



DATE: June 25, 2024

TO: Bellevue City Councilmembers

FROM: Mayor Lynne Robinson
Deputy Mayor Mo Malakoutian
City Council

Genesee Adkins, Deputy City Manager, 452-7849
City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Trip Summary Report: Bellevue Federal Relations Annual Visit

Dates: June 4-6

Destination: Washington, DC

Delegation Leaders for Bellevue: Mayor Lynne Robinson, Deputy Mayor Mo Malakoutian, and DCM Genesee Adkins. Also joined by W2A contractor staff Nina Collier.

Purpose: To share Bellevue's 2024-2025 adopted Federal Agenda, advocating for City congressionally-directed spending requests, grants, and other key policy priorities.

Background

The City of Bellevue traditionally visits our Congressional delegation (Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, Representative Adam Smith, and Representative Suzan DelBene) each year in the late spring or early summer. When we are in Washington, we also meet with federal agencies, associations, or other entities that connect to or bolster the City's current issues in play. This visit comes on the heels of adoption of the City's refreshed federal agenda, which in turn is informed by the president's budget release in the first quarter. This visit is part of a year-round federal relations program, with multiple interactions and touchpoints throughout the calendar year.

Summary – Congressional Visits

During the June 2024 trip, we met with each of the four delegation offices. We met with each of the three elected officials directly, and Senator Murray sent her senior staff as she was unable to step away from Appropriations Committee work on the day of our visit.

Key Takeaways:

- Thanked members for their support of our growing, thriving City.

- Expressed appreciation for their sponsorship of Bellevue congressionally-directed spending (earmark) requests, as well as for successful funding of three requests in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.
- Reinforced the importance of pending City and partner grant applications, with the RAISE grant for Eastrail a high priority for our city and region.
- Requested letters of support for additional grant requests
- Discussed the tremendous need for wastewater infrastructure funding and received valuable feedback from the offices, who seemed to be unaware that there was not a major competitive grant funding source available.
- Discussed affordable housing and the work Bellevue is doing to encourage and facilitate more housing types, more housing stock, and more affordability. Sen. Cantwell encouraged Bellevue to continue its work to be a regional leader on housing, modeling how to foster additional housing and density while maintaining city character. Staff will follow up offline, particularly with Rep. Smith's staff on draft federal legislation.
- Discussed the Grand Connection Crossing and the city's continuing design work, intending to apply for a major USDOT grant for the construction phase in 2025 or 2026.

Summary – NLC Meeting

We wanted to visit with the National League of Cities (NLC) during this trip for two primary reasons: To amplify and elevate the need for wastewater infrastructure funding, and to give Deputy Mayor Malakoutian an overview of NLC's mission and opportunities, as a new city official.

Key Takeaways:

- Thanked NLC for being a strong voice for cities, yielding valuable results like the ability in the BIL for cities to apply directly for several competitive grants and for cities to access and leverage pandemic-era funding support.
- NLC acknowledged the valued participation of CMs Lee and Zahn on committees and the Board of Directors.
- Discussed the tremendous need for wastewater infrastructure funding and explained that while cities are not often wastewater dischargers, our ratepayers bear the cost of upgrading facilities to comply with federal laws. Substantive discussion on this topic and will follow up offline.
- Discussed NLC grant tracking resources that are new to the organization that Bellevue may want to access and will follow up offline.