



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.

Police reform

2022



Continue supporting local control over city law enforcement policies to meet the needs of each community, while recognizing the need for clarification of certain statewide reforms.

Background:

Cities employ most law enforcement officers in Washington state, which is why cities are deeply involved in law enforcement reforms. City officials and police departments need the ability and clarity to directly implement state requirements and ensure accountability to our communities. Cities have an ongoing commitment to communities of color and seek a deeper focus on equity and diversity in law enforcement policies.

In 2021, the Legislature adopted a package of reforms related to policing. Some aspects of these changes remain unresolved and unclear. City officials and law enforcement officers need clarity and understanding of what is expected of them. And cities need time and resources to provide training on the many changes passed. Several areas remain where the Legislature can provide clarification for cities.

Strong cities need:

1. Clarification that law enforcement officers have authority to:

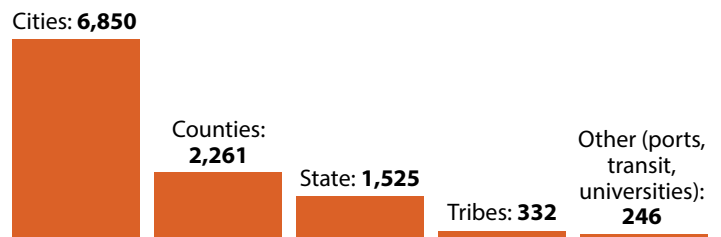
- **Use nonlethal alternatives** – Specifically, bean bag rounds need to be explicitly authorized.
- **Conduct a brief, investigative hold** – During the early moments of an investigation, while officers are assessing the situation, a person may not be placed under arrest but is not free to leave. This allows the police to briefly detain a person based on reasonable suspicion of involvement in criminal activity.
- **Use force for noncriminal activity related to community caretaking** – Law enforcement

officers are called upon daily to assist people in need. This could be a person suffering from dementia, a teen runaway, or to provide a welfare check on an elderly neighbor who fails to answer after repeated attempts at contact. At times, these contacts may require forced entry or minimal use of force to protect those individuals.

- **Assist with transporting** a person under the Involuntary Treatment Act.
- 2. **A resolution to a conflict in law:** Currently, there is a mandatory requirement in RCW 10.99.030 that officers arrest the aggressor involved in a domestic violence incident. However, a new 2021 law prevents officers from engaging in a vehicular pursuit unless the underlying offense is a violent or sex offense. If a person flees a location prior to arrest, law enforcement is currently prohibited from pursuing them.
- 3. **Investments in the future:** Washington is facing historic vacancies in law enforcement. This requires a historic investment in the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) to hire and provide timely training of new officers. Enhanced training investments would also increase diversity in law enforcement.

179 cities employ 61% of all law enforcement

Number of law enforcement by jurisdiction



Source: 2020 CJIS Statistics and Reports

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