



Introduction to Lobbying Team & Discussion on City's 2023 Legislative Priorities

AB 6159

October 3, 2022

Agenda

- Introduce the City's Lobbying Team
- Review City of Mercer Island 2022 legislative priorities
- Review the Association of Washington Cities adopted priorities for 2023
- Discussion on the development of the City's 2023 legislative priorities



Introduction to Lobbying Team



- Anita Gallagher
- Nick Federici
- Luke Esser (not attending tonight)



2022 Legislative Priorities



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND 2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. PRESERVE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

Cities possess strong local knowledge and authority to keep communities safe and healthy, and to improve their communities' quality of life. Therefore, it is critical that cities maintain the authority to provide these necessary services and retain local control over land use planning. If the state legislature passes new legislation in these areas, then reasonable implementation timelines and resources must be provided.

2. ECONOMIC SUPPORT

The City encourages legislation to continue supporting the economic recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic including funding for local businesses, mental health counseling, and emergency assistance to address food and housing insecurity.

3. CLARIFICATIONS TO 2021 POLICE REFORMS

The City supports and strongly urges the state legislature to clarify the 2021 police reform legislation (see attached – Association of Washington Cities 2022 Police Reform Statement). City officials and law enforcement officers need clarity and a better understanding of what is expected of them. Cities also need time and resources to provide appropriate training on the new statute and regulations.

4. SUSTAINABLE AND FLEXIBLE LOCAL FUNDING

As the region continues to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic, stable funding for local government is essential for providing quality, predictable services to the communities we serve. The City supports legislation that preserves city fiscal health through secure and flexible funding by:

- a. Providing State and Federal funds to help cities finance basic infrastructure, such as water, sewer, transportation, and green infrastructure projects.
- b. Fully funding the Public Works Trust Fund.
- c. Removing restrictions on REET revenues.
- d. Replacing the annual 1% cap on property tax revenues with a growth limit whose maximum is inflation plus the rate of population growth.
- e. Maintaining State shared revenue distributions to cities and seeking opportunities to expand revenue sharing, particularly during this time of economic recovery.

5. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The Puget Sound Region needs funding for transportation projects to ensure economic vitality, reduce congestion, enhance traffic safety, replace aging infrastructure, and increase mobility. The City supports a comprehensive transportation bill that provides new resources for local government transportation projects and legislation that delivers solutions to relieve congestion along I-90 and I-405.

6. PRESERVING AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

It is essential to preserve and protect the environment today and for future generations with equity in mind. The City encourages legislation and partnerships that incentivize and support clean energy, carbon reduction and climate protection, and other environmental health measures.

7. PERMANENT MODERNIZATION OF OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (OPMA)

The City supports a permanent policy that provides greater flexibility for local governments to hold virtual meetings without the requirement for a physical meeting location.

Adopted: November 16, 2021



AWC 2023 Legislative Priorities

2023 City Legislative Priorities

Strong cities make a great state. Cities are home to 65% of the state's residents, drive the economy, and provide the most accessible government. The continued success of cities depends on adequate resources and local decision-making to best meet the needs of our residents.

Washington's 281 cities ask the Legislature to partner with cities and act on the following priorities:



Respond to the *Blake* decision

Support clarification around the crime of possessing a controlled substance so that individuals, law enforcement, and treatment providers can respond appropriately. Revise the current system of two referrals prior to criminal charges, so it can be more effectively administered across the state.

Support additional investments to help cities with the costs stemming from the *Blake* decision on how possession of controlled substances is handled by the criminal justice system. This includes:

- Funding to help offset the costs of vacating criminal convictions, repaying legal financial obligations, administering diversion programs, and mitigating municipal court impacts.
- Investment in alternative response teams; treatment facilities for adults and juveniles; treatment in jails; and social workers, treatment providers, and system navigators to help direct people to treatment.



Address vehicle pursuits for public safety

Clarify the ability for law enforcement to conduct vehicle pursuits using a reasonable suspicion standard in specific circumstances. This is essential to allow for effective and safe pursuit of suspects when there is an immediate threat to public safety. Cities will continue to support safety standards and training for officers who engage in vehicle pursuits.



Ensure basic infrastructure funding

Fully fund the Public Works Assistance Account (PWAA), allow the current revenue diversions to sunset at the end of fiscal year 2023, and refrain from further fund transfers or diversions to other infrastructure programs or non-infrastructure accounts. Expand state funding opportunities to assist with maintenance and operations of local infrastructure.



Increase housing availability & affordability

Support a proactive approach that creates new tools, incentives, and revenues that cities can use to help increase housing supply and address affordability. Cities need resources to encourage development of housing at all income levels—especially for our lowest-income residents.



Provide behavioral health resources

Create greater access to community-based behavioral health services to include substance use disorder treatment and dual diagnosis treatment facilities. Support continued state funding to help communities establish alternative response programs like co-responder programs, diversion programs, and others that provide options beyond law enforcement for responding to situations that involve individuals suffering from behavioral health issues.



2023 Funding Requests

Staff recommend including the following funding requests in the 2023 State legislative priorities:

Capital Funding Requests:

- Public Safety Capital Funding Request
 - Marine Patrol vessel replacement
- Parks Capital Funding Request/Grant Programs
 - Luther Burbank Docks and Boiler Building projects

Other Funding Requests:

- Mental Health counseling resources, including direct funding to support school mental health counselors.



Discussion

- Lobbyist Report Out: Key themes for upcoming legislative session
- City Council discussion

