



**COUNCILMEMBER BENSON WONG**  
**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON**  
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DATE: December 3, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor Bertlin and Councilmembers

FROM: City Clerk Deborah Estrada on behalf of Councilmember Benson Wong

SUBJECT: Draft SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda (Exhibit 1)

At the November 13 PIC meeting, the attached Draft SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda was discussed. The PIC is scheduled to meet again on December 11 to review and approve the SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda, in advance of the 2020 legislative session scheduled to start in Olympia this January.

Councilmember Wong noted in his November 14 email (see Exhibit 2) to Council that the SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda aligns with the Mercer Island Legislative Agenda that was previously adopted.

## **DRAFT SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda**

### **Address the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

The state and cities must partner to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing as, well as address behavioral health needs and other root causes of homelessness. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Allow cities to create and preserve affordable housing through optional local tools, including extending the timeline to approve a “qualifying local tax” provided under HB 1406 adopted in the 2019 legislative session*
- *Continue to expand investment in the Housing Trust Fund*
- *Address other underlying causes of homelessness by providing support to cities to implement innovative local solutions and increasing investments in our state’s behavioral health system*

### **Invest in Transportation Infrastructure and Mobility**

The economic vitality of our state demands that we invest in our existing transportation infrastructure and prioritize new investments that improve the movement of people and goods. Cities have increased investments in local transportation systems, but still face an annual funding gap for maintenance and operation of those systems of \$1 billion statewide. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Partner with cities to develop a comprehensive transportation bill that provides new resources and options for local government to address transportation and mobility needs*

### **Fully Fund the Public Works Trust Fund and Provide Options for Local Infrastructure Needs**

Today’s cities are building the infrastructure necessary to accommodate a growing population and economy. Investments in infrastructure keep communities vibrant, protect the environment, and attract economic development. Cities need tools to lower the cost of providing local infrastructure and to avoid further exacerbating the housing affordability crisis. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Fully fund the Public Works Trust Fund*
- *Support economic development tools that help maintain and expand local infrastructure, such as Tax Increment Financing and similar tools*

### **Preserve Local Decision-Making Authority**

Cities possess strong local knowledge and authority to keep communities safe, healthy, and improve quality of life. It is critical cities maintain the authority to provide the necessary services and retain local control over land use planning that will help communities thrive.

### **Provide the Tools for Cities to Address Local Priorities**

City revenue streams are limited and are not structured to sustainably keep-up with rising costs. Cities need flexible local funding tools, fewer unfunded mandates, and continued support from the state for shared responsibilities. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Replace the arbitrary 1% cap on annual property tax increases with a limit tied to inflation plus population growth*
- *Meet the state’s commitment to revenues intended to be shared with cities to serve our shared constituents*
- *Continue streamlined sales tax mitigation to affected cities*

**From:** [Benson Wong](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Jessi Bon](#); [Ali Spietz](#); [Deborah Estrada](#)  
**Subject:** Draft SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda  
**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 4:46:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [SCA 2020 Leg Agenda \(11.13.2019\).pdf](#)

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At last night's PIC meeting, there was a brief discussion about the Draft SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda. The PIC will have one more meeting in December. The hope is that the PIC members will give their approval of the proposed SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda (or that any changes will be agreed to by a majority of the PIC members in attendance). Ideally, SCA would like to get its 2020 Legislative Agenda approved before the start of the session in Olympia in January.

I will ask for a show of support for the SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda on Tuesday (11/19) as part of my councilmember report. Hopefully each of you will have had time to review it before the meeting. As you will see, many of the items on the SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda align with the MI Legislative Agenda that was adopted earlier.

Benson

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