

## Advocacy

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# Preview the 2020 City Legislative Priorities

Contact: [Candice Bock](#)

AWC's [Legislative Priorities Committee](#) has wrapped up its work. The Committee met on September 5 and adopted recommend priorities for 2020. The recommendations now go to the AWC Board of Directors for review and final adoption.

Here is a snapshot of the Committees' 2020 recommended priorities:

- Pursue a comprehensive city transportation bill that provides new resources and options
- Pursue full funding for the Public Works Trust Fund
- Pursue the creation of a tax increment financing option for cities
- Preserve city fiscal health with secure funding sources.
- Behavioral health – Support statewide medication assisted treatment (MAT) services in city and regional jails if fully funded by the state and feasible in local jurisdictions.
- Continue to advance a watershed-based approach and strategic plan to address local fish-blocking culverts along with state culverts, and provide significant local funding.
- Continue to pursue new resources and policies to increase affordable housing both at the state and local level.

While the slate of issues the committee has recommended are all crucial to cities, it is important to keep our expectations for 2020 realistic. 2020 is a short session (60 days) and the Legislature will only be making limited changes to the 2019-2021 budget through the supplemental budget process. Additionally, it is a major election year with all of the House positions and half of the Senate positions up for election. Typically, in an election year, legislators are unwilling to take on controversial issues that could distract come November.

However, even with limited expectations, 2020 is an important time to bring forward this list of priorities. By focusing on these issues in 2020 we may achieve some positive outcomes during the session, but we can also educate legislators, bring together stakeholders, and build more momentum for the 2021 session when they will again be adopting the next biennial budget and more inclined to take on major policy issues.

Once the Board approves AWC's final 2020 priorities, we will share those with the full membership. We will also talk about them and advise how you can be a strong city advocate at [AWC's Cities on Tap](#) events this fall. We hope we will see you at one of these fun and educational evenings.

### Time to adopt your city's legislative agenda

Each month we have been reminding you about the importance of being strong city

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city's legislative agenda should focus on the policy issues and capital requests that your city supports and needs. Be specific and keep it short and simple. It is a real benefit if you can also include support for AWC's priority issues.

Once you have your adopted agenda – share it. Make sure to sit down and review it with your legislators as soon as possible – they will need time to work with you on how best to support your needs. You should also share it with your residents, other local stakeholders and your local news media.

### **Federal action**

While we tend to joke about the in-action of Congress in the other Washington, this is a good time to reflect on the impact Congress can have on cities. The [National League of Cities](#) (NLC) recently shared its five priorities for Congress this fall.

- Prevent a federal government shutdown
- Stop the looming infrastructure cuts
- Reauthorize flood insurance
- Empower local broadband leadership
- Invest in infrastructure

AWC will be convening our [Federal Priorities Committee](#) this fall to review and update AWC's federal agenda for 2020.

### **State of the Cities survey**

Thank you to all of those cities that completed the State of the Cities survey. We know how much work it was and we are grateful! AWC's State of the Cities project takes a look at the issues facing Washington's cities and towns and identifies common issues and trends, as well as what cities need to succeed. We expect to have the completed report available by the end of the year.

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