

# 2023 Legislative Session:

B.

## City priorities & outcomes—the pros and cons.



### Respond to the *Blake* decision

Support clarification around the crime of possessing a controlled substance so individuals, law enforcement, and treatment providers can respond appropriately.

**Incomplete:** Did not pass legislation to create a statewide criminal penalty for drug possession (**SB 5536**).

**Pro:** Provided funding for new therapeutic courts, law enforcement assisted diversion programs, and substance use disorder and behavioral health treatment.

**Pro:** Appropriated **\$11.5 million** in continued funding to reimburse cities for vacating simple drug possession convictions, including cannabis or cannabis paraphernalia, to comply with *State v. Blake*.



### Address vehicle pursuits for public safety

Clarify law enforcement's ability to conduct vehicle pursuits with reasonable suspicion standard in specific circumstances.

**Pro:** Passed legislation allowing for a reasonable suspicion standard for pursuits of certain dangerous crimes (**SB 5352**).

**Pro:** Funded a **\$3 million** grant program for new vehicle tracking technologies.

**Pro:** Funded additional CJTC BLEA classes in Burien, Spokane, and at three new regional training academies.

**Pro:** Appropriated **\$5 million** for law enforcement wellness programs.



### Increase housing availability & affordability

Support a proactive approach with new tools, incentives, and revenues to increase housing supply and address affordability. Recognize the need for a multifaceted approach bolstering city capacity to accommodate new housing construction with more certainty and speed. Acknowledge the need for significantly more resources to meet the identified need for lower income housing.

**Pro:** Adopted bills exempting residential development from SEPA (**SB 5412**), eliminating external design review boards (**HB 1293**), providing state assistance for permit streamlining (**SB 5290**), and changes to the building codes (**SB 5491**). Passed a negotiated permit processing reform bill (**SB 5290**).

**Pro:** Funded infrastructure to support housing, including the Public Works Assistance Account (PWAA) and the Connecting Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP).

**Pro:** Adopted agreed-to zoning changes to support middle housing development while preserving decision-making flexibility for cities (**HB 1110**).

**Incomplete:** Invested nearly **\$1 billion** in funding for low-income housing and related services, but did not dedicate ongoing state revenues, nor establish local authority for new revenue. Dedicated and sustainable revenue is still needed.

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### Ensure basic infrastructure funding

Fully fund Public Works Assistance Account (PWAA), allow current revenue diversions to sunset, refrain from further fund transfers or diversions. Expand state funding opportunities for local maintenance and operations.

**Pro:** Funded the PWAA at **\$400 million** for the 2023-25 biennium. Expiring revenue diversions will sunset, restoring full funding to the account.

**Pro:** Maintained commitments made in the Move Ahead WA package for city preservation and maintenance. Appropriated **\$9 million** for the Transportation Improvement Board and **\$14.6 million** for the Complete Streets Program.



### Provide behavioral health resources

Create greater access to community-based behavioral health services to include substance use disorder treatment and dual diagnosis treatment facilities.

**Pro:** Improved the 988-behavioral and mental health crisis line (**HB 1134**), and established certification criteria for 23-hour crisis relief centers (**SB 5120**).

**Pro:** Appropriated **\$1.17 billion** for behavioral health treatment expenses statewide, including provider rate increases, funding for 988-crisis response, and substance use disorder treatment and prevention. Appropriated **\$884 million** for behavioral health facilities. Of this funding, **\$224 million** is for community-based behavioral health facilities, and **\$613 million** is allocated for a new 350-bed forensic hospital wing at Western State Hospital.

**Pro:** Provided **\$4 million** in grant funding for local alternative response programs.



### Other significant issues:

Cities identified several significant policies for the 2023 session.

**Pro:** Standardized and increased procurement limits (**HB 1621**). The Capital Projects Advisory Review Board must review and make recommendations on the proposed increases.

**Pro:** Clarified that cities may use impact fees to fund improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities not within road rights-of-way (**SB 5452**).

**Pro:** Modified small works roster requirements, addressed issues of equity in public works procurement, and revised the small and limited works roster process to increase administrative efficiency (**SB 5268**).

**Con:** Did not address legislation to reduce the impact of unnecessary and costly public records litigation (**HB 1597/SB 5571**).

**Pro:** Passed legislation to phase out the PERS 1 unfunded accrued actuarial liability (UAAL) surcharge resulting in significant savings for cities over time (**SB 5294**).

**Pro:** Passed balanced legislation and associated funding to help cities integrate climate change considerations into the Growth Management Act (**HB 1181**).

**Pro:** Reinstated the annexation sales tax credit to support cities annexing large areas with fiscal support to provide urban levels of service (**HB 1425**).

**Pro:** Funded the Fish Barrier Removal Board at the highest level in the state's history. This critical funding source helps cities correct fish-blocking culverts to support salmon recovery.

**Con:** Did not revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap to instead tie it to inflation and population growth up to 3% (**HB 1670/SB 5770**).

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