

## 2024 AWC legislative agenda

The following items are the official 2024 City Legislative Priorities as adopted by the AWC Board of Directors.

### 2024 City Legislative Priorities

#### Public safety – Officer recruitment and retention

Additional funding tools and resources to support officer recruitment and retention, including but not limited to, updating the Public Safety Sales Tax to allow an option to implement by councilmanic authority and providing greater flexibility on use of the funds.

Expand access to mandated training especially the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) including more regional academies to get new officers on the street faster to support recruitment and retention.

#### Infrastructure investment

- Continued state investment in infrastructure (traditional as well as broadband) needs particularly for operations and maintenance.
- Expanded funding options for state and local transportation needs particularly for preservation and maintenance.
- Seek Climate Commitment Act funding for city priorities that support carbon reduction and/or improve climate resiliency.

#### Behavioral health

Support creating greater access to the entire continuum of behavioral health services and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for adults and juveniles, including crisis treatment, as well as inpatient, intensive outpatient, and ongoing behavioral and mental health treatment and SUD treatment. This includes, but is not limited to, support to improve workforce and staffing issues at community treatment centers, and additional state funding for establishment and expansion of treatment facilities.

#### Revise the arbitrary property tax cap

Revise the property tax cap to tie it to inflation, up to 3%, and population growth factors so that local elected officials can adjust the local property tax rate to better serve their communities. The current 1% cap has created a structural deficit in our revenue and expenditure model, resulting in a reliance on regressive revenues and artificially restricting the use of property taxes to fund community needs.

In addition to the four priorities listed above, AWC's Board adopted a variety of other issues on the AWC legislative agenda for the 2024 session. Those include issues that are significant to cities and issues that cities support.

### Issues that are significant to cities

#### Drug possession and fentanyl crisis

- Direct funding to help offset cities' costs for implementing the new Blake/drug possession law including funding for staffing, law enforcement assisted diversion, co-responder teams, therapeutic courts, and diversion programs.
- Technical fixes to address implementation issues related to SB 5536 (2023) that have been identified.

#### Police officer recruitment and retention

- Pursue changes to eligibility requirements to allow those in DACA status to serve as police officers.
- Support changes that allow for part-time positions to be covered in the LEOFF 2 pension system.

#### Affordable housing

- Expand REET authority for state and locals (HB 1628) to fund affordable housing.
- Develop an approach to transit-oriented development density increases that addresses affordable housing needs, reflects existing and future community transportation modes, maintains consistency with local community development needs, and promotes complete communities with walkability and multimodal access to services.
- Remove barriers to condominium development and ownership.

## **Land use**

Allow cities time to implement recently adopted planning and zoning changes consistent with comprehensive plan update process. Provide adequate time, technical and financial support for land use and planning requirements.

## **Public safety – Auto theft and property crime**

Further expand crimes eligible for pursuit to include auto theft and some property crimes.

Support additional tools to address auto theft and property crime including additional investment in auto-theft prevention and enforcement programs and regional property crimes task forces and prosecution.

## **Public Records Act**

Explore ways to reduce the impact of abusive public records requests and litigation.

## **Culverts**

Support that State funding be provided for repairing and replacing fish-blocking locally owned culverts as a part of the State's overall resolution to the culvert injunction.

## **Water rights**

Work with the state to ensure that municipal water needs can be sustainably managed to meet present and future demand.

## **Liability**

- Protect against liability expansion and new policies that would drive additional claims and litigation increasing costs especially in the area of law enforcement and public safety, and human resources.
- Explore tort reforms that would reduce liability and related costs for cities.

## **Producer responsibility for packaging**

Support proposals to establish a product stewardship framework for packaging.

## **Revenue options**

Support efforts to review and revise both state and local tax structures such that they rely less on regressive revenue options. Changes to the state tax structure should not negatively impact cities' revenue authority and should allow cities revenue flexibility to address their community's needs.

## **Climate**

Seek direct Climate Commitment Act funding for city efforts/programs related to reducing or responding to the impact of climate change.

## **Emergency management**

Expand funding to cities for prevention, planning, response, and recovery for wildfires and other natural disasters.

# **Issues that cities support**

## **Net ecological gain**

Support efforts to make progress on incorporating ecological improvement over time into environmental regulations rather than no net loss, while also defending against legal exposure and unfunded mandates.

## **Body worn cameras and dash cameras**

Support local efforts to implement use of body cameras and dash cameras as a tool to increase transparency during law enforcement interactions with members of the public. Explore updates to the Public Records Act to further protect privacy and reduce the costs associated with use of camera technology.

## **Childcare**

- Support policies that expand access to affordable, quality childcare in Washington.
- Support policies that expand access to preschool including universal Pre-K.

## **State infrastructure bank**

Support the creation of a state-sponsored financing cooperative option that focuses on low interest (less than market rate) public infrastructure financing.

## **Audits**

Support further dialogue in identifying solutions to the delays cities experience with the state-required annual financial statement auditing processes conducted by the State Auditor's Office.

## **Housing Trust Fund**

Increase Housing Trust Fund (HTF) grants for cities and towns, especially for projects in small and medium sized jurisdictions in rural parts of the state and including dedicated funding for affordable home ownership and workforce housing statewide.

## **Elections**

Support policies that preserve local control and input regarding how local elections are administered.