

City of Bellevue Draft 2022 State Legislative Agenda

Version: November 1, 2021

Growth, Economic Vitality and Recovering from COVID-19

Bellevue has experienced exponential growth over the last several years which is expected to continue with another 30,000 jobs expected by 2025. The economic vitality of Bellevue and the Eastside of Lake Washington provides an excellent return on investment for the regional and the state economy. Continued infrastructure investments by the state are urgently needed and are critical to sustain this growth and economic vitality. Bellevue supports state incentives for partnerships that advance transportation and other critical infrastructure projects and urges the Legislature to eliminate barriers to partnerships, including restrictions on the use of state land.

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 continues to invest in workforce development. 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 also supports proposals that build upon reform proposals enacted in 2021 to provide greater clarification and implementation direction, due to the complexities and nuances of police practices and to provide for consistent implementation across the state. 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 the expansion of mobile integrated healthcare and services for those experiencing mental and emotional crisis on an emergency basis. 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.

Timely Completion of Projects Along the I-405/SR 167 Corridor: 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 urges 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, including enhanced funding for programs such as the Transportation Improvement Board, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, the WSDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Program, and Safe Routes to School. 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 in any transportation revenue package:

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 for construction.
- **South Downtown I-405 Access Improvement (Lake Hills Connector):** To relieve congestion and improve access into Bellevue, a new partial interchange south of NE 4th Street is essential with a southbound on-ramp to I-405 from the Lake Hills Connector. This project will support the additional 30,000 new jobs anticipated in Bellevue by 2025. As identified in the I-405 Master Plan, the on-ramp will provide travel time reduction benefits on I-405 and local roads, while reducing delays at intersections in the area. \$150 million is needed for design, environmental documentation and construction.

Multimodal Improvements

- **Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail:** 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 \$6.9 million requested will complete a portion of the “Bellevue Gap” from 142nd Avenue SE to 150th Avenue SE, and match the \$27 million in commitments from local, state, and federal sources. An additional \$29.6 million will be required to complete the final Bellevue segment from 150th Avenue SE to Lakemont Boulevard.

- **Eastrail:** The Eastrail will be an uninterrupted 42-mile multi-use trail from Renton into Snohomish County along a former BNSF rail right-of-way. When fully connected, the Eastrail will provide important multi-modal options for commuters in and out of Bellevue through designated trail and direct access to East Link light rail stations. In fall of 2021, Amazon announced \$7.5 million investment for last-in funding for the Wilburton Trestle and Trail Segment, making it possible for work on the Wilburton area of Eastrail to begin. In addition to contributions from the City of Bellevue and King County, \$18 million is needed for the completion of the I-90 Steel Bridge and adjacent trail segments.

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. \$50 million is needed for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way.
- **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. \$90 million is needed for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way for the Bellevue-to-Issaquah Direct Connector and the Renton-to-Issaquah Direct Connector.

Housing, Affordable Housing, Homelessness and Human Services: The City supports increased assistance to tenants, landlords and homeowners as the statewide eviction moratorium ends. 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. Bellevue supports efforts to incentivize a diversity of housing types and efforts to reform existing condominium laws.

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 reentry 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. Bellevue has adopted a goal of reducing emissions by 50 percent by 2030. 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.

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 to levels historically promised) and retaining programs and authority benefitting local government.