

City of Bellevue Draft 2021 State Legislative Agenda

Recovering from COVID-19: Small businesses and micro-businesses throughout the state, including Bellevue, are struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City urges the Legislature to adopt a statewide economic recovery strategy that includes additional financial support for businesses and new economic tools, such as tax increment financing and public-private partnerships. The City supports additional resources to ensure childcare providers and school districts can safely reopen. The City requests that the state preserve and increase city state-shared revenues and provide greater flexibility to cities through the pandemic and the recovery from the pandemic.

Social and Criminal Justice: Implicit bias and racism exist throughout our society. Bellevue recognizes the need to address racism and implicit bias and supports systemic reforms that are timely, reasonable and effective. Specifically, the City supports proposals that address reforms in the criminal justice system that bring equity to our institutional practices and provide greater safety for communities that have been historically harmed by racism and implicit bias. The City supports efforts to fill gaps in existing local public safety response, including enhanced professional mental health services and other social support services. Bellevue supports state funding to augment locally funded programs that build community capacity to address racial equity and inclusion initiatives such as the City of Bellevue's Diversity Advantage Plan, Communities of Color Program and the Cross-Cultural Center Project.

Transportation Investments: The strength of our region's economy depends on a multimodal, well-integrated, and well-performing transportation network to reliably move people and goods within and between job centers. In 2019, the Legislature authorized tolling and the bonding of toll revenue on the entire I-405/SR 167 corridor to generate funds to continue implementation of the I-405 Master Plan and fund much-needed improvements on this critical transportation route. Bellevue encourages the state to honor its commitment to make these improvements in a timely manner to ensure that the planned bus rapid transit service can be constructed on this vital corridor.

Bellevue encourages the state to adopt a transportation revenue package to fund new projects and maintenance and preservation of the state and local system. The City encourages the state to identify a stable revenue source that accounts for emerging smart technologies such as autonomous vehicles, and the impact of our transportation system on climate and the environment. The City of Bellevue joins with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce to request funding for the following projects:

Key Capacity Improvements

- **SR 520/124th Ave NE Interchange**
The SR 520/124th interchange is one of the most congested and unsafe in East King County. Improvements to this interchange will reduce congestion, improve safety and provide access to the Spring District – an urban neighborhood and job center with connections to light rail and regional trails. Preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition are funded and underway. \$175 million is needed to fund the project.
- **I-405 Access to Downtown Bellevue:** In order to decrease traffic congestion and provide greater access into the City, a direct connection is needed from I-405 into Downtown Bellevue south of NE 4th street. Funding is needed to move the project to design and construction of the preferred alternative.

Multimodal Improvements

- **Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail - \$6.9 million next phase:** This non-motorized 100-mile long trail along I-90 stretches from the Seattle Waterfront to Ellensburg. It features a regional trail network used by pedestrians and bicyclists for recreation and transportation. The “Bellevue Gap” is a 3.6-mile trail segment between Factoria Boulevard and Lakemont Boulevard. The next phase to close this gap is a \$33.9 million overcrossing from I-405 to 150th Avenue. Approximately \$27 million in local, state, and federal funds is committed for the overcrossing, leaving a \$6.9 million shortfall. The remaining amount needed to fully complete the Bellevue Gap is \$36.5 million.
- **Eastrail - \$18 million:** The Eastrail will be an uninterrupted 42-mile multi-use trail from Renton into Snohomish County along a former BNSF rail right-of-way. Once completed, this multi-use trail will provide pedestrians and bicyclists 42 miles of uninterrupted trail and direct access to East Link light rail. The following investments are needed to complete the trail through Bellevue:
 - \$5.5 million for the Wilburton Trestle
 - \$10 million for the I-90 Steel Bridge
 - \$2.5 million SE 5th to NE 6th

Planning for the Future

- **I-405/SR 520 Interchange Improvements:** To maximize significant investments in the SR 520 and I-405 corridors, system-to-system connection is needed to relieve a significant congestion point where I-405 and SR 520 intersect. Funding is needed for design that will link the eastbound SR 520 HOV lanes to the I-405 express toll lanes to keep transit moving, improve safety and access to one of the fastest growing areas of Bellevue and the region.
- **I-405/I-90 Interchange Improvements:** Congestion on I-405 at the I-90 interchange is a regional choke point that creates significant safety issues, slows transit and vehicle traffic at all hours. Funding is needed to design direct access from the north and southbound ramps that connect eastbound traffic off I-90 onto I-405. The design will enable future improvements and identify the most cost-effective means of improving safety, reducing congestion and keeping all modes moving through this area.

Affordable Housing, Homelessness and Human Services: The City supports increased assistance to mitigate the impacts of the eviction moratorium on tenants, landlords and homeowners as a result of lost income due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City supports efforts to provide funding and funding tools to construct and/or preserve affordable housing units and housing for people experiencing homelessness, with a focus on a broad array of income levels, including very low-income and workforce housing.

As the state balances its budget, the City opposes cuts to programs that serve our most vulnerable populations, including funding for treatment and prevention programs that focus on the root causes of homelessness, mental and behavioral health services, addiction, domestic violence, diversion programs such as community courts to keep people out of the criminal justice system and re-entry programs for previously incarcerated people.

Climate and the Environment: The City supports policies and investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve environmental health, including reducing carbon emissions, implementing energy-efficient building codes, funding electric vehicle infrastructure, reducing the waste stream, and advancing habitat restoration. Bellevue will advocate for a balanced approach that ensures consistency with the City’s Environmental Stewardship Plan, other policy goals and does not harm people already negatively impacted by the pandemic. The City supports state proposals that include funding for local governments to implement environmental stewardship actions that move the dial from bold actions to leading edge actions.

Capital Budget Investments: Bellevue recognizes the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for the state to prioritize capital investments that respond to this crisis and reinvest in our economy. Given these capital funding priorities, the City requests \$2 million in matching funds for acquisition of a property to provide single-room-type shelter to serve our most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.

In addition to funding investments in facilities to serve vulnerable populations, the City requests support for funding in two Washington Wildlife and Recreation Programs (WWRP) where Bellevue projects scored well:

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: The City of Bellevue supports continued investments in the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP), including:

WWRP Water Access Category: Bellevue is ranked 5th to receive a \$1.8 million grant to buy a half-acre on the western shore of Lake Sammamish. The land connects to 1.2 acres of undeveloped, city-owned land on the lake. This is part of a larger project to build Bellevue's first park on Lake Sammamish, which is surrounded by mostly private land with limited public access points.

WWRP Trails Category: Bellevue is ranked 13th to receive a \$1.18 million grant to develop 665-feet of trail along the eastern edge of Mercer Slough, to connect the Mountains to Sound Trail to a ramp to the Easttrail. In addition to connecting regional trails, this project fills a long-standing gap in the Mercer Slough Nature Park internal trail system and is part of the City's Lake to Lake Trail.

Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board Program: The City supports investments in the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board Program which is proposing funding for 87 local culvert projects in the 2021-2023 budget. Bellevue's project is ranked 71st to receive \$600,000 in planning funds to improve the Coal Creek culvert.

Preserve Fiscal Sustainability and Local Control: Bellevue strongly urges the Legislature to honor local decision-making authority and refrain from preempting the authority of city elected officials who are closest to the people they serve. The City strongly opposes unfunded mandates and state pre-emption of local authority.

Bellevue supports protecting and enhancing state-shared revenues (e.g. restoring liquor taxes/profits and marijuana revenue to levels historically promised) and retaining programs and authority benefitting local government. The City encourages the state to consider providing additional revenue to local agencies facing revenue shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.