

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Draft 2024 State Legislative Agenda

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**ACTION**

Staff is asking the council to consider adopting the draft 2024 State Legislative Agenda at this meeting or a subsequent meeting, in advance of the next session of the Washington State Legislature, which begins in January. Adoption of the agenda allows staff and other city officials to clearly articulate the City's 2024 legislative priorities to state lawmakers, state agencies, peer jurisdictions, and community and other stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Council consider, discuss, and adopt a State Legislative Agenda in advance of the next legislative session.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Preview of the 2024 Regular Session**

The 2024 legislative session will begin January 8, 2024. This is the second year of the two-year biennium and will last for 60 days, ending March 8. During this time, the legislature will adopt supplemental capital, operating, and transportation budgets for 2023-25, which are customarily only relatively small adjustments to the two-year budget adopted this past spring. All bills introduced during the 2023 session that did not pass will be automatically reintroduced in the 2024 session.

Democrats will set the agenda for the 2024 session because they continue to hold the majority. Last fall's elections resulted in strong Democrat majorities for the 2023 session and the upcoming 2024 session. Because this is an "off" election cycle for legislators, majorities are not expected to change between now and January.

Bellevue staff anticipates that affordable housing will continue as a priority for the legislature in 2024. Democrats called the 2023 session "the year of affordable housing." The legislature allocated over \$1 billion for housing in the 2023-25 Operating and Capital Budgets and passed several dozen housing bills into law. Transit-oriented development legislation and other land use bills had momentum yet ultimately did not pass out of the legislature in 2024. Some legislators are already discussing these and new affordable housing and land use proposals for the 2024 session.

Democrats are also expected to continue working on similar priorities to 2023, including efforts to address climate change, public safety, behavioral health, and special education funding.

Highest Priority Issues

The agenda's Highest Priority Issues section highlights the items of utmost importance to the City of Bellevue in the upcoming state legislative session. In general, these items are either exclusively or largely Bellevue-led and Bellevue-focused and highlight the areas of greatest value at this time.

In the 2024 session, those priority issues are:

Affordable Housing and Land Use

- Recognition of our state's affordable housing crisis
- Desire to shape bills on transit-oriented development to be effective
- New and flexible local funding sources

Infrastructure for a Growing Community

- Electric fire engine and charging infrastructure
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail funding shift
- I-405 funding gap

State Policy Statement

The agenda's State Policy Statement covers a broad set of issues and gives the City the flexibility and charge to weigh in on a host of issues, funds, and bills that may arise during the legislative session. Many of the items captured in this section are led by other parties or coalitions, and Bellevue intends to weigh in as necessary and strategic to advocate for the City's interests, direct or indirect.

In the 2024 session, those issue categories are:

- Homelessness and Human Services
- Climate and the Environment
- Fiscal Sustainability, Financing Tools, and General Government
- Equity and Social Justice
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Public Works and Infrastructure
- Economic Development and Workforce
- AWC Legislative Priorities
- Implementing Bellevue's Vision and Priorities

Association of Washington Cities Legislative Priorities Development

The AWC Legislative Priorities Committee met this summer and fall to develop the Association's 2024

legislative agenda. Bellevue weighed in on the association's legislative priority development process this year, and the AWC Board of Directors adopted their 2024 legislative priorities last month.

The 2024 AWC legislative priorities are:

- Help recruit and retain police officers for public safety
- Continue investing in infrastructure
- Revise the arbitrary property tax cap
- Provide behavioral health resources

Timeline and Next Steps

After the council has considered and adopted a legislative agenda, staff will take several steps to help maximize its utility, some of which are already in the early stages. Those next steps include:

- Schedule meetings with each of our 41st and 48th District lawmakers to brief them on the agenda
- Further refine and flesh out the highest priority issues, including identifying supporters and opportunities
- Develop a set of marketing materials for lawmakers and staff as compelling educational pieces
- Attend committee assembly in Olympia on in late November
- Talk with other cities and additional partners about developing legislation and budget items
- Develop opportunities to talk with key legislators before session begins January 8
- Identify key dates in the upcoming session and when Bellevue will plan to be on the ground
- Plan to attend City Action Days on February 24-25, 2024

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

An adopted state legislative agenda is an important messaging document for the City, encapsulating the most important state-level policy positions for Bellevue in 2024. The work of the Washington State Legislature will have myriad impacts on the City, and it is important that the City weigh in appropriately on bills throughout the course of the session.

Fiscal Impact

The budget developed at the state level is of critical importance to the City, as many important programs are either directly within the City's scope or are of benefit to or impact upon our residents, employees, businesses, and visitors. The legislature's ability to impact or modify authorized city revenue tools and revenue streams is also of direct and essential interest to Bellevue.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

A. Draft 2024 State Legislative Agenda

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N/A