

BUCKLEY CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 6:00 P.M.
Multi-Purpose Center, 811 Main Street

Or Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82990819660?pwd=WVdKY0U3UlkwS1JybWxtWnh5M3NQdz09>

Call-in Number: 253-215-8782

Meeting ID: 829 9081 9660

Webinar Passcode: 637567



A. CALL TO ORDER

B. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. E-Bike Memo
- b. Fire Department Mutual Aid (Automatic) Agreement

C. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

D. ADJORNMENT



TO: Buckley City Council and Mayor

FROM: Police Chief, Kurt Alfano, Parks and Recreation Director, Erin Snodgrass

THROUGH: Interim City Administrator, Chris Banks

DATE: February 3, 2026

SUBJECT: Electric-Powered Bikes, Scooters, and Motorcycles

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to brief City Council on increasing safety concerns related to the operation of electric-powered bikes, scooters, and motorcycles on city streets, sidewalks, parks, and trails, and to outline potential options for updating the Buckley Municipal Code to better address current use patterns, emerging vehicle types, and enforcement challenges.

BACKGROUND

Buckley's existing regulations related to motorized and nonmotorized devices were adopted primarily between 1995 and 2008, with Chapter 11.40 (Motorized Foot Scooters and Wheeled Recreational Devices) adopted in 2005 and Chapter 10.84 (Parks and Trails) adopted earlier.

At the time these codes were adopted, electric mobility devices were limited in availability, speed, and power. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the use of electric-powered devices, including high-powered e-bikes, e-scooters, and electric motorcycles that may visually resemble bicycles but function more like motor vehicles.

Staff, law enforcement, and community members have observed increased use of these devices:

- On sidewalks and pedestrian areas
- On trails
- By minors
- At speeds that exceed safe conditions

These trends raise concerns related to pedestrian safety, trail conflicts, enforcement clarity, and potential liability for the City.

CURRENT CODE SUMMARY

Chapter 11.40 – Motorized Foot Scooters and Wheeled Recreational Devices

Chapter 11.40 restricts the operation of motorized foot scooters and similar devices, including

prohibitions in parks, on sidewalks and trails, a minimum operating age of 16, a 15 mph speed limit, helmet requirements, and restrictions on nighttime use. However, the chapter explicitly excludes electric-assisted bicycles, electric personal mobility devices, and motorcycles. As a result, certain high-powered electric devices fall outside the scope of this code.

Chapter 10.84 – Parks and Trails

Chapter 10.84 generally prohibits motor vehicles in parks and on trails, establishes a default 15 mph speed limit, and allows limited exceptions for accessibility devices, maintenance, and emergency vehicles. While these provisions address traditional motor vehicles, they do not clearly account for newer high-powered electric devices that may resemble bicycles, creating confusion for users and enforcement.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

1. **Technology has outpaced the ordinance** – Devices capable of traveling 30–50+ miles per hour are being operated in pedestrian-oriented spaces not designed for motorized traffic.
2. **Lack of clear local regulation for electric motorcycles** – Devices that do not resemble traditional motorcycles are often misunderstood by riders and the public.
3. **Enforcement challenges** – Officers lack clear authority for citation escalation or impoundment for certain electric devices under existing code.
4. **Youth safety concerns** – Increased use by minors without licensing.
5. **Trail and park conflicts** – Shared-use trails were not designed for high-speed motorized devices, increasing the risk of collisions and injuries.

POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR BUCKLEY CODE UPDATES

Council may wish to consider the following options, individually or in combination:

Option 1: Update Definitions in BMC 11.40

- Add a clear definition for “electric motorcycle” consistent with RCW and updated wattage and speed thresholds
- Clarify distinctions between electric-assisted bicycles, scooters, and electric motorcycles

Option 2: Adopt a New Chapter for Electric Motorcycles

- Similar to Mercer Island’s Chapter 10.53 (see Exhibit A)
- Establish:
 - Licensing and registration requirements
 - Prohibited areas of operation
 - Enforcement authority and penalties

Option 3: Clarify and Strengthen Prohibitions in Parks and Trails (BMC 10.84)

- Explicitly address high-powered electric devices within park and trail regulations

- Reinforce that sidewalks, trails, and parks are not appropriate for electric motorcycles or similar devices
- Ensure consistency across Parks, Streets, and Police enforcement

Option 4: Enforcement and Penalty Tools

- Add civil infraction schedules
- Authorize impoundment for repeated or egregious violations
- Provide escalation options for repeat offenses

Option 5: Education-First Implementation

- Phased rollout with public outreach and signage
- Coordination with Buckley Police Department, Youth Center, Parks, and local schools
- Clear communication distinguishing legal e-bikes from electric motorcycles

NEXT STEPS

If Council is interested in moving forward, recommended next steps include:

1. Direction from Council
2. Coordination with Buckley Police Department and City Attorney
3. Draft ordinance development
4. Public outreach and education
5. Formal adoption process

EXHIBIT A

Chapter 10.53 – ELECTRIC MOTORCYCLES

10.53.010 Restrictions on the operation of electric motorcycles.

The following regulations apply to the operation of electric motorcycles on Mercer Island streets, right-of-way, easements, and publicly accessible parking lots.

1. No person may operate an electric motorcycle that is not displaying a valid license plate issued by a state or comparable government agency.
2. No person without a valid driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement may operate an electric motorcycle.
3. To be operated on a public street or road, an electric motorcycle must meet the requirements of RCW 46.61.705.
4. No person may operate an electric motorcycle on any sidewalk, pedestrian path, park trail, or within City-owned or controlled parks (except areas open to vehicle traffic).
5. Any person operating or riding an electric motorcycle must wear a motorcycle helmet. The motorcycle helmet neck or chin strap must be fastened securely while the electric motorcycle is in motion. For purposes of this section, "motorcycle helmet" means a protective covering for the head consisting of a hard outer shell, padding adjacent to and inside the outer shell, and a neck or chin strap type retention system, with the manufacturer's certification applied in accordance with 49 C.F.R. Sec. 571.218 indicating that the motorcycle helmet meets standards established by the United States department of transportation.

10.53.020 Impoundment and penalties for operation of an electric motorcycle.

1. A law enforcement officer may impound, as defined in MICC 10.04.180, any electric motorcycle operated in violation of this chapter.
2. The impounded vehicle may be redeemed in accordance with MICC 10.22.060.
3. Violations of MICC 10.53.010 are deemed civil infractions and are subject to the following penalties:
 - a. First offense: \$250
 - b. Second offense: \$500
 - c. Third and subsequent offenses: \$750 and possible referral for criminal citation under RCW 46.20.005.
4. In addition to the penalties set out in this section, violators must pay the costs of impound, storage, and court fees in accordance with MICC 10.22.070.

10.53.030 Enforcement authority.

The Mercer Island Police Department is authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter and may issue civil infractions, impound vehicles, and take other lawful action necessary to protect public safety and ensure compliance.



CITY OF BUCKLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT



February 2, 2026

To: Mayor and City Council

Fr: Eric Skogen, Fire Chief

Cc: Chris Banks, Interim City Administrator

Re: Response Plans and Mutual Aid

Background

The City of Buckley Fire Department is dispatched by South Sound 911(SS911), who provides 24/7 emergency dispatch for 39 Law Enforcement and Fire/EMS agencies in Pierce County.

A County-Wide Mutual Aid Agreement exists to provide seamless responses through Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD).

The vast majority of incidents that involve providing or receiving outside aid are by definition Automatic Aid. Automatic Aid is prearranged and is used to automatically dispatch closest available resources—regardless of jurisdiction—to a 911 call. CAD automatically does most of the work, selecting closest resource types with very little human interaction.

There are 7,179 different Fire/EMS call types that are pre-designated in the CAD at SS911. When a person calls 9-1-1 for a Fire or Medical Emergency, the information obtained from the caller helps determine what the specific call type is. The CAD then selects and dispatches resources according to the agency specific response plan that is developed for each call type.

Response Plans

Response plans dictate the number and type of resources that are part of the initial dispatch package.

For example, the response plan to an incident coded as a Residential Structure Fire in the City of Buckley will automatically dispatch the following closest and available resources:

- (6) Fire Engines**
- (2) Medic Units**
- (1) Chief Officer**

These pre-defined resources exceed the number that are physically owned by the City of Buckley. Therefore, we can assume that if all 3 Buckley Fire Engines are available and not on another call, 3 Fire Engines will automatically be dispatched as Automatic Aid from other agencies. If any specific type of resource is unavailable, the CAD continues to select additional outside resources until the minimum response plan criteria above is met. This happens instantaneously and all resources are dispatched as one package at the exact same time.

The response plan to a critical medical emergency in the City of Buckley is as follows:

- (1) Basic Life Support Unit (Engine or Aid)**
- (1) Advanced Life Support Unit (Medic Unit)**

It is not uncommon for Medic Units to be responding into the City of Buckley from East Pierce or Central Pierce. Likewise, it is common for a Buckley Medic Unit to respond to neighboring districts when there is a lack of Medic Unit availability in their jurisdiction.

Station Orders

The CAD dispatch of units to fulfill minimum response plan criteria is based upon the proximity of other Fire Stations in the region. These are commonly referred to as Station Orders.

The depth of Station Orders for the response zones in Buckley and surrounding areas is currently at 28. This means that the CAD has the ability to work through its Station Order algorithm for up to 28 different types of resources to send to an emergency before the Station Order list is exhausted.

Cancellations

Often incidents are found to be more minor in nature than the original call type at the time of dispatch. It is also industry standard for home agencies to wish to cancel outside aid to preserve resources at the regional level. These are regular occurrences that result in the cancellation of units prior to any arrival.

In 2025, the City of Buckley Fire Department was dispatched to provide Automatic or Mutual Aid on 294 incidents. 168 of these incidents were cancelled while units were enroute.

Conclusion

Regardless of political boundary, the Fire/EMS agencies in Pierce County operate as one system. The use of Automatic Aid and Computer Aided Dispatching ensure that all residents receive a prompt response to their emergency.