



City of Tumwater Legislative Agenda

Bush Prairie Carbon Sequestration*

\$2 million

The City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia are working to acquire mitigation land for the Mazama Pocket Gopher to support successful implementation of the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). In addition to offsetting the impacts of development on gopher habitat, research shows that prairies perform significant sequestration by storing carbon in deep fibrous root systems. Because the carbon is stored in the soil, this also makes prairies a more resilient form of carbon sequestration, as they do not release carbon into the atmosphere when burned (as would occur with carbon sequestered in trees). The city anticipates it will need to purchase and preserve approximately 1,500 acres of prairie habitat over the next 30 years to offset projected development impacts. The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) estimates this acreage will sequester approximately 2,100 MTCO₂e/year (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year). It is estimated that an investment of \$2 million will enable the City of Tumwater to purchase 20 to 30 acres of prairie habitat. It is critical that the City and Port demonstrate a commitment to obtaining and preserving gopher habitat as soon as possible to support adoption and implementation of the HCP.

The State's Climate Commitment Act (CCA) established multiple accounts to house cap-and-invest auction proceeds until they are appropriated for specific projects by the Legislature. The auctions have generated approximately \$1.5 billion in the first year, far exceeding any projections. The City of Tumwater is requesting funds from the CCA's Natural Climate Solutions Account, which focuses on projects that protect fish and wildlife habitats, including those that preserve or establish carbon sequestration in forests and agricultural soils.

**This item is also identified as a regional priority for the Shared Legislative Agenda.*

E Street Connection Engineering and Permitting

\$6.6 million

The City of Tumwater plans to build a connection from Capitol Boulevard to Cleveland Avenue (Yelm Highway) at E Street to alleviate congestion near the brewery, provide access over the railroad tracks to the brewery warehouse, and provide an alternate route for through traffic. It is estimated that 80% of daily drivers on Capitol Boulevard start and end their trips in other cities. The conceptual design for the E Street Connection is complete and pending public input. The relocation of Tumwater Valley Drive from the E Street intersection is under construction in conjunction with the Craft District development. This is an ideal project for major funding from a State or Federal program. Engineering and the initial permitting cost is \$3.4 million, the right-of-way is estimated at \$3.2 million, and the total project cost is estimated at \$54.2 million. The City is seeking funding for design, engineering, initial permitting, and right-of-way acquisition. Additional information at www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/estreet

Tumwater Boulevard/I-5 Interchange

\$5 million

The Tumwater Boulevard/I-5 Interchange serves the Port of Olympia Airport, the New Market Industrial Campus, numerous State agencies, several thousand housing units in the pipeline for construction in the next few years, and a growing retail base. This request is to support the City and new development—public, private-retail, private-industrial, and residential—in adding the first of two roundabouts at either end of the interchange. The improvements are needed to reduce congestion, facilitate freight movement, to avoid back-ups onto I-5 at peak hours, to improve safety, to allow and promote economic development, and to support significant additional housing. The entire project is \$15 million, with the other funds coming from development and the City.

WSDOT Regional Offices Redevelopment

\$2.8 million

In 2020, the State Department of Transportation vacated the Olympic Region offices located at 5720 Capitol Blvd SE, Tumwater, WA 98501. The 10-acre site was identified as the keystone to the city's Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan. It would create opportunities to provide affordable and market-rate housing, retail, public, and potentially historic preservation.

The City and WSDOT are currently in discussions to jointly perform due diligence on the site. If the parties move forward with a purchase and sale agreement, the City of Tumwater is asking the Legislature to make the State Department of Transportation whole for them to transfer the property to the City. The vision is for one-third of the property to be available for affordable housing, one-third available for market-rate housing, and the remainder would be for commercial and public uses. Although the City would initially hold the property, it would seek one or more private sector partners to develop it. The City is particularly interested in ensuring this property develops and does not sit vacant and blighted.

Shared Legislative Agenda

The list of regional legislative priorities will be finalized later in the year as participating agencies submit their proposals. Current proposals include:

I-5 Corridor

Continue focus on I-5 corridor between Mounts Road & Tumwater and the design and construction of the funded State Route 507 roundabouts.

Regional Basic Law Enforcement Academies

Provide a training center and two BLEA classes in Thurston County to expedite the training of police officers once hired.

Bush Prairie Carbon Sequestration*

Use \$2M from the Natural Climate Solutions Account to acquire local properties for carbon sequestration habitat preservation.

Supportive Housing

Develop long-term funding solutions to sustain supportive housing acquisitions.

Board of Health Efficiencies

Eliminate the requirement that all elected county commissioners must serve on the sit on County Board of Health

Policy & Statewide Issues

1% Property Tax Cap

The City property tax revenue growth is capped at 1% under a voter-approved initiative. The only exceptions are new construction, annexations, and levy lid lifts. Recent record inflation is significantly impacting City services, now and in the future. The City supports indexing the cap to an inflation index.

Extension of Transportation Benefit Districts

Current law allows a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) to be renewed only once after its initial 10-year term. The City's TBD has been vital in stabilizing the overall City budget and dramatically improving road quality and safety. The first term will expire in 2025, and making allowances for long-term planning and funding of transportation infrastructure is essential. We suggest that there is no limit to the number of renewals of a TBD.

Association of Washington Cities Priorities

The Association of Washington Cities is bringing forward four priorities. Detailed information and fact sheets are available at <https://wacities.org/advocacy/City-Legislative-Priorities>.

1. **Help recruit and retain police officers for public safety.** Provide additional funding tools and resources for officer recruitment and retention to improve public safety. This includes updating the existing local option Public Safety Sales Tax to allow implementation by councilmanic authority and greater flexibility for using the funds to cover increased officer wages and related programs like behavioral health co-response teams.
2. **Revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap** that has been in place for more than 20 years. Tie the tax to inflation and population growth factors with a new cap not to exceed 3%. This allows local elected officials to adjust the local property tax rate to better serve our communities and keep up with the costs of providing basic services like police, fire, streets, and valued community amenities like parks. The current 1% cap has created a structural deficit in cities' revenue and expenditure model, causing reliance on regressive revenues and artificially restricting the ability of property taxes to fund critical community needs.
3. **Continue strong state investments in infrastructure funding** to support operations and maintenance of traditional and non-traditional infrastructure like drinking water, wastewater, and broadband. Expand funding options that support state and local transportation needs with emphasis on preservation and maintenance to prevent expensive replacement and repairs. Improve access to Climate Commitment Act funding, including direct distributions, for city priorities that support carbon reduction and climate resiliency.
4. **Provide behavioral health resources.** Create greater access to behavioral health services to include substance use disorder treatment and dual diagnosis treatment facilities. Support continued state funding for cities to help communities establish alternative response programs like co-responder programs, diversion programs, and others that provide options beyond law enforcement to assist individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges.

Adopted:

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