

City of Bellevue Draft 2023 State Legislative Agenda

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HIGHEST PRIORITY ISSUES

Affordable Housing and Land Use

Washington State faces an affordable housing crisis. Bellevue supports legislative action that takes a balanced, collaborative approach. Necessary state tools include regulatory reform, condominium liability reform, and safe harbor for cities increasing development capacity. Incentives and new funding options, such as a new local option Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), are essential for the construction and acquisition of affordable housing. Where possible, such options should be progressively structured to minimize impacts on low- and moderate-income households. Bellevue supports statewide policies to increase housing supply, including expanding middle housing. The state should build upon local actions underway by Bellevue and many other cities.

- Bellevue requests funding for a strategic land acquisition bank to implement or preserve affordable housing and support transit-oriented development. Bellevue seeks state funding to match City investment dollar-for-dollar.

Transportation

Bellevue appreciates the Legislature's bold action to pass Move Ahead Washington, which made crucial multimodal investments and closed the I-405 funding gap. As the Legislature and WSDOT implement Move Ahead Washington projects, Bellevue requests that the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail (142nd Place SE to 150th Avenue SE) funding be phased as follows:

- \$300,000 in the 2023-25 biennium for final design and easement acquisition in advance of construction
- \$6.6 million in the 2025-27 biennium for construction

This sequencing is critical to maximize a \$2.37 million federal match that must be obligated by June 2025. The project supports access to transit and higher education, providing equitable mobility options to emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing under construction.

Additionally, the City supports programming the Move Ahead Washington funds for the Eastrail Wilburton Trestle and I-90 Steel Bridge in Bellevue in the 2023-25 biennium.

Services and Infrastructure for a Growing Community

Bellevue is experiencing exponential growth, absorbing 30,000 new jobs from 2020 to 2025. The economic vitality of Bellevue and the Eastside of Lake Washington provides an excellent return on investment for the state economy. Sustainable growth requires wise investments in both built infrastructure and human infrastructure. The following investments by the state are urgently needed and are critical to accommodate and sustain this growth and vibrancy:

- Lake Hills Sewer Pump Station 12 Replacement: An existing sewer pump station and pipe will be replaced to ensure sewer service to 860 residences and to reduce the risk of raw sewage spills into Lake Sammamish due to failure of aging infrastructure. Bellevue seeks \$1.5 million to leverage the City's investment of over \$10 million.
- Community Service Center: Bellevue connects Eastside residents to employment, housing, medical, and legal services. To meet growing demand in the Crossroads area, Bellevue seeks \$850,000 to expand the service center.

STATE POLICY STATEMENT

Homelessness and Human Services: The City supports programs to provide shelter and permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, with a focus on a broad array of income levels. The Legislature should maximize the utility of housing vouchers and leverage the power of state financing tools to facilitate local progress in constructing needed housing. Assistance is needed for renters. Bellevue supports extension of the successful Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP). Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center has closed over 1,400 ERPP cases by providing free, confidential and impartial negotiation help to landlords and tenants.

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, such as behavioral health, domestic violence survivor advocacy, reentry for previously incarcerated people, and diversion strategies like community courts to keep people out of the criminal justice system. Bellevue supports sustained investment to address the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on low- and moderate-income families and individuals. The City strongly supports human rights as well as efforts to combat human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Bellevue recognizes substance use disorder as a chronic and treatable disease that is best managed through the behavioral health system. Bellevue supports state investment for walk-in crisis and inpatient treatment programs. Services must be equitably available and proven.

Climate and the Environment: The City supports policies and investments that combat climate change and improve environmental health, including reducing carbon emissions, implementing energy-efficient building codes, funding electrification of buildings and fleets, deploying vehicle charging infrastructure, and advancing habitat restoration. Bellevue's Environmental Stewardship Initiative includes goals of reducing emissions by 50 percent and achieving a 50 percent recycling rate by 2030. The City supports proposals that include funding for local governments to implement environmental stewardship actions that make measurable progress in achieving our adopted climate goals and watershed improvement actions.

Fiscal Sustainability, Financing Tools and General Government: Bellevue urges the Legislature to honor local decision-making authority and refrain from preempting the authority of city elected officials. The City opposes unfunded mandates. Bellevue supports replacing the one percent cap on annual property tax levy increases with a limit that allows cities to respond to local needs. Bellevue supports modifying the Tax Increment Financing tool in order to maximize its utility and application for growing cities.

Bellevue supports protecting and enhancing state-shared revenues and retaining programs and authority benefitting local government. The City requests that the state preserve and increase city state-shared revenues and provide greater flexibility to. The City strongly opposes state administration of the local business and occupation (B&O) tax as it would reduce local flexibility to tailor the tax to local conditions and reduce revenues that fund critical services. If the state transitions from a B&O tax to a margins tax, the state should mitigate related transition costs for cities.

Bellevue supports proposals that increase city operational efficiency while maintaining transparency and open government, including amendments to the Public Records Act and the Open Public Meetings Act that reduce costs to cities.

Equity and Social Justice: Implicit bias and racism exist throughout our society. 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.

Public Safety: Bellevue 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 proposals that build upon reforms previously enacted 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. Bellevue supports proposals that expand authorization for police to conduct effective, safe, and timely vehicular pursuits, such as using a reasonable suspicion rather than probable cause standard. Bellevue supports additional investments to help cities with the costs stemming from the Blake decision on how possession of controlled substances is handled by the criminal justice system.

Transportation: The strength of our region's economy depends on a multimodal, well-performing transportation network to accommodate a growing, diverse population and workforce. Bellevue's mobility, land use, equity, and climate goals depend on an integrated transportation network that improves safety and efficiency, while investing in vulnerable populations. The City encourages expansion of state funding opportunities to reduce traffic congestion, expand transportation innovation and smart mobility, incentivize demand management, and assist with maintenance and operations of local infrastructure.

Bellevue supports the continued implementation of the I-405 Master Plan and requests funding that supports the following improvements:

- Improvements to the SR 520/124th interchange, one of the most congested and unsafe in East King County, will reduce congestion on both I-405 and SR 520. This project will improve safety and provide access to the Spring District – an urban neighborhood and job center connecting to light rail and trails. Preliminary engineering and right-of-way are funded and underway. Funding certainty is critical to construct the project in 2025.
- Bellevue requests state investment in the 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. The on-ramp will provide travel time reduction benefits on I-405 and local roads, while reducing delays at intersections in the area. \$150-175 million is needed for design, environmental documentation, and construction.
- To maximize investments on our state's highways and relieve significant congestion in our region, design funding is needed for the I-405/SR 520 interchange project and the I-405/I-90 interchange project.

Public Works and Infrastructure: The health and safety of our growing community and our high quality of life require continued investments by the state in water, sewer, stormwater and solid waste utility infrastructure. Bellevue strongly supports prioritizing state funding to replace locally- and state-owned culverts to reduce flooding and improve salmon passage. Bellevue supports streamlining state permitting processes and requiring manufacturers to produce recyclable, reusable, or compostable packaging. Bellevue supports equitable access to broadband while balancing the City's need to protect public rights of way and infrastructure. Bellevue opposes proposals that shift costs to utility ratepayers.

Interest in emerging sports like cricket and pickleball continues to grow on the Eastside, exemplified by the success of the Seattle Thunderbolts, the 2022 Minor League Cricket

National Champions. Major League Cricket is interested in developing a Bellevue-owned site adjacent to King County's Marymoor Park into a long-term home for cricket. Bellevue supports King County's request for state funds to help the county purchase and develop the property into a major league cricket facility.

In partnership with SPLASHForward, Bellevue is exploring funding opportunities to build a regional aquatics center. The facility will provide fitness and recreation opportunities for people of all ages, ranges of abilities, and backgrounds.

Bellevue is working with public and private partners to implement the Grand Connection vision of safe, welcoming, interconnected pedestrian and bicycle pathways and experiences across the heart of the Eastside. The project intersects with Eastrail and better connects the entire region to jobs and services in downtown Bellevue via that trail's 42-mile network. Implementation will require construction of new publicly owned spaces, reconstruction of major intersections, public-private partnerships for redevelopment, and a key crossing over I-405.

Economic Development and Workforce: Bellevue is rapidly becoming home to more and more global and regional leaders in technology and innovation. The City urges the Legislature to prioritize concrete economic recovery strategies, including financial support for businesses as well as childcare resources. As the Eastside continues to grow as a regional employment hub, investment is needed to improve residents' access to higher education, upskilling and reskilling, and work-based learning opportunities.

Bellevue recognizes the need to remove barriers to opportunity for historically underserved populations and creating more equitable access to career support, so that all residents benefit from the economic growth in the area. The City supports investment in career navigation services, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, scholarships for higher education and vocational programs, work-based learning opportunities, entryways into higher education, and access to affordable childcare. In addition, the City supports proposals which increase funding for expanded capacity in colleges and universities.

AWC Legislative Priorities: Bellevue supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and its adopted legislative priorities.

Implementing Bellevue's Vision and Priorities: The City of Bellevue has an enumerated vision with goals, structured around seven strategic target areas. They are: Economic Development; Transportation & Mobility; High Quality Built & Natural Environment; Great Places Where You Want to Be; Regional Leadership & Influence; Achieving Human Potential; and High Performance Government. Because the budgets and proposed legislation will evolve throughout the legislative session, we will weigh in on important items that advance the strategic target areas of the City's adopted priorities.