Seoul Metropolitan Government Ordinance on the Operation of River Buses and Promotion of Distribution of Environment-Friendly Ships

Enactment No. 9061, Dec. 29, 2023
Partial Amendment No. 9616, May. 19, 2025
Partial Amendment No. 9808, Sep. 29, 2025

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 (Purpose)

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONSThe purpose of this Ordinance is to provide the matters necessary for the operation of Hangang buses and the adoption of environmentally friendly vessels, thereby contributing to the stable operation of Hangang buses and promoting the distribution of environmentally friendly vessels. <Amended on May 19, 2025>

Article 2 (Definition)

The definitions of the terms used in this Ordinance shall be as follows:<Amended on May 19, 2025, Sep. 29, 2025.>
1. “Hangang bus” refers to a ferry business, as defined in Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Excursion Ship and Ferry Business Act, that transports people or people and goods along the Hangang River using vessels and ferry docks, and refers to a means of public transportation as defined in Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Act on the Development and Promotion of the Use of Public Transportation.
2. “Hangang bus operator” (hereinafter referred to as “operator”) refers to a person who operates a river bus after receiving a license for a river bus business in accordance with Article 3, Paragraph 1 of the Excursion Ship and Ferry Business Act from the Seoul Metropolitan City Mayor (hereinafter referred to as the “Mayor”).
3. “Revenue” refers to the operational and ancillary revenues generated by a person or entity that operates a Hangang bus business.
4. “Expenditures” refers to the operational and ancillary expenses incurred by a person or entity that operates a Hangang bus business.
5. “Operating deficit” refers to the difference between expenditures and revenues.
6. “Environmentally friendly ship” refers to a vessel as defined in Article 2, Paragraph 3 of the Act on the Promotion of the Development and Distribution of Environmentally friendly Vessels (hereinafter referred to as the “Act”).
7. "Hangang bus wharf" (hereinafter referred to as a "wharf") refers to a facility that enables the safe berth, boarding, and disembarkation of Hangang buses, and serves as a comprehensive aquatic transportation hub comprising auxiliary facilities for waiting passengers, amenities, cultural spaces, and links with land transportation, etc.

Article 3 (Responsibilities of Mayor)

(1) The Mayor shall endeavor to enhance the mass transit convenience of the general public with the operation of the Hangang buses. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(2) The Mayor shall manage and supervise business operators on a continuous basis to ensure the stable operation of Hangang buses. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(3) The Mayor shall ensure that financial support for Hangang buses is provided in a fair and transparent manner. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(4) The Mayor shall endeavor to promote the use of environmentally friendly vessels.
(5) The Mayor shall endeavor to prepare measures to ensure the convenience of mobility disadvantaged persons in the operation of the Hangang buses. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>
(6) The Mayor shall periodically solicit citizens’ opinions on the operation of Hangang buses, wharf management, etc., and shall make efforts to reflect such opinions in municipal policies. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>

Article 4 (Responsibilities of Business Operators)

(1) A business operator shall prepare various amenities and safety devices in the operation of the Hangang buses so as to increase their convenience and safety as a means of mass transit, and shall make efforts to maintain and manage vessels and other related facilities such as wharves. <Amended on May 19, 2025, Sep. 29, 2025>
(2) In the event of a reduction in the performance of the vessels or related facilities, such as the wharves used for the operation of

Hangang buses, or an accident involving them, the business operator concerned shall respond in good faith to the Mayor's requests to investigate the cause of, and liability for, such reduction of performance etc. or accident. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>
(3) A business operator shall make efforts to improve the work conditions and treatment of its hired workers, such as crew and employees. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>
(4) A business operator shall operate the business in good faith pursuant to the policy of Seoul Metropolitan City (hereinafter referred to as the "City"). <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>
(5) A business operator who receives financial support shall comply in good faith with the Mayor's requests to submit materials and facilitate investigations and audits, etc. in order to ensure the transparent and appropriate use of financial subsidies. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>

CHAPTER II OPERATION AND SUPPORT OF RIVER BUSES <Amended on May 19, 2025>

Article 5 (Hangang Bus Routes and Operations)

CHAPTER II OPERATION AND SUPPORT OF RIVER BUSES <Amended on May 19, 2025>The Mayor shall determine the Hangang bus routes and operation times, taking into account public demand, the availability of wharves, and so forth, and may change them if necessary. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
[Title amended on May 19, 2025]

Article 6 (Obligations and Prohibited Acts of Business Operators)

(1) Business operators shall faithfully fulfill the following provisions: <Amended on May 19, 2025>
1. Compliance with the laws and regulations related to the pilotage business;
2. Compliance with the agreements on affairs concluded pursuant to Article 22;
3. Securing of convenience facilities to improve passenger services;
4. Matters necessary for promoting the river bus project, such as Hangang bus campaigns.
(2) Business operators shall not commit any of the following misdemeanors:
1. Unfair discrimination against a specific person or cargo;
2. Receipt of additional fares or charges beyond the announced rates;
3. Operation of a ship in violation of the established ship routes and ship times due to such reasons as a lack of passengers, etc.

Article 7 (Measures to Promote Safe Operation)

(1) The Mayor shall ensure that regular inspections of the Hangang buses are conducted to ensure their safe operation and improve the convenience of use; shall systematically manage and identify violations of the laws and regulations by business operators, ship accidents, and safety accidents on boats; and shall establish measures to prevent such accidents, etc. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(2) Business operators shall educate and manage the crews of vessels and other employees to ensure that they comply with the laws and regulations on safe operation, etc.
(3) Business operators shall keep the interiors and exteriors of the vessels clean, and shall continuously manage and ensure the safety of the boats, including the condition of their fuel tanks and batteries, etc. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(4) Business operators shall ensure that all of a riverboat's functions, life-saving equipment, dock guidance, and fee payment devices required for safe operation and service provision operate normally, and shall provide regular training to crew members and employees to enable them to operate the vessels skillfully.
(5) If a business operator determines that any of the circumstances set forth under the following paragraphs may endanger the safety of passengers or cause damages, the operator may refuse to transport the passenger concerned, and if the passenger has already boarded, they may order the passenger to disembark at the nearest dock. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
1. When the passenger is deemed likely to affect hygiene or quarantine measures within the Hangang bus;
2. When the passenger fails to comply with the job-related instructions of the business operator, crew, or staff, or obstructs the performance of their duties through assault or threats;
3. Acts that do not comply with the infectious disease control policies of the central government or local governments;
4. Any act that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to the public or passengers.

Article 8 (Adjudication Support)

(1) The Mayor may provide financial support to a business operator within the scope of the budget in any of the following cases: <Amended on May 19, 2025>

1. In the event of an operating loss in the Hangang bus project;
2. Other cases deemed necessary by the Mayor for the operation of Hangang buses.

(2) The Mayor shall determine the specific matters, such as the amount and methods of financial support, by an agreement with the business operators under Article 22, and finalize them with the resolution of the Committee under Article 16. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>

(3) The agreement under paragraph (2) shall include a means to prevent the business operator's lax management and secure transparency with regard to financial support. <Amended on Sep. 29, 2025>

Article 9 (External Audit)

Businesses that receive adjudication support shall have their accounting audited by an independent external auditor in consultation with the City each year and report the results to the City by the end of March. <Amended on May 19, 2025>

CHAPTER III PROMOTING THE ADOPTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BOATS

Article 10 (Support for Buyers and Owners of Environmentally friendly Vessels)

CHAPTER III PROMOTING THE ADOPTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BOATS(1) The Mayor may, within the scope of the budget, provide a portion of the funds required for the purchase and renovation of environmentally friendly vessels to the buyers and owners thereof.

(2) The support criteria and methods pursuant to Paragraph 1 shall be in conformance with Article 10 of the Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Promotion of the Development and Distribution of Environmentally friendly Vessels (hereinafter referred to as the "Enforcement Decree").

Article 11 (Support for Installers of Fuel Supply Facilities for Environmentally friendly Vessels)

(1) The Mayor may, within the scope of the budget, provide a portion of the funds required to install and operate fuel supply facilities for environmentally friendly vessels that can be jointly used by multiple boats.

(2) The support criteria and methods pursuant to Paragraph 1 shall be in conformance with Article 11 of the Enforcement Decree.

Article 12 (Support for Transition to Environmentally Friendly Vessels, Etc.)

(1) The Mayor may recommend that owners of old vessels whose age and other conditions meet the standards prescribed in the Enforcement Decree scrap such vessels or convert them into environmentally friendly vessels.

(2) The Mayor may provide the necessary funds, etc., within the scope of the budget to those who convert vessels into environmentally friendly vessels.

(3) The support criteria and methods under Paragraph 2 shall be governed by Article 12 of the Enforcement Decree.

Article 13 (Obligation to Purchase Environmentally friendly Vessels)

The Mayor and heads of public corporations established by cities in accordance with the Local Public Enterprises Act, and heads of municipally invested or invested institutions in accordance with the Act on the Operation of Local Government-Invested or -Funded Institutions, shall purchase environmentally friendly vessels unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so, as stipulated in Article 4 of the Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Promotion of the Development and Distribution of Environmentally friendly Vessels.

Article 14 (Opening of Fueling Facilities for Environmentally friendly Vessels)

The Mayor may open fuel supply facilities for environmentally friendly vessels that are built, operated and supported by the City to the extent that it does not interfere with the performance of the related duties or security arrangements, and may disclose relevant

information, such as the location, opening hours, and conditions of use of the newly opened fuel supply facilities.

Article 15 (Collection of Fees for Using Fueling Facilities for Environmentally friendly Vessels)

(1) The Mayor may collect usage fees from persons who use the fuel supply facilities for environmentally friendly vessels owned by the City.
(2) Matters pertaining to the collection of usage fees, such as the amount of the fees and the methods of collection pursuant to Article 1, shall be determined by the relevant regulations.

Chapter IV. Operation of Committee, Etc.

Article 16 (Establishment and Function of the Committee)

Chapter IV. Operation of Committee, Etc.The Mayor shall establish and operate Seoul Metropolitan City's Committee on Support for Hangang Buses and Environmentally friendly Vessels (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") to deliberate on the following matters. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
1. Matters concerning the adjudication support under Article 8;
2. Matters concerning support for environmentally friendly vessels pursuant to Articles 10, 11, and 12;
3. Matters concerning the collection of fees for the use of the fuel supply facilities for environmentally friendly vessels pursuant to Article 15;
4. Matters concerning sailing fees;
5. Other matters deemed necessary by the Mayor in relation to the operation of river buses and the distribution of environmentally friendly vessels

Article 17 (Composition and Operation of Committee)

(1) The Committee shall be composed of no more than ten (10) members, including one (1) Chairperson and one (1) Vice-Chairperson, taking gender into consideration. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(2) The Chairperson shall serve as the head of the Future Hangang River Headquarters, and the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from among the members.
(3) Members shall be appointed or commissioned by the Mayor from the Administrator for Fiscal Planning, public officials of Grade 3 or higher responsible for Hangang administrative duties, members of the Seoul Metropolitan Council, and persons who have majored in transportation, environmentally friendly energy, vessels, economics, accounting, or other related fields and who currently serve or have served as associate professors or higher, or in an equivalent position, at a university or an accredited research institute. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(4) The term of office of a commissioned member shall be two (2) years, and it may be extended only once, whereas the term of office of a supplementary member shall be the remaining term of office of the predecessor. However, the term of office of a member who is a public official shall be the period of their tenure in that position.
(5) The Chairperson shall represent the Committee and oversee Committee affairs, and the Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson and act on behalf of the Chairperson when the latter is unable to perform the required duties due to unavoidable circumstances.
(6) The Chairperson shall convene meetings of the Committee and serve as the Chair of those meetings.
(7) Meetings of the Committee shall be opened with the attendance of a majority of the registered members, and resolutions shall be made with the consent of a majority of the members present.
(8) For members who are not public officials among the members attending the Committee, stipends and travel expenses may be paid within the scope of the budget in accordance with the Seoul Metropolitan (9) Government Ordinance on the Payment of Committee Stipends and Travel Expenses.
(9) The duration of the Committee shall be five (5) years from the date of enforcement of this Ordinance.
(10) The dismissal, recusal, avoidance, evasion of members, and other matters regarding the committee that are not provided for in this Ordinance shall be governed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government Ordinance on the Establishment and Operation of Various Committees.

Chapter 5. Requests for Corrective Action, Etc.

Article 18 (Evaluation of Business Operators, etc.)

Chapter 5. Requests for Corrective Action, Etc.(1) The Mayor may conduct regular evaluations of business operators to confirm their compliance with Articles 6 and 7 herein, to improve the standard of the passenger services, and to address inconveniences.
(2) The details necessary to conduct the evaluation pursuant to Paragraph 1 shall be separately determined by the Mayor.

Article 19 (Investigation)

The Mayor may, if necessary, request a business operator to submit data on all matters related to financial support provided under Article 8 herein or have public officials visit the site to conduct an investigation

Article 20 (Request for Correction)

(1) If any unfair practices are discovered as a result of the evaluation under Article 18 or the investigation under Article 19, the Mayor may request the relevant business operator to take corrective action within a specified deadline.
(2) If a business operator has a legitimate reason for not complying with the request for corrective action pursuant to Paragraph 1, they may submit explanatory materials within ten (10) days of receiving the request for corrective action.
(3) The Mayor may review the explanatory materials, etc. submitted pursuant to Paragraph 2, and accept them if there is a justifiable reason for doing so; however, in the absence of a justifiable reason, the Mayor may request re-correction within a specified deadline.

Article 21 (Suspension and Recovery of Adjudication Support Funds)

(1) The Mayor may suspend payment of all or a part of the financial support to a business operator falling under any of the following:
1. In cases where the business operator becomes able to operate without financial support for operating losses due to increased demand, etc.;
2. In cases where financial support is no longer needed due to changes in the circumstances, etc.;
3. In the event of a business operator’s failure to comply with a request for correction or re-correction under Article 20.
(2) In the case of subparagraph 3 of Paragraph 1, the business agreement concluded pursuant to Article 22 may be terminated.
(3) If a business operator is found to have obtained financial support by fraudulent means or to have used such support fraudulently, the Mayor may recover all or a part of the financial support.

Article 22 (Affairs Agreement)

(1) The Mayor may conclude a separate operational agreement with the business operator regarding the details related to the operation of Hangang buses. <Amended on May 19, 2025>
(2) The Mayor shall report the main points of minor modifications to the operational agreement to the standing committee of the Seoul Metropolitan Council with jurisdiction. <Added on May 19, 2025>

Article 23 (Mutatis Mutandis)

Matters regarding adjudication support that are not provided for in this Ordinance shall be governed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government Ordinance on the Management of Local Subsidies, etc., which shall be applied mutatis mutandis.

Article 24 (Enforcement Rules)

Other matters necessary for the enforcement of this Ordinance shall be prescribed by enforcement rules of the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Addendum <No. 9808, Sep. 29, 2025>

This Ordinance shall enter into force on the date of its promulgation.