

2026 State Legislative Session Kick-off

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Information Only





Agenda

1. 2026 Legislative Session Expectations
2. Review Bellevue's State Legislative Agenda
3. AWC Legislative Agenda
4. Next steps



2026 Legislative Session Preview

- Second year of the two-year biennium, 60-day session (begins Jan. 12)
- Supplemental 2025-27 budgets
 - Operating
 - Transportation
 - Capital
- Consider and adopt policy



2026 Legislative Political Climate

- Uncommonly high occurrence of legislative seats on off-cycle election in November due to appointments in 2025
 - Elections resulted in no change in partisan makeup of Legislature or to Bellevue's legislative delegation
- 2026 is a campaign year for half of the Senate and all members of the House



Likely Hot Topics in the 2026 Session



- Continued Budget Shortfall
- Federal Government Action Response
- Human Services
- Housing Affordability



City of Bellevue 2026 State Legislative Agenda



City of Bellevue 2026 State Legislative Agenda

Economic Prosperity and Partnership

State and federal actions play a significant role in shaping Bellevue's economic health. The City asks to be engaged as a consulted partner as the Legislature considers responses to shifting economic conditions and federal policy changes. The decisions by the Legislature have direct downstream impacts on city services and affordability for our residents. Bellevue strongly urges the Legislature to avoid tax on residents that could create a direct impact on our employment base and may put Washington at a competitive disadvantage in a dynamic marketplace.

Bellevue will evaluate state taxation proposals or budget adjustments through the lens of fiscal sustainability and economic prosperity. We support strategies that promote fair competition among businesses without disproportionate impact on size or industry, foster innovation and economic growth, and help attract and retain talent in communities across Washington. Bellevue urges the State to prioritize revenue sources that are less volatile and more stable across economic cycles, while carefully balancing fiscal needs with the potential impacts on cities, residents, and ratepayers.

Key Legislative Priorities

Affordable Housing

Bellevue seeks ongoing partnership with the State to help build an equitable and caring community where everyone can thrive. We urge the Legislature to provide adequate funding, resources and time to effectively implement recent state land use and housing laws that have significantly impacted cities.

Bellevue supports flexible funding tools for local jurisdictions to address affordable housing needs, including construction and preservation of affordable housing. Funding tools should provide support for early planning, pre-development and acquisition to promote affordable housing development in diverse, inclusive and growing communities like Bellevue.

Streamlined Permitting

Consistent permitting across jurisdictional boundaries is critical to supporting local economies, housing, environmental protection and trust in government, and is critical to achieving Bellevue's long-term growth plans. The City is working to reduce permit processing timelines by implementing Senate Bill 5290 (2023) and investing in innovative technologies to streamline review processes. As these local efforts continue, Bellevue urges the Legislature to prioritize funding support and incentive-based approaches, rather than imposing additional mandates, to help jurisdictions accelerate permitting.

Bellevue supports the eCityGov Alliance funding request that will modernize MyBuildingPermit online platform so that it remains an industry-leading, digital permitting technology solution with improved outcomes for applicants, customers, planners, builders and designers. The eCityGov Alliance is the only non-profit, government-led organization delivering a predictable digital permitting experience consistent with the needs of permitting customers and jurisdictions across the region.

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2026 State Legislative Agenda

City of Bellevue State Policy Statement

High Performance Government

Bellevue supports data-informed and collaborative decision making, strategic investment of public resources and strong commitment to inclusive engagement. Bellevue is a Smart City and we are interested in leveraging technology to optimize data management, safe and secure infrastructure, and the customer experience. Moreover, residents often do not distinguish between services delivered at the state level versus the local level; the City supports efforts to ensure all levels of government are financially stable. When state policies are achieving their goals at the local level, we encourage the State to recognize and preserve those local approaches, maintaining the flexibility cities need to effectively meet the unique needs of our communities.

Governance and Fiscal Sustainability

- Bellevue supports preserving and enhancing **state-shared revenues** and retaining programs to meet the diverse needs of local government.
- Cities must not be burdened by **state mandates** that are unaccompanied by sufficient funding or necessary resources.
- Bellevue strongly opposes proposals that would undermine the ability for cities to administer local **business and occupation (B&O) tax** revenues. Diminished local authority reduces flexibility to tailor taxes to local conditions and may reduce revenues that fund critical services.
- The city requests that the Legislature provide greater flexibility for **local revenue decisions**.
- Cities require support managing public works needs in the most efficient manner possible. Ensure state regulatory requirements, including proposals related to **contracting and procurement**, are flexible, reasonable, and balanced and consider the cost impacts on local governments, as well as taxpayers.
- Bellevue urges the Legislature to preserve **public employer management rights** in collective bargaining. The City's right to make decisions about expenditures, programs and new technologies should not be impeded.

Liability

- Bellevue seeks opportunities to reduce **liability exposure** and reduce costs of litigation and insurance.
- Bellevue supports proposals to reduce inefficient, costly and outdated requirements, while maintaining transparency and reducing **litigation abuse** and disruptions to **public meetings**.



Bellevue City Hall

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2026 Key Legislative Priorities

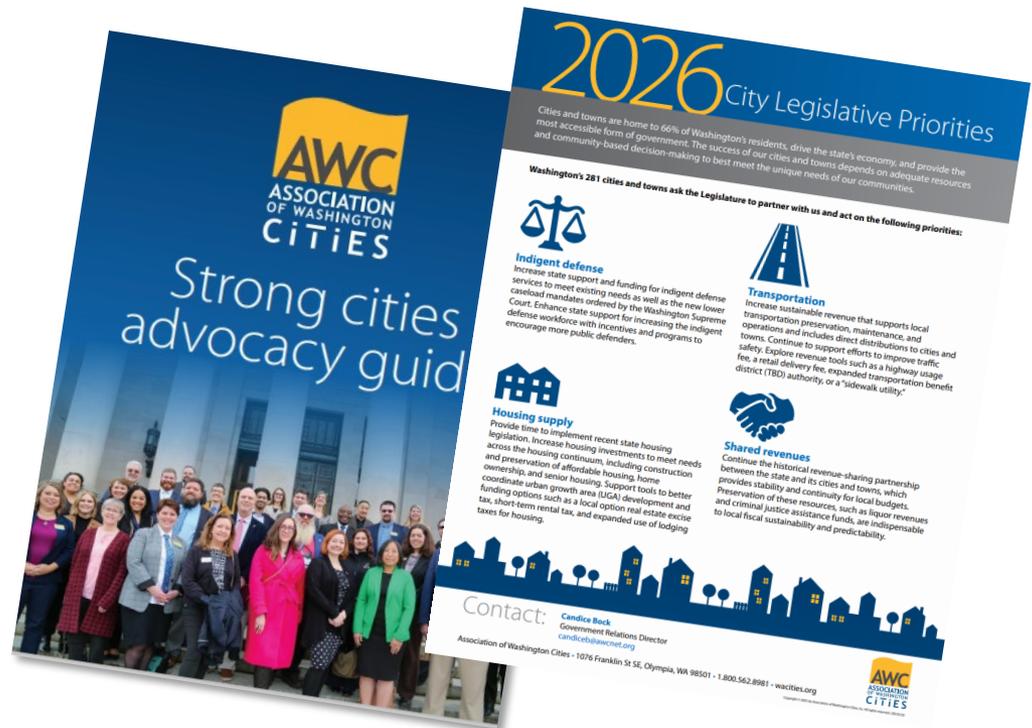
- **Economic Prosperity and Partnership**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Transportation**
 - **I-405/SR 167 Corridor**
 - **Business Access and Transit (BAT) Lanes**
 - **SR 520/124th Ave NE Interchange Project**
- **Streamlined Permitting**

2026 State Policy Statement

- **High Performance Government**, including fiscal sustainability and liability
- **Thriving People & Communities**, including human services and behavioral health
- **Vibrant Economy**, including economic and workforce development
- **Safe & Efficient Transportation**, including Vision Zero and smart mobility
- **High Quality Built & Natural Environment**, including utilities infrastructure and land use
- **Community Safety & Health**, including first responders, law enforcement, and justice

AWC 2026 Legislative Agenda

- Indigent Defense
- Transportation
- Housing Supply
- Shared Revenues



Next Steps

- ❑ Meetings with 41st and 48th district legislators and visits to Olympia
- ❑ Discussions with AWC, other cities, and stakeholders on key emerging issues
- ❑ Advance Key Legislative Priorities
- ❑ **January 21-22:** AWC's City Action Days
- ❑ **February 17:** House of Origin Cutoff
- ❑ **February 20:** Revenue Forecast
- ❑ **March 6:** Opposite House Cutoff
- ❑ **March 12:** Legislative Session Ends



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