

April 9, 2021

Senator Rolfes, Chair, Ways & Means Committee

Senator Wilson, Ranking member, Ways & Means Committee

Senator Frockt, Vice Chair Capital, Ways & Means Committee

Senator Robinson, Vice Chair Operating & Revenue, Ways & Means Committee

Senator Honeyford, Assistant Ranking member Capital, Ways & Means Committee

Senator Hobbs, Chair, Transportation Committee

Senator King, Ranking member, Transportation Committee

Representative Ormsby, Chair, Appropriations Committee

Representative Stokesbary, Ranking member, Appropriations Committee

Representative Tharinger, Chair, Capital Budget Committee

Representative Steele, Ranking member, Capital Budget Committee

Representative Fey, Chair, Transportation Committee

Representative Barkis, Ranking member, Transportation Committee

Legislative Budget Leaders:

On behalf of city officials, we want to thank you for your work in crafting biennial operating, capital, and transportation budgets focused on statewide priorities that also address city funding priorities. We appreciate your efforts to recognize cities as governance partners committed to serving all our state's residents.

We know that these are uniquely challenging times and, like you, city officials welcome the opportunities that come with a recovering economy and federal relief funding. Cities appreciate the investments you are making in important city programs. We also recognize your efforts to fund policy priorities that have cost impacts on cities.

We respectfully request the following funding approaches to ensure that cities around the state can help carry out the Legislature's policy goals and effectively serve our communities.

City assistance

Cities appreciate the legislature's commitment to continue to fund revenue sharing with cities. Additionally, the House budget sets aside **\$58 million** for cities for costs related to new legislative mandates, including changes in policing and new Growth Management Act (GMA) planning requirements. Cities are grateful for this investment to alleviate the costs of the new mandates. We urge the Legislature to retain this critical funding in the final budget.

Police reforms and law enforcement training

Cities have been engaged stakeholders in legislative work around police reforms and support many of the proposals. However, several of the reforms require real investment at both the state and local levels to achieve tangible goals. We urge you to fully fund the various agency funding needs that are necessary for successful implementation, including:

- **\$609,000** to develop a use of force model policy (**HB 1310**).
- **\$111,000** to develop model policies for use of police tactics and equipment (**HB 1054**).
- **\$4.5 million** for managing state oversight and accountability of law enforcement and creating a new process for decertifying police officers (**SB 5051**); however, the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) estimates an additional **\$1.7 million** needed to cover these costs.
- **\$920,000** for developing training for police officers and their duty to intervene (**SB 5066**).
- **\$750,000** for CJTC to develop the cognitive command training tool, a web-based app accessed via a handheld or desktop device, to facilitate timely, efficient training for police officers. The app can reduce local training costs by reducing travel and time away from regular duties.

We ask that you add the additional funding requested by the CJTC to fully fund the implementation of **SB 5051** and the development of the online training app.

Cities also ask for full funding of 15 classes per year for the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Cities continue to experience turnover and retirements in our departments, necessitating hiring new recruits. 15 classes per year will help alleviate training delays and put officers on streets in a timely manner.

Growth Management Act

Several proposals are advancing through the legislative process that add new city planning responsibilities under the GMA. We ask that the Legislature include the necessary additional state and local agency funding critical to supporting the new planning mandates.

- **\$17.2 million** for implementing **HB 1117**, integrating salmon recovery into GMA.
- **\$6.3 million** for implementing **HB 1099**, integrating climate change into GMA
- **\$325,000** for implementing **HB 1220**, requiring more extensive affordable housing planning under GMA.

Cities ask that you ensure full funding for these new planning requirements in the final budget and the commitment to necessary funding in upcoming years so that we can adequately implement these important policy goals. We are continuing to work to define exact funding needs for this biennium in recognition of grant timing issues with the Department of Commerce.

Blake decision and legislative action on possession of controlled substances

The recent *Blake* decision by the State Supreme Court has upended our statewide approach to the legality of possession of controlled substances. Cities understand that the Legislature is now grappling with how to respond and what policy to adopt. Cities support a treatment-based approach and urge the Legislature to provide the necessary funding to stand up a comprehensive statewide system.

Housing & utilities support

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, communities throughout the state were already facing a housing affordability and stability crisis and an overburdened homelessness response system. Clearly, the crisis has become more acute. Cities support the significant investments being made to address housing stability through rental assistance, as well as funds for affordable housing and emergency housing programs.

The housing crisis created by the pandemic is also a utilities crisis – the emergency shutoff moratorium for utilities has caused a near doubling of delinquent accounts at city-owned utilities. Utilities need specific dedicated funding to help residents with these delinquent accounts so we can keep the lights and water running without negatively impacting all ratepayers.

Infrastructure funding

Year after year, infrastructure funding continues as one of cities' most significant needs. The Public Works Assistance Account (PWAA) is a crucial funding source in our efforts to provide necessary infrastructure for our communities. We encourage the Legislature to fund the PWAA in addition to other critical infrastructure programs.

Local transportation needs

Cities understand that the transportation budget has been hit hard by the pandemic; nevertheless, we encourage the Legislature to retain funding for important programs that support local transportation maintenance and improvements, including the Transportation Improvement Board and Safe Routes to Schools. City leaders from across the state recognize the need for a statewide transportation package to address the growing state and local transportation needs.

Thank you for your support for cities. We hope that you can fund these important city requests in your final 2021-2023 budgets. City officials are committed to a strong partnership with the state to provide the programs and services our residents need.

Sincerely,

Nancy Backus, Mayor, Auburn
Lynne Robinson, Mayor, Bellevue
Seth Fleetwood, Mayor, Bellingham
Carol Benson, Mayor, Black Diamond
Tamie Deady, Councilmember, Black Diamond
Liam Olsen, Mayor, Bothell
Greg Wheeler, Mayor, Bremerton
Pat Johnson, Mayor, Buckley
Steve Sexton, Mayor, Burlington
James Fletcher, Mayor, Cashmere
Mark Schuller, City Administrator, Cheney
Dorothy Knauss, Mayor, Chewelah
Michael Rizzitiello, City Administrator, College Place
Maria Pena, City Administrator, Connell
Jeff Wagner, Mayor, Covington
Regan Bolli, City Manager, Covington
Dan Rankin, Mayor, Darrington
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Michael Matthias, City Manager, Des Moines
Ronald Frederick, Mayor, DuPont
Amy Ockerlander, Mayor, Duvall
Dot Lengyel, Councilmember, Duvall
Rick Shaffer, Councilmember, Duvall
Diane Kohout, Mayor, Electric City
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Jim Ferrell, Mayor, Federal Way

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Rob Karlinsey, City Manager, Kenmore
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Chuck Torelli, Councilmember, Kennewick
Dana Ralph, Mayor, Kent
Satwinder Kaur, Councilmember, Kent
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Neal Black, Councilmember, Kirkland
Jay Arnold, Deputy Mayor, Kirkland
Kelli Curtis, Councilmember, Kirkland
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Phillippa Kassoover, Deputy Mayor, Lake Forest Park
Semra Riddle, Councilmember, Lake Forest Park
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Paula Bell, Mayor, Lind
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Jerry Phillips, Mayor, Long Beach
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George Hurst, Council President, Lynnwood
Dana Parnello, Deputy Mayor, Maple Valley

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Chris Cammock, Police Chief, Mount Vernon
Bryan Brice, Fire Chief, Mount Vernon
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Craig Maloney, Councilmember, Pasco
Ruben Alvarado, Councilmember, Pasco
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John Clauson, Councilmember, Port Orchard
Bek Ashby, Councilmember, Port Orchard
Jay Rosapepe, Councilmember, Port Orchard
Shawn Cucciardi, Councilmember, Port Orchard
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Armondo Pavone, Mayor, Renton
Ed Prince, Councilmember, Renton
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Ryan Lukson, Mayor, Richland

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Karl de Jong, Councilmember, Sedro-Woolley
Frank Wagner, Fire Chief, Sedro-Woolley
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Will Hall, Mayor, Shoreline
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