



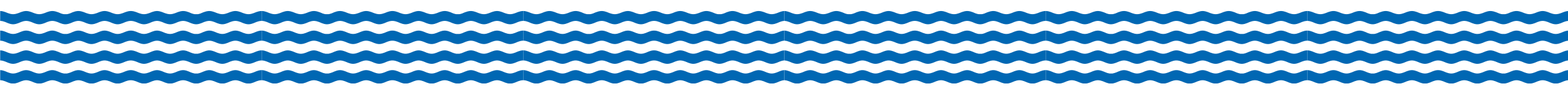
AB 6557: 2025 State Legislative Priorities Adoption

November 19, 2024



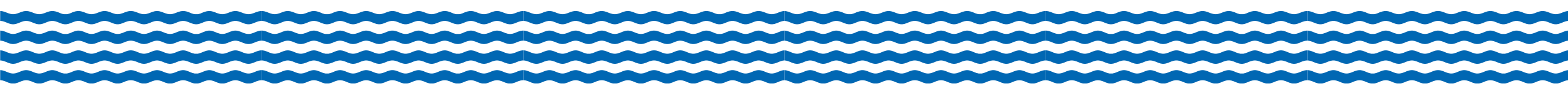
2025 Session Logistics

- The 2025 legislative session will be a “long” session, meaning a 105-day session rather than the “short” 60-day session that occurs in even years.
- Long sessions occur during the beginning of the State’s two-year budget cycle and include the process of adopting the 2025 to 2027 state budget
- While the exact dates of the session are not finalized, staff anticipate the session will run from January 13 to April 27, 2025.



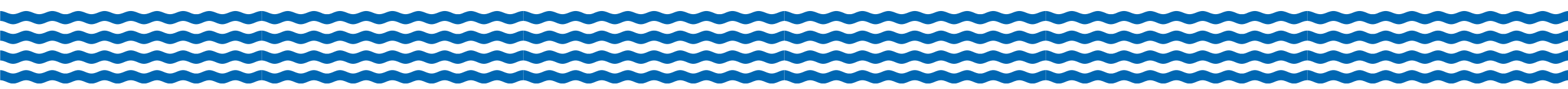
Prep for 2025 Session

- Council leadership and staff worked to prepare the draft legislative priorities and strategy.
- Reviewing draft priorities from other associations such as AWC, ARCH, and Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs (WASPC)
- Staff attended AWC legislative session prep session.
- Already reviewing proposed bill language.



2025 Legislative Priorities

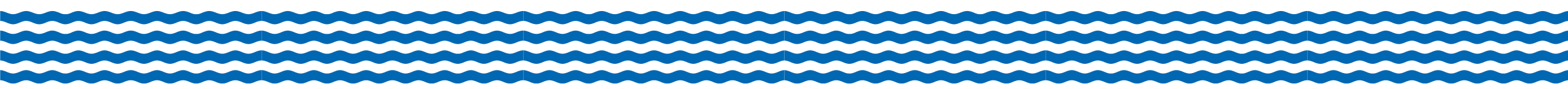
- The purpose of Council-approved legislative priorities is to allow the City to engage on issues with legislators directly, quickly, and efficiently.
- Provides high level goals of Mercer Island that allow staff and Council to widely engage with specific language of draft legislation.



2025 Legislative Priorities

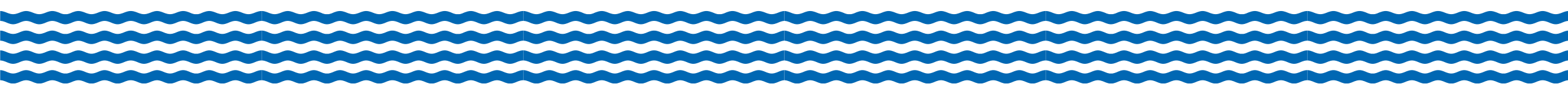
The City's draft 2025 State Legislative Priorities are included as Exhibit 1 and the proposed priorities are categorized as follows:

- Capital Funding for Emergency Replacement of City's Sole Water Source
- Support for Public Safety
- Increase Resources for Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Prevention
- Support for Affordable Housing
- Sustainable Funding Preservation and Maintenance of Critical Transportation Infrastructure
- Preserving and Protecting the Environment



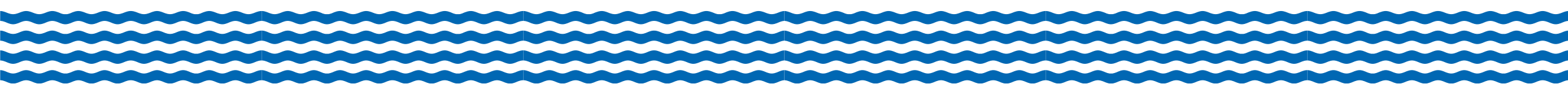
Capital Funding for Emergency Replacement of City's Sole Water Source

- Seeking \$3 million in emergency state funding to cover 15% of the cost to undergo emergency replacement of the damaged water supply pipeline, relocate the pipeline to a safer location, and upgrade it with earthquake-resistant materials.
- Basic infrastructure need to ensure the City can reliably provide safe drinking water and sufficient water pressure for fire response.
- State financial forecast shows a deficit. Headwind against successfully securing any state funding.
- **Prioritized funding ask from City.**



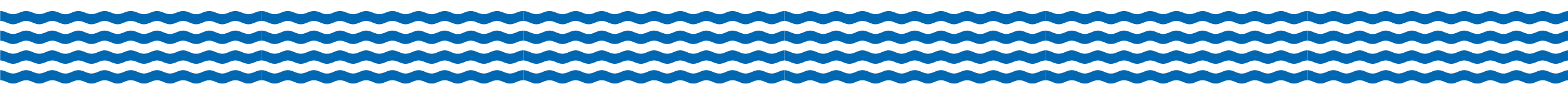
Support for Public Safety

- **Likely a primary theme of this legislative session.**
- Increase capacity at regional law enforcement academies and increased funding support for hiring officers and adopting public safety technologies
- State support to reduce auto and organized retail theft.
- State regulations for safe use of e-scooters and e-bikes.
- Exempt ALPR security footage from public records act to improve service efficiency and safeguard privacy.
- Water safety measures and additional resources for marine patrol providers



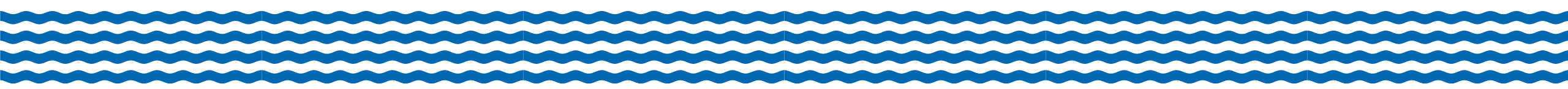
Increase Resources for Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Prevention

- **Build on success of last year's fentanyl education measures.**
- Increasing prevention and intervention resources targeting opiates and other substances of abuse.
- Expand low-barrier behavioral health services and integrated behavioral health and first responder crisis response.
- Focus on youth, young adults, and senior/geriatric care.



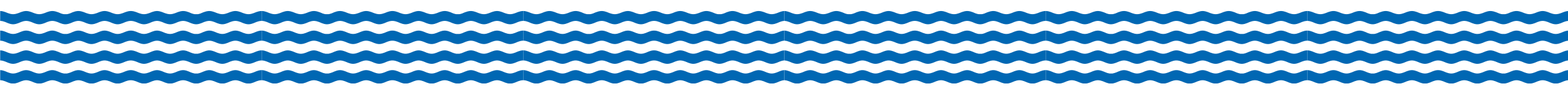
Support for Affordable Housing

- **Likely a primary theme of legislative session.**
- Transit-oriented development with affordability requirements integrated with City's housing targets under ESSHB 1220
- Complete Communities that support walkability, public safety, livability, and access to resources in tandem with affordable housing.
- State investments and low-interest loans to strengthen local infrastructure such as sewer and water systems, which are essential for expanding affordable housing opportunities.
- Acknowledgement that cities are the best suited to implement these values in the unique context of their community.



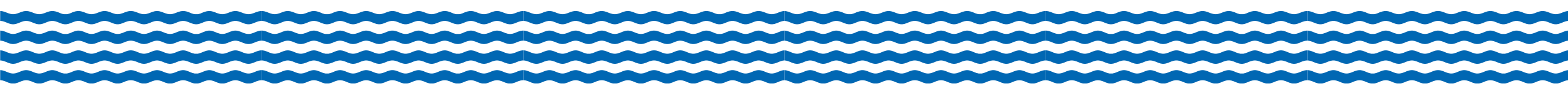
Sustainable Funding Preservation and Maintenance of Critical Transportation Infrastructure

- State should emphasize maintenance and preservation of I-90. Keeping interstate operational is essential for safety, reliability, and commerce.
- State support for city maintenance of transportation infrastructure.



Preserving and Protecting the Environment

- State policy and funding support to implement the City's adopted Climate Action Plan.
- Goals of the Climate Action Plan give City's legislative team and Council broad ability to engage with detailed and often complex bill language expected this session on climate and sustainability.



Partner Legislative Priorities

The City collaborates with other organizations when developing legislative asks. Staff included for reference the legislative priorities from the following partner agencies in the agenda material:

- Association of Washington Cities (AWC)
- A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)



A REGIONAL COALITION FOR HOUSING

2025 City Legislative Priorities

Cities and towns are home to 65% of Washington's residents, drive the state's economy, and provide the most accessible form of government. The success of our cities and towns depends on adequate resources and community-based decision-making to best meet the unique needs of our communities.

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

- Fiscal sustainability**
Revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap that has been in place for more than 20 years. Adopt a new cap tied to inflation and population growth factors, with a limit not to exceed 3%. This will allow local elected officials the option to adjust the local property tax rate to better serve our communities and keep up with the costs of providing basic services like police, fire, streets, and valued community amenities like parks.
- Public safety**
Provide more resources and tools to cities and towns to address public safety and criminal justice challenges. Help cities hire new officers by covering 100% of the cost of attending the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA), and continue to expand existing—and create new—regional BLEA academies. Increase support for public safety and the overall criminal justice system with additional funding for the Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account, as well as enhanced local funding tools like the public safety sales tax. Increase programs to reduce juvenile crime and provide more juvenile behavioral health treatment and correctional capacity. Continue to support our officers and other first responders with wellness and injury prevention programs.
- Behavioral health treatment capacity**
Expand funding for grants to establish and support ongoing funding for local behavioral health crisis co-responder programs. Support additional training and certification, and workforce development for co-responders. Seek increased investments in community behavioral health treatment funding – both capital start-up and operational expenses. Support continued expansion of continuum of treatment capacity, from crisis stabilization to inpatient to outpatient and continued expansion of forensic behavioral health treatment capacity. Provide additional mental health support for students.
- Infrastructure investment**
Protect and expand direct and meaningful investments in traditional local infrastructure for needed expansion and ongoing operations and maintenance of aging systems, including expanded and reliable funding for the crucial Public Works Assistance Account. Support sustainable state transportation revenue that includes funding for local preservation, maintenance, and operations. Develop new fiscal tools to build infrastructure to support housing development and growth, including increased funding for the Connecting Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). Expand cities' ability and flexibility to use the real estate excise tax (REET) for additional capital needs, including maintenance as well as to support affordable housing.
- Housing supply**
Dedicate current funding and explore new funding options, such as the real estate transfer tax, to address needs across the housing continuum, including home ownership, senior, workforce, affordable, and permanent supportive housing. Ensure that funding availability extends to all communities with needs, including small and medium-sized cities and towns in both eastern and western Washington.

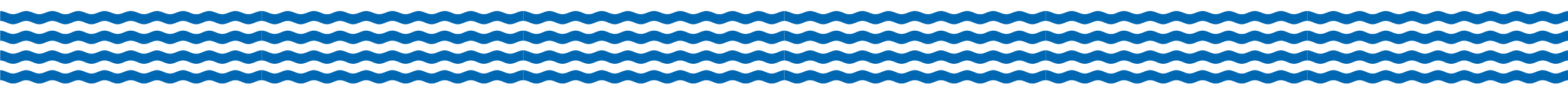
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Next Steps

- After Council review and approval of text version of the priorities, staff will proceed with final design and layout of the document, similar to the look and feel of the 2024 Legislative Priorities (see Exhibit 2).
- The 2025 State Legislative Priorities will be published on the City's website, shared with the community, and distributed to the City's legislative delegation and other partners.



Recommended Motion

- Adopt the City of Mercer Island 2025 State Legislative Priorities, substantially in the form attached as Exhibit 1 to AB 6557.

