

2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA - DRAFT

Key Legislative Priorities

Bellevue Grand Connection – Downtown Integration Project

Bellevue requests \$900,000 from the Capital Budget for construction.

This project would improve the safety and accessibility of the public gathering space at Bellevue’s City Hall Plaza for more than 40,000 people each day when the Bellevue Grand Connection I-405 Crossing is complete, connecting light rail to Eastrail and the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout East King County. Capitalizing on the regional investment of Sound Transit’s 2 Line, this project is critical in preparing for the arrival of the Grand Connection I-405 Crossing, future bus rapid transit lines, and new public facilities near City Hall.

Bellevue Grand Connection - I-405 Crossing: City Hall to Eastrail

Bellevue requests the Legislature’s partnership if a transportation funding package is developed in 2025.

This project will improve access to the second-largest regional jobs center by constructing a pedestrian and bicyclist bridge over I-405. The crossing over I-405 will connect more than half a million people via a 120-mile regional trail network, including Eastrail and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway. It will improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, create new opportunities for community gathering and recreation, and drive redevelopment in the fast-growing Wilburton neighborhood, spurring transit-oriented housing.

Digital Permitting

Bellevue asks the Legislature to support the edition Alliance \$2.7 million request.

Consistent permitting across jurisdictional boundaries is critical to supporting local economies, housing, environmental protection, and trust in local government. It is also a key component in helping Bellevue realize its long-term growth plan. This eCityGov Alliance funding request will modernize *MyBuildingPermit.com* so that it remains an industry leading, digital permitting technology solution with improved outcomes for applicants,

Affordable Housing

Bellevue seeks the state’s partnership to address the affordable housing crisis. We ask the Legislature to provide adequate funding, resources, and time necessary to successfully implement recent state land use and housing legislation.

Bellevue supports flexible funding options for local jurisdictions that address affordable housing. Options should provide support for early planning, predevelopment, and acquisition to promote affordable housing development in diverse, inclusive and growing communities like Bellevue.

customers, planners, builders and designers. The eCityGov Alliance is the only non-profit, government-led organization delivering a consistent with the needs of permitting customers and local jurisdictions across the region.

SR 520/124th Avenue NE Interchange Project

Bellevue supports funding for the Washington State Department of Transportation to construct the interchange, fish passage, and multimodal realignment to improve connectivity.

One of the most congested and unsafe interchanges in East King County, this project will reduce congestion on both I-405 and SR 520. This project will improve safety and access to medical facilities and the Spring District – an urban neighborhood and job center connecting to light rail and regional trails. The SR 520/124th Avenue NE Interchange project is at the end of the preliminary engineering phase and is envisioned as a design-build contract.

I-405/SR 167 Corridor

Bellevue supports infrastructure improvements that maximize the effectiveness of the 50-mile I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lane system, implement the I-405 Master Plan, and upgrade the efficiency of state highways and regional corridors. Bellevue requests that projects identified in the I-405 Master Plan, which includes the 2022-approved Renton to Bellevue Contract 3 projects, be advanced by exploring funding options and conducting a collaborative Practical Solutions process with city involvement.

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. We value our relationship with the Washington State Legislature, while advocating for Bellevue's interests including infrastructure, public services, growth, and finance.

Governance & Fiscal Sustainability

- Bellevue urges the Legislature to honor the autonomy of cities to use **community-based decision-making**. The City recognizes that there are times when statewide approaches may be necessary and pledges to work toward statewide solutions that empower communities and support local decision-makers.
- Cities must not be burdened by **state mandates** that are unaccompanied by sufficient funding or necessary resources.
- The City 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 tax to local conditions and may reduce revenues that fund critical services.
- Bellevue supports revising the **one percent cap** on annual property tax levy growth with a limit that allows cities to respond to local needs.
- Bellevue supports preserving and enhancing **state-shared revenues** and retaining programs to meet the diverse needs of local government. The City requests that the State provide greater **flexibility for local revenue decisions**.
- Bellevue supports proposals that increase operational efficiency while maintaining transparency and access to open government, including updating the **Public Records Act** and the **Open Public Meetings Act** to reduce costs to cities and disruptions during public meetings.
- Support cities in managing public works needs in the most efficient manner possible, including flexible and reasonable **contracting and procurement** requirements.

Vibrant Economy

Bellevue fosters the conditions for economic success for residents, workers, visitors and learners from around the world. We seek Legislative partnership to support capacity-building of public, private and non-profit partners to fuel prosperity and enrich the ability of every member in our community to thrive.

Economic & Workforce Development

- Bellevue supports strengthening and expanding **tax increment financing** and other economic development tools to fund public infrastructure that supports economic development.
- The City urges the Legislature to prioritize entrepreneur-led **economic strategies**, including resources to support and protect small and family-owned businesses, as well as first-time entrepreneurs.
- Bellevue supports efforts to expand access to **affordable childcare** and capacity-building for childcare providers.
- Bellevue's growth as an employment hub necessitates investments in **higher education, upskilling and reskilling, and work-based learning opportunities**. The city supports investment in career navigation services, apprenticeships, scholarships for higher education and vocational programs, work-based learning opportunities, and entryways into higher education.
- Innovations like edge computing and generative **artificial intelligence (AI)** will drive transformative city services. Bellevue supports legislation and funding that ethically enhances service delivery.
- Bellevue supports state investments in the **arts** to help promote economic development and tourism, while fostering creativity. Bellevue supports the implementation of the Department of Commerce's Creative Economy Strategic Plan, including Building for the Arts funding and enhancement of creative districts.
- **Local schools and colleges** are facing financial crises in the wake of the pandemic and other compounding challenges. Bellevue's excellent educational opportunities are a key component of our high quality of life, and the state needs to support their ongoing work at adequate levels, including an increase in special education funding.

Safe & Efficient Transportation

Bellevue supports a transportation system that is sustainable, reliable and predictable where mode choices are abundant, clean and safe. The strength of our region's economy depends on a multimodal, well-performing transportation network to accommodate a growing, diverse population and workforce.

- The City encourages the State to act with urgency to identify and adopt a **sustained revenue source** to accelerate transportation investments. Funds are needed to help manage traffic congestion, expand transportation innovation, support multimodal needs, incentivize demand management, and assist with maintenance and operation of local infrastructure.
 - If the Legislature considers transitioning from the gas tax to an **alternative revenue source**, it must provide adequate funding for state **and** local governments. New or replacement revenue sources should be equitable, less regressive, support economic development, and minimize impacts to small businesses.
- Bellevue encourages the State to collaboratively advance a shared **Vision Zero** goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injury collisions through a Safe System approach, including funding and technology to enhance safety for people walking and biking.
- Bellevue supports new investments in **bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure**, neighborhood connectivity, and safety enhancements.
- Bellevue supports innovation and connectivity through the expansion of next generation **smart mobility technologies** that integrate connected vehicle systems with sensors at signalized intersections.

High Quality Built & Natural Environment

Bellevue supports growth that is focused on dense, mixed-use centers and transit while maintaining a well-balanced mix of business and commercial properties. We are actively working to implement the 2024 comprehensive plan to provide more housing types that support a range of needs and affordability levels. Bellevue is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing climate resilience, preserving our natural environment, and transitioning to clean energy.

Utility Infrastructure

- The health and safety of our growing community requires state investment in **drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure**. The City requests direct investment and meaningful resources for the needed expansion, ongoing operations, and maintenance of aging systems. Local jurisdictions need assistance keeping utility rates affordable for local communities, avoiding impacts to ratepayers from regulatory and mandated costs on city-owned utilities, and offering utility rate relief programs.

Land Use & Housing

- Bellevue is committed to regional solutions that provide **supportive housing** to ensure all people have access to safe and stable housing, especially near services and transit. Legislative action is most effective when incentives are offered for jurisdictions to more effectively site and permit supportive housing developments. Such legislation must provide protection from appeals and litigation.
- Affordable housing is a critical component of growth near fixed-route transit. Bellevue supports setting affordability goals for **transit-oriented development (TOD)**, while providing local flexibility and planning resources to help communities achieve those goals. TOD legislation should focus on residential development and provide flexibility for local land use conditions.

Environmental Stewardship

- Bellevue supports sustainable funding that helps local governments implement **environmental stewardship actions** that reduce carbon emissions, including implementation of energy-efficient building codes, funding electrification of buildings and fleets, installing publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure, advancing habitat restoration, and a statewide extended producer responsibility program.

Community Safety & Health

Bellevue is committed to prevention, intervention, enforcement and support of activities that protect life, property and the environment so all people feel safe, valued and welcome. We seek partnership to ensure our systems and infrastructure are resilient and secure.

First Responders

- The City supports efforts to **retain first responders**, while supporting direct funding to recruit, train, and deploy additional first responders.
- Bellevue supports efforts to increase programs to improve **first responder wellbeing**.
- The increase in electrification has created new challenges for emergency response and infrastructure. Bellevue supports efforts to provide new and increased training for responding to **electric vehicles (EV) and electric storage systems (ESS) fires**.
- Bellevue supports expanded funding for local behavioral health **crisis co-responder programs** to enhance deployment.

Law Enforcement

- Bellevue supports **state investment** to allow law enforcement departments to deploy new technologies, enhance crime reduction and prevention strategies, and engage in community policing programs.
- Bellevue supports enhanced and improved **training for existing and new officers** through the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) and fully funding the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA).

Justice System

- Bellevue supports diversion strategies like **community courts, crisis-response teams, and other programs** that help keep individuals out of the criminal justice system.
- Bellevue supports enhanced state funding for **indigent defense and workforce development** for public defenders to help our criminal justice system function more effectively.

Community Safety

- Bellevue supports prioritizing state funding to replace locally- and state-owned **culverts** to reduce flooding and improve salmon passage.

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- Bellevue supports expanding resources to cities for prevention, planning, response, and recovery for **wildfire and other natural disasters**, including reducing the impacts from emergency water shortages and increasing seismic resiliency in water and wastewater systems.
- Support **cybersecurity** investments and grant funding to protect the integrity of our technology infrastructure and sensitive data against increasing threats.
- Bellevue supports enhanced **graffiti removal** services by the Washington State Department of Transportation that are necessary to prevent property damage, maintain property values, and deter criminal activity.

Thriving People & Communities

Bellevue strives toward a community where every individual has access to necessary resources, housing, and supportive services. We seek partnership in creating an equitable and caring community where everyone can thrive, while promoting the safety and wellbeing of all residents.

Behavioral Health

- Bellevue supports increased capacity for **vulnerable and marginalized populations**, including behavioral health treatment, substance use disorder treatment and prevention, and resource navigation for those seeking treatment.
- Bellevue supports **behavioral health funding** for prevention and education programs, treatment alternatives, and resource navigation for those seeking treatment. Services must be equitably available.
- Bellevue supports efforts to increase the **workforce pipeline and equitable wages** to address critical staff shortages in behavioral health professions.

Access to Housing

- The City supports investments to ensure **access to safe and stable housing**, while addressing the needs of those without housing stability.
- Bellevue supports state funding to strengthen and increase local partnerships for **rental assistance** to meet the city's growing needs and prevent evictions that lead to homelessness.
- The Legislature should maximize the utility of housing vouchers and leverage the power of state financing tools to facilitate **housing construction** for all income levels.

The City supports the Association of Washington Cities' 2025 legislative agenda items that serve the best interests of Bellevue.