scheduled coordination with King County Metro to discuss opportunities to improve transit access within Des Moines and the surrounding communities. Many of Des Moines’ most popular transportation linkages have significant discrepancies in travel time for automotive users in comparison to transit users. Partnering with King County Metro can raise these issues to a regional level, and improve the likelihood of stronger regional outcomes.
- Develop an understanding of how Des Moines residents and visitors move throughout the community to understand travel demand and focus on developing transportation solutions that meet those demands.
- Prioritize mobility solutions that improve connections to existing transportation infrastructure, including bike and pedestrian connectivity to Link light rail stations and existing King County Metro bus service.
- Develop partnerships with King County Metro and other local transportation providers to ensure Des Moines’ transportation priorities are considered as part of larger regional dialogues.

- To build a future market for passenger-only ferry services, focus on redeveloping Des Moines' Marina District to develop regional attractiveness and improve connectivity into Des Moines' downtown area.
- Identify internal staff resources to oversee coordination and management of transportation priorities with regional partners. Improving modal options locally will require intentional planning and coordination with a variety of local and regional stakeholders.

DRAFT

APPENDIX

- Market Analysis Report
- Engagement Summary Memo
- Ferry Pilot Evaluation Report
- Transportation Planning Literature Review Memo

DRAFT



Des Moines, WA, Ferry Pilot
Evaluation and Alternatives

Market Analysis

May 2026



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of a Market Analysis

The purpose of this market analysis is to provide understanding of all travel into and out of Des Moines, and to assess opportunities to enhance travel between areas that display travel connectivity with non-auto modes, including the potential for a passenger ferry, in a way that will enhance economic development opportunities in the city of Des Moines.

Analysis consists of:

- Demographic analysis of the study area
- Travel pattern analysis of work trips and non-work trips starting or ending in Des Moines
- Identification of potential markets for Ferry Service

Data Sources:

- U.S. Census, ACS 2023 (5-year estimates) for demographic data, consisting of population, race, transit demand, etc.
 - Data is collected at the Block Group level. Block Groups are the second smallest census geography to Blocks, which are the smallest census geographies that are formed by streets, water, or other types of boundaries. Block groups are a combination of census blocks and are the smallest geography for which ACS data is available.
- Replica travel flow analysis (2025) for commuting patterns and destinations.
- King County GIS Center for boundaries, census geographies, land use, etc.
- Puget Sound Consolidated GTFS for all transit service data in the Puget Sound region.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Population and employment density, when combined with demographic factors, indicate moderate but meaningful underlying transit demand in Des Moines** relative to nearby shoreline cities and communities.
- **Adjusted population density and transit propensity highlight that transit demand in the area between Des Moines and Seattle is concentrated in central urban and employment-focused areas**, specifically in Seattle, SeaTac, and western Kent.
- **Des Moines demonstrates higher transit propensity than many adjacent jurisdictions**, suggesting demographic characteristics that support transit use.
- **Commuter travel to and from Des Moines is oriented toward major employment centers** and takes place during peak travel periods.
- **Non-commuter travel to and from Des Moines is more localized** and distributed throughout the day.
- **Trips between Des Moines and downtown Seattle are limited**, with significantly fewer than 50 trips going from the area within ½-mile of the Des Moines Marina to within ½-mile of Bell Harbor Marina in Downtown Seattle.
- **Key regional travel markets represent opportunities for expanded transit service.** Some of these markets are downtown Seattle, SoDo, SeaTac, and industrial areas in Kent and Auburn, represent opportunity for expanded transit service.
- **There is limited potential for meaningful ferry connections between Des Moines and Seattle** due to the lack of movement between Des Moines and waterfront adjacent locations.

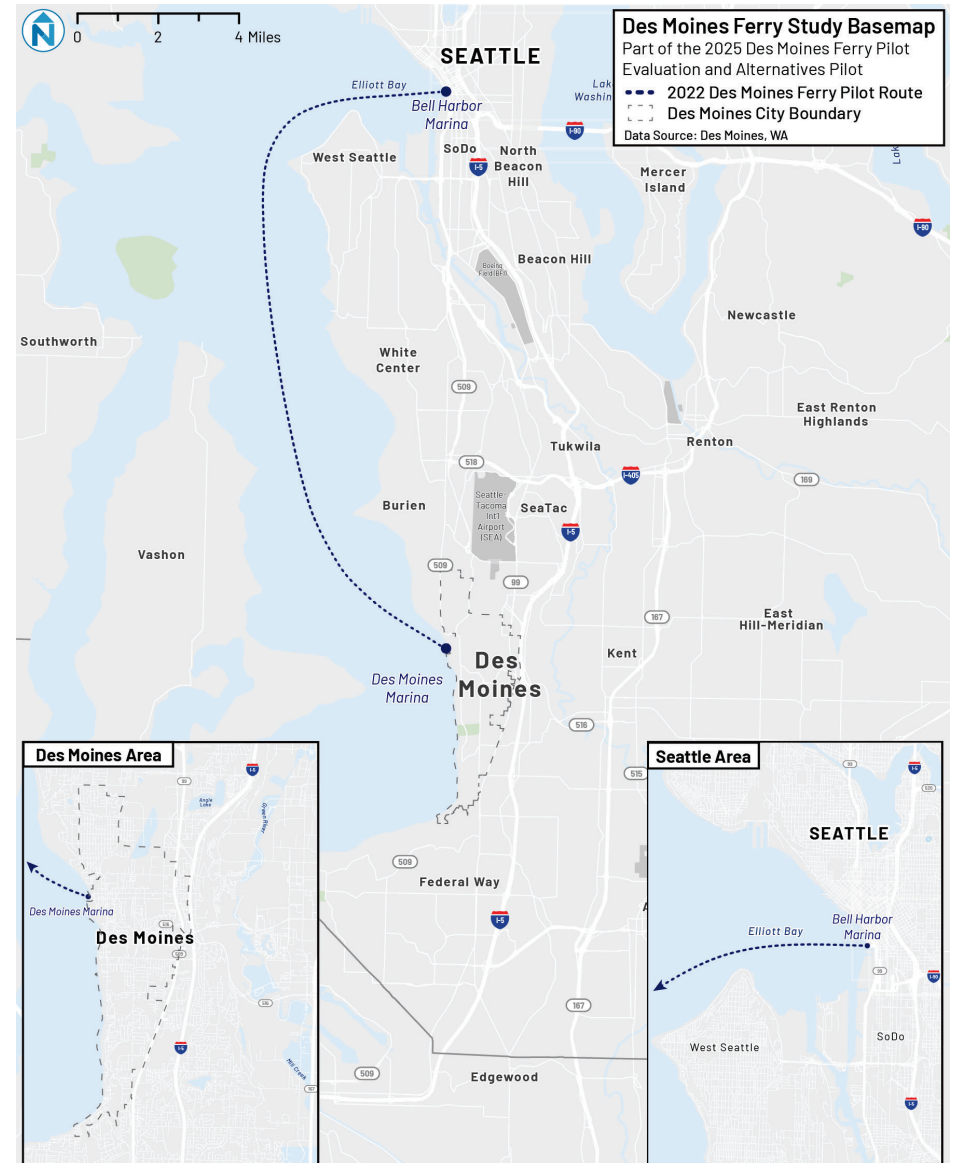


Figure 1 Study Area Map

TRANSIT AND FERRY NETWORKS

Transit Network

The Seattle-Tacoma regional transit network is a multi-agency system that provides local, regional, and commuter connections throughout the Puget Sound, including the Des Moines area. The primary service providers are King County Metro, Sound Transit, and Pierce Transit, each offering distinct, interconnected services to major regional destinations.

King County Metro operates the core local and regional bus network throughout King County, including routes that serve Des Moines and connect to nearby cities such as Kent, Federal Way, SeaTac, and Seattle. Routes serving Des Moines provide key north-south access along Pacific Highway and link to major transit centers and park-and-ride facilities throughout the southern part of King County.

Sound Transit operates regional express bus service (ST Express), commuter rail (Sounder), and light rail (Link) connecting the broader metropolitan area. The Link Light Rail 1 Line has been extended southward to include a Kent Des Moines Station as part of the Federal Way extension, which provides access to Downtown Seattle in 45 minutes, SeaTac Airport in 12 minutes, Federal Way in 5 minutes, and University of Washington (Seattle campus) in 55 minutes.

Pierce Transit serves Tacoma and Pierce County with local and regional bus routes, including connections to southern King County in Federal Way and Auburn.



Figure 2 Regional Transit Network

Ferry Network

Ferry and passenger water transportation services are a key component within the broader Seattle-Tacoma regional transit system, providing cross-Sound and shoreline connections that complement the roadway, transit, and rail networks. Ferry and passenger-only water services provide an alternative travel mode across Puget Sound, offering a reliable option when road or rail travel is congested or limited, and creates access between shoreline communities and the Seattle urban core. Of note, in this network all but one of the present routes, Downtown Seattle/West Seattle being the exception, are cross-Sound. Today, as opposed to when there were few highways, there are no long-distance ferry routes that immediately parallel land-based routes.

Washington State Ferries (WSF) is the primary provider of regional ferry service, operating an extensive network of auto and passenger ferries across Puget Sound. WSF routes connect downtown Seattle to Bainbridge Island and Bremerton and provide additional east-west crossings at locations including Edmonds-Kingston, Mukilteo-Clinton, Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth, and Point Defiance-Tahlequah. These ferry routes support both vehicle and walk-on passengers and connect to local and regional transit services at various ferry terminals, creating multimodal trip opportunities between urban centers and island or peninsula communities.

King County Water Taxi, operated by King County Metro, is a passenger-only water transit service between downtown Seattle and West Seattle, as well as to Vashon Island.

Kitsap Transit operates a network of passenger-only fast ferries connecting downtown Seattle with Bremerton, Kingston, and Southworth, offering higher speed crossings than traditional auto ferries.

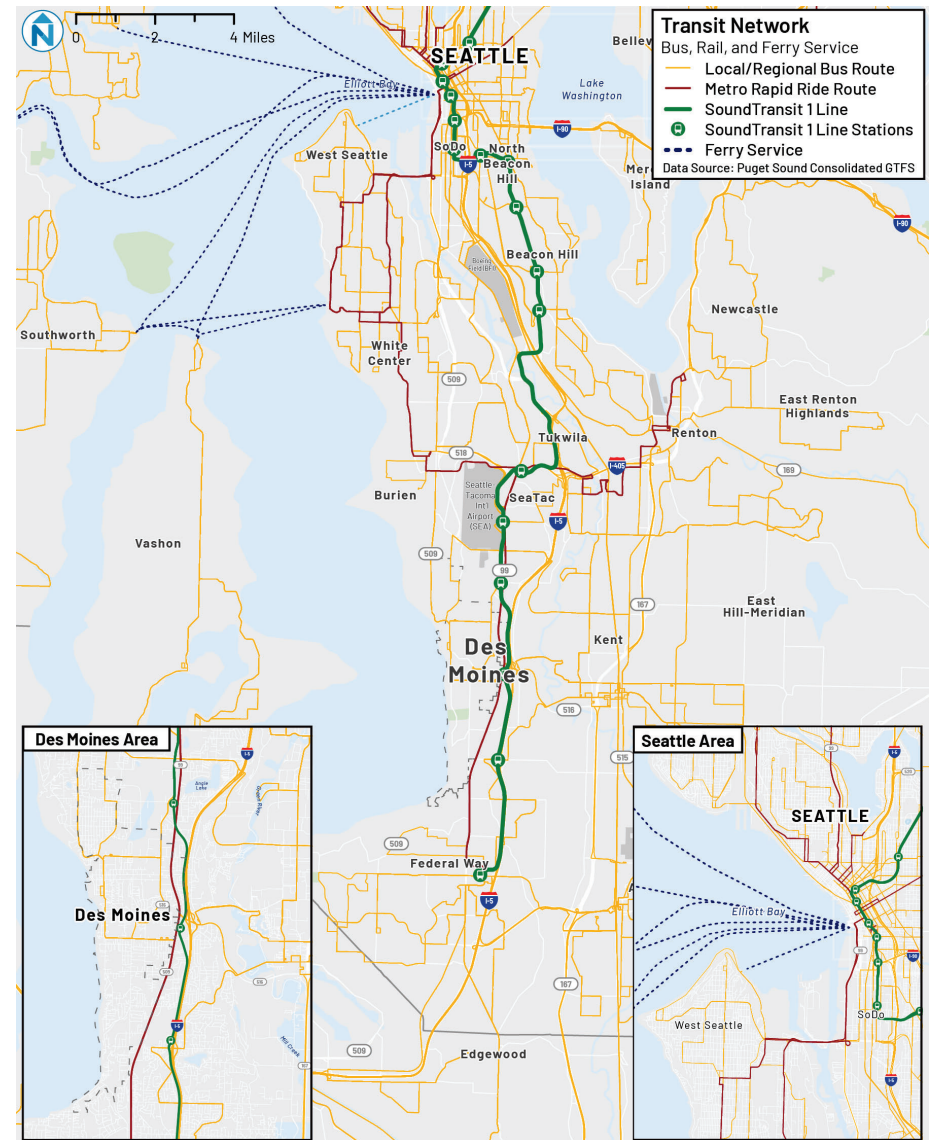


Figure 3 Regional Ferry Network

TRANSIT DEMAND ANALYSIS

Underlying transit demand is strongly related to the following factors, discussed in detail in this chapter:

Population and Population Density: Transit relies on having more people near service, and a higher population density makes it feasible to provide higher levels of service.

Socioeconomic Characteristics: Different people have a different likelihood of using transit, with differences related to socioeconomic characteristics. For example, households with no cars are more likely to use transit than those with one or more.

Job Types and Employment Density: Job density, like population density, is a strong indicator of transit demand, as traveling to and from work often accounts for the most frequent type of transit trip. On a further level, the type of job also influences who travels there and whether it is just employees, such as to an office building, or also customers, clients, patients, or students.

Travel Patterns: People use transit to get from one place to another. Understanding where, when, and why people travel is important for assessing the market for transit.

The combination of population and employment density is the best determinant for transit demand. When combined, these two factors create a composite demand, which can help determine the level of service that is best suited to the area.

When composite demand is compared to travel patterns, areas that have high volumes of connected travel patterns along with high composite demand are areas where transit is more likely to be successful.

How does Passenger Ferry Service Fit into Transit Demand?

Passenger ferry service shares characteristics with transit modes that offer direct point-to-point connections with limited opportunities for passengers to board or alight between termini. This includes modes such as gondolas and limited-stop, express bus service. These service types offer riders a direct route to a destination that may otherwise have an obstruction preventing connection for most travel. These modes can often utilize faster paths of travel, many times with a competitive advantage over other modes. For example, passenger ferries can often connect two ports directly and overcome a geographic barrier that prevents connection for travelers otherwise.

However, this operating model also requires a strong travel demand connection between the two termini, as these modes do not allow for boardings along the course of the route. Passenger ferries are much more costly than many modes and are often difficult to implement. Therefore, to be operationally sustainable, ferry routes need to generate all of their ridership between the two termini.

The catchment area for ferry ridership can be large, like other high-investment transit modes, but is contingent upon several factors, including travel time savings, convenience, frequency, and service reliability. To be an attractive option for riders, ferries must be competitive with other modes across these factors. In Des Moines, several transportation linkages with Seattle exist or are in development, including: I-5, King County Metro's Rapid Ride service, and Sound Transit's Link service. For a Des Moines passenger ferry to be operationally sustainable, it must be competitive with the other available options.

Passenger Ferry Feasibility Considerations

When considering the feasibility of a passenger ferry, there are two primary aspects to consider: demand for the service and the physical siting of terminals.

Demand

- Combination of several factors, including:
 - strength of travel market
 - travel time
 - convenience
 - cost
- Ferries may have a faster trip time than alternatives, but if service is less convenient, alternatives may be more competitive. Ferry travel times between Des Moines and downtown Seattle are approximately 35 minutes, whereas Sound Transit's Link completes a similar trip in 45 minutes. Despite the slower travel time, Link will be more convenient/competitive due to its higher frequency, 7-8 minutes during peak times, in comparison to a ferry with a trip every 1-2 hours.
- Strong market between two destinations to be successful. Because ferries operate over water, they cannot easily board/alight passengers mid-trip to increase or supplement demand.

Terminals

- Proximate to shoreline activities. Trips that require transfers or long walks to destinations will be less attractive than trips that are next to key destinations.
- Tidal current and water depths factor into terminal siting as well as shelter from rough waters and weather.
- Located in areas where ferry activity does not impede other activities, natural and human.


























LAND USE			TRANSIT		
Land Use Type	Residents per Acre	Jobs per Acre	Appropriate Types of Transit	Frequency of Service	Other Modes
 Urban Mixed-Use	>30	>15	    Light Rail/Streetcar BRT Express Bus Local Bus	 15 minutes or better	 Rail
 Neighborhood & Suburban Mixed-Use	15-30	10-15	  Express Bus Local Bus	 15-30 minutes	
 Mixed-Density Neighborhoods	10-15	5-10	   Express Bus Local Bus Micro-Transit	 30-60 minutes	Land Use and Frequency Varies  Passenger Ferry
 Low Density	2-10	2-5	   Micro-Transit Rideshare Volunteer Driver Pgm	 60 mins or less, or on-demand	
 Rural	<2	<2	  Rideshare Volunteer Driver Pgm	On-demand	

Figure 4 Supported Transit Service by Land Use and Densities

Population Density

Population density is a high-level indicator for areas that are well-suited for transit service. Higher-density environments tend to support land use patterns that are more compatible with transit and are generally associated with higher potential ridership. Densely populated areas are often more walkable, less auto oriented, and have lower parking availability, all of which reduce the convenience of owning a vehicle and therefore increasing the likelihood of transit use.

The Puget Sound region, overall, reflects moderate to high population densities, particularly along major corridors and in urban centers. South of the Seattle municipal boundary, population densities along the water typically range from 2 to 15 people per acre, indicating a mix of suburban and urban development.

Within Des Moines, population density is generally lower to moderate, with most areas having between 2 and 10 people per acre. However, there are several localized pockets with higher densities, ranging from 10 to 15 people per acre, and up to 15 to 30 people per acre. Seattle, on the other hand, exhibits the highest density within the region, where most block groups exceed 45 people per acre.

To the south of Des Moines, Federal Way displays higher population densities than Des Moines, overall. These conditions suggest stronger underlying market characteristics for transit services in those areas, particularly where higher-density development is paired with supportive land use and infrastructure.

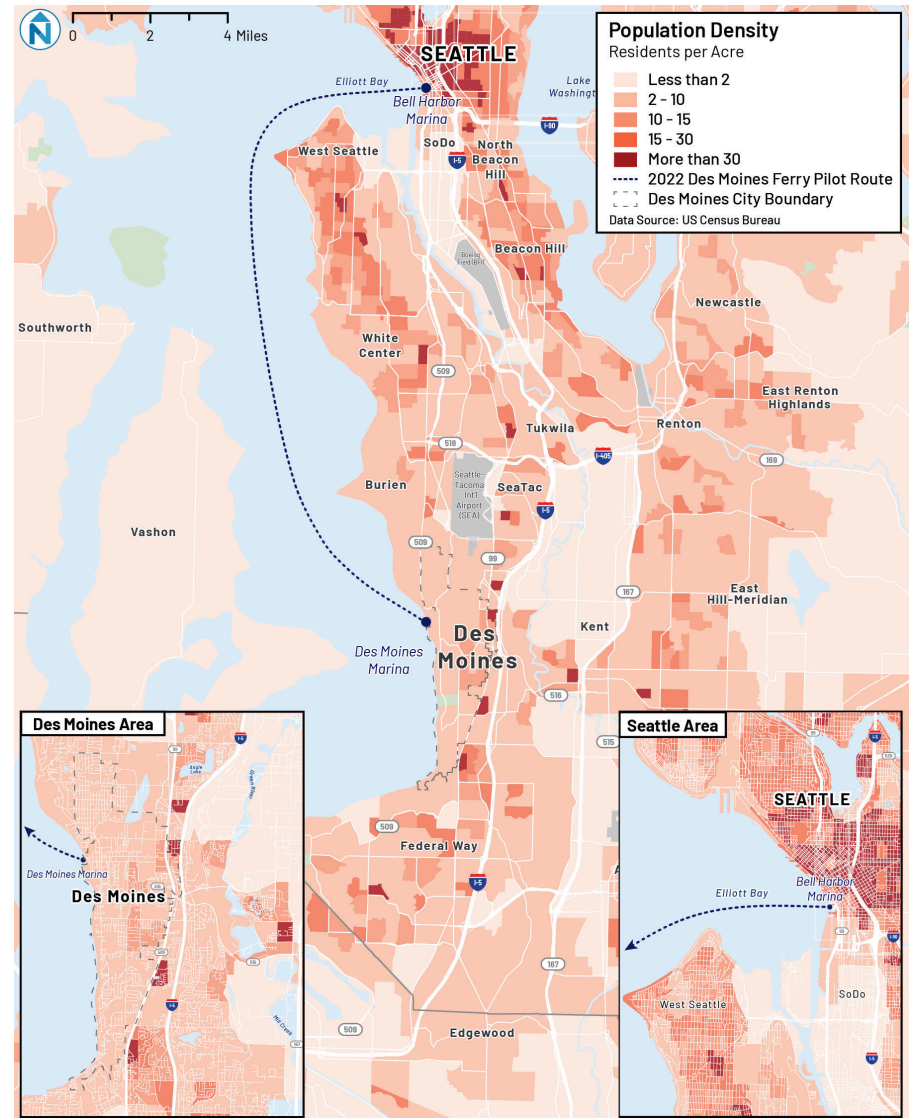


Figure 5 Population Density

Socioeconomic Characteristics and Transit Propensity

Underlying transit demand is influenced by population and employment densities, but both the socioeconomic characteristics of the people within the populations also influences transit demand. Transit propensity is determined using census reporting on mode share. This allows comparisons to be drawn between the total population of each demographic group and the mode share of each demographic group. Groups that report higher transit use will be reflected with a higher transit propensity than those who report lower transit use.

In lower density areas, clusters of people with multiple strong transit propensity characteristics can reveal higher transit demand than density alone would suggest. On the other side, in places where transit supportive demographics are underrepresented, transit demand may be lower than the population and employment densities alone suggest.

Who is most likely to take transit to work?

Based on the comparison of the 2023 US Census American Community Survey to the 2020 Decennial Census, a further refinement of understanding key demographic characteristics of who rides transit is possible. This adjustment of socioeconomic characteristics using the more granular ACS data allows for better understanding of how different populations of people utilize transit service. For example, residents that are Black (not Hispanic) were most likely to report transit use relative to other race and ethnicity groups in King County. White residents reported transit use that is below the average. Other races and ethnicities reported average levels of transit use.

Table 1 Transit Propensity Values

Demographic Group	Relative Transit Propensity
Race and Ethnicity	
White (not Hispanic)	0.88
Black (not Hispanic)	1.73
Asian (not Hispanic)	1.12
Other Race (not Hispanic)	0.99
Hispanic	1.00
Vehicle Ownership	
No Car	3.71
One Car	1.33
Two Cars	0.67
Three or More Cars	0.46
Country of Origin	
Native-born	0.98
Foreign-born	1.04
Household Income	
Less than \$15,000	1.32
\$15,000 - \$50,000	1.21
\$50,000 - \$65,000	0.99
More than \$65,000	0.85

Residents without a car are nearly three times more likely to use transit than people with one car, and five to six times more likely to take transit than those with two, three, or more cars.

Based on country of origin, there is a nominal difference between transit usage and whether a resident is foreign-born or native-born.

Among income groups, households that are making less than \$15,000 are 32% more likely than average to take transit. Households with incomes up to \$65,000 are about just as likely as average to take transit. Households with income higher than \$65,000 are least likely to take transit, by about 15% less than average.

Transit Propensity Factor

The Transit Propensity Factor (TIF) represents the relative likelihood of transit use compared to the average resident in the study area. Values greater than 1.0 indicate populations that are more likely than average to use transit, while values below 1.0 indicate below average transit use.

Transit propensity is generally average or below average in Des Moines, meaning that residents are less likely to use transit than average within the region. Des Moines does exhibit higher transit propensity than some nearby cities do, such as areas in Burien and north Federal Way, but still remains at or below average relative to the region.

Areas located along the shoreline generally display below-average transit propensity. Despite proximity to some regional destinations, the demographic and employment composition of these water adjacent areas are less likely to generate transit demand.

The industrial area on the western side of Kent stands out as having some of the highest inland transit propensity values in the region, even though it falls within the lowest population density categories. This shows that travel to and from major employment centers, such as this one, can be a key transit demand driver.

Seattle has the highest concentrated transit propensity, and specifically among shoreline areas. This indicates that residents are substantially more likely to use transit relative to residents elsewhere, ultimately reflecting the combined influence of higher-density development, job density, and transit-favorable demographic characteristics.

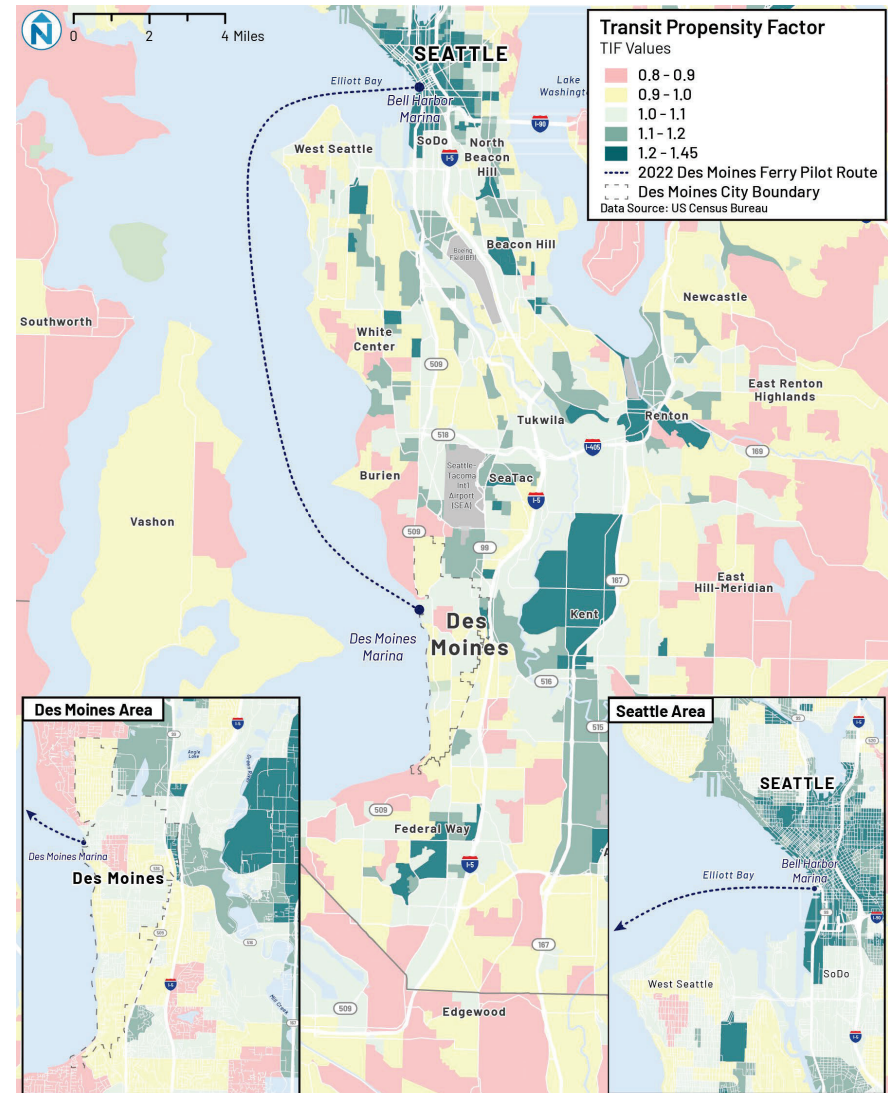


Figure 6 Transit Propensity Factor

Adjusted Population Density

Adjusted population density provides a more nuanced indicator of underlying transit demand by accounting for both population density and demographic characteristics. It is calculated by multiplying population density by the Transit Index Factor (TIF). When these demographic factors are considered alongside population density, areas with characteristics supportive of transit tend to exhibit higher underlying demand, while more auto-oriented or dispersed areas show comparatively lower demand.

Across the region, adjusted population density is highest in downtown Seattle, with consistently elevated values also observed in West Seattle, North Beacon Hill, and Beacon Hill, where densities exceed 15 people per acre. Other areas of high adjusted population density are distributed throughout the study area, most commonly in downtown areas, near major employment centers, or corridors along major roadways.

In Des Moines, inland areas west of I-5 and east of Pacific Highway exhibit relatively high adjusted population density, indicating stronger underlying transit demand relative to surrounding neighborhoods. In contrast, water adjacent areas between South Seattle and Tacoma generally do not exhibit high adjusted population density, with most areas falling within the 2 to 10 people per acre range. This pattern suggests that transit demand in this area is more strongly concentrated in inland urban areas rather than along the shoreline.

Areas experiencing the greatest increases in density as a result of the adjustment are typically those that already have moderate to high population density. The TIF adjustment amplifies these conditions, further highlighting places such as SoDo, West Seattle,, and Renton as locations where demographics meaningfully increase underlying transit demand.

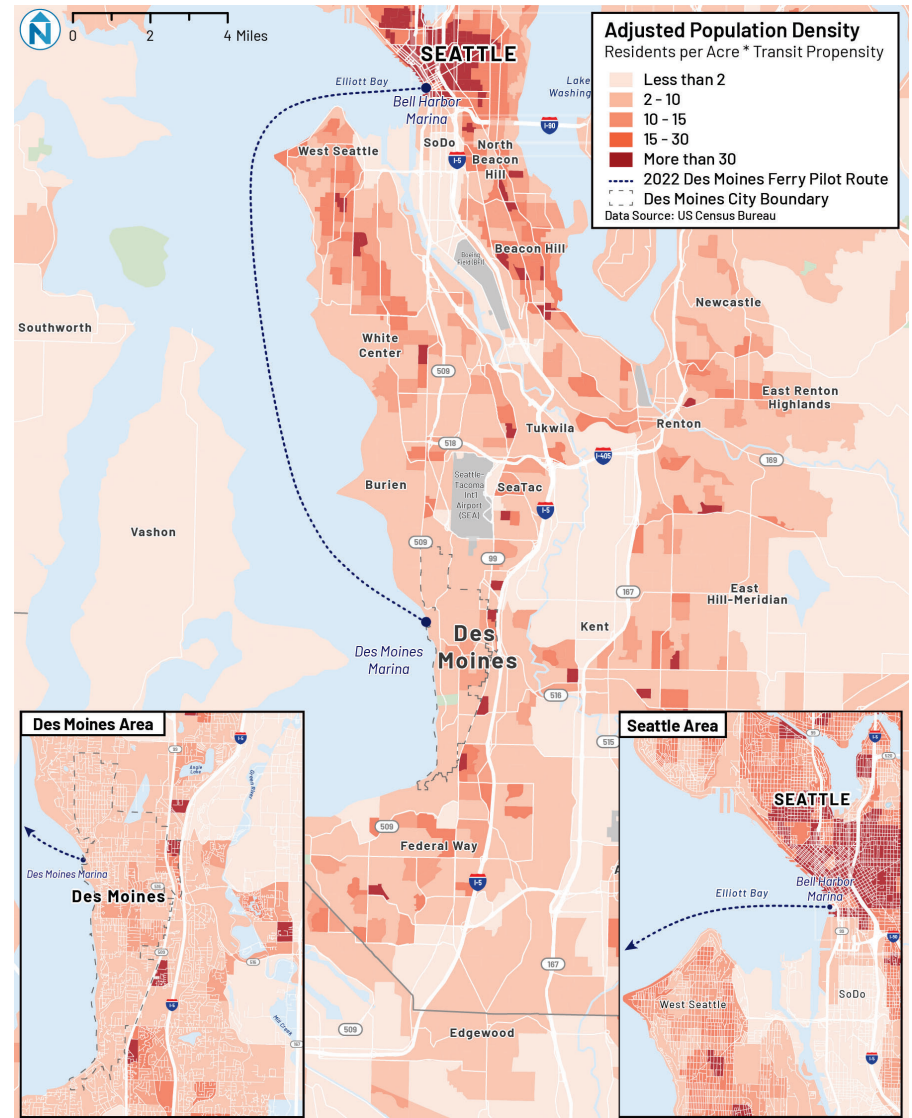


Figure 7 Adjusted Population Density

Adjusted Employment Density

Employment density is also a key indicator of transit demand and an important complement to population-based measures. Employment density is representative both of where people work and where people travel to access goods and services such as customers, clients, patients, students, or visitors. Adjusted employment density weights jobs with customers, clients, patients, students, or visitors more highly than jobs without. Therefore, areas with high adjusted employment density often generate both commuter and non-commuter travel demand.

The relationship between adjusted employment density and transit demand varies by land use type. Employment centers such as industrial or warehouse districts and office buildings primarily function as destinations for workers, therefore generating strong peak-period travel demand. On the other hand, employment such as retail, healthcare, education, and civic services typically supports a broader range of trips and more evenly distributed travel throughout the day.

Within the Des Moines and Seattle region, employment is most heavily concentrated in downtown Seattle. Tacoma, the SeaTac Airport area, Federal Way, and the western industrial part of Kent also have more heavily concentrated employment areas. Areas along the shoreline that would have easy access to a ferry terminal, except for Seattle, do not have high enough employment density nearby to generate significant transit demand.

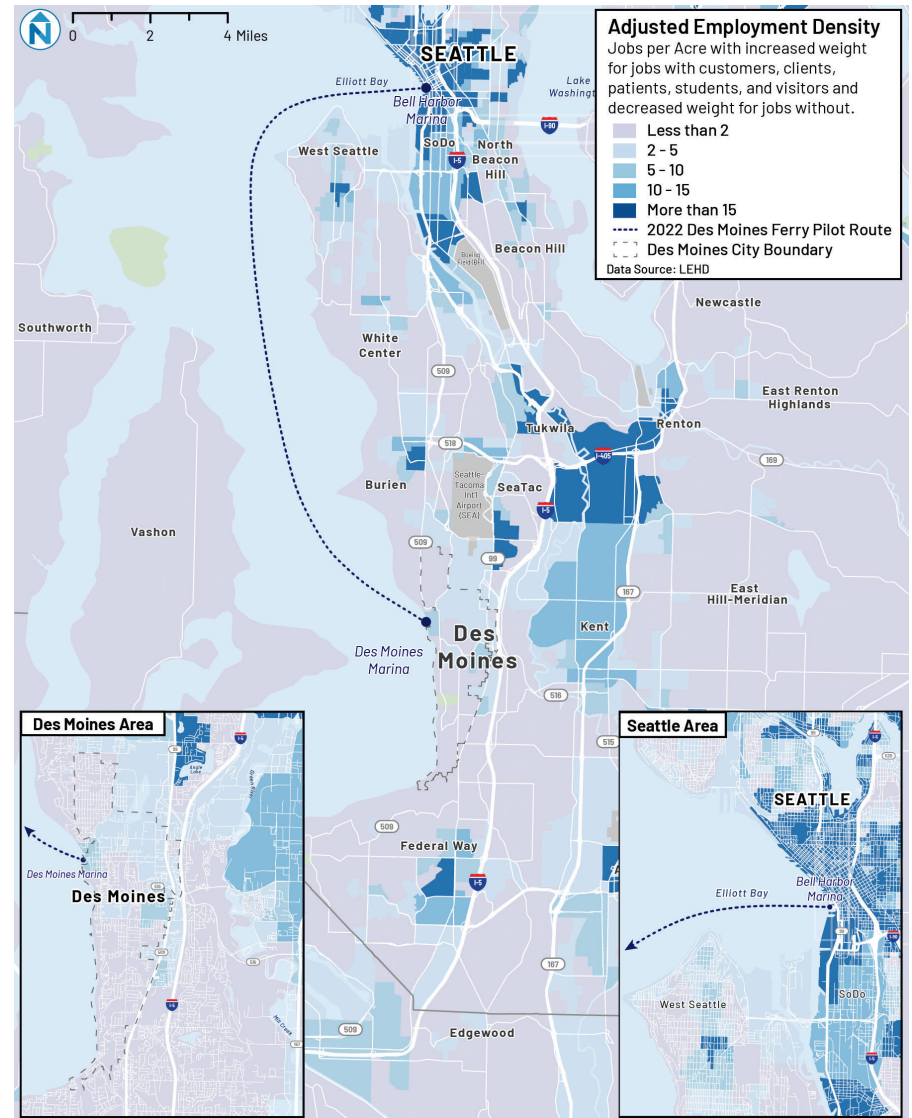


Figure 8 Adjusted Employment Density

Composite Demand

Composite transit demand captures the latent demand for transit in an area and is calculated by combining adjusted population density and adjusted employment density (adjusted for jobs with customers, clients, patients, and students). These two factors, when combined, provide a composite demand score that can be translated into a level of transit service that is appropriate for the context. However, it is important to note that high composite demand does not always equal high propensity. Areas with high population or employment density and low propensity might still have high composite demand.

Areas shown in dark brown and orange—suburban or urban mixed use—can support higher levels of transit service, meaning 15-minute or better service. Areas in light brown or tan—rural or low density—indicate areas that don’t have the population or employment density to justify high levels of service, so services like on-demand or hourly service are most appropriate for that context.

Des Moines’ composite density shows support of 60-minute service, with some areas supporting 30- or 15-minute or better service. Throughout the region, high composite demand areas are typically in densely populated urban centers and major employment centers, most of which can be found inland as opposed to along the shoreline.

- **Downtown Seattle** has the highest composite demand in the Des Moines-Seattle area.
- **West Seattle** has high composite demand along and nearby the bay, specifically in Downtown West Seattle, North Admiral, Seaview, and Fairmount Park.
- **SeaTac**, has high composite demand, specifically in the area abutting the airport on the eastern and northern sides which are locations of upwards of 15-minute or better transit service.

- **Kent’s** northwestern industrial area is the largest high-density employment area outside of Seattle and has good composite demand due to its high employment density.

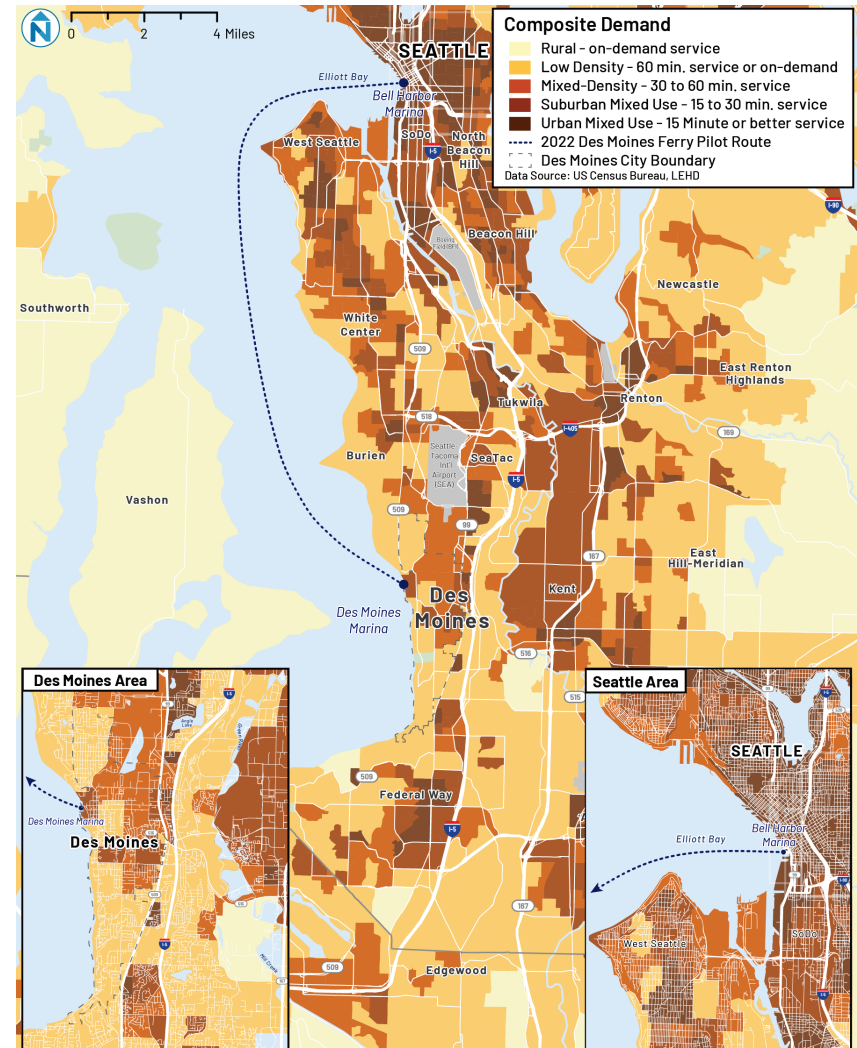


Figure 9 Composite Demand

Travel Pattern Analysis

Travel pattern analysis shows where people are traveling to, when they are traveling, and for what purpose they are traveling. This analysis is for all modes, inclusive of transit and non-transit modes, and utilizes Replica one-way trip data to and from Des Moines during Spring 2025 and is calibrated for volume using LEHD 2022 employment data.

Replica is an activity-based travel model that simulates where residents, visitors, and commercial vehicle travel happens in an area on a typical day. Replica data is grounded in multiple private and public source data, including data from personal mobile devices, demographic data from public and private sources, and credit transaction data for consumer spending. Replica data is best for understanding where, how, and for what purpose people are traveling, but is not best suited for volume, which is why LEHD data is used to properly calibrate the volumes.

Travel Patterns

Work trips and non-work trips differ in locations traveled to, time of trip taken, trip duration, and trip distance. Work trips are generally longer in both time and distance but occur less often than non-work trips.

On an average weekday, 82,000 non-work trips and 18,000 work trips are taken to and from Des Moines. Work trips travel an average of 10.5 miles, which is 3.6 miles farther than non-work trips (6.9 miles). Duration of travel time is consistent with the differential in trip distance, with trips taking 20.3 minutes, 6.5 minutes longer than a non-work trip.

The highest volume of trips to and from Des Moines occurs at 7:00 AM, where the hourly total exceeds 10,000. More than 2,000 hourly trips take place every hour between 5:00 AM and 8:00 PM, indicating high travel volumes throughout the day and not just in the peak periods.

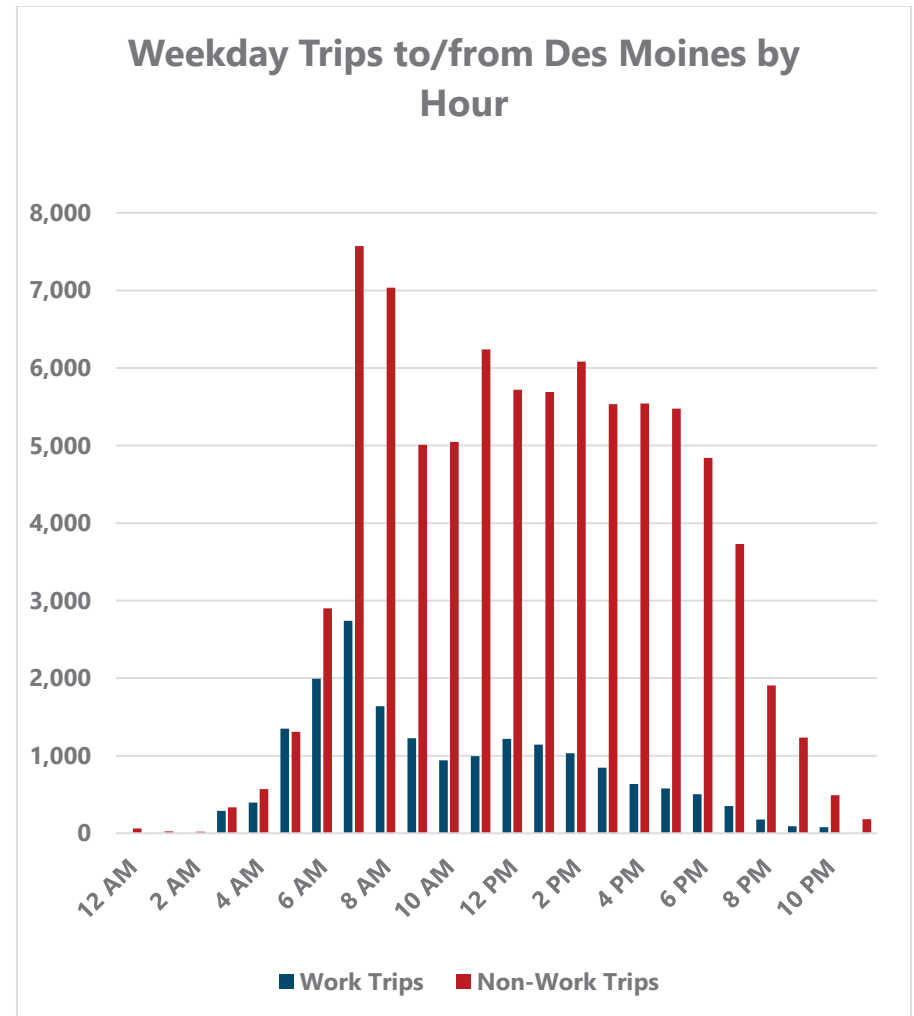


Figure 10 Weekday Trips to/from Des Moines by Hour

Commuter Patterns (Work Trips)

Commuter travel within the region is characterized by strong directional flows between residential areas and major employment centers. This section details one-way trips to work, meaning that the trip from home to work is included, but the trip from work to home is excluded. This improves the accuracy of this analysis, as it is difficult to accurately attribute trips returning home.

Key commuter markets for Des Moines include the SeaTac Airport area, the industrialized areas of northwest Kent and northwest Auburn, the SoDo district south of downtown Seattle, and localized commute travel within Des Moines. These destinations show that more people are traveling to places nearby Des Moines for work as opposed to into Seattle. Those that do travel to Seattle generally stay on the southern end of the city and in SoDo, with few commute trips heading north of downtown.

Commuter trips generally align with traditional peak travel periods, with the highest volume occurring between 5:00 AM and 8:00 AM. Private automobile travel accounts for 65% of all work trips, amounting to approximately 1,600 daily work trips to/from Des Moines.

Commuter Trips to Des Moines

Commuter trips to Des Moines are lower in volume than commuter trips from Des Moines. Figure 11 shows where people who end up in Des Moines are traveling from. Most commuter trips to Des Moines originate in Des Moines itself. Excluding those trips that start in Des Moines, the other location of high trip volumes is in western Renton and southern Tukwila, which is just east of SeaTac. Very few trips to Des Moines originate north of the aforementioned Renton/Tukwila area, with less than 25 trips originating in any block group north of that area.

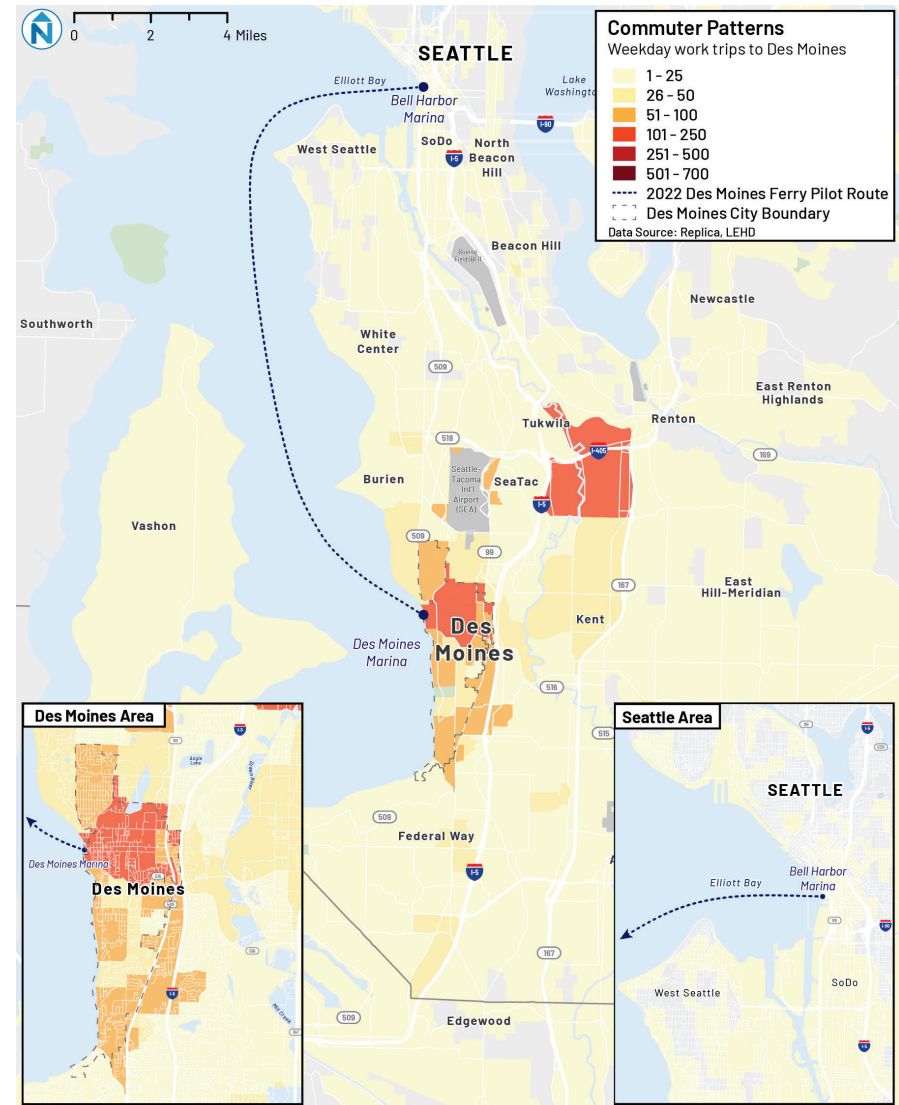


Figure 11 Commuter Trips Ending in Des Moines

Commuter Trips from Des Moines

Commuter trips originating in Des Moines are higher in volume than those that are traveling to Des Moines. There are more areas that are noteworthy travel locations from this perspective compared to work trips heading to Des Moines. Notable areas for commute travel originating in Des Moines are the industrial area in Kent, which has between 500 and 700 daily commute trips, and Sodo, west Renton, and South Tukwila which each have between 251 and 500 daily commute trips.

Trips from Des Moines to downtown Seattle are not as common as many other local trips, with most areas in Seattle having under 50 daily trips. The specific travel pattern between the area within 1/2-mile of the Des Moines Marina and the area within 1/2-mile of the Bell Harbor Marina in downtown Seattle has fewer than 50 daily trips, indicating that there is not high demand for a trip between those two specific locations. Those traveling into Seattle are more likely traveling to parts of Seattle that are south of downtown, like SoDo, as opposed to downtown and north.

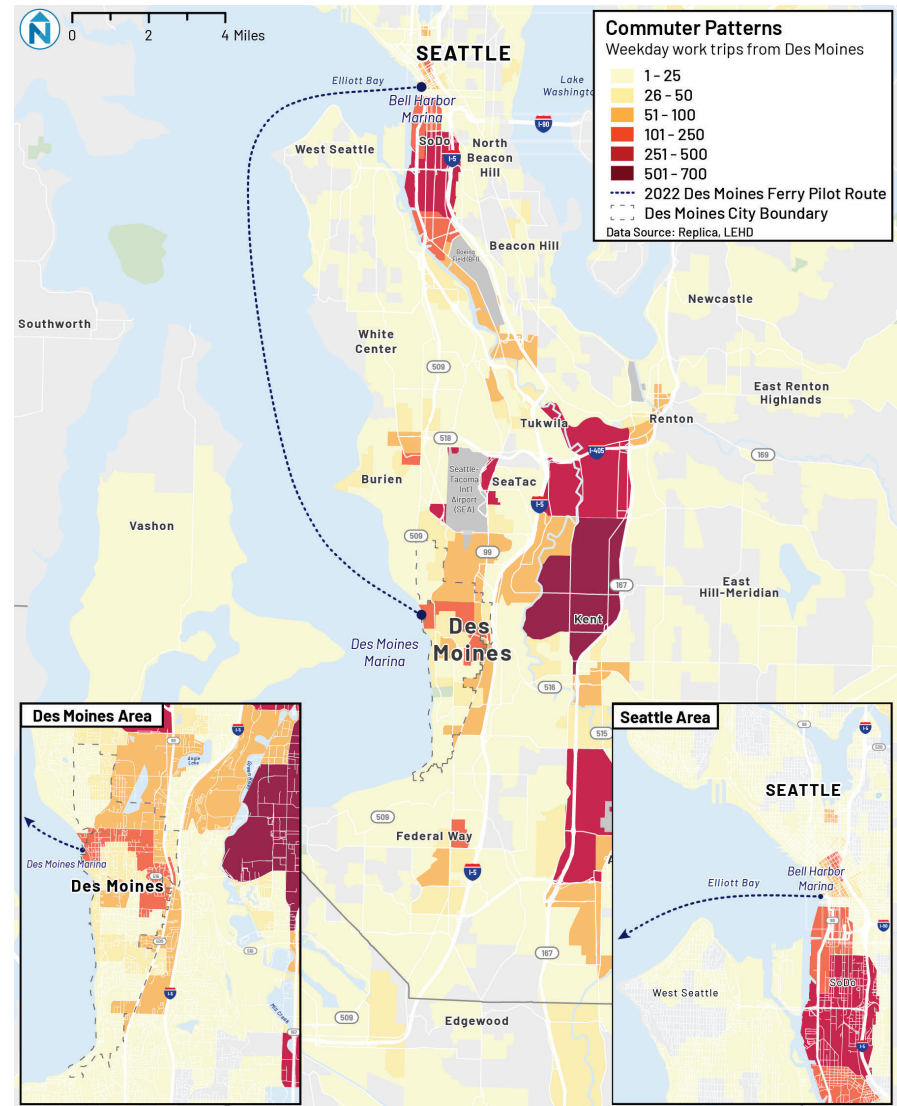


Figure 12 Commuter Trips Starting in Des Moines

Non-Work Trips

Non-commuter travel shows a more dispersed and time-flexible pattern compared to work trips. These trips occur throughout the day, particularly between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, rather than being concentrated in peak periods. This pattern reflects a range of trip purposes, including shopping, services, and social or recreational travel.

Non-commuter travel follows many of the same geographic patterns as commuter travel, such as to places like SeaTac, Kent, Federal Way, and SoDo. These trip patterns show that local circulation is very important for Des Moines residents. Non-work trips north of SeaTac are less common, and very few non-work trips are taken to Seattle.

Non-Work trips are four to six times higher in volume than work trips throughout the day. While traditional commuting patterns are relevant, the volume of non-work trips displays demand for all-day service.

Non-Work Trips to Des Moines

Non-work trips to Des Moines originate from local areas. Similar to the work trips to Des Moines, most non-work trips originate in Des Moines itself. SeaTac also has a high-volume of non-work trips, with between 1,000 and 2,500 daily trips. The industrial area on the western side of Kent along with the southern Tukwila and western Renton area each has between 500 and 1,000 daily trips.

There are hardly any non-work trips to Seattle, even areas such as SoDo, which showed higher travel volumes have relatively few trips. Downtown Seattle especially has less than 100 originating trips to Des Moines from each downtown block group.

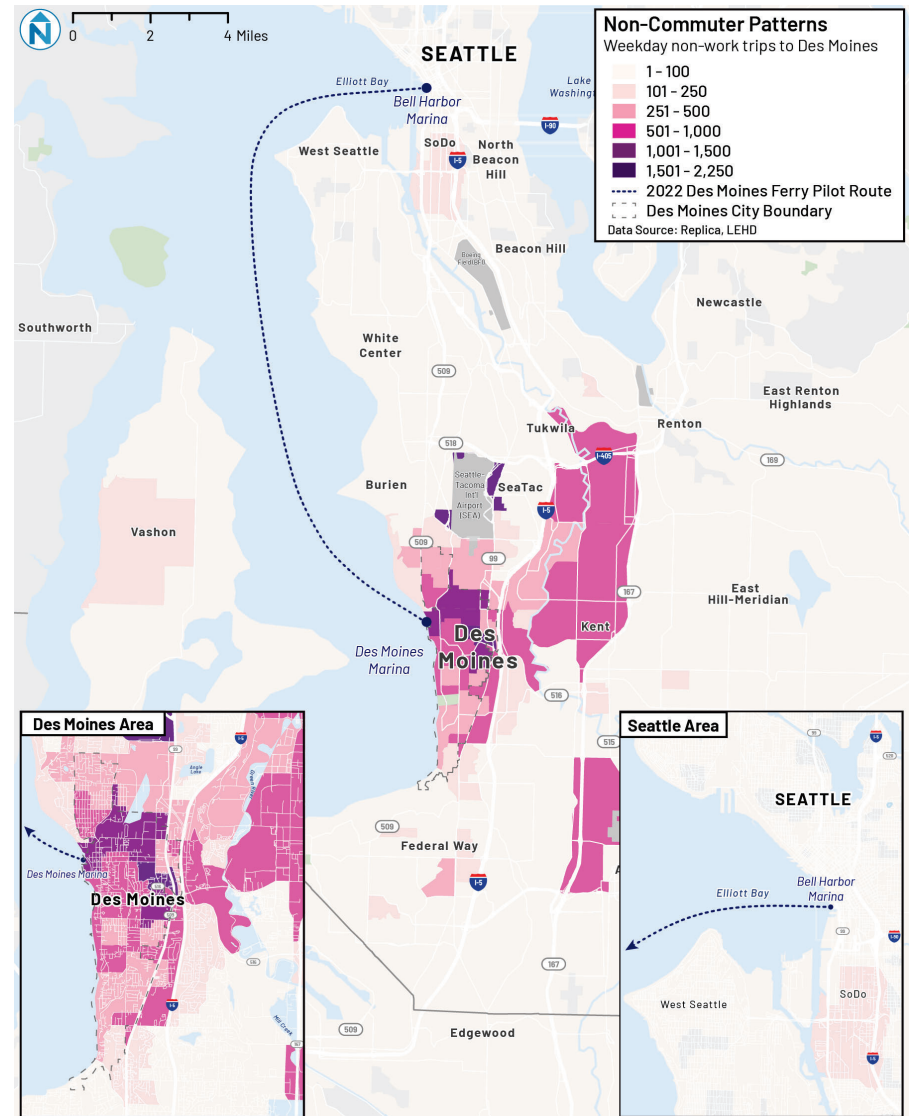


Figure 13 Non-Work Trips to Des Moines

Non-Work Trips from Des Moines

Non-work trips originating in Des Moines have similar travel patterns to work trips traveling to Des Moines, with most trips starting and ending in Des Moines. Areas in Des Moines have travel volumes that fluctuate by area between 100 and 2,250.

Like travel patterns to Des Moines, travel starting in Des Moines and ending in areas north of SeaTac are limited, with nearly all block groups having less than 100 daily non-work trips besides a few exceptions, like in SoDo, Beacon Hill, and south of downtown Seattle where between 101 and 250 daily trips occur.

Trips originating in the western Renton and southern Tukwila areas have increased travel volumes compared to trips to Des Moines, with daily trip volumes between 1,501 and 2,250. This is an industrial area, but also one with high densities of jobs involving customers, clients, patients, students, and/or visitors. This means that in addition to high volumes of commuters, high volumes of non-commuters will travel to this location too.

Trips that start in Des Moines and end in downtown Seattle are limited, with all areas north of Bell Harbor Marina having fewer than 100 daily trips, indicating that non-work travel demand for getting to Seattle is not high enough to justify transit that accommodates this specific travel pattern.

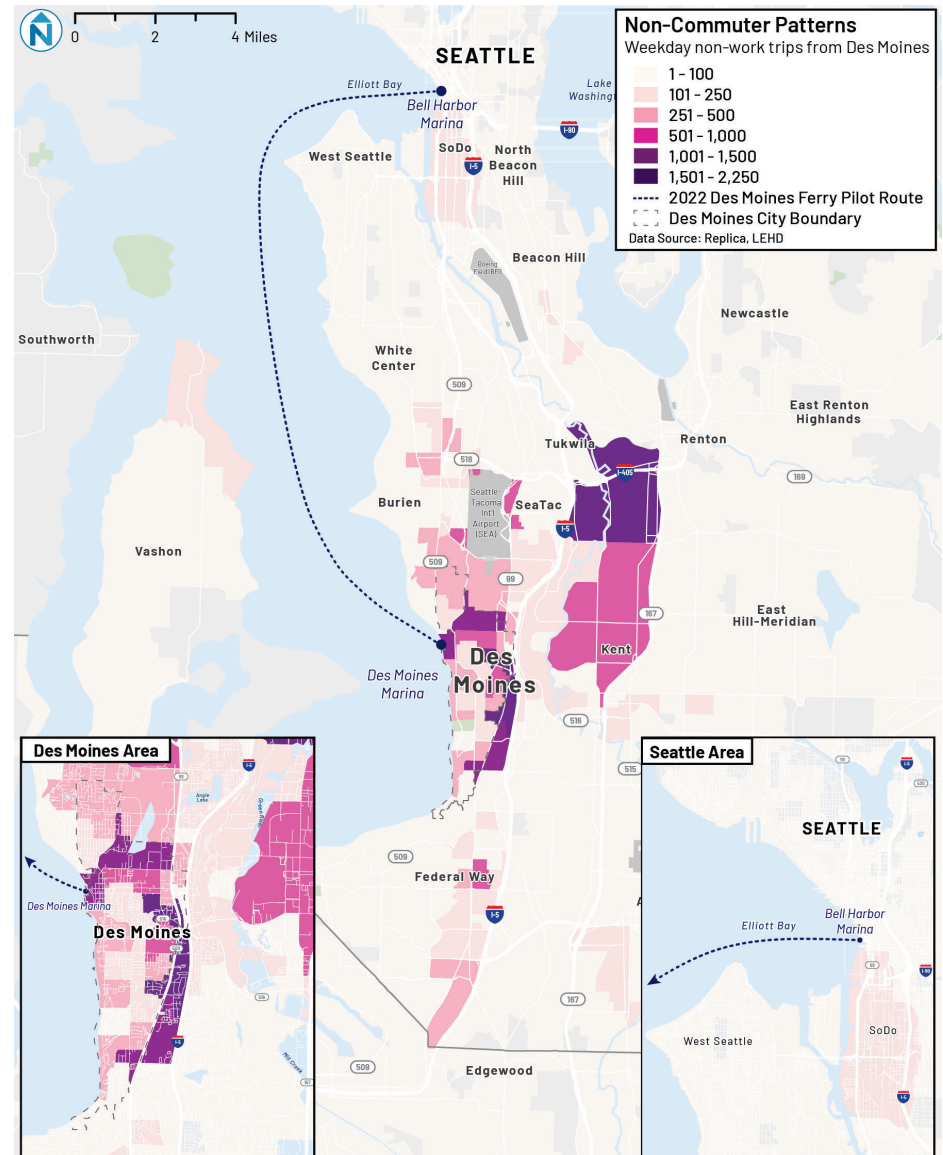


Figure 14 Non-Work Trips from Des Moines

TRAVEL TIMES BETWEEN

Comparing automobile and transit travel times between Des Moines and key regional destinations highlights a significant competitiveness gap that helps explain existing travel behavior and points to where future transit investments may be most impactful. Across the highest-volume travel markets, transit travel times are consistently longer than comparable auto trips, and often by large margins. For example, trips to Southcenter, which represent the largest travel flow at approximately 5,000 daily trips, take roughly 16 minutes by car but approximately 55 minutes by transit. Similar disparities exist for other major destinations, including both the Valley and West Hill of Kent, and Auburn, where transit travel times are typically two to three times longer than driving.

The only corridor where transit is competitive with automobile travel is between Des Moines and Federal Way, where transit travel times are nearly equivalent to driving. This competitiveness is attributable to the Link 1 Line, which provides a fast, direct, and high-frequency connection between Kent Des Moines Station and Federal Way.

Importantly, the corridors with the highest travel volumes, such as Southcenter, SeaTac, and the Valley and West Hill in Kent, are also those with the greatest transit travel time disadvantages. This mismatch suggests that the most significant opportunity for improving regional mobility lies in strengthening east-west transit connections and first-/last-mile access to high-capacity transit, rather than prioritizing a north-south ferry connection to Seattle. While a ferry may provide a fast and attractive option for the limited downtown market, the majority of daily trips to and from Des Moines are oriented towards nearby employment and commercial centers where transit currently does not compete with driving.

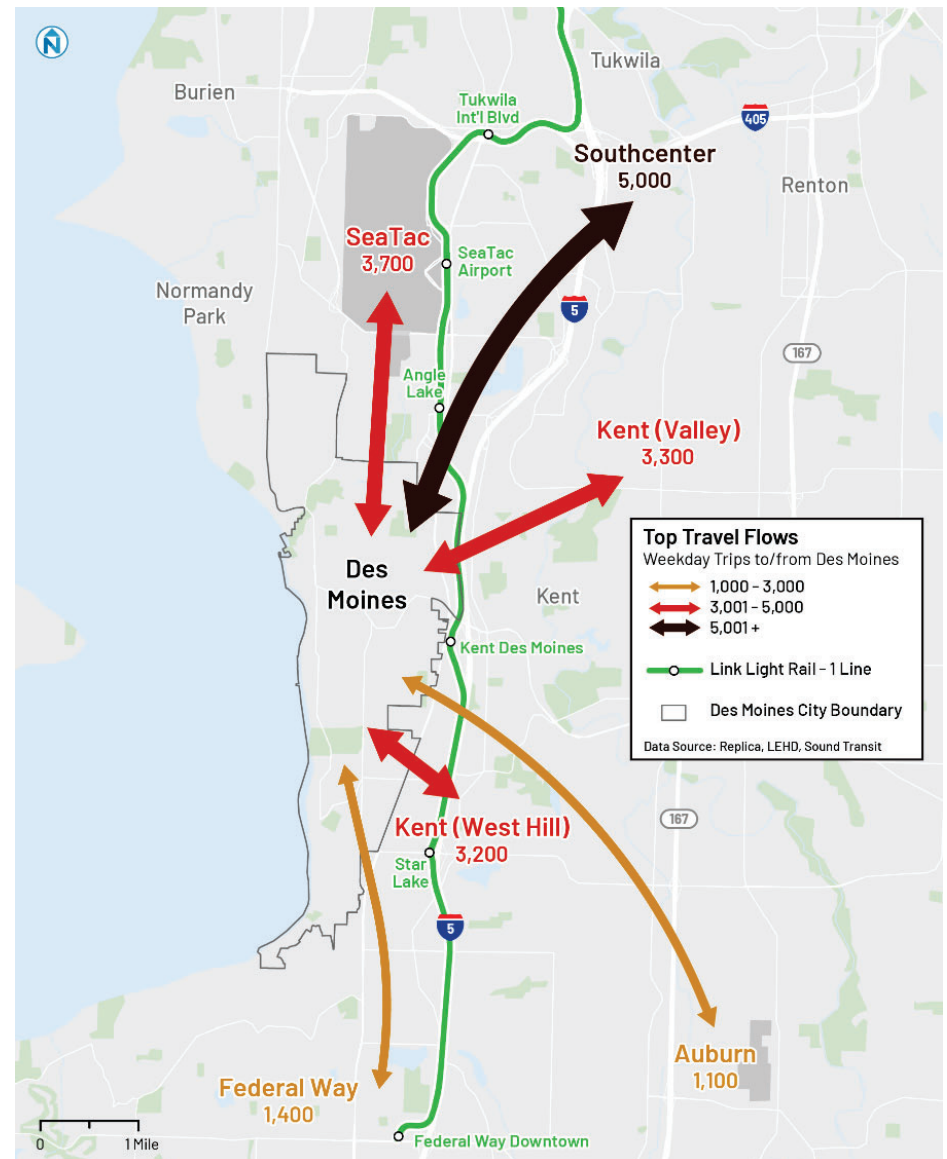


Figure 15 Top Weekday Regional Travel Flows to/from Des Moines

Table 2 Automobile and Transit Travel Times

Destination	Weekday Trips to and from Des Moines	Peak Auto Travel Time (min.)	Off-Peak Auto Travel Time (min.)	Peak Transit Travel Time (min.)	Off-Peak Transit Travel Time (min.)
Southcenter	5,000	16	16	55	55
SeaTac	3,700	14	12	25	25
Kent (Valley)	3,300	12	12	55	60
Kent (West Hill)	3,200	12	12	32	45
Federal Way	1,400	16	16	17	18
Auburn	1,100	24	20	65	55

*Peak times based on average travel times on Wednesdays at 8:30 AM; Off-Peak times based on average travel times on Wednesdays at 12:30 PM

SUMMARY AND FERRY MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Summary

This analysis evaluated transit market conditions in the Des Moines area within the broader Puget Sound context, with a focus on population and employment density, transit propensity, composite density, and travel patterns. These indicators suggest that Des Moines has meaningful underlying transit demand relative to nearby areas when demographic characteristics, job access, regional travel patterns, and composite demand are all considered together.

The travel pattern analysis highlighted several key nearby areas that consistently generate demand, including SeaTac, industrial centers in Kent and Auburn, SoDo, and local Des Moines travel. These patterns underscore the importance of providing both peak and off-peak local service options.

The Federal Way extension of Sound Transit's 1 Line created a Kent Des Moines Station, which will greatly help residents travel between Seattle, SoDo, SeaTac, Des Moines, and Federal Way in an efficient manner. Des Moines residents can now get to downtown Seattle in 45 minutes from the Kent Des Moines Station, which is only

With the expansion of Sound Transit's 1 Line, Des Moines is served locally by three Link stations: Angle Lake Station, Kent-Des Moines Station, and Star Lake Station. Angle Lake and Star Lake both include more than 1100 parking spaces each, and Kent-Des Moines includes more than 500 parking spaces, offering easy regional access for commuters not wanting to drive regionally.

10 minutes longer than the travel time of the Des Moines ferry that ran in 2022. ST's 1 Line operates every 8 minutes, which contributes an overall faster travel time a ferry.

Even though the ferry was 10 minutes faster, its frequency being every two hours would make trip planning much less flexible than the light rail, which offers trips approximately every 10 minutes during the day and 15 minutes in the early morning and evening; missing a ferry trip has a much greater impact on travel time than missing a light rail trip.

Ferry Market Opportunities

Today, Des Moines does not have high enough transit demand for ferry service and trips based into or out of Des Moines remain relatively local and do not exhibit high volumes of travel north of SeaTac. Des Moines also has existing transit options to get to nearby employment centers and into Seattle. With this understanding, there is no current potential for a ferry market between Des Moines and Seattle today.

The ideal conditions for a ferry service originating in Des Moines would involve connections to high-density employment centers where travel to and from Des Moines already occurs at meaningful levels. While there are numerous employment areas within the region that have travel demand, most are not located along or near the shoreline. As a result, ferry service would have limited ability to meaningfully influence travel patterns to and from these inland locations.

The clearest opportunities for effective ferry service are connections to downtown Seattle. However, these areas are well served by existing transit, particularly by Sound Transit's 1 Line. A ferry could offer a competitive and potentially more convenient alternative for certain users that are traveling directly into downtown Seattle, but it is unlikely to be a more convenient option than the transit options that are already available.

Des Moines does have the ability to build a transit market for a future ferry, but this will require significant effort and time to build the conditions that would support long-term ferry operations, including significant residential and commercial development of Des Moines' marina to create a destination that draws interest regionally. The City of Des Moines would need to consider these investments as part the city's broader goals to determine if developing a ferry market is a priority.

Des Moines, WA, Ferry Pilot
Evaluation and Alternatives

Ferry Pilot Evaluation

March 2026 - DRAFT

N NELSON
NYGAARD



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INTRODUCTION

Report Purpose

In 2022, the City of Des Moines launched a seasonal passenger-only ferry pilot connecting the Des Moines Marina to downtown Seattle as a demonstration of potential long-term ferry service. The pilot was designed to test operational feasibility, ridership demand, financial performance, and community interest in a permanent seasonal or year-round ferry service between the two localities. The ferry operated four round trips, five days a week for nine weeks.

The purpose of this report is to document the operational, financial, and ridership outcomes of the Ferry Pilot and to evaluate its overall effectiveness. This report analyzes service metrics, fare revenue and farebox recovery, passenger utilization, fuel consumption, and incorporates relevant survey results to inform future decision making regarding a Des Moines to Seattle ferry.

Document and Data Context

Reviewed documents and data:

- *Puget Sound Passenger-Only Ferry Study*, Puget Sound Regional Council, January 2021
- *Passenger Ferry Economic Impact Analysis*, The City of Des Moines, January 2025
- *City of Des Moines Passenger Ferry Demand Study*, The City of Des Moines, July 2020
- *Des Moines Marina Activation Update*, Colibri Northwest, January 2025
- *2022 Ferry Demonstration Project Final Report*, City of Des Moines, December 2022.
- *Des Moines Ferry Pilot Project 2022 Passenger Survey Results*, City of Des Moines, October 2024.
- *Various invoices from the Ferry Pilot*, City of Des Moines

OPERATIONAL DETAILS

The Des Moines Ferry Pilot operated from August 10th to October 9th, 2022, providing seasonal passenger-only ferry service between Des Moines Marina and Bell Harbor Marina in downtown Seattle. Service ran five days per week, Wednesday through Sunday, with four roundtrips per day scheduled at two-hour intervals beginning at 10:00 AM. This schedule was designed to accommodate both recreational travel and discretionary work or personal trips while avoiding peak maritime congestion periods.

Each one-way trip had a scheduled travel time of approximately 35 minutes, though actual travel times varied depending on operating speeds, weather conditions, tidal currents, and surrounding marine traffic in Puget Sound. The pilot service utilized a vessel that had a maximum capacity of 60 passengers and was operated by Puget Sound Express. With the exception of the first week, the vessel was stored in the Des Moines Marina. During the first week, the vessel was stored in Edmonds and traveled to and from Des Moines prior to and after the conclusion of daily service.

Depart Des Moines	Arrive Seattle	Depart Seattle	Arrive Des Moines
10:00 AM	10:35 AM	11:00 AM	11:35 AM
12:00 PM	12:35 PM	1:00 PM	1:35 PM
2:00 PM	2:35 PM	3:00 PM	3:35 PM
4:00 PM	4:35 PM	5:00 PM	5:35 PM

Figure 1 Ferry Pilot Schedule

PEER CONTEXT

There are four peers referenced in this report that provide context regarding cost metrics of a fully operating, non-pilot, ferry service. Three of these peers are local—Washington State Ferries, Kitsap County Ferry, and King County Ferry—and one of which is regional—San Francisco Bay Ferry. These providers represent a variety of fleet sizes and compositions, but are intended to provide a comparison point to better understand the Des Moines Ferry Pilot’s performance metrics.

Operator	Total Operating Cost	Unlinked Passenger Trips	Cost per Passenger	Cost per Revenue Hour	Total Vessels	Farebox Recovery
Des Moines Ferry Pilot	\$793,676	16,996	\$46.70	\$2,274.14	1	11%
Washington State Ferries	\$282,506,427	17,156,046	\$16.47	\$2,678.90	21	20%
Kitsap County Ferry	\$17,702,830	794,789	\$22.27	\$1,188.99	9	17%
King County Ferry	\$8,899,659	400,407	\$22.23	\$1,521.83	3	19%
San Francisco Bay Ferry	\$46,480,710	1,412,543	\$32.91	\$1,949.78	15	18%

Figure 2 Peer Ferry Operator Metrics

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Operational Cost

The Des Moines Ferry Pilot received \$975,000 in funding from the Des Moines City Council to support the planning and implementation of the service. This allocation covered a range of activities that went beyond the day-to-day vessel operations, including pre-launch planning, contractual services, administrative oversight, and marketing. In total, the ferry pilot cost \$976,936 to operate for the entire pilot period.

The Total Operating Cost, \$793,676, will be used for analysis in this report, as the specifics of cost allocation to the 2022 pilot regarding the General Consulting Support line item are unknown.

Error! Reference source not found. details the general costs that amount to both the Total Operating Cost and Total Ferry Pilot Cost. Except for the City of Des Moines Staff time, it is assumed that all these costs were funded through the City’s \$975,000 authorization.

Item	Cost
<i>City of Des Moines Funding</i>	\$975,000
Ferry Rental	\$203,777
Fuel	\$83,532
City of Des Moines Staff Time	\$42,750
Non-Operations Support (Marketing, Supplies)	\$93,411
Ferry Pilot Consulting Support	\$251,295
Ferry Operations (Management, Crew, Insurance, Maintenance)	\$121,840
Moorage in Seattle	\$15,030
Total Operating Cost	\$793,676
General Consulting Support ¹	\$183,300
Total Cost of Ferry Pilot	\$976,936

Figure 3 2022 Pilot Funding and Costs

¹ The City of Des Moines hired a consultant to support the Ferry Pilot and other additional City-based work related to ferries, amounting to \$183,300. While this consultant’s role is assumed to have been primarily focused on Ferry Pilot work, it is inappropriate to assume the portion of the work that was dedicated specifically to the 2022 ferry pilot. The consultant was also engaged in working on a more extended ferry pilot for 2023, which was subsequently cancelled due to a catastrophic breakdown of the intended vessel. For transparency, this cost is being included in the Total Cost of the Ferry Pilot, but this cost will be excluded from other analysis in the report.

Revenue Hours

Revenue hours can be defined as the span of time from the beginning of the first passenger trip to the completion of the final passenger trip on each service day. This measure reflects the full-service availability window, including layover time between trips and is commonly used in transit performance benchmarking.

The first daily trip departed from Des Moines at 10:00 AM and the final trip concluded in Des Moines at approximately 5:45 PM, resulting in about 7.75 scheduled revenue hours per service day. Across 45 service days, this equates to approximately 349 total scheduled revenue hours during the pilot period. Using the same operating cost of \$793,636, the cost per scheduled revenue hour was approximately \$2,274.

Fuel Cost

Over the full duration of the Des Moines Ferry Pilot, the vessel consumed approximately 16,156 gallons of fuel, resulting in a total fuel cost of \$83,532. With fuel priced at slightly more than \$5.00 per gallon during the pilot period, fuel represented a meaningful component of overall operating costs.

Fuel consumption was not uniform throughout the pilot period. The first week of service recorded the highest fuel

usage at 2,362 gallons. During that initial week, the vessel traveled daily between Edmonds and Des Moines before and after revenue service, resulting in approximately 700 additional gallons consumed compared to any other week of the pilot. This repositioning activity represents a non-revenue operating requirement and demonstrates how vessel staging and storage could affect costs in a scenario where housing the vessel locally is not an option.

In subsequent weeks, when the vessel was staged locally, the ferry required approximately 1,800 gallons fuel each week to operate scheduled service. This average reflects fuel used during active passenger service as well as idling, docking, maneuvers, and traveling to the staging area.

Fuel usage and associated costs are directly tied to several variables, including vessel type and engine efficiency, cruising speed, weather conditions, marine traffic patterns, and service frequency. Even modest adjustments to operating speeds or daily trip volumes can have measurable impacts on fuel consumption and total operating cost.

Costing Metrics

Transit providers think about the cost to provide service in two ways: total operating cost and marginal operating cost. Total operating cost (also called fully-allocated operating cost) includes all costs associated with delivering service, including support costs such as vessel procurement, moorage, advertising and marketing, administration, and other non-operational costs. Total operating costs are used to understand the full cost of delivering ferry service. For the Des Moines Ferry pilot, the total operating cost was \$793,636 for the duration of the project or \$2,274 per revenue hour of service.

Marginal operating cost includes only costs directly related to the delivery of service, including crew salaries, fuel,

Costing Metric	Total Operating Cost (\$793,636)	Marginal Operating Cost (\$220,402)
Revenue hours (349 hours)	\$2,274/ revenue hour	\$823/ revenue hour
Total one-way trips (360 trips)	\$2,205/ one-way trip	\$798/ one-way trip
Total passengers (16,996)	\$46.70/ passenger	\$16.90/ passenger
Potential passengers (21,600)	\$36.75/ seat	\$13.30/ seat

Figure 4 Total Operating Costs and Costing Metrics

maintenance, and insurance. Marginal operating cost gives insight into operational efficiency and performance. For the Des Moines Ferry pilot, the marginal operating cost was \$220,402 or \$823 per revenue hour of service.

Cost per Trip

The pilot scheduled 360 one-way trips over the nine-week service period, based on four inbound and four outbound trips per service day, five days per week. Using the marginal operating cost of \$220,402, the average operating cost per one-way trip was approximately \$798. This metric provides a useful comparison point to other passenger-only ferry services and helps illustrate the unit cost of delivering individual trips

Cost per Seat

Cost per seat builds off cost per trip, as it is more reflective of the cost of providing the service to a single rider. Cost per seat is representative of the maximum number of seats available and how much it would cost to deliver a trip if all seats were occupied. With 360 scheduled one-way trips and a vessel with a capacity of 60 passengers, the maximum number of potential seats was 21,600. Relative to the total cost, the cost per seat was \$36.75 and to the marginal operating cost it was \$13.30. Relative to the fares charged, at the marginal operating cost and fares of \$10, the ferry would need to

subsidize 25% of the cost/seat, and at the total operating cost, 75% of the total cost would need to be subsidized.

Cost per Passenger

With nearly 17,000 riders served during the pilot period and total operating costs of \$793,636, the average operating cost per passenger was approximately \$46.70.

FARES AND FAREBOX RECOVERY

The Des Moines Ferry Pilot charged a base fare of \$10 per one-way trip, excluding sales tax, with discounted fares available for seniors and military personnel at \$5 per one-way trip, and bringing a bike on required an additional \$4 on top of the ticket price. Youth under the age of 13 rode free. In the rider survey, 89% of respondents said that the ticket price was just right, with only 7% saying it was too high and 4% saying it was too low. Over the full duration of the pilot, the service generated \$89,456² in total fare revenue. The first week of service was fare-free to encourage ridership during the trial, after which weekly fare revenue averaged \$10,824, reflecting relatively stable revenue performance once fares were implemented.

Based on the total number of riders, including the first week which was fare free, the average fare was \$5.26. Excluding the first week, the average fare was \$6.28. Considering the cost per passenger was \$46.70, the ferry pilot project subsidized an additional \$40 per passenger to operate the service.

² The Des Moines Ferry Pilot Final Report states fare revenue of \$89,456 and data received from the City of Des Moines states fare revenue of \$86,590.

Weekly fare revenue after the initial week ranged from \$10,000 to \$11,700. This consistency suggests that fares remained as steady as ridership did, and that demand was not solely concentrated in the opening weeks of the pilot and was sustained through the late summer and early fall.

Based on the total operating costs of \$793,636 and total fare revenue of \$89,456, the Pilot achieved an overall farebox recovery ratio of 11% during the operating period.

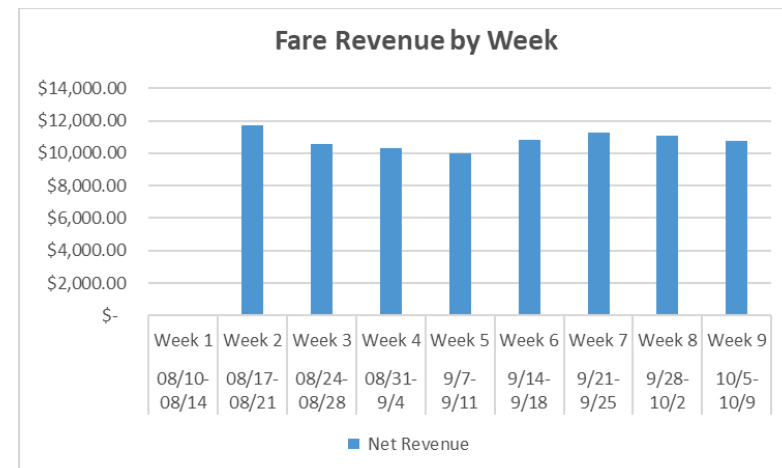


Figure 5 Fare Revenue by Week

RIDERSHIP AND LOADS

Across the pilot, 16,996 passengers rode the ferry. Weekly ridership during the Ferry Pilot ranged between approximately 1,500 and 2,000 riders, with the highest weekly total occurring during the first week of service. One key limitation to the ridership data is that it does not account for round trips or provide any detail on unique riders, therefore it is unknown how much of this ridership was people riding the ferry both directions or the same people frequently using the service.

On average, approximately 375 riders used the ferry service each day. With eight daily one-way trips and a vessel capacity of 60 passengers, the maximum theoretical daily capacity was 480 passenger trips. Based on average daily ridership, the ferry operated at roughly 75% of maximum capacity across all trips. However, it is important to note that a 60-passenger vessel is relatively small—this is about the same capacity as a standard 40-foot bus—and that a more standard vessel size can carry between 150-250 passengers. For further context, a similar vessel in the King County fleet is outfitted to carry 149 passengers with the same hull and deck configuration. For the size of the vessel, the level of utilization is strong, particularly for a new and limited-duration pilot

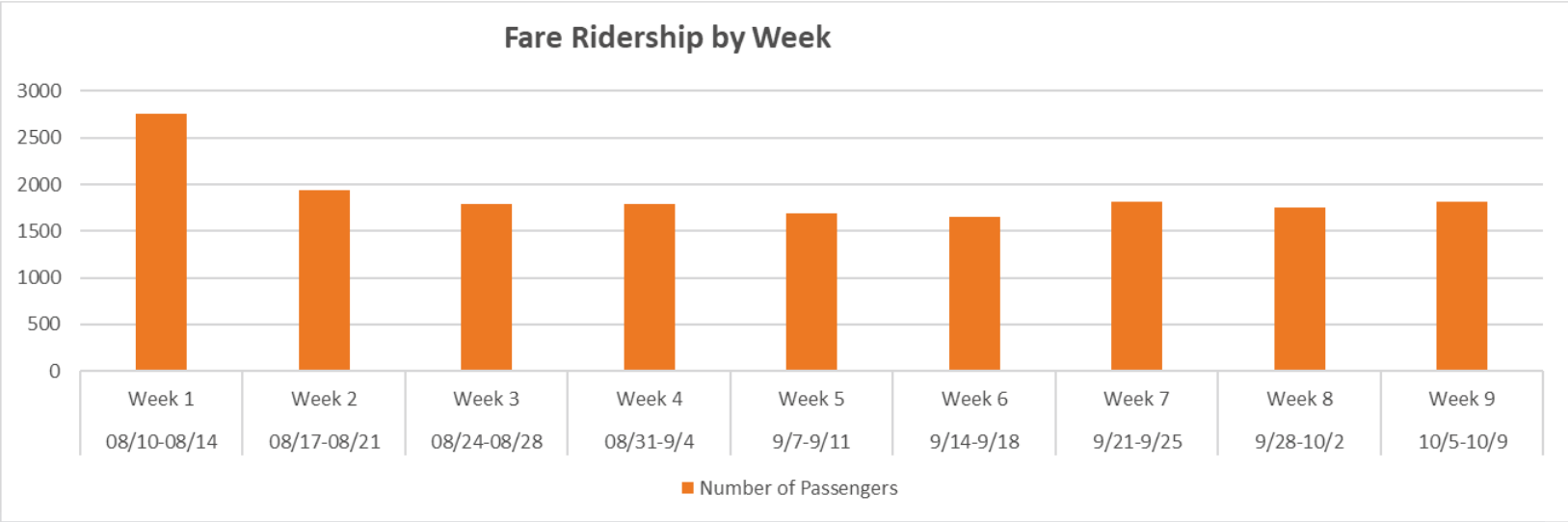


Figure 6 Ferry Ridership by Week

service. High average load factors suggest that the service was well received and that the market responded positively to the availability of a direct marine connection between Des Moines and downtown Seattle.

Rider survey results provide important context regarding the composition and potential sustainability of this initial ferry pilot demand. While survey results are not entirely representative of the rider base, the sample size of approximately 1,400 people is large enough to potentially be indicative of how people would respond to a future ferry service.

Survey responses collected during the pilot period show that 93% of respondents indicated that leisure or recreational travel was their primary purpose for using the ferry. On the contrary, only 2% reported business-related travel as their trip purpose. This distribution indicates that ridership was overwhelmingly discretionary in nature, rather than work-based.

Survey responses regarding future use of a permanent ferry service further reinforce the disparity between work and leisure travel. When asked how frequently they would use the service if it were offered on an ongoing basis, 77% of respondents indicated that they would ride periodically, 10% stated once or twice per week, and only 3% indicated that they would use the ferry more than twice per week. These responses suggest that while initial interest in the service was broad, relatively few riders anticipated using it on a daily, or even weekly basis.

Most riders were from the Des Moines and surrounding areas. 31% of riders originated in the City of Des Moines, with between 5%-8% coming from each Burien/Normandy Park, Federal Way West, Federal Way East, and Kent.

While considered in tandem, these findings indicate that the pilot successfully generated strong initial ridership and high vessel utilization, but much of the demand was leisure driven, and potentially relevant to the season or a specific event. As a result, sustaining similar ridership levels over a long-term operating period may require adjustments to service design, scheduling, fare structure, marketing strategy, or integration with regional transit connections, each of which would require additional effort and/or cost, especially with expanded schedules. Even with adjustments, the ability to sustain strong ridership is questionable considering the responses received by ferry riders indicate that their use of the ferry would not be consistent and is leisure-based as opposed to commute-based.

Ferry Pilot Passenger Survey

The Des Moines Ferry Pilot Project Team administered a survey to riders throughout the summer. Approximately 1,400 people completed the survey in full, with some opting to leave some questions blank.

15 questions were asked about the ferry service, including questions regarding existing ferry quality and the potential for a future ferry service.

CONCLUSION

The Des Moines Ferry Pilot demonstrated that there is clear and measurable demand for passenger-only ferry service between Des Moines and downtown Seattle. Over a nine-week operating period, the service carried nearly 15,000 riders, averaging approximately 375 passengers per day, and operated at nearly 75% of vessel capacity. Weekly fare revenue remained consistent following the introductory fare-free week, and the pilot achieved an overall recovery ratio of 41% when only considering direct operating costs. For a short-term pilot service, these results reflect strong public interest, operational execution, and effective marketing.

Operationally, the pilot functioned reliably within its planned schedule, consisting of four daily roundtrips, five days a week across nine weeks. The travel time between Des Moines and Seattle was approximately 35 minutes, providing a competitive and predictable marine connection to downtown Seattle compared to driving and transit options, albeit it is a more expensive alternative at \$10 per one-way trip. Competitive travel times are significantly hindered by 2-hour wait times between trips, making the ferry pilot less convenient to travelers. Marginal operating costs totaled \$220,402, which are just a portion of the \$793,636 total operating costs, resulting in an average cost of \$2,205 per one-way trip, \$2,274 per scheduled revenue hour, and \$46.70 per passenger. Fare revenue offset 11% of the total operating costs.

However, several factors raise questions about the long-term sustainability of replicating pilot-level performance under a permanent service model. Survey data shows that 93% of riders used the ferry for leisure purposes, with limited commute or business travel demand. Additionally, the vast majority of respondents said they would use a permanent service only periodically rather than on a weekly or daily basis. Beyond the survey results, the time of year that the pilot operated—August through October—was advantageous, as this is the height of regional tourism and a time of typically nice weather. These findings suggest the pilot ridership may not be repeatable and was potentially influenced by seasonal conditions, novelty effects, and concentrated promotional efforts.

Financially, while the pilot's operating performance was strong, it benefitted from a limited-duration structure, summer operating conditions, an initial fare-free week designed to stimulate trial ridership, and an end date which incentivized people to use it before it went away. Long-term service would additionally need to consider the ongoing costs of fuel, vessel staging, vessel maintenance, crewing and staffing, administration, and marketing, (not to mention vessel capital costs and back-up vessels, which are essentially a requirement to operate reliable service for long periods of time).

To have a successful full-time ferry service, the service itself would have to be expanded to appeal to a broader, non-leisure audience. An expanded ferry service would require more frequent daily trips across a longer service span, potentially more days of service, season-long or year-round service, long-term vessel storage during periods of no service, require at least one additional vessel, more staff to accommodate the expanded service, and marina space to house two or more vessels, all of which come with their own additional costs. In addition to these service expansion factors, operational factors such as the cost of fuel, planning, maintenance, operation, and management would all increase as well. Considering that the grand total cost of the nine-week, single-vessel ferry pilot was \$976,936 and generated \$89,456 in fare revenue, it is difficult to envision a future, more expansive ferry service that is sustainable from a cost-perspective, at least without fares exceeding \$40 per one-way trip, of which would likely not be supported by the market.

In all, the Des Moines Ferry Pilot can be characterized as an operational success that effectively demonstrated market interest. However, the sample size that the pilot represents is insufficient to predict how the connection between Des Moines and Seattle could, or would, operate on a larger scale. From a cost perspective, the pilot showed that there are many considerations that would be required for a longer-term operation, including costs, ridership sustainability, and service expansion. Ridership peaked in the first week and nothing indicated that ridership would continue at that level or increase with the establishment of a long-term, expanded operation. Simultaneously, the potentially unsustainable ridership and realities of long-term ferry operating costs suggest that maintaining similar utilization and cost recovery yearly or seasonally could be challenging.

The Des Moines Marina still has potential as a ferry terminal for other regional ferry operators. Its location between Seattle and Tacoma could be a strategic regional portal for other ferry operators seeking to improve access to other South King County trip generators. In such a case, Des Moines could play a role as a midpoint stop, and as a result could have the potential for service connecting Des Moines to downtown Seattle through another ferry operator. Such a partnership would provide Des Moines residents with the benefit of a ferry service to downtown Seattle but without the financial pressures that operating a ferry service comes with. An alternative like this is worth exploring through studies and gauging community interest, but not at the expense of other mobility improvements that would be better suited for the people of Des Moines.



MEMORANDUM

To: City of Des Moines, Washington
From: Nelson/Nygaard, Greg Nordin
Date: March 26, 2026
Subject: Transportation Planning Literature Review

The purpose of this memo is to provide a foundation for the City of Des Moines to explore future transportation strategies and ensure they are in accordance with or build upon regional transportation planning efforts. The operation of a Des Moines – Seattle passenger-only ferry (POF) pilot in 2022 has sparked further interest in exploring transportation alternatives from the city to surrounding municipalities. This memo reviewed nearly a dozen planning documents and summarized the most recent local and regional transportation strategies that would impact the City of Des Moines. These planning documents range from local and regional planning departments to local and regional transit agencies.

Key Findings

- Both King County Metro (Metro) and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) planning documents propose additional POF. The PSRC alternative of a Tacoma – Seattle route does include a potential stop in Des Moines but Des Moines is absent from any planned service in Metro’s planning document. The challenges facing POF service are significant capital and operating costs, modest travel time savings due to parallel transit options along the I-5 corridor, and limited POF capacity in Seattle’s pier network.
- The impending extension of the Sound Transit (ST) 1 Line to Federal Way accounts for the most significant regional planning effort impacting Des Moines through 2050. There are no other major transportation investments planned with the exception of further promoting and assisting local municipalities to implement pro-growth housing and employment policies around these major transit facilities and improving pedestrian and multi-modal access in their vicinities.
- Des Moines is proposed to have two frequent bus routes by 2050; Route 165 and Route 156. Frequent service is defined as operating every 15 minutes for 16 hours on weekdays and 12 hours on the weekend. Route 165 east of Kent Des Moines Station would be a candidate for conversion to RapidRide. This supports the region’s vision to have the majority of trips transition from local bus service to premium modes by 2050.
- Transportation-related planning documents are heavily coordinated at the local and regional level. The recommendations and goals found in these documents are largely in concert and supportive of an overall regional vision to target population and economic growth in areas with existing or planned high-quality transit service as well as providing multi-modal access to and from these areas.

Transportation Planning Literature Review

City of Des Moines

- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Puget Sound Gateway Program is projected to reduce traffic congestion in Des Moines on local and arterial roads north of the SR 509 extension currently under construction, notably, SR 99 (pacific highway). However, the intersections in and around Des Moines that serve on and off-ramps to the new expressway is expected to have higher traffic volumes, longer delays, and lower levels of service than under a no build scenario.

Sources

This memo examined 14 planning documents from five different entities, including one municipality, two transit agencies, one state department of transportation (DOT), and one metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Although the local and regional planning documents typically try to create a cohesive planning vision with one another, due to the differences in publishing years and impact of the pandemic on travel behavior, some of the proposed strategies have been altered or outdated.

Figure 1: Research Documents

Entity	Plan	Publish Year	Horizon Year
City of Des Moines	Transportation Improvement Plan	2026	2045
City of Des Moines	Imagine Des Moines	2024	2044
City of Des Moines	Marina Master Plan	2007	-
City of Des Moines	Shoreline Master Plan	2011	-
King County Metro	Transit Development Plan/Metro Connects	2021	2050
King County Metro	Transit Development Plan	2025	2030
King County Metro	South Link Connections, Phase 3	2025	2026
King County Metro	South Link Connections: Public Engagement Report	2026	-
Sound Transit	Transit Development Plan	2025	2030
Sound Transit	Regional Transit Long-Range Plan	2014	-
Puget Sound Regional Council	Vision 2050	2020	2050
Puget Sound Regional Council	Regional Transportation Plan	2022	2050
Puget Sound Regional Council	Passenger-Only Ferry Study	2021	-
Washington State Department of Transportation	Puget Sound Gateway Program – Phase 1 SR509 Completion Project	2018	-

CITY OF DES MOINES

The City of Des Moines has four documents related to transportation planning. The published year is in parenthesis.

Des Moines Transportation Improvement Program, 2026-2045 (2026)

The city's Public Works Department through its Transportation Engineering Division annually updates a Transportation Improvement Program with a 20-year horizon. The document includes dozens of projects that range from street improvements to funding transportation studies. The most notable planned projects with a regional or transit focus are below.

- *Sound Transit – Link Light Rail*, The 1 Line Extension to Federal Way opened in December 2025, significantly expanding access to the light rail network with two additional stations. Now no part of Des Moines – a geographically long and narrow city – is more than two miles from a light rail station. The Angle Lake station is under one mile northeast of Des Moines, the Kent Des Moines station is directly adjacent to the Des Moines city boundary on S 236th St , and the Star Lake station is located one-half mile east of the city boundary on S 272nd St. .
- *Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update*: This plan is programmed for 2028 and would update the 2009 plan.
- *Downtown Circulation Study*. The plan, programmed for 2029-2031, will explore a strategy to increase multi-modal use, pedestrian access and traffic operations.

Imagine Des Moines 2044 (2024)

The City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan was recently updated and documents planning and growth strategies across a 20-year horizon. The transportation element in the document is heavily informed by the land use forecasts and growth projections in the city and were made in coordination with the assistance and plans developed by King County, Sound Transit, PSRC, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Overall, the plan emphasizes coordinating with local municipalities and over-arching agencies to provide varied transit options.

Transportation

- *Land Use Goal 3.1* advocates efforts that helps ST and Metro implement high-capacity transit through Des Moines. This includes coordinating with transit agencies and major stakeholders to develop a multi-modal approach that connects communities to any future service.
- *Land Use Goal 3.2* supports establishing goals and strategies for transit supportive development within 1.5 miles of any proposed stations, including the South Des Moines, Pacific Ridge, and Woodmont neighborhoods. It also emphasizes coordinating with neighboring municipalities and related transit agencies.
- *Transportation Goal 4.1*. advocates for the expansion of Metro and ST to increase fixed-route bus service, RapidRide, light rail, and explore the feasibility of permanent ferry service.
- The city documents that the 2022 ferry pilot program was well-received and will continue to explore a permanent service.

Land Use

- According to PSRC, the city is classified as a High-Capacity Transit (HCT) Community due to its proximity to the region's HCT system. King County's Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) projects a need for 3,800 new housing units by 2044, half of which should be at or below the area median income. King County's Urban Growth Capacity Report indicates the city has the available land to obtain this goal.

Transportation Planning Literature Review

City of Des Moines

- *Housing Goal 1.2* calls for mandating an affordability component and minimum density requirements in areas withing walking distance to light rail stations.
- With regards to residential land use, the city wants to maintain the character of a single-family residential community with more “missing middle” housing types and improved pedestrian infrastructure. Higher densities should be permitted closer to HCT areas.

Des Moines Shoreline Master Plan, 2011

This plan discusses, in part, the construction of transportation facilities, which include ferry terminals. The plan permits the construction of water dependent transportation facilities, subject to a Shoreline Conditional Use Permit and various conditions outlined in the plan. Although not prohibited, new facilities and infrastructure needed to support a ferry terminal (e.g., parking facility) would face stronger conditions and requirements for approval due to the shoreline location, such as maintaining public access and environmental standards.

Des Moines Marina Master Plan, 2007

The 2007 plan reveals a long-held vision by the city to implement a ferry service to alleviate congestion on the land-based north-south transportation corridors. The study cited the Des Moines Marina as a potential passenger ferry terminal due to its proximity to other major transportation modes, such as Sea-Tac airport, light rail, State Highway 509, and Interstate 5. It recommended that any changes to the marina, including the marina entrance or guest moorage area should not preclude the possibility of a future passenger ferry terminal.

KING COUNTY METRO

King County Metro provides service throughout the county and the City of Seattle. It’s services into and near Des Moines include Routes 156, 165, 635, and the RapidRide A Line. There are three recent planning document that have or will impact transit in Des Moines.

South Link Connections: Public Engagement Report (2026)

This report summarized the planning, outreach, and outcomes of the public engagement process and how it impacted the final network proposal developed as part of the South Link Connections Mobility Project (SLC). The purpose of the SLC was to determine how Metro services in King County should be redesigned to complement Sound Transit’s Link three-station light rail extension from Angle Lake to Federal Way, which parallels much of Des Moines. The engagement approach consisted of three phases:

- Phase 1: Needs Assessment – Initial outreach to more than 200 organizations through a multilingual survey to glean and define five mobility needs from a network redesign. This occurred in the spring and summer of 2024.
- Phase 2: Service Concepts – Based on the feedback from Phase 1 and technical analysis, a draft network was developed. Outreach included materials translated into 14 languages and six contracted community-based organizations that engaged with over 800 people.

- Phase 3: Service Proposal – Phase 2 feedback further refined the proposed network. Public outreach expanded significantly with more than 4,200 participants and more than 30 events and online outreach. Select materials continued to be translated into 14 languages. This occurred in the summer of 2025

Language Identification

As noted in the report, materials were translated into 11 languages in Phase 1 and 14 languages in Phase 2 and Phase 3. These were selected based 2022 US Census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). The languages are Amharic, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Dari, French, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Ukranian, and Vietnamese. Dari, French, and Tigrinya were added in Phases 2 and 3, based on community feedback. Updated 2024 figures for the PUMA containing Des Moines are detailed in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Language Spoken at Home, PUMA 223308 (King County Southwest), 2024

Language	Estimated Speakers
Spanish	18,000
Vietnamese	5,400
Amharic, Somali, or other Aro-Asiatic languages	4,600
Tagalog	3,800
Arabic	3,700

Des Moines Outreach and Results

Among area-wide outreach efforts that included surveying, media campaigns, and public presentations during all three phases, the City of Des Moines was also directly engaged to glean the needs specific to the city. Details of these efforts, their results, and impacts, are detailed for each phase, below.

Phase 1: Outreach efforts included tabling at an Earth Day event in Des Moines. The needs identified for Des Moines included improved connections between Des Moines and Kent and 15-minute weekend service in and around the city. The needs analysis also identified the increased importance of intra-community travel post-COVID with Des Moines listed among the top five cities in the study area.

Phase 2: Subsequent surveys and a Des Moines City Council Presentation in February 2025 revealed a need for greater service area coverage and peak-only service between Des Moines/Burien and downtown Seattle. This resulted in the proposed restoration of suspended peak-only routes 121, 122, and 123 and new areas served in the draft concept network.

Phase 3: Efforts specific to Des Moines include tabling at the Community Covenant Church, and an additional presentation to the City Council. These meetings reinforced the need for additional coverage in South Des Moines and nearby Star Lake.

Approval for the proposed network increased by 24% compared to Phase 2, which suggests that outreach efforts and the response to community needs helped improve community satisfaction about the project. Included in the changes to the proposed network that were specific to Des Moines were the improved connections between Des Moines and Kent.

Transit Development Plan, 2025 – 2030 (2025) and South Link Connections Phase 3

This plan conforms with the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2021-2031) and the long-range Metro Connects Plan. It does not appear that King County Metro has significant plans impacting Des Moines by 2030. Recent transit planning efforts are related to the South Link Connection study, which is a three-phase study to restructure bus service to serve the ST 1 Line extension to Federal Way. Currently in Phase 3, the changes impacting Des Moines area routes are detailed in Figure 2. These changes would increase the quality of existing bus service serving Des Moines but would not significantly expand the geographic extent of the service. Moreover, despite the splitting of existing Route 165 into two routes, most trips would be served by the same bus that would layover and change route signs at Kent Des Moines Station. As a result, riders may not need to transfer to a different bus if their trips start and end on either side of Kent Des Moines Station.

Figure 3: South Link Connections Phase 3 Proposed Changes to Des Moines Area Routes

Routes	Frequency	Span	Alignment
Route 156	Weekday: Improve midday service to 15-30-minute headways. Weekend: Improve peak service to 30-60-minute headways and midday service to 30-minute headways.	Weekday: Expand first and last trips to 4:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Weekend: Expand first trip to 4:30 a.m.	Extend alignment eastwards on S 240 th St to serve Kent Des Moines Station.
Route 164	All Days: Improve peak and midday service to 15-minute headways. Night service improved to 30-minute headways. Sunday: Evening service improved to 30-minute headways, matching existing weekday and Saturday service levels.	Weekday: Expand first trip to 4:15 a.m. Saturday: Expand first trip to 4:45 a.m. Sunday: Expand first and last trips to 4:45 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.	Route operates existing Route 165 alignment between Kent Des Moines Station and Green River College.
Route 165	Replaced by Routes 164 and 166		
Route 166	Weekday: Improve peak service to 15-30-minute headways and night service to 30-60-minute headways. Sunday: Improve midday and evening service to 30-minute headways.	Weekday: Expand first trip to 4:15 a.m. Saturday: Expand first trip to 5:15 a.m. Sunday: Expand first trip to 5:15 a.m.	Route operates existing Route 165 alignment between Kent Des Moines Station and Burien Transit Center Park-and-Ride.
Route 121 (Suspended)	Permanently removed		
Route 122 (Suspended)	Permanently removed		
Route 635	No Mention		

Although service on the 1 Line Link Light Rail extension began on December 2025, the bus changes associated with Phase 3 of South Link Connections have not been implemented. Metro's contracted Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) service continues to operate an alignment between Angle Lake Station and near the marina. The only other major planning effort in this document that may impact Des Moines was the replacement or preservation of six RapidRide A Line stations, programmed for 2028. It is unclear from the report which stations will be improved.

Metro Connects, 2021 – 2050 (2021)

This document is Metro's unconstrained and partially funded long-range plan spanning three decades with a proposed 70% increase in service by 2050. The vision would also disproportionately benefit priority populations (minorities, low-income, limited-English, or have a disability). The plan calls for the following strategies that may impact service in Des Moines.

RapidRide Service

- Increased investment in RapidRide services. This includes improvements on speed and reliability through transit priority measures, such as TSP, BAT lanes, and/or queue jumps.
- Enhanced customer amenities (e.g., Wi-Fi, all-door boarding, off-board fare payment).
- Major capital investments on facility access improvements.
- Metro also stressed the importance of working with cities to help enable transit-supportive land uses along existing (and future) RapidRide corridors. It also seeks city support for speed and reliability improvements. Cities are asked to assist in project planning and right-of-way acquisition while Metro would assume funding for passenger facilities and roadway enhancements.
- The RapidRide proposed map indicated an east-west ride from Kent Des Moines station towards state highway 167 and south towards Auburn. However, this appears to have been partially fulfilled by the new Route 165 that operates between Burien Station and Green River College in Auburn. However, this route does not operate at RapidRide service levels.

Frequent Service

- The plan classified frequent service as at least 15-minute headways 16 hours a day on weekdays and 12 hours on weekends. There appears to be two frequent routes identified in the proposed 2050 service map and appear to be similar to existing Route 165 and Route 166.

Express Service

- The plan proposes all-day express service with more frequent service during the peak periods. In the proposed 2050 service map, there continues to be express service operating parallel to the A Line corridor although it is unclear which routes or what park and ride lots are served.

Ferry Service

- Although the plan discusses water transportation expansion, there are no plans for ferry service between Des Moines and Seattle.

Mobility Hubs

- Metro intends to transform park-and-ride lots in medium density service areas into Mobility Hubs. These hubs would meet the growing demand for multi-modal access needs, such as enhanced pedestrian and

bicycle access, electric vehicle charging, improved waiting areas and pickup zones, and other amenities. The plan does not identify which park-and-ride lots but they would typically be located in high and medium density areas.

Transit Infrastructure

- Metro plans on doubling the number of layover locations (an increase of 270 spaces) due to the increased service (430 new buses) proposed for 2050. Layovers typically occur near one of the termini of a route and involves working with the municipality or property owner to secure an agreement for use of the layover location. Layover locations may already include or impact DART route 635 and Route 156 as they have at least one terminus in or near Des Moines¹.
- In addition, with the increased desire to reduce emissions and work towards a zero-emission fleet, there will be an increased need for layover charging locations for electric buses, which will require increased municipal involvement due to the added complexity of the service.

SOUND TRANSIT

Sound Transit is the regional transit agency serving Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties. As such, their planning takes on a larger regional emphasis than Metro with service centered on regional bus and rail modes. ST currently have short-range and long-range planning documents that are valid through 2025. ST is currently undergoing a new long-range planning document for 2026.

Transit Development Plan, 2025 – 2030 (2025)

This plan discusses planned changes through 2030. Beyond the major extension of the 1 Line and its associated impacts on King County Metro and Sound Transit bus service, there are no other major changes or strategies affecting impacting Des Moines. The following changes may influence Des Moines transportation planning efforts.

- ST Express Bus service (Routes 574, 577, 578, 580, 590, 592, 594, and 595) would be altered to better serve the 1 Line extension to Federal Way.

Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (2014)

The long-range plan focuses on increasing regional connectivity and expanding HCT service. The plan also stresses the need for the MPO to work with local municipalities to produce transit services and infrastructure that are context-sensitive and promote the land use visions of those communities.

- The 1 Line would extend further than the recent extension to Federal Way, reaching as far south as DuPont via Tacoma. This would enhance southbound travel access for Des Moines residents.
- Sound Transit will continue to collaborate and work with communities to manage parking demand and multi-modal access near their transit facilities. This includes access improvements within ¼ mile of those facilities.

¹ Route 156 may layover at the new Kent Des Moines Station, although it is unclear in the diagrams.

- Plans to build strong relationships with municipalities in order to promote and facilitate TOD strategies.
- ST is flexible in how it explores implementing additional BRT services. These are often inter-agency efforts where ST will pay for the capital costs, but the service is operated by the local transit agency.

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

The PSRC is the governing MPO for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and helps coordinate regional planning decisions regarding transportation and economic development. This memo reviewed three planning documents developed by PSRC.

Passenger-Only Ferry Study (2021)

This study examined passenger-only ferry route alternatives throughout the 12 counties that border Puget Sound. The study assumed a publicly operated service model and used a four-step process to rank and reduce the 45 potential routes for implementation.

The two route alternatives relevant to Des Moines in this analysis were different than the POF pilot implemented in 2022 (Des Moines – Seattle). This study examined a proposed Des Moines – Southworth route that built upon a 2008 study that identified a Bainbridge – Des Moines POF route as “potentially feasible” but was never implemented. The shift to Southworth was due to the improved POF capabilities there to accommodate the new Kitsap Transit POF service between Southworth and Seattle (operations began in 2021). The proposed service was intended to attract travelers heading to or from SeaTac airport as the analysis found that travel time savings of more than 35 minutes (compared to a car) could be achieved between the Kitsap Peninsula and the airport, even after assuming a 20-minute shuttle ride from the Des Moines Marina to the airport.

The other alternative was the previously studied Tacoma – Seattle route with a potential stop in Des Moines. However, the analysis only considered direct trips between Seattle and Tacoma in their operational and financial findings. The study mentioned that any stop in Des Moines would result in increased travel times and other impacts (e.g., operational costs and potentially capital costs) would need to be further evaluated.

Both alternatives succeeded Steps 1 and 2, which reduced routes based on waterway conditions, land-use, and travel time savings. In Step 3, routes were ranked according to ten factors. The Des Moines - Southworth route ranked high in travel time savings but low in public support according to surveys. Ridership was also projected to be low although this analysis was based on recreational and general commute demand as opposed to a more complex airport-demand analysis. The alternative also scored average in the quality of modal connections, due to the lack of existing direct transit service between the Des Moines Marina and the airport. These findings resulted in the alternative ranking 12th out of 18 and was eliminated from further analysis.

The Tacoma – Seattle alternative scored highest in the weighted rankings with high scores on commute potential and modal connections. The route, which excluded Des Moines from the analysis, would project to have 290 weekday riders spread across three trips during each peak period, for six total daily roundtrips. The route would help riders avoid the congested I-5 corridor but produce only modest travel time savings of 5 to 15 minutes compared to the fastest transit options. These saving would be reduced or eliminated entirely for Tacoma riders if a stop at Des Moines were included.

Due to the long travel times of 55 minutes, the route would need to operate two vessels with a third in reserve, significantly increasing capital costs although federal grants can be used for capital investments. These vessels would also need to be larger and more powerful to comfortably transport riders longer distances across the Puget Sound. This would render electric alternatives difficult or impossible and increase capital and operating costs. The annual operating costs were projected as \$4,280,000. The study does not include projected revenues or projected farebox recovery (ratio of fare revenue to operating costs) but it includes Kitsap Fast Ferry service which averaged a farebox ratio of 26% system-wide. The travel distances on the two Kitsap Fast Ferry routes in operation at the time of the study (Bremerton – Seattle and Kingston – Seattle) would be comparable to a Des Moines – Seattle route.

Regional Transportation Plan 2050 (2022)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the transportation element within the overarching Vision 2050 document, which outlines a plan to manage and influence growth in the region. The RTP identifies particular areas of transportation modal growth that are salient to the services in and around Des Moines.

- The RTP anticipates significant investment in high-quality transit services, particularly BRT and rail modes. As a result, BRT and rail is projected to increase from 10% and 11%, respectively, to 25% and 34% of ridership, consisting of nearly 60% of ridership. The share of local bus ridership is projected to decline from 73% to 37%.
- The region is cautious towards recommending Mobility on Demand (MOD) service as a sustainable transportation option due to the difficulty in scaling up service and reducing costs.
- The plan references the PSRC Passenger-Only Ferry Study and estimates that there could be 10 passenger-only routes. Although multimodal ferry and POF boardings are expected to increase, these services will remain low in terms of overall ridership in the system, at 3%. The plan also noted that ferry terminals have limited TOD potential due to environmental and land suitability factors.

Vision 2050 (2020)

This is a 30-year comprehensive planning document that includes a framework for implementing policies that can influence growth in a manner that fits with the vision of the region. Transportation is a significant element in the document and notable elements that impact Des Moines are detailed below.

- As mentioned in the Imagine Des Moines comprehensive planning document, the city is categorized as a HCT community, due to the city's proximity to the ST 1 Line and Metro's RapidRide A line. These communities (34 in total) are anticipated to account for 24% of the population growth and 13% of job growth by 2050.
- The plan advocates long-term affordable and varied housing allocations within ½ mile of HCT stations. Several policies are also related to HCT communities, including implementing transportation projects and programs that support HCT stations. There is also strong emphasis on preserving existing rights-of-way for future HCT corridors.
- To ensure equity, HCT communities must develop and implement strategies to address displacement in conjunction with the populations identified of being at risk of displacement, including both residents and small business owners.

- Local comprehensive plans must adhere to PSRC’s Policy Plan Review Process. This ensures that local transportation-related decisions are coordinated and align with the Regional Transportation Plan.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (WSDOT)

Puget Sound Gateway Program – Phase 1 of the SR 509 Completion Project

The SR 509 project is part of a larger state infrastructure project to relieve the congestion of passenger and freight traffic from the ports of Tacoma, Seattle, and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport at various points on the I-5 corridor. The completion of this project will have a direct impact on local traffic volumes as the SR 509 corridor will be extended three miles north and northwest past Des Moines to the western edge of Seattle-Tacoma Airport. The goal of the SR 509 project is to reduce congestion on the I-5 corridor around Tukwila.

This literature review focuses on the traffic volume forecasting for intersections and road segments in Des Moines. However, the majority of the traffic volume and intersection analysis detailed either volumes and congestion on various segments of I-5, SR 509 or areas located near proposed on and off-ramps. The forecasting used 2015 as the base year forecasted to 2045 as Build and No Build scenarios and used various methods and software (e.g., Synchro). The projected results of intersections relevant to Des Moines are listed in Figure 3 and Figure 4. These show that some intersections serving the new SR 509 extension would see a reduction in volume in the Build scenario, such as Pacific Highway, north of 200th St, due to the diversion of travel further south onto the SR 509 extension. However, areas further south in Des Moines, such as Kent Des Moines Rd, are projected to see higher traffic volumes under the Build scenario.

Figure 4: SR 509 Corridor Intersection Results, AM Peak Hour

Intersection	Existing			2045 No Build			2045 Build		
	Volume	Delay	LOS	Volume	Delay	LOS	Volume	Delay	LOS
Pacific Highway / 204 th St	2,265	15	B	2,790	22	C	2,165	10	B
Pacific Highway / 208 th St	2,265	15	B	2,790	22	C	2,165	10	B
24 th Ave / 28 th Ave at SR 409 NB Off-Ramp	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,060	11	B
24 th Ave / 28 th Ave at SR 409 SB On-Ramp	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,000	8	A
Pacific Highway / 206 th St	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,185	21	C
Pacific Highway / Kent Des Moines Rd	3,105	45	D	4,120	58	E	4,035	72	E

Transportation Planning Literature Review

City of Des Moines

Kent Des Moines Rd / 30 th Ave S	2,510	24	C	2,945	28	D	3,260	30	D
Kent Des Moines Rd / I-5 SB Ramps	2,995	18	B	3,585	28	C	4,095	34	C
Kent Des Moines Rd / I-5 NB Loop Off-Ramp	2,470	17	C	2,830	36	E	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kent Des Moines Rd / I-5 NB Slip Off-Ramp	2,840	18	B	3,395	24	C	4,090	12	B
Kent Des Moines Rd / Military Rd S	3,925	81	F	4,890	83	F	4,175	78	E

Figure 5: Future AM/PM Peak Traffic Volumes

Road Segment	AM No Build	AM Build	PM No Build	PM Build
Pacific Highway (south of S 188 th St)	2,150	1,600	3,110	2,820
S 188 th St (west of 28 th Ave s)	2,380	1,990	3,140	2,760

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA**

SUBJECT: Website Update - 30 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Website Update PowerPoint
2. City Council Website PowerPoint Presentation

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Administration

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 07, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide Council with an update regarding the City's ongoing website redesign and migration from the current CivicLive platform to CivicPlus.

Suggested Motion:

No formal Council action is requested at this time. This item is presented for informational purposes and project overview.

Background

The City is currently undergoing a comprehensive redesign and modernization of its public website. As part of this effort, the City is transitioning from the existing CivicLive platform to CivicPlus, a website platform widely utilized by municipalities and local governments throughout the country.

The website redesign project is intended to improve overall accessibility, organization, usability, and functionality for residents, businesses, visitors, and staff.

In addition to visual and structural improvements, the migration to CivicPlus allows the City to better organize and index public records and meeting materials, including:

- City Council agendas, minutes, and videos
- Boards, Commissions, and Committee agendas and materials
- Archived meeting information and documents

- Department information and public resources

Discussion

The updated website is being designed to create a more intuitive and user-friendly experience while improving access to information and online services.

Key improvements include:

- Improved site organization and navigation
- Enhanced search functionality
- Mobile-friendly and responsive design
- Improved accessibility compliance
- Simplified access to frequently requested information
- Better integration of agendas, minutes, videos, and public meeting materials
- Improved consistency in page layouts and content organization

The new platform will also provide greater flexibility for future enhancements and improved content management tools for staff.

As part of the redesign effort, staff have been reviewing and reorganizing website content to ensure information is easier for users to locate and understand. The goal of the project is to create a website structure that is more logical, streamlined, and accessible to the public.

The transition to CivicPlus also supports improved transparency and public engagement by making Council and Board/Committee materials more searchable and easier to access.

The website redesign and migration to CivicPlus represents a significant modernization effort for the City's digital services and public communication tools. The updated platform will improve accessibility, usability, transparency, and overall public access to City information while providing a more modern and efficient experience for users across all devices.

Staff anticipates launching the redesigned website in mid to late summer following continued testing, content migration, and staff training efforts.

As part of the final implementation process, staff will also invite members of the City Council and Citizens Advisory Board to assist with review and testing of the site prior to launch. Feedback related to usability, organization, navigation flow, broken links, formatting issues, and overall user experience will help ensure the website is as functional, intuitive, and user-friendly as possible for the community. Additionally, new photos will be used on the site.

Alternatives

None.

Financial Impact

Funding for the website redesign and platform migration was included within the adopted budget. Ongoing annual licensing and hosting costs will be incorporated into future operational budgets.

Recommendation

Informational item only. No Council action requested.



WEBSITE UPDATE

May 21, 2026

Website Redesign Overview

- Transitioning from CivicLive to CivicPlus, a platform widely used by municipalities across the country.
- Project is being supported by Allison Daskam, Principal Arts & Science Communications and her team.

DRAFT



What We Heard From The Public

Residents, businesses and users shared several common concerns about the current website experience:

- Information can be difficult to find
- Navigation feels confusing or inconsistent
- The search function does not always return useful results
- Council agendas, minutes and videos are difficult to locate

DRAFT



Accessibility & ADA Compliance

AudioEye Integration

AudioEye is a digital accessibility platform that helps organizations identify, monitor, and improve accessibility issues on website and digital documents. It combines/will help with:

- Automated accessibility scanning
- Ongoing monitoring
- Expert accessibility audits
- WCAG and ADA compliance support
- Identify issues such as:
 - Missing alt text
 - Color contrast concerns
 - Navigation and keyboard accessibility issues
 - Improper heading structures

Accessibility is not a one time project – it requires ongoing monitoring, testing and improvements as website content evolves.



Next Steps

Council and Citizens Advisory Board BETA Testing

- Attend the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting on May 27th
- Instruction to Council and CAB on process by June 1st
- What testers will review:
 - Test the search function
 - Identify broken links or missing content
 - Review page organization and flow
 - Flag spelling, formatting, or accessibility concerns





Des Moines
WATERLAND CITY

Des Moines, WA

City Council Website Presentation

May 21, 2026

Agenda

1. Strategy process
2. (Select) research findings
3. Content preparation
4. Draft site review
5. City Council questions and input



Strategy process

Goal

Our overall goal is to make the website easier for people to use.
That is accomplished through:

- Good content organization
- Clear user paths
- Pleasing user experience (UX)
- Strong signals to search engines
- Solid backend development
- Strong SEO

Process

Site Analytics

- Traffic
- Channels
- Devices
- Users
- Engagement

Search Behavior

- Organic search trends
- In-site search trends
- Interest categories
- SEO gaps

Content Evaluation

- URL crawl
- Content structure
- Comp website review
- Content value analysis
- Content gaps and prioritization
- Sitemap



(Select) Research findings



2025 YTD Traffic Engagement

Sessions
131,952

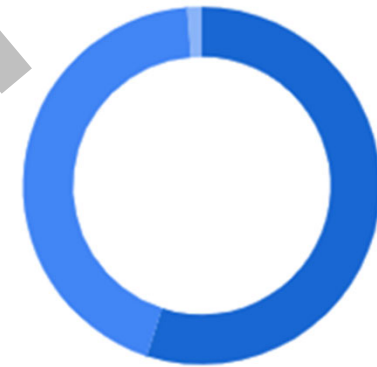
Engaged Sessions
78,815

Engagement Rate
59.7%

Channel

Device

google	70K
bing	9K
desmoineswa.gov	3.7K
m.facebook.com	2.3K
desmoineswa.applic...	1.5K
yahoo	1.5K
l.facebook.com	1.3K



● DESKTOP 55.0% ● MOBILE 43.7% ● TABLET 1.3%



2025 YTD Traffic

First user prim...Channel Group) +

	↓ Total users	New users	Returning users	Average engagement time per active user	Engaged sessions per active user	Event count All events
Total	78,731 100% of total	77,212 100% of total	16,534 100% of total	1m 09s Avg 0%	1.00 Avg 0%	853,531 100% of total
1 Organic Search	45,493 (57.78%)	44,259 (57.32%)	11,493 (69.51%)	1m 13s	1.12	526,519 (61.69%)
2 Direct	26,228 (33.31%)	25,627 (33.19%)	3,653 (22.09%)	1m 05s	0.80	262,567 (30.76%)
3 Referral	4,077 (5.18%)	3,950 (5.12%)	950 (5.75%)	1m 16s	1.10	43,701 (5.12%)
4 Organic Social	3,409 (4.33%)	3,298 (4.27%)	326 (1.97%)	32s	0.77	20,134 (2.36%)
5 Unassigned	79 (0.1%)	78 (0.1%)	14 (0.08%)	46s	0.73	610 (0.07%)

Des Moines Comparative Performance

Municipality Benchmarks

- Average engagement rate: 50–65%
- Average engagement time: 30–60 seconds
- Top channel: Organic search (50–70% of traffic)
- Direct traffic is often strong but less engaged due to residents using bookmarks or typing the homepage, then struggling with navigation
- Referral tends to have above-average engagement since users follow specific links (permits, courts, agendas)
- Social traffic usually has low engagement times (~40s) since users click for updates and then exit

desmoineswa.gov is in line with benchmarks:

Engagement rate: 59.7% overall (healthy)

Organic performance is strong, but direct traffic underperforms, showing UX/navigation gaps

Social traffic is low quality (time on site 26s vs. ~40s benchmark)

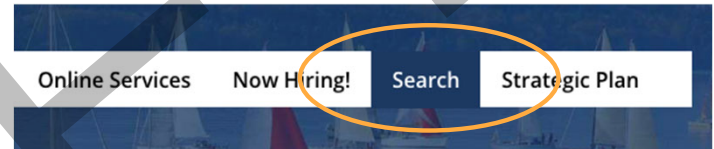
Source: CivicPlus, Granicus, and gov-focused GA4 reports



Website Page Views by Category (YTD 2025):

- Core Site Pages: 98,698 (39.4%)
- Courts / Legal: 23,512 (9.4%)
- Permits / Zoning / Planning: 21,204 (8.5%)
- Site Search: 18,909 (7.6%)
- Community / Events: 18,562 (7.4%)
- Police / Public Safety: 17,727 (7.1%)
- Parks / Recreation: 12,855 (5.1%)
- General Info / Other: 12,118 (4.8%)
- Finance / Payments: 12,015 (4.8%)
- City Council / Committees: 5,679 (2.3%)
- Transportation / Ferry: 3,530 (1.4%)
- Jobs / Staff: 2,582 (1.0%)
- Uncategorized: 2,986 (1.2%)

Source: GA4



In-Site Search (User types in website search bar)

All Time

- General Info / Other: 33,377 (42.0%)
- City Council / Committees: 22,211 (28.0%)
- Courts / Legal: 7,082 (8.9%)
- Permits / Zoning / Planning: 5,185 (6.5%)
- Parks / Recreation: 4,198 (5.3%)
- Police / Public Safety: 3,473 (4.4%)
- Finance / Payments: 1,415 (1.8%)
- Jobs / Staff: 990 (1.3%)
- Community / Events: 886 (1.1%)
- Transportation / Ferry: 658 (0.8%)

Source: CivicLive CMS with GA4 alignment

YTD 2025

- General Info / Other: 10,499 (59.2%) ↑
- Courts / Legal: 2,442 (13.8%) ↑
- Permits / Zoning / Planning: 1,714 (9.7%) ↑
- Police / Public Safety: 885 (5.0%) ↑
- Parks / Recreation: 880 (5.0%) ↓
- Finance / Payments: 436 (2.5%) ↑
- Jobs / Staff: 273 (1.5%) ↔
- City Council / Committees: 254 (1.4%) ↓
- Community / Events: 204 (1.2%) ↔
- Transportation / Ferry: 147 (0.8%) ↔



Why is this important?

This work gives insight into what users want to know about Des Moines and how they interact with the current site.

It tells us what's important to them and, in turn, how to organize the website in a way that is effective and easy to use.



Content Preparation

Content gap analysis

URL	Tier	Importance Score	GSC Clicks	GSC Impressions	GA4 Views	GA4 Users
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/search_page	HIGH	85	25	250177	4792	3354
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/doing_business/about_des_moines/	HIGH	80	643	219142	509	290
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/departments/city_staff_directory	HIGH	75	2541	58673	2407	1696
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/your_community/city_news/redondo_fishing_pier_closed_un	HIGH	70	851	23785	421	363
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/news/	HIGH	65	193	6307	176	140
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/your_community/city_news/club_khaos_before_after_school	HIGH	65	990	3434	693	472
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/departments/parks_recreation/parks_rec_faqs	MEDIUM	60	144	31830	437	366
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/your_community/city_news/change_sto_2021_business_lice	MEDIUM	60	159	20237	137	108
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/your_community/city_news/restaurants_in_des_moines	MEDIUM	60	210	41938	218	188
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/your_community/mayor_s_minute	MEDIUM	60	55	3344	605	342
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/doing_business/major_projects/	MEDIUM	60	255	6894	197	147
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/doing_business/current_land_use_applications/	MEDIUM	60	145	1531	108	80
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/news/what_s_new	MEDIUM	60	60	4306	736	313
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/departments/planning_and_building/development_services	MEDIUM	55	57	3814	497	308
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/departments/city_manager/subscribe_for_the_city_mailing_l	MEDIUM	55		32	1091	897
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/departments/police/domestic_violence_resources/domestic_	MEDIUM	55	347	12639	145	113
https://www.desmoineswa.gov/news/what_s_new/des_moines_animal_control_f_a_q	MEDIUM	55	37	1826	546	454

Content Architecture

Navigation

- Follows industry standards and user expectations
- Meets user intent for DMWA
- Addresses user priorities as determined in analytics research

Icons

- Does not duplicate or interfere with navigation
- Is something users will need quickly
- Research showed that users have a strong interest in the link

Buckets

- Does not duplicate or interfere with other home page content
- Represents a category, not a single destination
- Grouped in a way that is intuitive to users
- Meets search intent and/or fills SEO gaps

Sitemap development

1 Home
1.1 Buckets
1.1.1 Residents
1.2.1 Municipal Court & Payments
1.3.1 Doing Business
1.2 Icons
1.2.1 Agenda and Minutes
1.2.2 Contact
1.2.3 Public Notices
1.2.4 Permits & Licensing
1.2.5 Pay a Bill
1.2.6 Report a Problem
2 Government
City Council
2.1 Council Candidate Information
2.2 Strategic Plan
2.3 Boards and Commissions
2.3.1 Council Meeting Center
2.3.2 Current Year Packets
2.3.3 Agendas/Packets/Minutes
2.3.4 Meeting Video
2.3.5 Ordinances
2.3.6 Resolutions
2.3.7 Staff Directory
City Organizational Chart

2.4 Municipal Court
2.4.1 Criminal Summons to Appear
2.4.2 Traffic Infractions
2.4.3 Support Services (Probation)
2.4.4 DUI Court
2.4.5 Jury Duty
2.4.6 Popular Links
2.4.7 Daily Court Schedule
2.5 Municipal Code
2.6 Public Hearings / Legal Notices
2.7 Feedback and Suggestions
3 Community
3.1 Community Services Directory
3.2 Key Projects
3.3 City Maps
3.4 Report a Concern
3.5 About Des Moines
3.6 Sponsorship Opportunities
3.7 Volunteering
Green Des Moines
Park Clean-up/Adopt a Spot
Other Opportunities
FAQ's
Sonju Community Garden and Orchard
Midway Community Garden
Educational Partners
Social Services

4 Departments
4.1 City Staff Directory
City Manager
4.2 Subscribe for the City Mailing List
4.3 City Clerk
4.3.1 Forms / Documents
4.3.2 Requesting Records & Information
4.4 Finance
4.4.1 B&O Taxes
4.4.2 Budgets
4.4.3 Business Licenses
4.4.4 Financial Reports
4.4.5 Forms / Documents
4.5 GIS
4.6 Human Resources
4.6.1 Current Job Listings
4.6.2 Employee Benefits
4.6.3 Job Classification and Compensation
4.6.4 Organizational Structure
4.6.5 Collective Bargaining Agreements
4.6.6 Other Job Resources
4.6.7 Document Center
4.7 Legal
4.7.1 Municipal Code
4.7.2 Quick Links
4.8 Marina
4.9 Community Enrichment Services
4.9.1 Facility Rentals
4.9.2 Forms / Documents
4.9.3 Parks

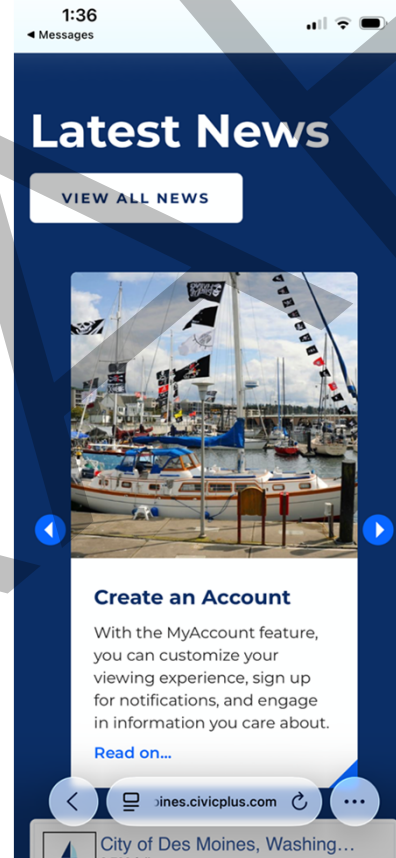
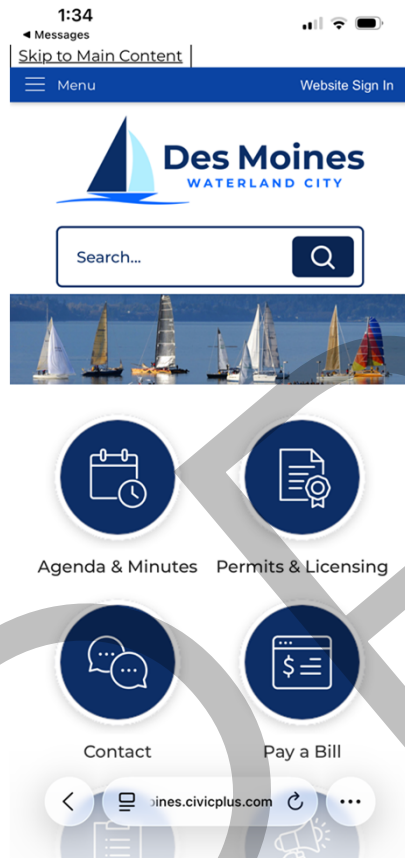
Note: these are **select portions** of the sitemap



Des Moines
WATERLAND CITY

**ART &
SCIENCE**
COMMUNICATIONS

Mobile View



The slide features a dark background with a complex geometric pattern of interconnected lines forming various polygons. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the word "DRAFT" is oriented diagonally across the center. A dark grey, angular shape overlaps the bottom-left portion of the slide, containing the text "Draft Site Review". A thick yellow horizontal bar is positioned below this grey shape. The top and bottom edges of the slide are white.

Draft Site Review



Des Moines
WATERLAND CITY



Draft site review and questions

<https://wa-desmoines.civicplus.com/>

DRAFT

Next Steps

1. Content updates
 - a. Site structure finalization
 - b. Edits and new content
 - c. Fresh pictures
2. Functionality audits
3. UAT
4. Launch mid to late summer



Thank You

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Update on SB6002 Implementation - 10 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Senate Bill 6002
2. Update of SB6002 Implementation
PowerPoint

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Police

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 06, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Purpose and Recommendation

This presentation provides information requested by council during the February 12, 2026 presentation, "Update on the City's Automated License Plate Reader System."

Background

In late 2025, Council requested a presentation on the Automated License Plate Reader System utilized in the city. That presentation was completed on February 12, 2026 by Chief Boe. At that time, council made two requests of the Des Moines Police Department:

- Create and publish a transparency portal on the City's website
- Monitor Washington Legislative Session SB6002, a bill providing state-level regulation of automated license plate reader systems.

Discussion

This presentation will provide an update on the implementation of the Des Moines Transparency Portal, as well as a progress report on the City's implementation of SB 6002 across multiple departments. The presentation is intended for informational purposes only and is designed to address ongoing community and Council questions regarding implementation efforts and progress to date.

Financial Impact

The city's contract with FLOCK is approximately \$50,000 annually.

Recommendation

Staff recommends they continue to implement the requirements of SB6002 within the timelines provided by the state legislature.

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6002

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate March 10, 2026
Yeas 39 Nays 10

President of the Senate

Passed by the House March 5, 2026
Yeas 84 Nays 10

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Approved

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6002** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

Secretary

FILED

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6002

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Trudeau, Holy, Alvarado, Bateman, Chapman, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Kauffman, Lovelett, Nobles, Pedersen, Shewmake, Slatter, Stanford, and Valdez)

READ FIRST TIME 01/23/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to driver privacy protections and automated
2 license plate reader systems; adding a new chapter to Title 10 RCW;
3 prescribing penalties; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** INTENT. The legislature finds that it
6 plays an important role balancing the need to ensure public safety
7 and an individual's right to privacy under both the federal Fourth
8 Amendment to the United States Constitution and the broader
9 protection of individual rights guaranteed by Article I, section 7 of
10 the Washington state Constitution.

11 The legislature further finds that the dramatic expansion of
12 surveillance technology across the country has demonstrated the need
13 to establish sensible guardrails on the use of surveillance data
14 collected from monitoring the location and travel of individuals,
15 without a warrant, to ensure its use by law enforcement and other
16 government agencies must not come into conflict with existing
17 protections for Washingtonians and ensure that it is not being used
18 for purposes prohibited under state and federal law.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** DEFINITIONS. The definitions in this
2 section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly
3 requires otherwise.

4 (1) "Agency" includes all state agencies and all local agencies.

5 (2) "Audit trail data" means all forms of data collected or
6 generated by an automated license plate reader system that identify
7 how the system is accessed or used. "Audit trail data" includes
8 information about who accesses or uses the system, and how and when
9 the system is accessed or used. "Audit trail data" does not include
10 automated license plate reader data.

11 (3) "Automated license plate reader data" means all data
12 collected by automated license plate reader systems including, but
13 not limited to, global positioning system coordinates, location, date
14 and time, speed of travel, photograph, license plate number,
15 automobile characteristics, or other identifying information.
16 "Automated license plate reader data" does not include audio or video
17 recordings generated by a dashboard or body worn camera, unless such
18 recordings are converted into computer-readable license plate
19 characters or associated metadata, or are indexed, made searchable,
20 or analyzed by license plate number, individual, vehicle, biometric
21 identifier, or other unique identifier for the purpose of
22 identifying, tracking, or reconstructing an individual's or vehicle's
23 location.

24 (4) "Automated license plate reader system" means a system,
25 software, or computer algorithm, whether used independently or in
26 combination with one or more mobile or fixed automated cameras, that
27 is used to convert images of license plates into computer-readable
28 data. An automated license plate reader system excludes automated
29 school bus safety cameras, speed safety camera systems, and automated
30 traffic safety camera systems, as defined in RCW 46.63.210, that do
31 not interface or interact with an automated license plate reader
32 system for purposes other than those authorized under RCW 46.63.180,
33 46.63.200, or 46.63.220 through 46.63.260. An automated license plate
34 reader system excludes photo toll system cameras authorized under RCW
35 47.56.795 or 47.46.105.

36 (5) "Court order," "warrant," or "subpoena" means a court order
37 as defined in RCW 43.17.420.

38 (6) "Law enforcement agency" has the same meaning as in RCW
39 10.116.010.

1 (7) "Local agency" includes every county, city, town, municipal
2 corporation, quasi-municipal corporation, special purpose district,
3 local housing authorities, or any office, department, division,
4 bureau, board, commission, or agency thereof, or other local public
5 agency including their respective employees and agents.

6 (8) "State agency" includes every state office, department,
7 division, bureau, board, commission, or other state agency, and their
8 respective employees and agents.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** OPERATION. (1) Except as provided for in
10 this section, it is unlawful for any agency to access, operate, or
11 use an automated license plate reader system or its associated
12 automated license plate reader data.

13 (2) An agency may access, operate, or use an automated license
14 plate reader system and its associated data only for the following
15 authorized purposes:

16 (a) Any law enforcement agency may use an automated license plate
17 reader system for the purpose of comparing captured automated license
18 plate reader data with:

19 (i) Data in any of the following databases maintained by either a
20 federal or Washington state agency: The department of licensing, the
21 state criminal justice information system, the federal bureau of
22 investigation kidnappings and missing persons list, the national
23 center for missing and exploited children list, and the Washington
24 missing persons list; or

25 (ii) License plate numbers or vehicle characteristics that have
26 been entered into a state or local automated license plate reader
27 system database or entered in order to perform a search, upon an
28 officer's determination that the license plate numbers or vehicle
29 characteristics are relevant and material to an investigation of a
30 vehicle that is:

31 (A) Stolen;

32 (B) Associated with a missing or endangered person;

33 (C) Registered to an individual for whom there is an outstanding
34 felony or gross misdemeanor warrant; or

35 (D) Related to or involved in a felony or gross misdemeanor.

36 (b) Any parking enforcement agency, or their agent, including,
37 but not limited to, cities, counties, the department of enterprise
38 services, and institutions of higher education as defined in RCW

1 28B.10.016 may use an automated license plate reader system for the
2 following purposes:

3 (i) Enforcing restrictions on the use of parking spaces; or

4 (ii) Identifying vehicles in a database for impoundment or
5 immobilization under a local ordinance enacted under RCW 46.55.240,
6 provided the database includes only license plates of vehicles
7 subject to that ordinance.

8 (c) Any transportation agency may use an automated license plate
9 reader system for the following purposes:

10 (i) Providing real-time traffic information to the public,
11 traffic modeling, and traffic studies such as determining
12 construction delays and route use; and

13 (ii) Enforcing commercial vehicle systems at Washington state
14 patrol enforcement sites and weigh stations.

15 (d) State and local agencies operating automated license plate
16 reader systems are the legal owners of the associated automated
17 license plate reader data collected by the system the agency
18 operates.

19 (3) It is unlawful for any agency, as described in RCW 43.17.425,
20 to use an automated license plate reader system for immigration
21 investigation or enforcement, or both, in accordance with RCW
22 10.93.160, or for any protected health care services under chapter
23 7.115 RCW, or to track or otherwise monitor activity protected by the
24 Washington state Constitution and the first amendment to the United
25 States Constitution.

26 (4) (a) It is unlawful for any agency to collect automated license
27 plate reader data on the premises or immediate surroundings or access
28 to or from facilities that provide protected health care, as
29 described in chapter 7.115 RCW, or at facilities conducting an
30 immigration matter as defined in RCW 19.154.020, elementary and
31 secondary schools, places of worship, courts, or food banks.

32 (b) For the purposes of this subsection, "facilities" includes
33 only the building or buildings used for the purposes described in (a)
34 of this subsection and any immediately adjacent parking lots that are
35 primarily or exclusively used for the purposes described in (a) of
36 this subsection.

37 (5) Any agency that intends to use, or currently uses an
38 automated license plate reader system as of the effective date of
39 this section and intends to continue using the system, shall register
40 it with the office of the attorney general on forms approved by the

1 office for that purpose within 180 days of the effective date of this
2 section. The head of the agency shall certify that the system meets
3 all the requirements of this chapter, and that the agency has a
4 policy or policies in effect governing its use and a documented
5 training process for the officers that will use it. Agencies may not
6 use automated license plate reader systems that have not been
7 properly registered under this section.

8 (6) A positive match by an automated license plate reader system
9 alone does not constitute reasonable suspicion as grounds for a state
10 or local law enforcement officer to stop the vehicle. The officer
11 shall develop independent reasonable suspicion for the stop or
12 immediately confirm visually that the license plate on the vehicle
13 matches the image of the license plate displayed on the automated
14 license plate reader system and confirm by other means that the
15 license plate number is in one of the databases specified in
16 subsection (2) (a) of this section.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** RETENTION. Automated license plate reader
18 data collected by or on behalf of an agency, as authorized pursuant
19 to section 3(2) of this act, shall not be used or shared for any
20 other purpose and shall not be retained longer than 21 days, with the
21 following exceptions:

22 (1) When retained pursuant to a valid, court-issued, probable
23 cause felony or gross misdemeanor warrant or subpoena, or as
24 permitted by court order in criminal or civil cases, provided the
25 data is deleted at the conclusion of the criminal or civil case,
26 pursuant to the applicable record retention schedule. Automated
27 license plate reader data may be shared in discovery in accordance
28 with applicable court rules;

29 (2) When retained for the purpose of parking enforcement,
30 provided the data is deleted no later than 12 hours after final
31 disposition of a parking enforcement case, including exhaustion of
32 any applicable appeals process;

33 (3) When retained for the purpose of traffic studies, provided
34 the data is deleted no later than 30 days after collection;

35 (4) When retained for the purpose of enforcing commercial vehicle
36 systems, provided the data is deleted no later than six months after
37 collection; and

38 (5) When retained for the purpose in section 3(2) (a) of this act
39 for as long as such captured automated license plate reader data is

1 needed as evidence of specific unlawful conduct enumerated in section
2 3(2) (a) of this act.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** PROHIBITED PRACTICES. (1) An agency that
4 uses an automated license plate reader system pursuant to section
5 3(2) of this act shall not:

6 (a) Disclose, share, or permit access to automated license plate
7 reader data except as required in a judicial proceeding;

8 (b) Provide any other entity with direct access to the automated
9 license plate reader system, except with other state or local
10 agencies authorized to collect automated license plate reader data
11 under section 3 of this act. A third-party vendor providing automated
12 license plate reader system services may access an automated license
13 plate reader system solely to the extent necessary to fulfill a
14 specific agency-authorized purpose.

15 (2) Any agency that uses a database pursuant to section 3(2) (a)
16 and (b)(ii) of this act shall use the most recent and updated version
17 of the database that is available to the agency and shall check for
18 and apply any available updates no less than once every 24 hours.

19 (3) An agency shall not sell, lease, rent, or purchase automated
20 license plate reader data or audit trail data.

21 (4) An agency may obtain privately held automated license plate
22 reader data only pursuant to a valid, court-issued, probable cause
23 warrant.

24 (5) Automated license plate reader data is not subject to
25 disclosure under the public records act, chapter 42.56 RCW, except
26 such data may be used for bona fide research as defined in RCW
27 42.48.010 and does not include individually identifiable information.

28 (6) Any automated license plate reader system vendor must provide
29 technical controls preventing unauthorized data sharing, secondary
30 transfer, or access by nonauthorized agencies, including federal
31 civil immigration enforcement in accordance with this chapter.

32 (7) Automated license plate reader system vendors are prohibited
33 from selling, leasing, renting, or otherwise allowing access to
34 automated license plate reader data to any nonauthorized agency,
35 person, or entity.

36 (8) An automated license plate reader system vendor is prohibited
37 from making any changes to an automated license plate reader system,
38 including but not limited to software updates that may change sharing
39 permissions, without the knowledge or explicit consent of the

1 authorized Washington agency. Automated license plate reader system
2 vendors must default any settings related to sharing to prevent any
3 sharing of an agency's data with any nonauthorized agency, person, or
4 entity.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** ADMISSIBILITY IN COURT. Any information
6 obtained from a knowing violation of section 3 of this act is
7 inadmissible in any civil or criminal case in all courts of general
8 or limited jurisdiction in this state, except with the permission of
9 the person whose rights have been violated in an action brought for
10 damages under section 10 of this act.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** POLICIES. (1) By July 1, 2027, the
12 attorney general shall develop and publish model policies on the use
13 of automated license plate reader systems consistent with this act.

14 (2)(a) By December 1, 2027, any agency that uses an automated
15 license plate reader system pursuant to section 3(2) of this act
16 shall:

17 (i) Adopt a policy governing use of the automated license plate
18 reader system consistent with the model policies established under
19 subsection (1) of this section and submit copies of the applicable
20 policies to the attorney general; or, if the agency did not adopt
21 policies consistent with the model policies, provide notice to the
22 attorney general stating the reasons for any departures from the
23 model policies and an explanation of how the agency's policies are
24 consistent with the provisions of this act, and include a copy of the
25 agency's relevant policies; and

26 (ii) Submit an annual report on its automated license plate
27 reader system practices and usage to the appropriate committees of
28 the legislature. The report must also be conspicuously posted on the
29 agency's public website. The report shall include:

30 (A) The number of matches that resulted in traffic stops or
31 arrests made with assistance from automated license plate reader
32 systems, and the number of subsequent prosecutions;

33 (B) The number of stolen vehicles and stolen license plates
34 recovered due to use of the system;

35 (C) The number of preservation requests and disclosure orders
36 received;

1 (D) The number of times automated license plate reader data or
2 audit trail data was shared with or accessed by another governmental
3 entity and the identity of each of those governmental entities;

4 (E) The number of times automated license plate reader data was
5 shared or accessed pursuant to a judicial warrant;

6 (F) Any changes in policy that affect data collection, retention
7 period, access or sharing;

8 (G) Results from the agency's internal audit of its automated
9 license plate reader system;

10 (H) The total annual number of automated license plate reader
11 system reads, searches that yielded results, and alerts; and

12 (I) The locations of cameras used as part of automated license
13 plate reader systems.

14 (b) Prior to or coincident with implementation of an automated
15 license plate reader system, a local law enforcement agency shall
16 take measures to promote public awareness on the use of such system.

17 (3) After December 1, 2026, whenever an agency modifies or
18 repeals any policies pertaining to the use of automated license plate
19 reader systems, the agency shall submit notice of such action with
20 copies of any relevant policies to the attorney general within 60
21 days.

22 (4) By December 31, 2027, the attorney general shall publish on
23 its website a report on the requirements of this section, including
24 copies of the model policies.

25 (5) Agencies that adopt policies required by this section must
26 publish the policies on the agency website and submit a website link
27 for those published policies with the attorney general. The attorney
28 general is not required to publish those agency policies.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** AUDITS. (1) Each agency operating or
30 accessing an automated license plate reader system shall maintain
31 audit trail data documenting all access to the system. Audit trail
32 data must be retained for two years and must include, at a minimum:

33 (a) A record of each action in which automated license plate
34 reader data is accessed or searched, including:

35 (i) The identity or username of the person who accessed or
36 queried the system, and as applicable, the organization or entity
37 with whom the person is affiliated;

38 (ii) The date and time the automated license plate reader data or
39 the automated license plate reader system was accessed or searched;

1 (iii) Data elements used to query the automated license plate
2 reader system;

3 (iv) Specific purpose for accessing or querying the automated
4 license plate reader system, including the offense type for any
5 criminal investigation;

6 (v) The associated call for service or case number; and

7 (vi) The location of the cameras that are part of the automated
8 license plate reader system accessed.

9 (b) All records of actions in which automated license plate
10 reader data is exported, downloaded, or shared; and

11 (c) Any audit trail data generated by or made available through a
12 third-party vendor providing automated license plate reader system
13 services. Each agency shall ensure that all such vendor audit trail
14 data is downloaded or otherwise obtained and retained by the agency
15 in accordance with this section.

16 (2) Data elements used to query the automated license plate
17 reader system and retained as audit trail data pursuant to subsection
18 (1)(a) of this section may be used solely for auditing purposes and
19 may not be searched, analyzed, compiled, or indexed for investigative
20 purposes. Data elements that contain unique identifiers must be
21 partially redacted in any public disclosure.

22 (3) Each agency shall conduct an internal audit at least once
23 each year to review:

24 (a) All access to and use of the automated license plate reader
25 system, as reflected in the audit trail data; and

26 (b) The agency's compliance with the data retention, purging, and
27 sharing requirements established under this chapter and agency
28 policy.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** VIOLATIONS—APPLICATION OF THE CONSUMER
30 PROTECTION ACT. (1) The legislature finds that the practices covered
31 by this chapter are matters vitally affecting the public interest for
32 the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86
33 RCW. A violation of this chapter is not reasonable in relation to the
34 development and preservation of business and is an unfair or
35 deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of
36 competition for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act,
37 chapter 19.86 RCW.

1 (2) This section applies only to persons, as defined in RCW
2 19.86.010, who enter into contract with state and local government
3 agencies authorized to use automated license plate reader systems.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** CRIMINAL PENALTIES. Any person who
5 willfully and intentionally queries, accesses, or uses an automated
6 license plate reader system for a purpose not specifically authorized
7 under this chapter, or who willfully and intentionally retains,
8 sells, shares, permits access, or disseminates automated license
9 plate reader system data or audit trail data in violation of this
10 chapter, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** CIVIL REMEDY. A person injured by a
12 violation of this chapter may bring a civil action to recover any
13 equitable, declaratory relief, or injunctive relief with respect to
14 the violation; and recover all other appropriate relief, including
15 monetary damages. The court may award to a person aggrieved by a
16 violation of this chapter who prevails in an action brought under
17 this section the costs of the action, including reasonable attorneys'
18 fees.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any provision of
20 this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held
21 invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision
22 to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** Sections 1 through 11 of this act
24 constitute a new chapter in Title 10 RCW.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** This act is necessary for the immediate
26 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
27 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
28 effect immediately.

--- END ---



Update on SB6002 Implementation

May 21, 2026

Purpose of Presentation

Provide Council and the Community with an Update on Actions Taken to Assure Public Trust and Legal Compliance in the Deployment of Automated License Plate Reader Technology

On February 12, 2026, Council Requested Additional Information on Two Topics:

- Create and Publish a Transparency Portal on Our Website
- Monitor Washington Legislature: Senate Bill 6002- “An Act Related to driver privacy protections and automated license plate reader systems”



What Happens When New Legislation is Passed

Multiple departments and agencies work together to ensure compliance with new laws

For SB6002, these departments worked together:

- Legal

- Police

- Community Development

- State and regional agencies for law enforcement



ALPR History in Des Moines

Public Meetings about FLOCK:

- June 2, 2022; PSEM
- October 20, 2022; Council Presentation
- November 3, 2022; PSEM
- November 17, 2022; Council Approves Contract
- May 4, 2023; Update on Installation
- February 12, 2026; Update for Council

Contact Signed on November 20, 2022

- ALPR System Agreement
- 16 Falcon Pole Mounted Cameras
- Installation and Implementation Fees
- Access to App and Search Features

Cameras Installed and Operational in June, 2023



Transparency Portal Active

The screenshot shows the Des Moines Waterland City website. The navigation menu includes: Home, Doing Business, Your Community, Your Government, Departments, Online Services, Now Hiring!, Search, and Strategic Plan. The 'Departments / Police / FLOCK Transparency Portal' link is highlighted in the left sidebar.

FLOCK TRANSPARENCY PORTAL

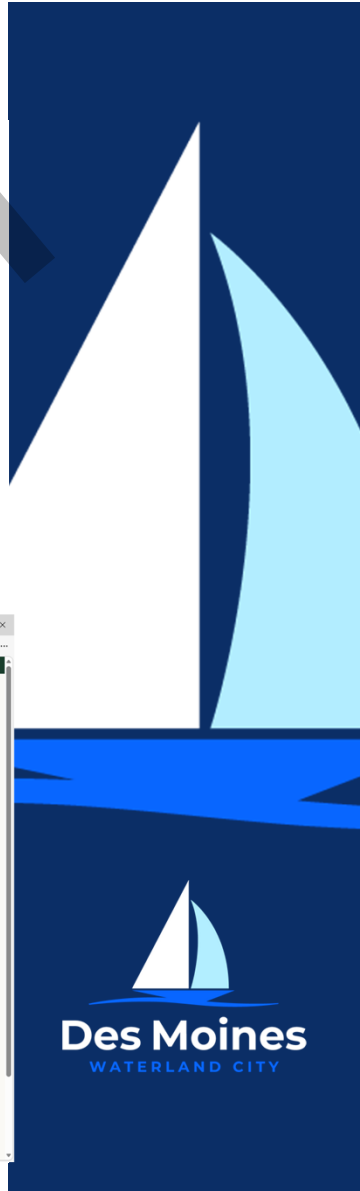
FLOCK Transparency Portal

Your Des Moines Police Department values the security of your data. We do not share your data with any agency outside of Washington State and have turned off all connections to federal law enforcement partners. We regularly audit our data to assure any searches meet our security requirements, as well as fully complying with Washington State laws and CJIS security requirements.

Access Portal [Here](#)

The screenshot shows the 'Des Moines WA PD Transparency Portal'. It features several data categories and statistics:

- What's Opened:** 21 days
- Total Comments:** 15
- Published Open:** Investigation enforcement, staff, enforcement, harassment or intimidation, illegal home entries or a prohibited place (e.g. work, sex, religious, personal use).
- Access Policy:** All system access requires a valid reason and is stored individually.
- Number of Vehicles:** 241,904
- Number of Inhabits:** 417
- Number of Searches:** 190



Monitor SB6002

Bill status-at-a-glance i

As of Wednesday, May 6, 2026 08:51 AM

Current version:

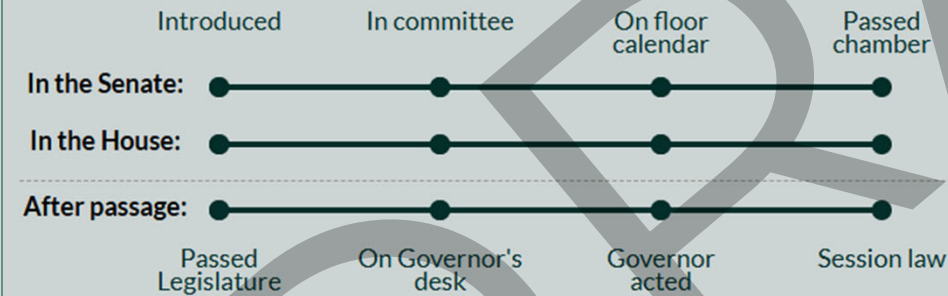
Engrossed substitute - ESSB 6002

[\(View 1st engrossed\)](#)

Current status:

C 239 L 26

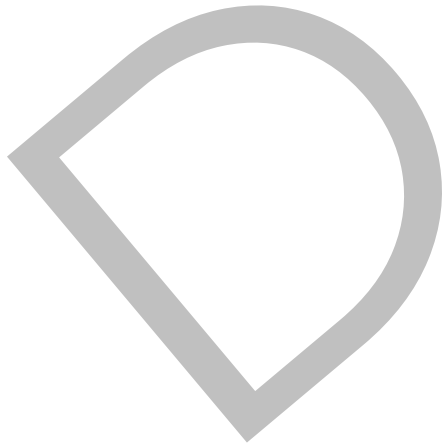
Where is it in the process?



Summary of SB6002

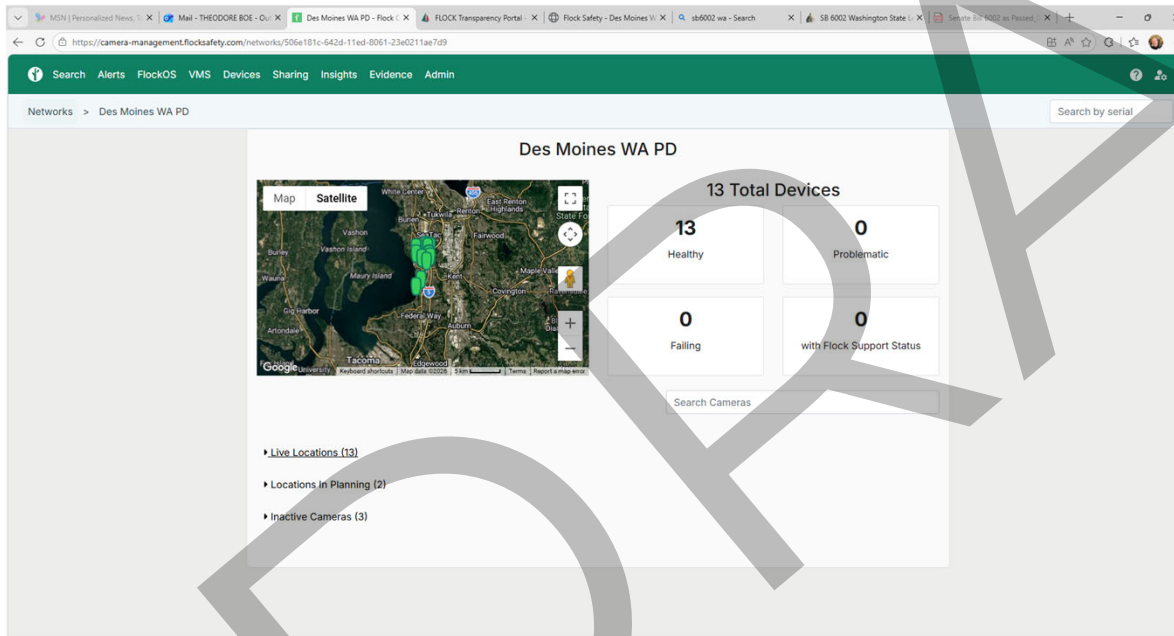
Camera Location/Use Requirements

- Prohibited from Tracking Free Speech Activities
- Expressly Prohibits Transfer of Information to Immigration
- Prohibits ALPR “on-premises” or “showing access to or from”
 - Protected Healthcare Facilities
 - Schools
 - Places of Worship
 - Courts
 - Food Banks



ALPR Cameras in Des Moines

- One Camera Removed from Contract (Unrelated to SB6002)
- Two Cameras Turned Off Pending Relocation
 - Healthcare Facility (Pharmacy)
 - Place of Worship



SB6002 Agency Requirements

Des Moines Police Department Implementation Status

Register ALPR Systems with AG's Office	180 Days from March 31	Pending Creation of Portal by AG's Office
Data Retention	Reduce retention to 21 Days on March 31	✓
ALPR Data is Exempt from Public Disclosure	Policies have been updated by Legal and PDR effective March 31	✓
Adopt Model Policy and Publish on Website	Senate requires AG to complete this work by July 1, 2027	PENDING
	Agencies must adopt policies by December 1, 2027	PENDING
Audits	Agencies must maintain a 2-year audit trail of searches	Records Unit maintaining monthly log / FLOCK to automate in future
	Agencies must do several audits for AG's Office and publish	Awaiting Model Policy
Search Criteria and Documentation	Officers required to add case number and reason for search	✓
	Training provided and policy updated	✓
	Records being stored monthly for AG audit	✓

Penalties:

- *Willful violations of law are criminal offenses*
- *Information can be used in civil actions*



FLOCK, PD and Legal Working Together!

Roll Call Training
Lexipol Policy Updates
Camera Location Review and Movement
Implementation of Audit Requirements
Updates to PDR Guidelines
Accountability to Attorney General's Office
Website and Transparency Portal Upgrades

1. **21-day data retention:** Just as we have in Virginia, we will apply a 21-day retention schedule across Washington. Longer term, we are exploring a product option to provide access to data older than 21 days after the provision of a warrant.
2. **Reproductive and immigration filters [Already in place]:** Due to existing laws, Washington already has [automatic search filters](#) applied statewide that prevent searches tied to immigration and reproductive healthcare. If a user attempts to search for reasons associated with immigration enforcement or reproductive care, the platform automatically removes all Washington networks from the search.
3. **Removing NCIC access and exploring alternatives:** We will remove NCIC access and are developing state-level alerting.
4. **Assessing camera locations:** We will work with agencies to ensure that cameras are not located at the listed facility categories. These cameras will be moved to a separate network and deactivated while we work with you to find alternative permitted locations.
5. **Turning off access to private cameras:** We will sever automatic access to private ALPR cameras.
6. **Out-of-state agency sharing:** Agencies can participate in sharing relationships with other agencies, but only for the purposes permitted by the bill. Therefore, we will turn off the ability to participate in National Lookup. Agencies that wish to share out-of-state could do so through MOUs to ensure Washington data is accessed only for those purposes.
7. **Record keeping:** We will provide guidance on how to track and pull the required information from the system for reporting and auditing.
8. **Audit trail retention:** We will adjust audit trail data retention from indefinite to two years.

Hi there,

Thank you for contacting Support—happy to assist.

I can confirm that the **Des Moines WA PD** network is configured with a default retention period of 21 days, in alignment with Washington state law. This 21-day retention setting is also consistent with what is published on your agency's public transparency portal.

Stay safe,
Ben
Flock Customer Support





Des Moines
WATERLAND CITY

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA**

SUBJECT: Recology Annual Update - 30 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Des Moines - Solid Waste Contract 2025 Review PowerPoint

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Public Works

DATE SUBMITTED:

April 30, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Public Works

Finance

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the City Council with an information presentation regarding the Comprehensive Garbage, Recyclables and Compostables Collection Services Contract with Recology King County, Inc.

Background

The City entered into a new Comprehensive Garbage, Recyclables and Compostables Collection Services Contract with Recology King County, Inc., effective January 1, 2024 through October 31, 2033. The agreement followed the expiration of the prior contract (originally effective November 1, 2011) and its authorized extensions through October 31, 2023.

The new contract reflects updated industry conditions, including changes in recycling markets, disposal costs, regulatory requirements, and service expectations. Key elements of the agreement include enhanced customer service standards, expanded recycling services, updated rate structures based on cost-of-service principles, and environmental performance improvements such as fleet electrification and cleaner fuels.

Discussion

Recology staff will be providing a presentation on the current status of the contract and their annual update for 2025.



City of Des Moines: Solid Waste Contract 2025 Review

May 21, 2026



Annual Update & Solid Waste Contract Overview

- Contract benefits & service features
- Community engagement and education opportunities with Waste Zero team
- Diversion statistics and highlights – Recology Highline Store and Special Item Pickups
- Target outreach to multifamily and commercial sites for ongoing diversion and state law support
- Overview of customer service and operations trends throughout 2025



Background: Solid Waste Contract Process

2010: Recology was selected as service provider through a competitive procurement process conducted by the City of Des Moines.

2022: The contract was renegotiated with Recology. The current contract is a 10-year agreement expiring on 10/31/2033 .

The current contract covers collection of garbage, recycling and compostables, along with comprehensive service features for residents and business.

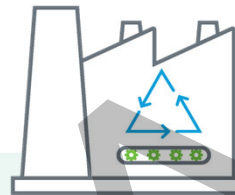


Recology Service Agreement Overview



Diversion & Service Offerings

- Expanded recycle capacity (commercial & multifamily)
- Free On-Call Curbside Clean-Up
- Free Kitchen Compost Pails
- Access to Recology Store
- 2 Special Drop-Off Collection Events Annually



Operations

- New collection vehicles
- New electric support fleet
- Increased operational support staff
- Ongoing Recology improvements – MRF and North Yard



Customer Service & Outreach

- Full-time dedicated Customer Service representative
- Waste Zero staff support
- Recology Store workshops
- Enhanced education programs

Residential Service Highlights



- **Free Annual Bulky Item Collection** – 2 bulky items + 1 cubic yard of material
- **Christmas Tree Collection** – all SF & MF residences
- **Storm Debris Collection** – City storm event, 96 extra gallons for next 2 weeks or drop-off
- **Free Kitchen Compost Pails**– available to SF & MF residents for pickup at Public Works Engineering Building and the Highline Recology Store
- **On-call special item pickup**- fluorescent bulbs, batteries, motor oil, small appliances, Styrofoam and other materials
- **Free backyard cart service** for residents unable to bring carts to curb
- **Senior/Low-Income Discount** offered for residents
- **Expanded customer service hours** – M-F 7-7PM, Sat/Sun 8 – 5 PM

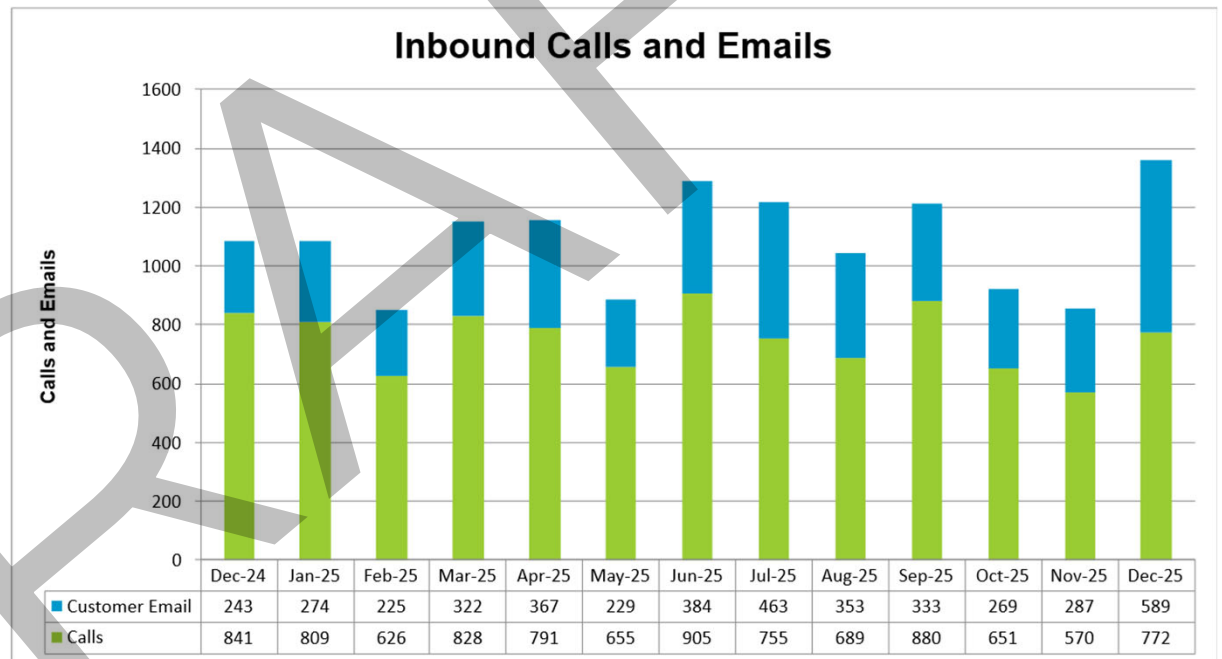
Operations & Customer Service Updates

- All new, fuel-efficient collection trucks
- Support vehicle fleet (Waste Zero, cart-delivery, Operations support) transitioning to be fully electric
- Waste Zero onsite support for businesses and multifamily properties
- New Operations District Manager recruited; overseeing Supervisor in Des Moines area
- Increased Customer service staffing
- New North hauling yard officially launched as of January 2026



Customer Service Review

- Increase of calls in December: new billing system and customer management system launched
- Des Moines Customer Service Satisfaction Average Score: 4.7/5



Waste Zero Engagement

- Site Visits/Technical Assistances with Multifamily and Commercial Properties
 - Signage and educational materials provided, including multilingual, laminated, various sizes & customizations
- Door-to-Door Multifamily Outreach
 - Kitchen top compost pails
 - Recycle Right bags and doorhangers
- Providing outreach for new WA state Organics Management laws for businesses
- MRF Tours – ongoing private tours and quarterly public tours
- Des Moines Dollars for Scholars Sponsorship



Recology Store

- Residents able to bring hard-to-recycle item drop offs at no cost (such as Styrofoam, lightbulbs, electronics, textiles and more)
- All customers able to complete bill pay, make customer service requests and ask questions about their Recology services
- **In 2025:**
 - 2,010 hard to recycle drop-offs
 - 10,871 gallons of Styrofoam diverted!
 - Waste Reduction Workshops
 - Sustainable Gift wrapping, Scissor Repair, Mending



What's Next?

- **Des Moines Farmer's Market:** June 13, August 1, September 26, October 17
- **Shark in the Park:** July 12th
- **Outreach for Schools, Multifamily, and Commercial sites** focusing on increasing diversion and reducing contamination in the recycling and compost streams
- **Ongoing Organics Management Law support**
- **Ongoing Implementation of Recycling Reform Act**
- **Annual Service Guide** to be mailed in November





206.762.4900

DesMoines@Recology.com

Recology.com/DesMoines



**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Approval of Vouchers

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Voucher Report

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Finance

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 11, 2026

CLEARANCES:

City Clerk

Finance

Purpose and Recommendation

Voucher transfers and expense reimbursement claims have been audited and certified by the auditing office in compliance with RCW 42.24.080 and RCW 42.24.090.

Suggested Motion:

"I move to approve the payment vouchers through May 6th in the attached list and further described as follows:"

EFT Vendor Payments	#13583 - #13639	\$1,459,672.46
Wires	#13583 - #13639	\$631,678.39
Total Checks and Wires for A/P:		\$2,091,350.85

Background

City Council review and approval of voucher reports is a key internal control that promotes transparency, accountability, and public trust in the City's financial operations. By examining vouchers after expenditures have occurred, the Council provides independent oversight to confirm that payments were properly authorized, supported by appropriate documentation, and made in accordance with the adopted budget, City policies, and applicable laws. This review helps ensure public funds are used for their intended purposes, strengthens fiscal discipline, and reinforces the separation of duties between staff who process payments and the elected officials responsible for

safeguarding taxpayer resources.

Discussion

The vouchers below have been reviewed and certified by individual departments and the City of Des Moines Auditing Officer.

Financial Impact

As described above.

Recommendation

Approval of vouchers.



Des Moines

WATERLAND CITY

Voucher Certification Approval May 21, 2026 Auditing Officer Certification

Voucher transfers and expense reimbursement claims have been audited and certified by the auditing office in compliance with RCW 42.24.080 and RCW 42.24.090. A listing of these claims has been provided to the City Council.

On May 21, 2026 the Des Moines City Council unanimously approved for payment the vouchers through May 6, 2026 as detailed in the attached list.

The vouchers below have been reviewed and certified by individual departments and the City of Des Moines Auditing Officer:



Jeff Friend, Finance Director

	# From	# To	Amounts
Claims Vouchers:			
EFT's	13583	13639	1,459,672.46
Wires	3319	3338	631,678.39
Total Vouchers paid			2,091,350.85
Total checks and wires for A/P			2,091,350.85

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA**

SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. April 23, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

City Clerk

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 11, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is for the City Council to review the minutes from the April 23, 2026 City Council meeting.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2026, City Council meeting."

Background

The City Clerk's Office has prepared action-format meeting minutes for City Council's consideration.

Alternatives

The City Council may make corrections to errors and approve the meeting minutes as amended.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Council approve the meeting minutes as presented.



**MINUTES
DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
City Council Chambers
21630 11th Avenue S, Suite C
Des Moines, Washington
Thursday, April 23, 2026 - 6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The flag salute was led by Councilmember JC Harris.

ROLL CALL

Council Present:

Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui, Deputy Mayor Gene Achziger, Councilmember Pierre Blosse, Councilmember Robyn Desimone, Councilmember JC Harris, Councilmember Jeremy Nutting, Councilmember Harry Steinmetz

Staff Present:

City Manager Katherine Caffrey; Assistant City Manager Adrienne Johnson-Newton; City Attorney Tim George; Police Chief Ted Boe; Assistant Police Chief Kevin Penny; Assistant Police Chief Cory Stanton; Community Engagement Officer Tonya Seaberry; Director of Administrative Services Bonnie Wilkins; Harbormaster Scott Wilkins; Finance Director Jeff Friend; Assistant City Attorney Matthew Hutchins; Community Development Director Rebecca Deming; Public Works Director Mike Slevin; City Engineer Tommy Owen; Surface Water and Environmental Engineering Manager Tyler Beekley; Civil Engineer Allyssa Beaver; Civil Engineer Alex Johnson; IT Manager Chris Pauk; Business Support Analyst Terryann Dell; Legislative Advocate Anthony Hemstad, and City Clerk Taria Keane.

PROCLAMATIONS

- Item 1. **South Sound Opening Day Boating Proclamation**
Motion: "I move to approve the Proclamation recognizing the official

opening of the South Sound Boating season on May 09, 2026."

Direction/Action

Motion made by Councilmember Jeremy Nutting to approve the Proclamation recognizing the official opening of the South Sound Boating season on May 09, 2026, seconded by Councilmember Harry Steinmetz.

Motion Passed 7-0.

Commodore Dan Wahlstrom thanked Council for the Proclamation.

CORRESPONDENCE NOT PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

- There were no additional correspondence beyond the emails already received by Council.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

- Richard Nagle - Redondo Speeder Problem
- Dave Kaplan - SAMP and Staff Recognitions
- Chris DeLaRosa - Flock
- Christie A - Flock
- Judy Grande - Flock
- Beth Cooper - Warehouse
- Karen Schartman - Legislation, Noise, and Speeding

REGIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

CITY MANAGER REPORT/PRESENTATIONS/BRIEFINGS

Item 1. **Recognition of Harbormaster Scott Wilkins for 30 Years of Service**

- City Manager Katherine Caffrey recognized Harbormaster Scott Wilkins for his 30 years of service.

Item 2. **Recognition of the Retirement of Community Services Officer Tonya Seaberry**

- Police Chief Ted Boe recognized Community Services Officer Tonya Seaberry for her years of service and retirement.

Item 3. **Recognition of Assistant Police Chief Kevin Penney for 25 Years of Service**

- Police Chief Ted Boe recognized Assistant Police Chief Kevin Penney for his 25 years of service.

Item 4. **Preliminary 2025 4th Quarter Report**
Staff Presentation: Jeff Friend, Finance Director

- Finance Director Jeff Friend gave Council a PowerPoint on the Preliminary 2025 4th Quarter Report.

Item 5. **Discussion of Downtown Parking**
Staff Presentation: Allyssa Beaver, Civil Engineer I

- Civil Engineer Allyssa Beaver gave Council a PowerPoint presentation on Downtown Parking.

CONSENT AGENDA

Item 1. **Approval of Vouchers**
Motion: "I move to approve the payment vouchers through April 8, 2026 and payroll transfers through April 3, 2026 in the attached list and further described as follows:"

EFT Vendor Payments #13416 - #13493	\$1,000,334.31
Wires #3299 - #3310	\$486,779.19
Accounts Payable #167459 - #167487	\$122,072.50
Checks	
Voided Checks #167465, #167466	-\$862.30
Payroll Checks #20063 - #20064	\$1,278.58
Payroll Advice #17121 - #17277	\$487,840.73

Total Checks and Wires for A/P & Payroll: \$2,097,443.01

Item 2. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion: "I move to approve the minutes from the March 12 and March 26, 2026, City Council Regular Meetings, and the April 02, 2026, City Council COW and Study Session Minutes."

Item 3. **Tyler Technologies Permit Software Service Agreement**
Motion: "I move to approve the Software as a Service (SaaS) Agreement with Tyler Technology in an amount not to exceed \$185,000 plus annual fees, and authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement substantially in the form as submitted."

Item 4. **King County 2026-2027 Hazardous Waste Management Program Grant Award**
Motion: "I move to accept the 2026-2027 King County Local Hazardous Waste Management Program Grant and authorize the City Manager to sign the grant document substantially in the form as attached."

Item 5. **Midway Park Final Design**
Motion: "I move to approve the 2026-2027 On-Call General Civil Engineering Services Task Assignment 2026-06 with Psomas, to provide final engineering and permitting services for the Midway Park Open Space Design Project in the amount of \$289,816.30 and further authorize the City Manager to sign said Task Assignment substantially in the form as submitted."

Item 6. **5th and 212th Pipe Replacement Project**
Motion: "I move to approve the 2026-2027 On-Call General Civil Engineering Services, Task Assignment 2026-05 with Psomas to provide engineering and permitting services for the 5th and 212th Pipe Replacement Project in the amount of \$217,413.65 and further authorize the City Manager to sign said Task Assignment substantially in the form as submitted."

Direction/Action

Motion made by Councilmember Jeremy Nutting to approve the Consent Agenda as read, seconded by Councilmember Harry Steinmetz.

Motion Passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. **Midway Soccer Field Design**
Staff Presentation: Alex Johnson, Civil Engineer I

- Civil Engineer Alex Johnson gave Council a PowerPoint Presentation on the Midway Soccer Field design.

Direction/Action

Motion made by Councilmember Jeremy Nutting to approve Task Assignment 2026-02 with Psomas (Attachment 1) to provide complete design and permitting services for the Midway Park Soccer Field Project in the amount of \$49,924.00 and further authorize the City manager to sign said Task Assignment substantially in the form submitted, seconded by Councilmember Pierre Blosse.

Motion Passed 7-0.

Item 2. **2026 Legislative Session Recap**
Presentation by: Legislative Advocate Anthony Hemstad

- Legislative Advocate Anthony Hemstad gave Council a PowerPoint Presentation on the 2026 Legislative Session Recap.

Item 3. **New Agenda Items for Consideration - 10 Minutes**

- There were no new agenda items for consideration.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

(4 minutes per Councilmember) - 30 minutes

COUNCILMEMBER JC HARRIS

- Earth Day

COUNCILMEMBER ROBYN DESIMONE

- No Report

COUNCILMEMBER JEREMY NUTTING

- Thank you to Assistant Chief Kevin Penney and Harbormaster Scott Wilkins

COUNCILMEMBER PIERRE BLOSSE

- SR3 Annual Fundraising Gala

COUNCILMEMBER HARRY STEINMETZ

- Good Eggs Breakfast hosted by King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer's
- Meeting with Councilmember Pierre Blosse
- Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Meeting
- Weekend events including the Des Moines Crawl supporting local restaurants, Concert at the Quarterdeck, and Heritage Month Celebration in Federal Way
- Meeting with Mayor
- Citizens Advisory Board

DEPUTY MAYOR GENE ACHZIGER

- Opening Day of Boating Season
- International Sculpture Day
- Des Moines Waterland Walkers
- Des Moines Legacy Foundation Bay Gala

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT

- Open positions on the Lodging Tax Committee and Salary Commission
- Chat with the Mayor at Tandoori Slice
- SR3 Harbor Seal Release
- Thank you to Harbor Master Scott Wilkins, Tonya Seaberry, and Assistant Chief Kevin Penney

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Special Meeting was called to order by Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui at 8:31 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Present:

Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui, Deputy Mayor Gene Achziger, Councilmember Pierre Blosser, Councilmember Robyn Desimone, Councilmember JC Harris, Councilmember Jeremy Nutting, Councilmember Harry Steinmetz

Staff Present:

City Manager Katherine Caffrey; Assistant City Manager Adrienne Johnson-Newton; City Attorney Tim George; and Community Development Director Rebecca Deming.

The purpose of the Special Meeting was to hold an Executive Session to discuss the Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property under RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) and (c).

The Executive Session was expected to last 30 minutes until 9:01 p.m.

At 8:59 p.m. Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui extended the Executive Session 15 minutes to 9:16 p.m.

At 9:15 p.m. Mayor Yoshiko Grace Matsui extended the Executive Session 15 minutes to 9:31 p.m.

The Special Meeting lasted 60 minutes and adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

May 07, 2026 City Council Committee of the Whole and Study Session

ADJOURNMENT

Direction/Action

Motion made by Councilmember Harry Steinmetz to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Jeremy Nutting.

Motion Passed 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Des Moines Farmer's Market 2026-2028 Agreement

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2026-2028 Farmer's Market Agreement
2. Farmer's Market Layout

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Administration

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 07, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide background and support Council's consideration of an agreement authorizing the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market to utilize designated space at the Marina for operation of the seasonal Farmers Market during the 2026, 2027, and 2028 market seasons, and to authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to authorize the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market to conduct the Farmers Market at the Des Moines Marina during the 2026, 2027, and 2028 market seasons, including the Holiday Market, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement substantially in the form as attached."

Background

The Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market has operated seasonally at the Marina since 2006 and continues to serve as a valued community gathering place and regional attraction. Operating on Saturdays from June through September, the Market provides residents and visitors with access to locally grown produce, flowers, specialty foods, artisan goods, entertainment, and educational opportunities.

The proposed agreement differs from prior approvals in that it establishes a three-year operating term covering the 2026 through 2028 market seasons.

Presentation of this agreement to Council was delayed due to the need to coordinate operational adjustments related to the ongoing Marina Steps construction project, as well as updated site safety and operational requirements from South King Fire & Rescue affecting vendor and event layouts.

Discussion

Due to construction impacts associated with the Marina Steps project, the Farmers Market layout for the 2026 season has been modified. The Market will primarily utilize the north parking lot area of the Marina, occupying approximately one-half of the lot during market operations.

The revised layout has been designed to maintain vendor operations, pedestrian circulation, emergency access requirements, and overall public safety while minimizing impacts to Marina users and surrounding businesses.

Staff recognizes that the revised configuration may create additional parking challenges during peak attendance periods. To help address these impacts, the City and Market organizers will implement enhanced directional and parking signage to guide visitors to available public parking areas and reduce congestion.

The Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market continues to provide significant community benefits, including:

- Supporting local farmers, artisans, and small businesses
- Encouraging community gathering and waterfront activation
- Increasing visitation to the Marina and surrounding businesses
- Providing educational and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors

Under the agreement, the Market will remain responsible for operational expenses such as garbage and recycling services, while the City will continue to provide support services including restroom access, utilities, and parking management.

Financial Impact

Consistent with prior years, the proposed agreement waives the facility rental fee for the 2026–2028 term in recognition of the significant community and economic benefits the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market provides to the City, residents, and Marina District businesses.

City staff time will continue to be required for maintenance oversight and public safety support throughout the market season. Additional operational costs associated with utilities, restroom maintenance, signage, and general event support are also anticipated to continue throughout the term of the agreement.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Council approve the agreement between the City of Des Moines and the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market for the 2026–2028 seasons and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement.

AGREEMENT
between
THE CITY OF DES MOINES
and
DES MOINES FARMERS MARKET
for the
2026-2028 DES MOINES FARMERS MARKET

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into by and between the CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON (hereinafter “City”), a municipal corporation of the State of Washington, and **DES MOINES FARMERS MARKET** (hereinafter “DES MOINES FARMERS MARKET”), a Washington non-profit corporation, regarding the 2026-2028 Des Moines Farmers Market.

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the Des Moines Farmers Market enhances the quality of life for residents of the City of Des Moines and wishes to permit it to operate at the Des Moines Marina property on Saturdays from June through September, including the Holiday Market in the Des Moines Beach Park, and other market days throughout the year as may be approved by the City Manager, and

WHEREAS, Des Moines Farmers Market, a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization, was created to operate the Des Moines Farmers Market, and

WHEREAS, the City receives an unquantifiable public benefit from hosting the Farmers Market on City property, including increased patrons in the City’s pay parking lot, increased patrons to Des Moines businesses, and an increased sense of community among attendees and vendors, and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to have Des Moines Farmers Market manage the Des Moines Farmers Market pursuant to certain terms and conditions; now therefore,

IN CONSIDERATION of the mutual benefits and conditions listed below, the parties agree as follows:

(1) Des Moines Farmers Market agrees as follows:

(a) Des Moines Farmers Market shall conduct the 2026-2028 Des Moines Farmers Market in compliance with the conditions outlined in this agreement and the attached Facility Rental Policies and Procedures (Exhibit 1), and will comply with all federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, and regulations.

(b) The prime leadership of all Des Moines Farmers Market activities shall be non-City personnel and it is clearly understood that assistance by City personnel is advisory to Des Moines Farmers Market.

(c) Des Moines Farmers Market shall defend, indemnify, and hold the City of Des Moines, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers harmless from any and all claims, injuries, damages, losses, or suits, including attorney fees, arising out of or in connection with the conduct of the event or its associated activities, except for injuries and damages caused by the sole negligence or intentional conduct of the City, its officers, agents, and employees. In the event that any suit based upon such claim, injury, damage, or loss is brought against the City, Des Moines Farmers Market shall defend the same at its sole cost and expense; provided, that the City retains the right to participate in said suit if any principal of governmental or public law is involved; and if final judgment be rendered against the City and its officers, agents, employees, or any of them, or jointly against the City and Des Moines Farmers Market and their respective officers, agents, and employees, or any of them, Des Moines Farmers Market shall satisfy the same.

(d) Des Moines Farmers Market will provide for expenses such as the Market Manager, portable sanitary facilities, advertising and/or promotional banners associated with the event. Des Moines Farmers Market shall provide adequate paid and/or volunteer staff, trained in courteous, efficient service to patrons of the Farmers Market. Des Moines Farmers Market shall ensure that persons handling and vending food and beverage products shall comply with all necessary health regulations.

(e) The rental fee for use of Des Moines Marina Lot and facilities for the 2026-2028 season of the Des Moines Farmers Market will be waived. This waiver also includes the use of all necessary power and water.

(f) Des Moines Farmers Market will provide and pay for its own garbage utility service.

(g) Des Moines Farmers Market will be allowed to have associated retail sales of food or merchandise as identified in the Des Moines Farmers Market 2026-2028 Application Requirements and Seattle King County Health Department requirements. Des Moines Farmers Market shall not use the Des Moines Farmers Market premises for any purpose other than herein specifically designated without prior written consent of the City. The Des Moines Farmers Market shall require vendors to report and submit state and local taxes resulting from their participation in the Market as a condition of participation.

(h) Des Moines Farmers Market will obtain a City of Des Moines Business License Registration prior to conducting business at the Farmers Market. The Farmers Market business license registration will allow all individual Market vendors except for food truck vendors to conduct business during approved Market hours at the approved Market location. A separate Des Moines business license will be required for food truck vendors or any vendor who conducts business in Des Moines outside of approved Farmers Market events. This provision does not relieve vendors of their responsibility to report and pay any applicable state or local taxes.

(i) Des Moines Farmers Market shall provide general liability insurance in the minimum amount of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) aggregate to cover the Des Moines Farmers Market. The City of Des Moines shall be named as additional insured. Insurance is to be placed with insurers with a current A.M. Best rating of not less than A: VII. The City shall be furnished with original certificates evidencing the insurance requirements thirty (30) days prior to the event. Des Moines Farmers Market shall also work with their insurance provider to confirm that any motorized vehicle used by the Market, including the two City owned shuttle carts, are fully insured in an amount similar to the general liability insurance required above. The Market will provide proof of insurance to the City prior to use of the City owned carts.

(j) Des Moines Farmers Market will be permitted to erect such special signage as is appropriate and in compliance with the Des Moines Municipal Code in the thirty (30) days prior to and during the event. All such signage shall be removed within ten (10) days after the event.

(k) Des Moines Farmers Market will be allowed to solicit booth fees, a percentage of sales and/or charge an admission fee to vendors of the Des Moines Farmers Market to recover the cost of the community event. Des Moines Farmers Market shall bear responsibility for all collection, accounting, and reporting of any funds collected. The City grants this privilege based upon the promoter's agreement that any funds collected in amounts greater than the cost of the event, including, but not limited to costs associated with overhead, staff, promotion and security, will be reinvested, as Des Moines Farmers Market deems fit, in the Des Moines Farmers Market for the benefit of the Des Moines community. Des Moines Farmers Market shall maintain an accounting system meeting the City's approval and agrees to permit the City and its agents and representatives at reasonable intervals at any and all times during usual business hours, to inspect all books, records and accounts of the Des Moines Farmers Market showing gross sales and inventories.

(l) Des Moines Farmers Market agrees to take whatever reasonable measures are necessary to prevent damage to the Marina facility and to be responsible for any damage that may occur as a result of Des Moines Farmers Market's or its vendors' action taken in the conduct of the Des Moines Farmers Market.

(m) A Des Moines Police Department command officer and/or the Fire Marshall of South King Fire District will have the authority to close the Des Moines Farmers Market down at any time should it be necessary, following assessment of any security issue.

(n) Farmer's Market shall pay the City in full any amounts billed within 30 days of receipt.

(o) In recognition of the waiver of the facility rental fees that the City of Des Moines is providing to the Des Moines Farmers Market, the Des Moines Farmers Market will recognize the City of Des Moines as a sponsor in the amount of the reduced rental rate of approximately \$50,000. The Des Moines Farmers Market will provide booth space weekly for City staff to utilize for community outreach and program and event promotions.

(2) The CITY agrees as follows:

(a) Upon execution of this Agreement, the City Manager is authorized to grant permission to Des Moines Farmers Market to use and occupy, for the purpose of the Des Moines Farmers Market in 2026-2028, City facilities and property at the Des Moines Marina.

(b) The City Manager is authorized, at her discretion, to grant permission to utilize City promotional tools such as the *City Currents*, City Web Page and Channel 21 to inform and educate the public about the event. Any City marketing costs will be paid to the City of Des Moines by Des Moines Farmers Market.

(c) The City Manager is authorized to provide City assistance to the Des Moines Farmers Market, which may include all necessary power and water utilities; services by the Police, Public Works, Parks, and Marina departments for the purpose of logistics coordination, Marina area traffic control, parking lot management and pedestrian safety. The City will inform the Farmers Market of any City operational costs of the City and those costs will be paid to the City of Des Moines by Des Moines Farmers Market.

(d) The City retains the right from time to time during the term hereof to change the location or use of areas designated for the Des Moines Farmers Market. If such relocations or adjustments are required, the parties shall cooperate so that such changes shall not unnecessarily interrupt the quality and quantity of services rendered by the Farmers Market.

(e) The City will provide the Market with a mutually agreeable storage area for Market supplies at the reduced rate of \$90 per month plus leasehold tax.

(3) Parking. For Saturday Markets, the City will provide to the Market parking coupons entitling the Market customer to two hours of free parking the days the Market is held. The City will provide these coupons as needed to the Market and the Market will limit coupon availability to paying customers.

(4) Independent Accounting. A true accounting of all receipts and disbursements shall be maintained by Des Moines Farmers Market and shall be made available for review and audit by the City at the discretion and expense of the City. Records of gross sales and receipts are to be kept for each revenue source and Des Moines Farmers Market is responsible for submittal of all taxes due in the ordinary course of operating the Des Moines Farmers Market.

(5) Duration of Agreement. The term of this Agreement shall be for three (3) years upon final execution of this Agreement.

(6) **Termination.** Either party may terminate this Agreement with or without cause with ninety (90) days prior written notice.

The terminating party shall be liable for its share of financial obligations entered into on its behalf prior to termination, including but not limited to, printing costs and media buys.

(7) **Discrimination Prohibited.** Des Moines Farmers Market shall not discriminate against any employee, applicant, vendor, or any person seeking to participate in the Des Moines Farmers Market on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap.

(8) **Assignment.** This Agreement may not be assigned by Des Moines Farmers Market except with written approval of the City to another non-profit organization with similar goals and purposes. Des Moines Farmers Market will provide prior written notice to the City of any assignment of this Agreement to another non-profit organization. Upon assignment, the assignee will be bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement as Des Moines Farmers Market was.

(9) **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties and no other agreements, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement, shall be deemed to exist or bind any of the parties. Either party may request changes in the Agreement. Proposed changes mutually agreed upon will be incorporated by written amendments to this Agreement.

(10) **Governing Law.** The existence, validity, construction, and enforcement of this Agreement shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Washington.

(11) **Mediation/Arbitration.** If a dispute arises from or relates to this Agreement or the breach thereof and if the dispute cannot be resolved through direct discussions, the parties agree to endeavor first to settle the dispute in an amicable manner by mediation administered by a mediator under the American Arbitration Association's Rules before resorting to arbitration. The mediator may be selected by agreement of the parties or through the American Arbitration Association. Following mediation, any unresolved controversy or claim arising from or relating to this Agreement or breach thereof shall be settled through arbitration which shall be conducted under the American Arbitration Association's Arbitration Rules. The arbitrator may be selected by agreement of the parties or through the American Arbitration Association. All fees and expenses for mediation or arbitration shall be borne by the parties equally. However, each party shall bear the expense of its own counsel, experts, witnesses, and preparation and presentation of evidence.

(12) **Amendments/Authorization for Additional Services.** This Agreement may be modified or amended and additional conditions may be authorized during the term of this Agreement upon the mutual written consent of the parties.

(13) **Severability.** If any term, provision, covenant, or condition of this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, void, or unenforceable, the remainder of the

provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect and shall in no way be affected, impaired, or invalidated as a result of such decision.

(14) **Waiver.** The waiver by either party of any breach of any term, condition, or provision of the Agreement shall not be deemed a waiver of such term, condition, or provision or any subsequent breach of the same or any condition or provision of this Agreement.

(15) **Captions.** The captions used herein are for convenience only and are not a part of this Agreement and do not in any way limit or amplify the terms and provisions hereof.

(16) **Time of Essence.** Time is of the essence for each and all of the terms, covenants, and conditions of this Agreement.

(17) **Concurrent Originals.** This Agreement may be signed in counterpart originals.

(18) **Ratification and Confirmation.** Any acts consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this Agreement are hereby ratified and confirmed.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed on the dates written below.

CITY OF DES MOINES

**DES MOINES FARMERS
MARKET**

Katherine Caffrey
City Manager

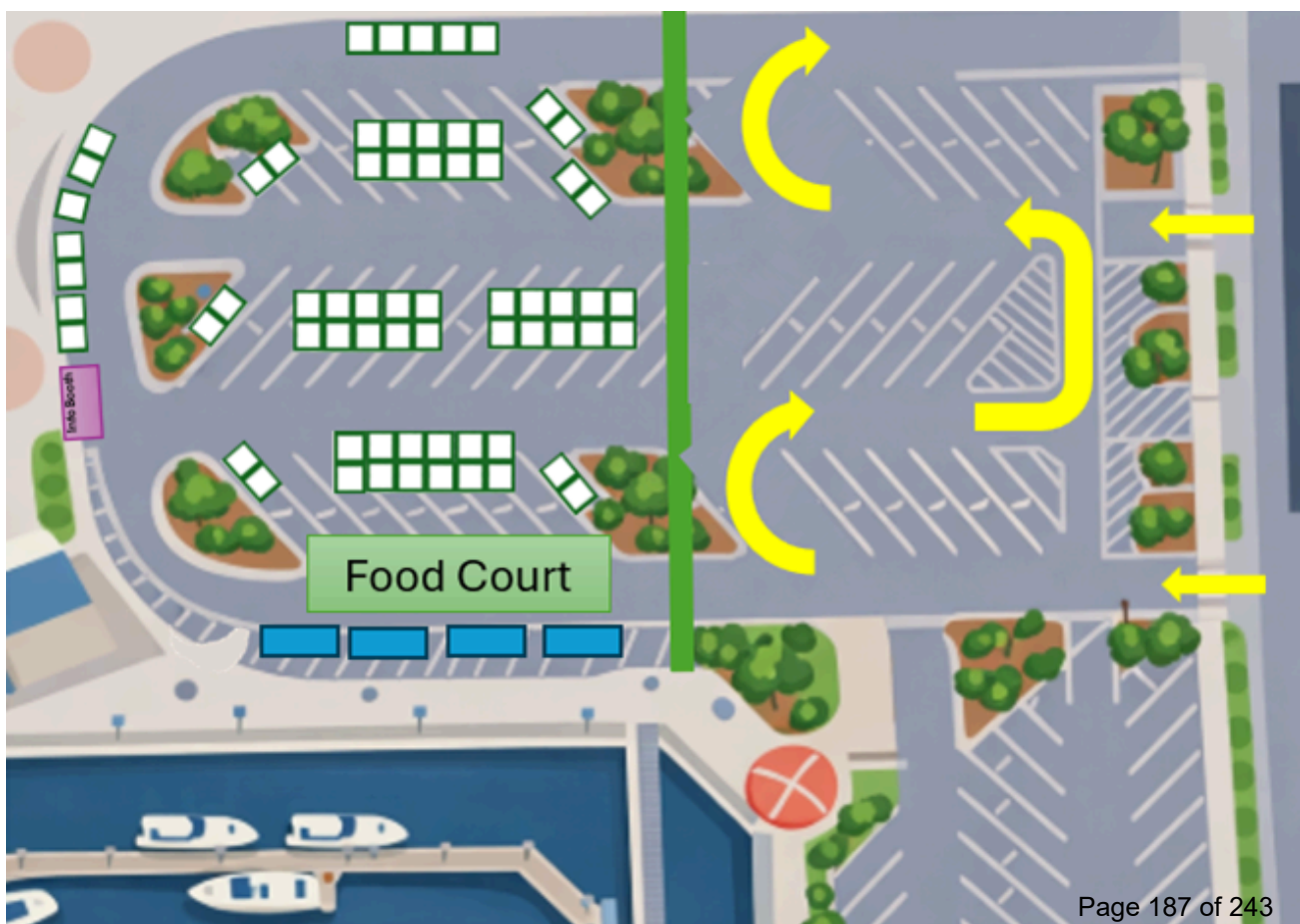
By Travis Denevers
Its President

Date _____

Date _____

Approved as to Form:

City Attorney



**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Resolution Acknowledging Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance No. 1828 Comprehensive Plan Adoption
2. Draft Resolution No. 26-044

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Community Development

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 08, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Community Development

Purpose and Recommendation

Adoption of Draft Resolution No. 26-044 acknowledging the City of Des Moines' Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update Requirements Under the Washington State Growth Management Act

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to pass Draft Resolution No. 26-044, Acknowledging the City of Des Moines' Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update Requirements Under the Washington State Growth Management Act."

Background

On September 25, 2025, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1828 (attached), approving the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update and related development regulation amendments. As part of the periodic update process, the City conducted a review of its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations for consistency with GMA requirements and applicable state law.

RCW 36.70A.130 requires jurisdictions to take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure compliance. The Washington State Department of Commerce tracks periodic update completion based on documentation provided by local jurisdictions. While the City has completed the required review and adopted the necessary updates, Commerce has requested a formal legislative statement acknowledging completion of the full periodic

update process, including review of development regulations.

Discussion

The proposed Resolution serves as this formal acknowledgment. It documents that the City has:

Completed review of its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations as required under RCW 36.70A.130;

- Adopted the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update; and
- Fulfilled the requirements of the 2024 periodic update cycle; and
- Adopted additional legislative mandates and code amendments associated with the 2024 periodic update cycle

This action is procedural in nature and does not introduce new policies or regulatory changes. It provides the formal documentation needed for Commerce to update the City's status to complete, which is necessary to maintain eligibility for certain state grants and funding programs.

Alternatives

None

Financial Impact

None

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of Draft Resolution No. 26-044 acknowledging the City of Des Moines' Completion of the 2024 Periodic Update Requirements Under the Washington State Growth Management Act.

ORDINANCE NO. 1828

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON adopting the 2024 periodic update to the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan and amending DMMC 18.05.050, 18.05.060 and 18.25.120.

WHEREAS, the 1990 Growth Management Act is codified in Chapter 36.70A RCW and requires that each jurisdiction produce a Comprehensive Plan that contains, at a minimum, elements pertaining to land use, transportation, capital facilities, housing, and utilities, and

WHEREAS, the most recent major periodic update to the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Council on June 25th, 2015 by enactment of Ordinance No. 1623, and

WHEREAS, there have been subsequent amendments to the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan, and

WHEREAS, each amendment of the Comprehensive Plan was processed in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act and public hearings were conducted in accordance with law, and

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Act requires, among other things, that "cities ... take action to review and, if needed, revise their **comprehensive plans** and development regulations (*emphasis added*) to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter . . . Any amendment of or revision to development regulations shall be consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan," and

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines is required to conduct a periodic update of its comprehensive plan and development regulations, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130(1), and

WHEREAS, public engagement and participation was gathered in many different ways including meetings, development and maintenance of a project website, and a survey, and

WHEREAS, the goals and policies for growth and the provision of services are guided by GMA requirements and are based in part upon state and regional goals, and reflect the vision and goals of elected officials, and

WHEREAS, during the course of developing the proposed Comprehensive Plan, various means of public outreach were used including, but not limited to, public meetings, a comprehensive plan webpage, booths and various events, notification of public hearings, and

WHEREAS, notice of the public hearing before the City Council was given to the public in accordance with law and a public hearing was held on the 11th day of September 2025, and all persons wishing to be heard were heard, and

WHEREAS, the Des Moines Community Development Director acting as the SEPA responsible official issued a determination of nonsignificance (DNS) on the 12th day of August 2025 and the accompanying comment and appeal periods have lapsed, and

WHEREAS, proper and timely notice was given to the Washington State Department of Commerce of these amendments as required by Chapter 36.70A RCW, and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the amendments contained in this ordinance are appropriate and necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 1. DMMC 18.05.050 and section 19 of Ordinance No. 1591 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1623 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1664 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1712 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1731 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1775 are each amended to read as follows:

Preferred land use map designation. The map filed in the City Clerk's office and marked Exhibit "B" to this ordinance constitutes the comprehensive land use map, also referred to as the preferred land use map, for the City. The map referenced herein supersedes all previously adopted preferred land use maps.

Sec. 2. DMMC 18.05.060 and section 20 of Ordinance 1591 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1623 are each amended to read as follows:

Adoption of Comprehensive Plan. The document consisting of 12 chapters, entitled "Imagine Des Moines 2044" and attached as Exhibit "A" to this ordinance is adopted by reference and constitutes the Comprehensive Plan for the City.

Sec. 3. DMMC 18.25.120 and section 3 of Ordinance 1623 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1664 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1712 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1731 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1746 are each amended to read as follows:

Comprehensive Plan amendments. There is adopted by reference a Comprehensive Plan, on file with the City Clerk, as subsequently amplified, augmented and amended pursuant to the provisions in this Title, as identified below.

- (1) Chapter 1: Introduction;
- (2) Chapter 2: Land Use Element;
- (3) Chapter 3: Transportation Element;
- (4) Chapter 4: Conservation and Environment Element;
- (5) Chapter 5: Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Public Services Element;
- (6) Chapter 6: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element;
- (7) Chapter 7: Housing Element;
- (8) Chapter 8: Economic Development Element;
- (9) Chapter 9: North Central Neighborhood Element;
- (10) Chapter 10: Marina District Element;
- (11) Chapter 11: Pacific Ridge Element;

(12) Chapter 12: Healthy Des Moines Element

Sec. 4. Severability - Construction.

(1) If a section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

(2) If the provisions of this ordinance are found to be inconsistent with other provisions of the Des Moines Municipal Code, this ordinance is deemed to control.

Sec. 5. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after its passage, approval, and publication in accordance with law.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines this 25th day of September 2025 and signed in authentication thereof this 25th day of September, 2025.


M A Y O R

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/ Tim George
City Attorney

ATTEST:


City Clerk

Published: September 30, 2025

CITY ATTORNEY'S FIRST DRAFT, 5/7/2026

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. 26-044

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON, declaring completion of the 2024 periodic review and update to the City of Des Moines 2024 Comprehensive Plan and development regulations pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130.

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines is required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), specifically RCW 36.70A.130(1), to periodically review and, if needed, revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, and

WHEREAS, this resolution formally documents completion of the periodic review and update process required under RCW 36.70A.130, and

WHEREAS, the city initiated a multi-year process to conduct a periodic review of the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure consistency with the GMA, the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies, and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2025, the city council adopted Ordinance No. 1828, which approved the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and associated amendments to the city's development regulations, and

WHEREAS, as part of the 2024 periodic update process, the City conducted a comprehensive review of its development regulations, including those not related to critical areas, to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, applicable state law, and the requirements of the Growth Management Act, and

WHEREAS, the findings of the City's review of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations are documented in the implementation sections of the Comprehensive Plan, which identify ongoing actions to be carried out through the City's work program and do not represent outstanding compliance requirements under RCW 36.70A.130, and

WHEREAS, based on that review, the City Council adopted amendments to development regulations where necessary and determined that remaining regulations are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and compliant with the Growth Management Act, and

WHEREAS, the City is still in the process of updating the critical areas ordinances to comply with the GMA and incorporate Best Available Science (BAS), and

WHEREAS, to further ensure the city's development regulations comply with the GMA, the City Council adopted the following legislative actions:

1. Ordinance No. 1750: Relating to zoning and the regulation of emergency housing, emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing, amending chapters 18.01, 18.52 and 18.210 and adding and codifying a new chapter entitled "Supportive Housing Standards" to the Des Moines Municipal Code; and
2. Ordinance No. 1828: Adopting the Periodic update to the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan and amending DMMC 18.05.050, 18.50.060 and 18.25.120; and
3. Ordinance No. 1820: Relating to land use, updating regulations related to accessory dwelling units, and amending DMMC 18.52.010A, 18.55.140, and 12.40.120; and
4. Ordinance No. 1821: Relating to zoning and the regulation of middle housing, amending DMMC 18.01.050, 18.52.010A, 18.210.090, 18.235.020, and 18.235.100, and adding and codifying a new DMMC Chapter 18.57 entitled "Middle Housing Provisions and Standards"; and
5. Ordinance No. 1836: relating to the land use, implementing and regulating co-living housing, amending DMMC 18.01.050, 18.52.010A, and 18.52.010B, and adding a new chapter to Title 18 DMMC entitled "Co-living housing", and

WHEREAS, the City provided for early and continuous public participation throughout the update process in accordance with RCW 36.70A.140, and

WHEREAS, the City submitted proposed amendments to the Washington State Department of Commerce for 60-day review or expedited review as required by RCW 36.70A.106 for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and for each development regulation amendment identified herein, including Ordinance Nos. 1750, 1828, 1820, 1821 and 1836, as part of the 2024 periodic update cycle, and

WHEREAS, The Puget Sound Regional Council certified that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Des Moines 2024 comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management Act and are substantially consistent with multicounty planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan, and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the collective actions taken through the adoption of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and the aforementioned ordinances satisfy the requirements of the periodic update cycle mandated by RCW 36.70A.130, and

WHEREAS, this resolution is intended to formally document completion of the periodic review and update process required under RCW 36.70A.130, through which the City has reviewed and, where necessary, revised its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure compliance with the Growth Management Act, and does not adopt new policy or regulatory changes; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Sec 1. Declaration of Completion. Pursuant to the requirements of RCW 36.70A.130, the City Council hereby declares that the City of Des Moines has completed the periodic review and update of its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations for the 2024 update cycle. This declaration signifies that the city has reviewed its plan and regulations and has taken legislative action to ensure continued compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Sec 2. Severability. If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this resolution, or its application to any person or situation, be declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid for any reason, or should any portion of this ordinance be pre-empted by state or federal law or regulation, such decision or preemption shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this resolution or its application to other persons or situation. The City Council of the City of Des Moines hereby declares that it would have adopted this resolution and each section, subsection, sentence, clauses, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Sec 3. Corrections. Upon the approval of the City Attorney, the City Clerk and the codifiers of this resolution are authorized

Resolution No. ____
Page 4 of 4

to make any necessary corrections to this resolution including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener's/clerical errors, references, resolution numbering, section/subsection numbers, and any reference thereto.

Sec 4. Ratification. Any act consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this resolution is hereby ratified and affirmed.

Sec 5. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage by the City Council of the City of Des Moines.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Washington this ____ day of _____, 2026 and signed in authentication thereof this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney

ATTEST:

City Clerk

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project Condemnation

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance 26-045
2. CIP Worksheet
3. Project Right of Way Plans
4. Des Moines ROW Procedures
Approved 4.15.25

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Legal

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 15, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Public Works

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this item is to hold a first reading of Draft Ordinance No 26-045 authorizing the City Attorney to begin condemnation proceedings to acquire the vacant property identified as parcel 2946000120 in Des Moines, which is necessary for the North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to pass Draft Ordinance No. 26-045 to a second reading to consider directing the City Attorney to prosecute the eminent domain action in King County Superior Court in a manner provided by law to condemn, take, damage and appropriate real property."

Background

The North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project will be installing sidewalks, curb and gutter, ADA curb ramps and other roadway and safety improvements to S 200th St, from 8th Ave S. to 10th Pl. S. As a part of this Project, the City has been acquiring property and easements as necessary to complete the plan. At this time, the only parcel remaining to be acquired is parcel 2946000120. Despite good faith efforts by the City and our acquisition agent, we have been unable to come to terms on a purchase of the property.

Discussion

Litigation and the condemnation process (eminent domain) is a last resort and only

used by government agencies once all reasonable negotiations and discussions have failed. Eminent domain is the government power to acquire private property necessary for public use following due process of law and payment of just compensation. Proceedings to take property under eminent domain are referred to as "condemnation" proceedings. The property that governments may condemn includes fee title as well as lesser interests in real property, such as easements.

The typical process this entails is the Council approving the condemnation proceeding to move forward (Draft Ordinance 26-045) which will allow the City Attorney to file the matter in Superior Court. After the lawsuit is served on the property owner, the City can file for approval from the Court for Possession and Use of the property. Once approved, the City can move forward with the project and will have the authority to access the parcel without limitation.

Although this will allow the project to move forward, the City will still be required to compensate the parcel owner for fair market value of the property. If agreement cannot be reached between the City and the owner, the Court will make this decision.

Alternatives

Not pass the draft ordinance. Absent condemnation proceedings or an agreement from the owner to sell the property to the City, the City will need to reconfigure the project.

Financial Impact

The City will be responsible for paying the property owner fair market value for the property. The most recent appraisal of the property valued it at \$10,000. The City will also be responsible for legal filing fees for the lawsuit.

Recommendation

Pass the Draft Ordinance to a second reading.

CITY ATTORNEY'S FIRST DRAFT 5/15/2026

DRAFT ORDINANCE NO. 26-045

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON relating to the acquisition by eminent domain of certain property in the City of Des Moines; describing the public convenience, use and necessity of such property; providing for the condemnation, appropriation and taking of such land, including the mode of payment of cost of acquisition; and directing the City Attorney to prosecute such action in King County Superior Court.

WHEREAS, there exists in the City of Des Moines certain property legally described in section 1 of this Ordinance, and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Des Moines intends to acquire by the payment of "fair market value" the property described in Section 1 to continue construction of the North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project in Des Moines, Washington ("Property"), and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that acquisition of the property described in section 1 "Legal description" below is critical to construct the improvements necessary for the North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project, and it is in the public interest to acquire such property for public health, safety, welfare and transportation needs, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to chapter 8.12 RCW, the City is empowered to condemn land and property for transportation purposes (RCW 8.12.030), and

WHEREAS, proper notice of planned final action shall be provided pursuant to RCW 8.25.290 prior to Council final action, and

WHEREAS, based upon the foregoing, the City Council finds that, pending the outcome of negotiations, the only alternative available for acquisition of properties in described in section 1, or portions thereof, may be by eminent domain; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 1. Legal description. The real property that is the subject of this Ordinance is legally described in Exhibit A; attached hereto.

Sec. 2. Public use and necessity. The public convenience, use and necessity demand the acquisition of the real property described in section 1 herein for the North Hill Elementary Walkway Improvements Project and for use by the public for transportation purposes. Said improvements have been designed to implement the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan, the City of Des Moines Transportation Improvement Plan, and the approved Right of Way Plan for the project.

Sec. 3. Condemnation of property. All lands, rights, privileges, and other property lying within the limits of the real property described in Section 1 herein are hereby condemned, appropriated, taken and/or damaged, only after just compensation has been made or paid into the court for the owner thereof in a manner provided by law.

Sec. 4. Costs of acquisition. The costs of the acquisition provided by this Ordinance shall be paid by the City of Des Moines, or such other funds of the City of Des Moines as may be provided by law.

Sec. 5. Authority of the City Attorney. The City Attorney is hereby authorized and directed to begin and prosecute the actions and proceedings in a manner provided by law to condemn, take, damage, and appropriate the real property necessary to carry out the provisions of this Ordinance. In conducting such condemnation; proceedings, the City Attorney is hereby authorized to enter into stipulations for the purpose of minimizing damages.

Sec. 6. Severability - Construction

(1) If a section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction and decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

(2) If the provisions of this Ordinance are found to be inconsistent with other provisions of the Des Moines Municipal Code, this Ordinance is deemed to control.

Sec. 7. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after its passage, approval and publication in accordance with law.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Washington, this ___ day of _____, 2026 and signed in authentication thereof this ___ day of _____, 2026.

M A Y O R

APPROVED AS TO FORM

City Attorney

ATTEST

City Clerk

Published: _____, __, 2026

Effective Date: _____

Exhibit A: Legal Description

LOT 8 IN BLOCK 4 OF GROVE ADDITION TO DES MOINES, AS PER PLAT
RECORDED IN VOLUME 4 OF PLATS, PAGE 83, RECORDS OF KING COUNTY
AUDITOR;
TOGETHER WITH A PORTION OF VACATED STREET ADJACENT THERETO AS
VACATED BY ORDINANCE NO. 2942 RECORDED UNDER RECORDING NO.
7611090856.

Tax Account No(s): 2946000120

**CITY OF DES MOINES
2026-2031 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
(Amount in Thousands)**

S. 200th St. & S. 199th St. Improvements (Segment 1)	Project #	TRCIP0021
-	Previous Project #	319.620

CIP Category: Transportation - Capital Projects

Managing Department: Plan, Build & PW Admin

<i>Summary Project Description:</i>
Installation of approximately 800 linear feet of curbs, gutter, sidewalks, ADA curb ramps, bike lane, storm drainage, retaining walls and driver radar feedback signs on both sides of South 200th St from 8th Avenue South to 10th Place South.

Justification/Benefits: The proposed walkway improvements support the City's non-motorized priority identified within the City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Safe Routes to School Project Report. South 200th Street is a high pedestrian corridor serving the North Hill Public Schools.

<i>PROJECT SCOPE</i>			
<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>Current Budget</i>	<i>Requested Change</i>	<i>Total Budget</i>
Design	667	(16)	651
Land & Right of Way	630	10	640
Construction	2,844	826	3,670
Contingency	364	97	461
Total Expenditures	4,505	917	5,422

<i>ANNUAL ALLOCATION</i>								
<i>Project to Date</i>	<i>Actuals Year</i>	<i>Scheduled Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>
<i>12/31/24</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2026</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>2028</i>	<i>2029</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>2031</i>
410	104	184	57	-	-	-	-	-
114	197	526	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	3,670	-	-	-	-	-
		150	311					
524	301	860	4,038	-	-	-	-	-

<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Current Budget</i>	<i>Requested Change</i>	<i>Total Budget</i>
SURFACE WATER UTILITY	500	(406)	94
AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT	205	-	205
REET 1	250	(250)	-
STREET PAVEMENT FUND	400	923	1,323
REDONDO SPEED ENFORCEMENT	150	150	300
TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT DISTRCT	-	500	500
WA ST SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL	3,000	-	3,000
Total Funding	4,505	917	5,422
Funding Shortfall/Excess	-	-	-

<i>Project to Date</i>	<i>Actuals Year</i>	<i>Scheduled Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>	<i>Plan Year</i>
<i>12/31/24</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2026</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>2028</i>	<i>2029</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>2031</i>
-	-	6	88					
30	-	175						
-	-	-						
1	-	331	991					
-	-	150	150					
-	-		500					
491	190	200	2,309					
522	190	862	4,038	-	-	-	-	-

Right of Way Procedures

The City of Des Moines (Agency), needing to acquire real property (obtain an interest in and/or possession of) in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act and applicable federal regulations (49 CFR Part 24) and state law (Ch. 8.26 RCW), and state regulations (Ch. 468-100 WAC) hereby adopts the following procedures to adhere to all applicable laws, statutes, and regulations. The Agency is responsible for the real property acquisition and relocation activities on projects administered by the Agency and must acquire right of way (ROW) in accordance with the policies set forth in the Washington State Department of Transportation Right of Way Manual M 26-01 and Local Agency Guidelines (LAG).

Below is a list of Agency staff, by name and position titles, who are qualified to perform specific ROW functions. Attached to these procedures are resumes for everyone listed within these procedures, which provide a summary of their qualifications. The procedures shall be updated whenever staffing changes occur.

1. The Agency has the staff with the knowledge and experience to accomplish the following ROW Disciplines:

i. **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:**

Oversee delivery of the ROW Program on federal aid projects for the Agency. Ensures ROW functions are conducted in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Ensures Agency’s approved ROW Procedures are current, including staff qualifications, and provides copies to consultants and Agency staff;
- Oversight of ROW consultants;
 - use of consultant contract approved by WSDOT
 - management of ROW contracts
 - management of ROW files
 - reviews and approves actions and decisions recommended by staff & consultants
 - Overall responsibility for decisions that are outside the purview of consultant functions
- Sets Just Compensation before offers are made;
- Oversight and approval of Waiver Valuations per policy;
- Oversight and approval of Administrative Settlements per policy;
- Ensure the Agency has a relocation appeal process before starting relocation activities;
- Obligation authority for their Agency;
- Obtain permits (Non-Uniform Relocation Act (URA));
- Ensures there is a separation of functions to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Verifies whether ROW is needed, and that the property rights and/or interests needed are sufficient to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed projects (see LAG Appendix 25.174, 25.175, & 25.176).

Michael P. Slevin III, Public Works Director
(Agency Staff Positions & Qualifications – See Attachment 1)

Note: Staff included under Program Administration must have completed the eLearning Administrative Settlement and No ROW Verification training available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/local-programs-training/right-way-training-education>

ii. APPRAISAL

Prepare and deliver appraisals on federal aid projects for the Agency. Ensures that appraisals are consistent and in compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Use only qualified agency staff approved by WSDOT to perform appraisal work;
- Use an Appraiser from WSDOT's Approved Consultant List if the Agency does not have qualified staff;
- Prepare ROW Funding Estimate (not required to be completed by an appraiser & only when there are federal funds in the ROW Phase);
- Prepare Wavier Valuation;
- Obtain specialist reports;
- Coordinate with engineering, program administration, acquisition, relocation, and/or property management, as necessary.

Contract with a qualified consultant

iii. APPRAISAL REVIEW:

Review appraisals on federal aid projects for the Agency to make sure they are adequate, and reliable, have reasonable supporting data, and approve appraisal reports. Ensures appraisals are adequately supported and represent fair market value and applicable costs to cure and are completed in compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Use only qualified agency staff approved by WSDOT to perform appraisal review work;
- Use review appraiser from WSDOT's Approved Consultant List if the agency does not have qualified staff;
- Ensures project-wide consistency in approaches to value, use of market data, and costs to cure;
- Coordinate with engineering, program administration, acquisition, relocation, and/or property management, as necessary.

Contract with a qualified consultant

iv. ACQUISITION:

Acquire, through negotiation with property owners, real property, or real property interests (rights) on federal aid projects for the Agency. Ensures acquisitions are completed in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Use only qualified staff to perform acquisition activities for real property or real property interests, including donations;

- To avoid a conflict of interest, when the acquisition function prepares a Waiver Valuation, only acquires property valued at \$15,000 or less;
- Provide and maintain a comprehensive written account of acquisition activities for each parcel;
- Prepare Waiver Valuation justification and obtain approval;
- Prepare Administrative Settlement and obtain approval;
- Prepare Right of Way Funding Estimate (when there are federal funds in the ROW Phase);
- Review title, and recommend and obtain approval for acceptance of encumbrances;
- Ensure acquisition documents are consistent with ROW plans, valuation, and title reports;
- Provide a negotiator disclaimer;
- Maintain a complete, well-organized parcel file for each acquisition;
- Coordinate with engineering, program administration, appraisal, relocation, and/or property management, as necessary.

Contract with a qualified consultant

Note: Staff included under Acquisition must have completed the eLearning Administrative Settlement training available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/local-programs-training/right-way-training-education>

v. **RELOCATION:**

Provide relocation assistance to occupants of property considered displaced by federally funded projects for the Agency. Ensures relocations are completed in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Prepare and obtain approval of relocation plan before starting relocation activities;
- Confirm relocation appeal procedure is in place;
- Provide required notices and advisory services;
- Make calculations and provide recommendations for Agency approving authority before making payment;
- Provide and maintain a comprehensive written account of relocation activities for each parcel;
- Maintain a complete, well-organized parcel file for each displacement;
- Ensure occupants and personal property is removed from the ROW;
- Coordinate with engineering, program administration, appraisal, acquisition, and/or property management, as necessary.

Contract with a qualified consultant

vi. **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:**

Establish property management policies and procedures that will assure control and administration of ROW, excess lands, and improvements acquired on federal aid projects for the Agency. Ensures property management activities are completed in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Responsibilities/Expectations:

- Account for use of proceeds from the sale/lease of property acquired with federal funds on other title 23 eligible activities;
- Keep ROW free of encroachments;
- Obtain WSDOT/FHWA approval for change in access control along interstate;
- Maintain property records;
- Ensure occupants and personal property is removed from the ROW;
- Maintain a complete, well-organized property management file;
- Coordinate with engineering, program administration, appraisal, acquisition, and/or property management, as necessary.

Michael P. Slevin III, Public Works Director

Thomas Owen, City Engineer

Tyler Beekley, Surface Water & Environmental Engineering Manager

Jeff Friend, Finance Director

Timothy A. George, City Attorney

(Agency Staff Positions & Qualifications – See Attachment 1)

- b. Any functions for which the Agency does not have qualified staff, the Agency will contract with another local agency with approved procedures, a qualified consultant, or the WSDOT. An Agency that proposes to use qualified consultants for any of the above functions will need to work closely with their ROW Local Agency Coordinator (LAC) and Local Programs to ensure all requirements are met. The LAC will perform spot-check reviews on selected federal aid or federal aid-eligible projects. **The LAC must be given an opportunity to review all offers and supporting data before offers are made to the property owners.** The number of spot-check reviews is dependent upon the scope of the project, the complexity of acquisitions, the local agency’s level of experience, and past performance. Spot check reviews may not be required on all projects but will lessen the risk of delays during ROW Certification. Additional information or parcel files may be requested by the LAC to ensure local agency compliance.
 - c. The Agency’s Administrative Settlement Procedures indicating the approval authorities and the procedures involved in making administrative settlements need to be included with these procedures (see Exhibit A).
 - d. An Agency wishing to take advantage of the Waiver Valuation process, properties valued up to \$35,000 or less, need to complete Exhibit B of these procedures.
2. All projects shall be available for review by the FHWA and WSDOT at any time and all project documents shall be retained and available for inspection during the plan development, ROW, and construction stages, and for three years following acceptance of the projects by WSDOT.

ATTACHMENT 1

AGENCY STAFF POSITIONS & QUALIFICATIONS

City of Des Moines staff will be responsible for the Program Administration and Property Management functions. The following positions and individuals are identified below. Position descriptions and qualifications are available.

Public Works Director: Michael P. Slevin III, P.E.- Registered Professional Engineer 36248 in the state of Washington. Washington State University B.S, Civil Engineering, University of Washington MBA, APWA Stone Public Works Fellow. Mr. Slevin has over 30 years of experience in the public sector managing and fulfilling Engineer of Record roles for municipal infrastructure projects. His experience includes 29 years at the City of Tacoma in numerous roles including; Project Engineer, Right of Way, Facilities, and Real Estate manager, City Engineer, Utility Engineer, Public Works Director, and Environmental Services Director.

City Engineer: Thomas Owen, P.E., PTOE – Registered Professional Engineer and Certified Professional Traffic Operations Engineer, Washington State; B.S. Engineering Management, University of Portland; Mr. Owen has over 17 years of experience in the public sector managing transportation infrastructure improvements consistent with WSDOT LAG guidelines. Experience includes Right-of-Way acquisition plan development, acquisition management, and project certification.

Surface Water and Environmental Engineering Manager: Tyler Beekley, P.E. – Registered Professional Engineer, Washington State; B.S. Civil Engineering, Washington State University; Mr. Beekley has over 12 years of experience in the public sector involving stormwater infrastructure projects, water quality permitting, and landslide restoration projects.

Finance Director: Jeff Friend, CPA – Licensed WA State CPA #26289. Master's in Public Accounting from Seattle University. He has 23 years of experience in public sector financing and accounting. His experience over the past 23 years include the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, King County Housing Authority, the City of Tukwila, and the City of Des Moines.

City Attorney: Timothy A. George, – J.D. California Western School of Law, Attorney licensed to practice law in Washington, California, and the United States Western District. Mr. George has been practicing law for over 18 years and has extensive civil and criminal law experience including acquisition of public Right-of-Way via use of municipal powers of eminent domain.

3. Approval of the Agency's procedures by WSDOT Local Programs may be rescinded at any time the Agency is found to no longer have qualified staff or is found to be in non-compliance with the regulations. The rescission may be applied to all, or part of the functions approved.



Mayor

04/08/2025

Date

Washington State Department of Transportation

Approved By:

Local Programs Right of Way Manager

Date

EXHIBIT A

Agency's Administrative Settlement Policy

Administrative settlements that exceed Fair Market Value (FMV) as established through the appraisal process, and in accordance with LAG manual section 25.11, Administrative Settlement Guidelines, shall be documented and thoroughly justified, and shall be set forth in writing. Administrative Settlements shall be subject to the following levels of approval authority: The City Manager, or designee shall have the authority to make administrative settlements up to 10% above FMV not to exceed \$50,000. Administrative settlements in excess of \$50,000 shall require the approval of the City Council.

Passed and approved by the City of Des Moines Council, this 15th day of February 2018.



Mayor

04/08/2025

Date

Attest:



City Clerk

Approved as to Form:

/s/ Tim George

City Attorney

Washington State Department of Transportation

Approved By:

Local Programs Right of Way Manager

Date

EXHIBIT B

Agency's Waiver Valuation


The City of Des Moines, hereinafter (Agency), desiring to acquire Real Property according to 23 CFR, Part 635, Subpart C, 49 CFR Part 24, and State directives, and desiring to take advantage of the waiver valuation process approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for Washington State, hereby agrees to follow the procedure approved for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) as follows:

Rules

- A. The Agency may elect to waive the requirement for an appraisal if the acquisition is simple, has a low fair market value, and the compensation estimate (including the cost to cure items) and the estimated property value is under \$35,000.
- B. The Agency must make the property owner(s) aware that an appraisal has not been completed on the property for offers of \$15,000 or less.
- C. The Agency must make the property owner(s) aware that an appraisal has not been completed on the property for offers over \$15,001 and up to \$35,000, and that an appraisal will be prepared if requested by the property owner(s).
- D. Special care should be taken in the preparation of the Waiver Valuation as no review is mandated, the preparer needs to ensure that the compensation is fair and that all the calculations are correct.

Procedures

- A. A Waiver Valuation is prepared using comparable sales found and verified at the time of preparation.
- B. The Waiver Valuation is approved by the Agency staff listed under Program Administration within these Right of Way Procedures. Upon signature, an offer to the property owner(s) is authorized once the local agency coordinator has completed a Spot Check for the project.



Mayor

04/08/2025

Date

Washington State Department of Transportation

Approved By:

Local Programs Right of Way Manager

Date

RESOLUTION NO. 1377

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON, adopting Administrative Settlement Policies in accordance with the Washington State Department of Transportation Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual, section 25.11, *Administrative Settlement Guidelines*.

WHEREAS, it is sometimes necessary for the City to acquire real estate property in order to construct or accommodate planned improvements and,

WHEREAS, for a project to be eligible for federal funding on any phase of the project, the project's right-of-way must be acquired in accordance with the requirements of the Washington State Department of Transportation Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual and,

WHEREAS, Section 25.09 of the LAG outlines the process for Administrative Settlements which include requiring the local agency to submit for review to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) the agency's responsible official with authority to approve administrative settlements, and the procedure for handling administrative settlements, and

WHEREAS, the designated local agency representative may approve an administrative settlement when it is determined that such action is in the public interest; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

The Des Moines City Council adopts the following Administrative Settlement Policies for real estate property purchases required for public works projects in accordance with the Washington State Department of Transportation Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual, section 25.11, *Administrative Settlement Guidelines*.

ADMINISTRATIVE SETTLEMENT POLICIES

(1) The City Manager, or the City Manager's designee, shall have the authority to make administrative settlements up to ten percent (10%) above the Fair Market Value (FMV) not to exceed \$50,000.

(2) Administrative settlements in excess of \$50,000 shall require the approval of the Des Moines City Council.

ADOPTED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Washington this 15th day of February, 2018 and signed in authentication thereof this 15th day of February, 2018.


M A Y O R

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Assistant City Attorney

ATTEST:


City Clerk

APPROVED BY:

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Local Programs Right-of-Way Manager
Dated: _____

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Residential Conversions Ordinance - 1st Reading - 20 Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance No. 26-035
2. Residential Conversions PowerPoint

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Community Development

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 8, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Community Development

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is for City Council to consider passing an Ordinance to a second reading adopting draft Ordinance No. 26-035 Residential Conversions.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to pass Draft Ordinance No. 26-035 to a second reading on June 11, 2026."

Background

The Washington State legislative session passed House Bill (HB) 1042 in 2023. HB 1042 requires jurisdictions to allow commercial and mixed-use buildings to convert to residential buildings. State law requires all local governments in Washington State planning under the Growth Management Act to update their development regulations to comply with HB 1042 by June 30, 2026. The bill is intended for the creation of additional housing units in existing buildings. This code update process requires a thorough review of Des Moines's regulations to ensure they reflect new laws and requirements.

At the May 5, 2026 Planning Commission, the Commission held a public hearing and recommended City Council approval of draft Ordinance 26-035.

Discussion

The draft Residential Conversions ordinance which includes amendments to Des Moines Municipal Code (DMMC) 18.01.050 Definitions, DMMC 18.52.010B Commercial

use chart, and adding a new chapter to Title 18 DMMC entitled “Residential Conversions”. City staff prepared a draft ordinance of the proposed Residential Conversions regulations (Attachment 1).

City staff conducted a review of Des Moines’s existing regulations to ensure consistency with HB 1042 and RCW 35A.21.440. As a result of the review, proposed code amendments address definitions, affected zoning districts, general and development.

Framework

City staff are proposing a Draft Ordinance which includes amendments to DMMC 18.01.050, DMMC 18.52.010B Commercial use chart, and adding a new chapter to Title 18 DMMC entitled “Residential Conversions” to comply with HB 1042 and RCW 35A.21.440. Per these new legislative requirements, cities:

- Must comply with HB 1042 by June 30, 2026;
- Only buildings with Certificates of Occupancy that are at least three years old are eligible;
- Must allow conversions to have a 50% density increase above what is permitted in the underlying zone;
- Parking for the new converted units cannot be required; however, cities may require retention of existing parking for residential and nonresidential uses;
- Cannot impose additional design standards beyond those generally applicable to all residential development in the zone;
- Cannot impose architectural or design standards unless the building is a designated landmark or is within a historic district established by a local preservation ordinance;
- Must allow additional housing units in all locations except ground floor commercial or retail that’s along a major pedestrian corridor;
- Cannot require unchanged portions of an existing building used for residential purposes meet the current energy code. If any portion of an existing building is converted to new dwelling units, the new units must meet the current code;
- Existing non-conformities such as setbacks, building coverage, impervious coverage, etc. cannot be a justification for denial of a building permit;
- Transportation and environmental studies are not required; and
- If a potential conversion cannot satisfy life safety standards, the city is not required to approve its building permit.

Proposed Amendments/Rationale:

Definitions. The words or phrases defined in this section will have the indicated meanings.

- **“Residential conversion”** means the conversion of a building, or portion of a building, that is vacant, or occupied by a nonresidential use, to a residential use.

Zoning Districts. HB 1042 applies to commercial and mixed-use zones. The zoning districts include:

- N-C: Neighborhood Commercial;
- I-C: Institutional Campus;
- C-C: Community Commercial;
- D-C: Downtown Commercial;
- H-C: Highway Commercial;
- PR-C: Pacific Ridge Commercial;
- T-C: Transit Community Zone; and
- W-C: Woodmont Commercial.
- Those excluded are Single Family Residential (SFR) Zones designated as RS-15,000; RS-9,600; RS-8,400; RS-7,200 and RS- 4,000, RS-E, and R-SR as these zones already allow for mixed-use development. The B-P Zone does not allow for residential or mixed-use development.

General Standards

1. For the purpose of this section, "existing building" means a building that received a certificate of occupancy at least three years prior to the permit application to add housing units;
2. Existing buildings may be permitted to convert to a residential use(s) provided their Certificate of Occupancy was issued a minimum of three (3) years prior to building permit application;
3. The proposal shall comply with all health and safety standards, including but not limited to building code standards and fire and life safety standards.

Development Standards

1. Development of new dwelling units entirely within an existing building is not subject to building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor area ratio requirement development standards as applicable to residential development of the underlying zone unless the Director makes written findings that the nonconformity is causing a significant detriment to the surrounding area;
2. The residential density established by the underlying zone may be increased by up to 50% if the housing is constructed entirely within the building envelope of an existing building. Applicable building codes and health and safety standards must be met;
3. New parking spaces are not required for dwelling units added to an existing building;
4. The existing commercial exterior structure is not required to meet additional exterior design requirements unless the building is a designated landmark or is within a historic district established through a local preservation ordinance;
5. Ground floor retail or commercial uses must be retained in buildings located on a

Major Pedestrian Corridor as defined as “Priority Pedestrian Corridor” in the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Transportation Plan;

6. No traffic concurrency or environmental study is required for residential conversions;
7. Emergency housing and transitional housing uses are exempt from the development standards of this chapter.

Alternatives

State law (RCW 35A.21.440) requires all local governments planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to revise their regulations by June 30, 2026 to conform with the requirements. If a city or county does not amend its rules to be consistent with the law, the statute will "supersede, preempt and invalidate any conflicting local development regulations" RCW 35A.21.440 (1)(b).

Financial Impact

Unknown

Recommendation

Staff recommends passing Draft Ordinance 26-035 relating to residential conversions to a second reading on June 11, 2026.

CITY ATTORNEY'S FIRST DRAFT 04/23/2026

DRAFT ORDINANCE NO. 26-035

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON relating to the land use, implementing and regulating residential conversions, amending DMMC 18.01.050, DMMC 18.52.010A, and adding a new chapter to Title 18 DMMC entitled "Residential conversions".

WHEREAS, in 2023 the Washington state Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 1042 (chapter 285, laws of 2023), creating new section RCW 35A.21.440, related to co-living housing, and

WHEREAS, in passing ESHB 1042 the Legislature found that Washington state is experiencing a housing affordability crisis, and

WHEREAS, On 04/22/2026, the City submitted the proposed amendment to the Washington State Department of Commerce for its expedited 30-day review and received documentation of completion of the procedural requirement (Submittal ID 2026-S-12726), and

WHEREAS, the Des Moines Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on May 5, 2026, and

WHEREAS, based on the careful consideration of the facts and law, the City Council finds that the proposed amendments attached and incorporated herein should be approved as presented; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 1. DMMC 18.01.050 and section 5 of Ordinance No. 1591 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1628 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1655 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1661 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1669 as amended by section 15 of Ordinance No. 1671 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1697 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1714 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1719 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1737 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1750 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1820 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1821 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1836 are each amended to read as follows:

Definitions.

As used in this Title, unless the context or subject matter clearly requires otherwise, the words or phrases defined in this section shall have the indicated meanings.

...

"Residence" means a building or structure, or portion thereof, which is designed for and used to provide a place of abode for human beings, but not including hotels or motel units having no kitchens. The term "residence" includes the term "residential" as referring to the type of or intended use of a building or structure.

"Residential conversion" means the conversion of a building, or portion of a building, that is vacant, or occupied by a nonresidential use, to a residential use.

"Restoration" means the return of an environmentally critical area to a state in which its functions, values, and size approach or exceed its unaltered state as closely as possible.

...

"Zone" means an area accurately defined as to boundaries and location on an official map and within which area only certain types of land uses are permitted, and within which other types of land uses are excluded, as set forth in this Title.

Sec. 2. DMMC 18.52.010B, and those parts of the Commercial Use Chart and section 133 of Ordinance 1591 as amended by section 12 of Ordinance 1601 as amended by section 8 of Ordinance 1618A as amended by section 2 of Ordinance 1644 as amended by Section 1 of Ordinance 1645 as amended by section 8 of Ordinance 1655 as amended by section 4 of Ordinance 1656 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance 1661 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance 1669 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance 1672 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance 1697 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance 1701 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance 1714 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance 1719 as amended by section 9 of Ordinance 1737 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance 1750 as amended by section 5 of Ordinance No. 1775 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1836 are each amended as follows:

Commercial Use Chart.

Use is: P: Permitted P/L: Permitted but with special limitations CUP: Conditional use review required UUP: Unclassified use review required	N-C	I-C	B-P	C-C	D-C	H-C	PR-C	T-C	W-C
Accessory buildings and uses (as described in the applicable zone)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
...									
Repossession services	P/L [3]		P	P	P		P/L [52.5]		P
<u>Residential conversions</u>	<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]		<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]	<u>P/L</u> [95]
Restaurants	P	P/L [6.1]	P/L [9]	P	P	P	P	P	P
...									

1. Accessory Buildings and Uses. This regulation applies to all parts of Table 18.52.010A that have a [1].

...

95. Residential conversions. This regulation applies to all parts of Table 18.52.010B that have a [95].

Residential Conversions are permitted where the underlying zone permits multifamily or mixed use. Additional requirements for Residential conversions per sections 3 through 8 of this ordinance.

NEW SECTION Sec. 3. Title.

This chapter shall be entitled "Residential conversions".

NEW SECTION Sec. 4. Application.

Residential conversions are a permitted use for buildings that are zoned for commercial or mixed use. Residential conversions are a permitted use in the following zoning districts: N-C, I-C, C-C, D-C, H-C, PR-C, T-C, and W-C.

NEW SECTION Sec. 5. Purpose.

The purpose in providing for the conversion of existing buildings to residential is to encourage conversion of underutilized office and commercial space to housing as a way to accommodate housing needs for the state's growing population, and to be consistent with RCW 35A.21.440.

NEW SECTION Sec. 6. Authority.

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the provisions of RCW 35A.21.440 and other applicable laws.

NEW SECTION Sec. 7. General Standards.

(1) For the purpose of this section, "existing building" means a building that received a certificate of occupancy at least three years prior to the permit application to add housing units;

(2) Existing buildings may be permitted to convert to a residential use(s) provided their Certificate of Occupancy was issued a minimum of three (3) years prior to building permit application;

(3) The proposal shall comply with all health and safety standards, including but not limited to building code standards and fire and life safety standards.

NEW SECTION Sec. 8. Development Standards.

(1) Development of new dwelling units entirely within an existing building is not subject to building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor area ratio requirement development standards as applicable to residential development of the underlying zone unless the Director makes written findings that the nonconformity is causing a significant detriment to the surrounding area;

(2) The residential density established by the underlying zone may be increased by up to 50% if the housing is constructed entirely within the building envelope of an existing building. Applicable building codes and health and safety standards must be met;

(3) New parking spaces are not required for dwelling units added to an existing building;

(4) The existing commercial exterior structure is not required to meet additional exterior design requirements unless the building is a designated landmark or is within a historic district established through a local preservation ordinance;

(5) Ground floor retail or commercial uses must be retained in buildings located on a Major Pedestrian Corridor as defined as "Priority Pedestrian Corridor" in the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Transportation Plan;

(6) No traffic concurrency or environmental study is required for residential conversions;

(7) Emergency housing and transitional housing uses are exempt from the development standards of this chapter.

Sec. 9. Codification. Sections 3 through 8 of this ordinance shall be codified as a new chapter in Title 18 DMMC.

Sec. 10. Severability - Construction.

(1) If a section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, such

Ordinance No. ____
Page 6 of 6

decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

(2) If the provisions of this ordinance are found to be inconsistent with other provisions of the Des Moines Municipal Code, this ordinance is deemed to control.

Sec. 11. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force thirty (30) days after its passage, approval, and publication in accordance with law.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines this ____ day of _____, 2026 and signed in authentication thereof this ____ day of _____, 2026.

M A Y O R

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Published: _____



RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

ALICIA JACOBS, LAND USE PLANNER
REBECCA DEMING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

City Council 05/21/2026

What is House Bill (HB) 1042

New State Legislation - GMA requires the City to comply with HB 1042 (2023) and RCW.35A.21.440 by June 30, 2026.

Purpose - Explore the use of converting existing buildings for residential purposes.

Notable Requirements:

- Buildings with Certificates of Occupancy that are at least three years old are eligible;
- Must allow a 50% density increase above what is permitted in the underlying zone;
- Parking for new units is not required;
- Cannot impose additional design standards;
- Must allow additional housing units in all locations that permit mixed-use or residential except ground floor commercial or retail that's along a major pedestrian corridor;
- Existing non-conformities such as setbacks, building coverage, impervious coverage, etc. cannot justify denial of a building permit; and
- Transportation and environmental studies are not required.



What are Residential Conversions?

Residential conversion means the conversion of a building, or portion of a building, that is vacant, or occupied by a nonresidential use, to a residential use.



Philadelphia, PA
Contractor shop converted to 3 bedroom house with large office space



Burlington, WA
2nd floor office space converted to 30 apartments



Lacey, WA
Vacant commercial building converted to 50 residential units

Draft Ordinance: Definitions

Create definition for “Residential conversion”:

- “Residential conversion” means the conversion of a building, or portion of a building, that is vacant, or occupied by a nonresidential use, to a residential use.

DRAFT

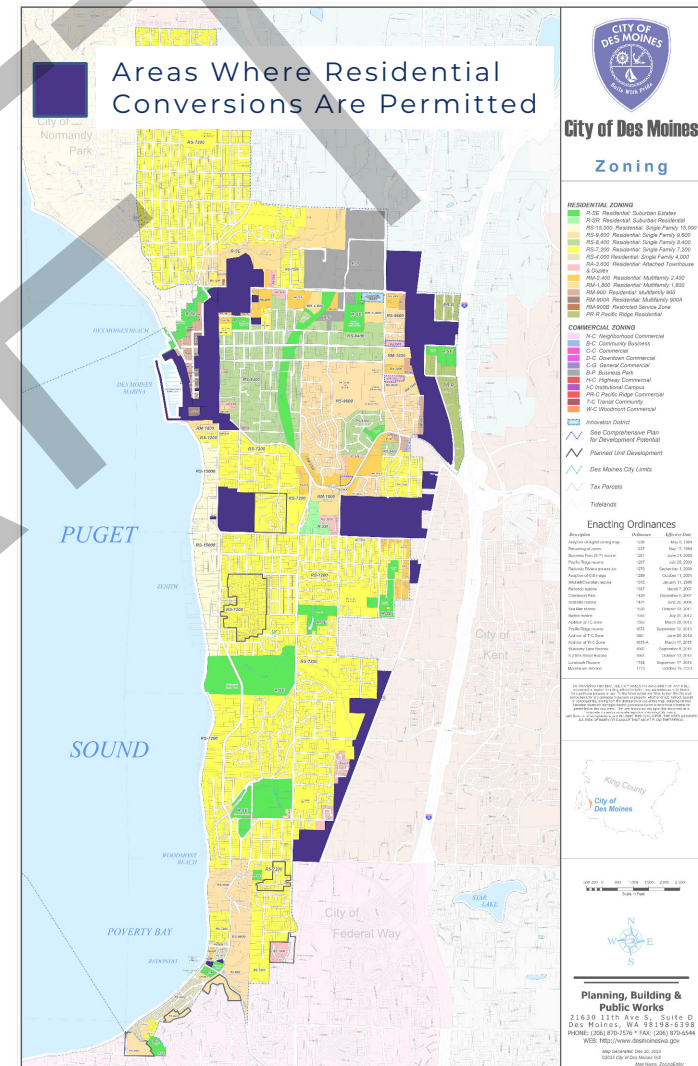
Draft Ordinance: Zoning

Update permitted uses table to permit residential conversions in the following zones:

- N-C: Neighborhood Commercial;
- I-C: Institutional Campus;
- C-C: Community Commercial;
- D-C: Downtown Commercial;
- H-C: Highway Commercial;
- PR-C: Pacific Ridge Commercial;
- T-C: Transit Community Zone; and
- W-C: Woodmont Commercial.

Excluded:

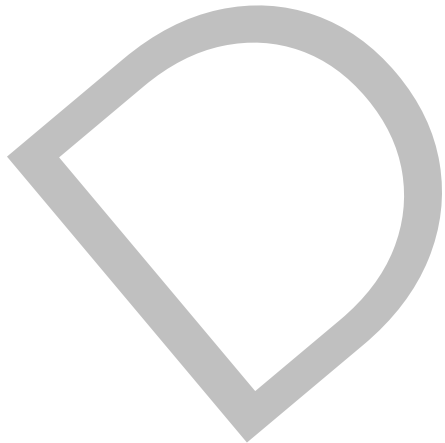
Those excluded are Single Family Residential (SFR) Zones designated as RS-15,000; RS-9,600; RS-8,400; RS-7,200 and RS-4,000, RS-E, and R-SR as these zones already allow for mixed-use development. The B-P Zone does not allow for residential or mixed-use development.



Draft Ordinance: General Standards

Minimum compliance with HB 1042:

1. For the purpose of this section, "existing building" means a building that received a certificate of occupancy at least three years prior to the permit application to add housing units;
2. Existing buildings may be permitted to convert to a residential use(s) provided their Certificate of Occupancy was issued a minimum of three (3) years prior to building permit application;
3. The proposal shall comply with all health and safety standards, including but not limited to building code standards and fire and life safety standards.



Draft Ordinance : Development Standards

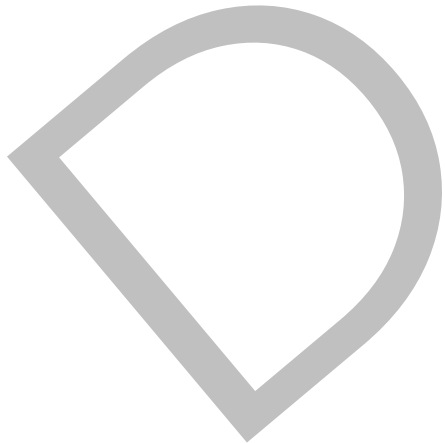
Minimum compliance with HB 1042:

1. Development of new dwelling units entirely within an existing building is not subject to building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor area ratio requirement development standards as applicable to residential development of the underlying zone unless the Director makes written findings that the nonconformity is causing a significant detriment to the surrounding area;
2. The residential density established by the underlying zone may be increased by up to 50% if the housing is constructed entirely within the building envelope of an existing building. Applicable building codes and health and safety standards must be met;
3. New parking spaces are not required for dwelling units added to an existing building;
4. The existing commercial exterior structure is not required to meet additional exterior design requirements unless the building is a designated landmark or is within a historic district established through a local preservation ordinance;



Draft Ordinance : Development Standards **cont.**

5. Ground floor retail or commercial uses must be retained in buildings located on a Major Pedestrian Corridor as defined as “Priority Pedestrian Corridor” in the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Transportation Plan;
6. No traffic concurrency or environmental study is required for residential conversions;
7. Emergency housing and transitional housing uses are exempt from the development standards of this chapter.



Suggested Motion

I move to pass Draft Ordinance No. 26-035 to a second reading on June 11, 2026.

DRAFT





Des Moines
WATERLAND CITY

**City Council
AGENDA ITEM**

BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 26-050, City of Des Moines Opportunity Zone Application

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution No. 26-050
2. Opportunity Zone Map

FOR AGENDA OF:

May 21, 2026

DEPT OF ORIGIN:

Community Development

DATE SUBMITTED:

May 13, 2026

CLEARANCES:

Community Development

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda is to review and approve draft Resolution No. 26-050 supporting the city's Opportunity Zone application and authorizing submittal.

Suggested Motion:

Motion: "I move to pass Draft Resolution No. 26-050, expressing support for the city's Opportunity Zone application to the Washington State Department of Commerce and authorizing the Community Development Director to submit the application."

Background

The federal Opportunity Zone program was established under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to promote private investment in designated economically distressed areas through federal tax incentives. Portions of the City of Des Moines have been designated as potential Opportunity Zones, presenting opportunities to attract private capital for redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, business expansion, housing development, and job creation.

Since 2018, \$200 billion in private sector funds have been placed in qualified Opportunity Zone funds across the United States, including in Washington, resulting in multitudes of new housing, health facilities, hospitality, commercial and industrial development, and new jobs created. Washington currently has 139 designated Opportunity Zones across 36 counties, and with the new program, that will narrow to 99

across the state.

The Washington State Department of Commerce serves as the state’s lead agency for economic development and community revitalization and coordinates state-level support related to Opportunity Zone activities. As part of this effort, the City of Des Moines is working with regional partners, as well as King County to prepare and submit an Opportunity Zone application to the Department of Commerce seeking participation, coordination, and support under the program.

Formal City Council endorsement is requested to demonstrate that the application reflects City policy direction and aligns with adopted planning documents and economic development strategies.

Discussion

The Washington State Department of Commerce is leading the State's process for identifying and selecting qualifying applications to be submitted to the U.S. Treasury department for approval. Des Moines census tract 53033028902 is qualified for zone designation. The Opportunity Zone designation will support and complement plans and resources to support economic growth and transit-oriented development goals in the Pacific Highway Corridor. Applications are due by May 28, 2026.

Alternatives

- 1. Approve Draft Resolution as presented
- 2. Approved an amended Resolution
- 3. Do not approve Resolution (City would miss the application window)

Financial Impact

Opportunity Zone 2.0 attracts private investment and development that contributes to City revenues. It does not require the expenditure of any additional City funds.

Recommendation

Adopt Resolution No. 26-050, expressing support for the city’s Opportunity Zone application to the Washington State Department of Commerce and authorizing the Community Development Director to submit the application.

CITY ATTORNEY'S FIRST DRAFT, 5/13/2026

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. 26-050

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON, supporting implementation of the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan including making application for Opportunity Zone 2.0.

WHEREAS, the Opportunity Zone Program (OZ) was created under the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) to incentivize long-term investment in designated low-income census tracts through capital gains tax benefits, and

WHEREAS, since 2018, cities and areas across the United States including within Washington State have attracted more an estimated \$200 billion dollars into qualified zone investment funds, and

WHEREAS, Washington currently has 139 designated OZs across 36 counties, and with the new program that will authorize an additional 99 OZs designated across the state, and

WHEREAS, Federal bill H.R. 1 was signed into Public Law 119-21 in July 2025, making OZ permanent, with designation cycles now set in place every ten years. Also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) and the "2025 Budget Reconciliation Act", and

WHEREAS, Governors must designate OZs to U.S. Treasury in a 90-day window that opens July 1, 2026, and the Washington State Department of Commerce is leading a project to develop recommendations for Governor Ferguson by June 30, 2026, and

WHEREAS, Commerce requires applicants to submit application materials by May 28, 2026, and

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines contains census tract 53033028902 which is eligible under the Opportunity Zone 2.0 Program, and

WHEREAS, the types of qualifying projects include housing, commercial office, retail, hospitals, hospital, and industrial, all of which would benefit Des Moines,

WHEREAS, the OZ works especially well for transit-oriented development associated with Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Station locations such as the recently opened Kent-Des Moines Station, and

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines has adopted a Comprehensive Plan to guide Des Moines future, including Policy Goals 1.3 and 1.4 towards growing a more vibrant commercial center that can attract new interest, investors, customers, and for investment-driven economic development tools; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Sec 1. The City of Des Moines supports the application for the Opportunity Zone 2.0 Program.

Sec 2. The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to prepare and file the application with the Washington State Department of Commerce, and to take actions deemed necessary and appropriate to advance the application.

Sec 3. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage by the City Council of the City of Des Moines.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Washington this ____ day of _____, 2026 and signed in authentication thereof this ____ day of _____, 2026.

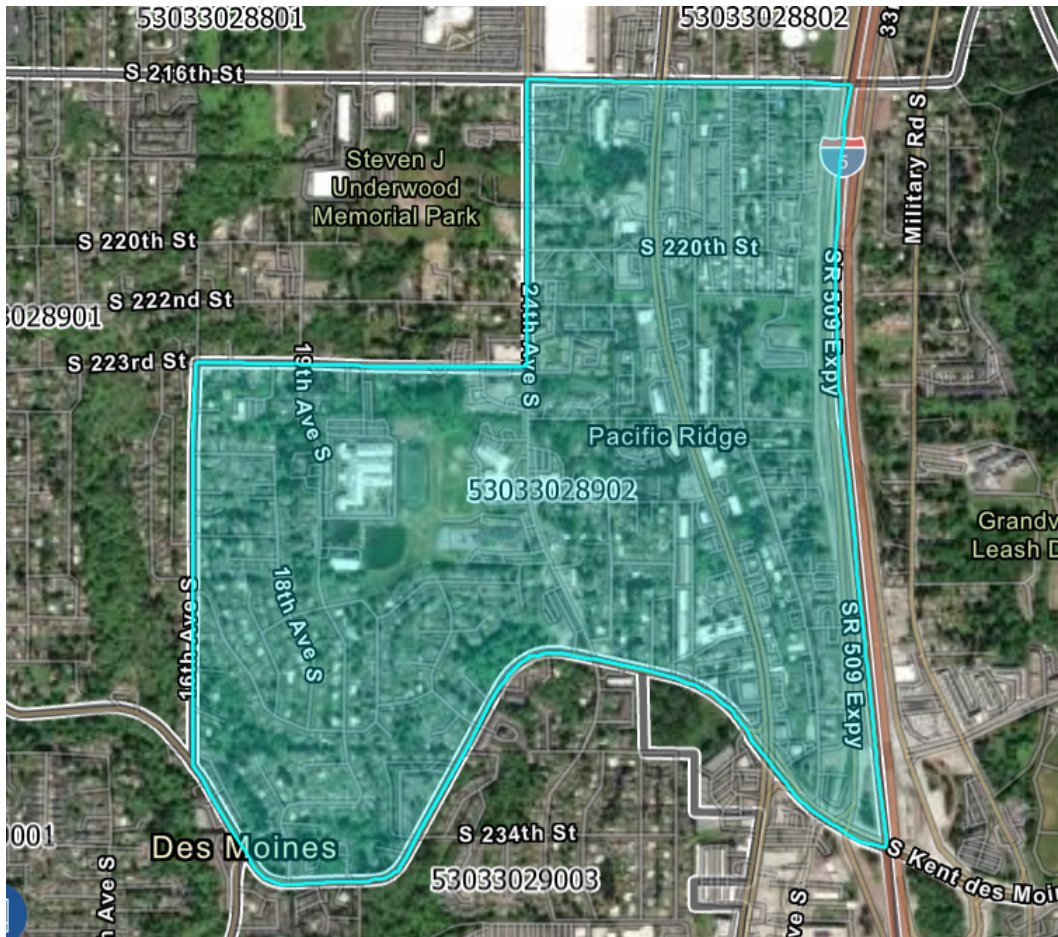
Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney

ATTEST:

City Clerk



Proposed Opportunity Zone No. 53033028902

Census Tract Full Name: Census Tract 289.02; King County; Washington

OZ eligible

Population: 7,428

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area

Median Family Income: \$ 64,614

Reference MFI: \$ 140,190

MFI ratio: 46 %

Poverty Rate: 23.42 %

Unemployment Rate: 7.14 %