



# CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

## 2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### 1. ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Significantly more economic support is needed for cities, businesses, and non-profits that are struggling as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Accordingly, the City encourages legislation to support services for the most vulnerable within our communities including funding for mental health counseling and emergency assistance to address food and housing insecurity.

### 2. SUSTAINABLE AND FLEXIBLE LOCAL FUNDING

Even more so because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, stable tax revenues for local government are essential for providing quality, predictable services to the communities we serve. The City supports legislation to:

- a. Provide greater flexibility to use existing revenue sources to help manage the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This will allow cities to direct scarce resources where they are needed most.
- b. Preserve city fiscal health with secure funding sources such as replacing the annual 1% cap on property tax revenues with a growth limit whose maximum is inflation plus the rate of population growth and removing restrictions on REET revenues; and,
- c. Maintain State shared revenue distributions to cities and ask the State to look for other opportunities to expand revenue sharing, particularly during this time of economic uncertainty.

### 3. 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.

### 4. LAW ENFORCEMENT REFORMS

The City supports local control over city law enforcement policy decisions to meet the needs of each community. The City also supports the [statewide policing reforms](#) listed in the Association of Washington Cities' *2021 Legislative Priorities*.

### 5. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The Puget Sound Region needs funding for transportation projects to reduce congestion, enhance traffic safety, replace aging infrastructure, and increase mobility. The City supports a comprehensive transportation bill that provides new resources and options for local government actions and legislation that delivers solutions to relieve congestion along I-90 and I-405. The City also supports full funding of the Public Works Trust Fund as well as additional local revenue options for cities.

### 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 support progressive clean energy, carbon reduction and climate protection, and other environmental health measures.