



## 2023-24 State Legislative Priorities

### **Issaquah Senior Center Plaza**

The City is prioritizing enhancement of public spaces in historic Olde Town Issaquah to bring the community together. Improvements at the Issaquah Senior Center Plaza will alter the entrance to create an expanded plaza and connect the space to Depot Park and Veterans Memorial Field. The new plaza will have a covered gathering space with seating, lighting, and new activity courts. To complete the funding for this project, the City is requesting \$700,000 from the state capital budget.

### **Housing Availability and Affordability**

The housing crisis facing our state is multi-faceted and requires solutions that recognize the complexity. Issaquah supports policies that provide communities with resources and tools to address their unique availability and affordability challenges. Statewide policies should establish goals and allow for locally tailored implementation to achieve those goals.

### **State Partnership for Transportation**

A safe, dependable and climate conscious transportation system is critical to sustain and enhance our region's economic vitality. Issaquah applauds the Legislature for passage of the Move Ahead WA (MAW) package. As the Legislature begins implementation of MAW and considers future investments, the City of Issaquah requests that the following priorities be included.

- Coordination with WSDOT: To advance the City's transportation goals, we must coordinate with WSDOT. The I-90 Crossing study, ROW for the future light rail station, improved management of traffic lights at several intersections throughout Issaquah, and responding to resident's concerns about the maintenance of state highways are all issues that require coordination with WSDOT. The City requests the state's investment in adequate staffing for WSDOT.
- Central Issaquah Multimodal I-90 Crossing: Interstate 90 divides the City of Issaquah between the north and south. There are four crossings of the interstate in city limits and the most popular is Front Street. Congestion at this intersection not only impacts intra-city travel but is a safety concern for vehicles traveling on I-90 due to long queues of vehicles exiting the freeway. The 2019 Front Street Interchange Justification Report (IJR) identified an additional crossing of I-90 between SR-900 and Front Street to relieve the congestion at the Front Street interchange and enhance the safety and flow of I-90. It is not yet determined if the crossing will go over or under the interstate, but the City envisions the crossing will support multimodal transportation options and be tied into the future Sound Transit light rail stop. The City is using ARPA funds to begin the necessary planning work and anticipates the state's partnership in 2025 for preliminary engineering.
- Widening & Safety Improvements on State Route 18: The City is grateful for the state's investment of \$640 million for widening and safety improvements along SR 18. The City will be closely monitoring the development of the project and urges the Legislature to phase the funds in a manner that allows for the most expeditious delivery schedule.



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### Affordable Housing, Health, Human Services and Homelessness

- Issaquah supports options to increase the supply of income restricted affordable housing in the Central Puget Sound region through investments in the Housing Trust Fund, preserving the Document Recording Fee, and providing local option funding mechanisms that preserve resources for the City.
- Issaquah supports regulatory streamlining to reduce the costs for developers to construct housing.
- Issaquah supports removing barriers to condominium development and ownership.
- Issaquah supports policies and investments that add services, shelter, and assist communities in addressing homelessness.
- Issaquah supports policies and investments that add services and assist communities in addressing issues of mental health and substance use disorder.
- Issaquah supports local option tools like the multifamily property tax exemption (MFTE).
- Issaquah will monitor any proposed changes to the Residential Landlord Tenant Act for its impact on both landlords and tenants.
- Issaquah supports tenant-landlord polices that address ongoing housing affordability and rent increases, including providing a minimum of 120 days' prior written notice for any rent increases of more than 3%.
- Issaquah supports increased investments in behavioral health resources and tools to address the structural shortage of behavioral health professionals.
- Issaquah supports youth substance abuse prevention and treatment programs administered by the state to meet the behavioral health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Issaquah Opportunity Center: Issaquah is grateful for the \$3 million the Legislature awarded for the Issaquah Opportunity Center. Having now overcome several unforeseeable challenges, the City is anticipating construction will be completed by end of year 2025. The City respectfully requests a re-appropriation of the behavioral health capacity grant from the 2019 capital budget.

### Budget and Fiscal Matters

- Issaquah supports replacing the arbitrary 1% cap on annual property tax increases with a limit tied to inflation plus population growth.
- Issaquah opposes unfunded or “under-funded” mandates on local governments and urges the Legislature to protect local revenue authority that is critical to cities providing core services their citizens depend upon.
- Issaquah supports Streamlined Sales Tax (SST) mitigation payments to cities that do not receive adequate Market Fairness Act (MFA) revenue and asks the Legislature to honor the promise to continue payments until at least 2026.
- Issaquah supports progressive revenue options like a payroll tax, provided it does not erode local taxing authority.
- Issaquah supports a local option to adopt a graduated Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), which is a more progressive revenue source.

- Issaquah will monitor legislation that would modify local B&O taxing authority to ensure it remains revenue-neutral.
- Issaquah supports efforts to protect state-shared revenues and existing distributions from the taxation of marijuana to help properly fund public safety.

## COVID-19 Recovery

- Issaquah supports tools and resources for local business recovery.
- Issaquah supports the Eviction Resolution Program (ERP), which facilitates early resolution of disputes over non-payment of rent and arrears during and after the state’s emergency COVID-19 eviction moratorium.

## Criminal Justice/Public Safety/Fire/Courts

- Issaquah joins AWC in requesting the Legislature clarify the ability to conduct vehicular pursuits using a reasonable suspicion standard in order to address concerns about impacts to public safety and allow for effective and safe pursuit of suspects when there is an immediate threat to public safety. The City continues to support safety standards and training for officers who engage in vehicular pursuits.
- Issaquah supports sustainable funding for law enforcement training through Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) classes and policy changes that would decrease the wait time for newly hired officers.
- Issaquah will monitor any legislation impacting the use of police body cameras to ensure it includes Public Records Act provisions to put reasonable limits on “body cam” video data and information requests.
- Issaquah will monitor the development of policies related to medication assisted treatment (MAT) services in city jails to ensure sufficient resources are appropriated and local logistical challenges are addressed.
- Issaquah joins the AWC in supporting direct funding for cities to administer diversion programs related to misdemeanor drug possession cases handled by city law enforcement and now adjudicated in municipal courts, as well as Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) services, therapeutic courts, and a diversion tracking database.
- Issaquah supports legislation and increased funding for Wildland Urban Interface fire prevention methods and better forest health management practices.

## Economic Development/Infrastructure

- Issaquah supports fully funding the Public Works Assistance Account, including allowing the current revenue diversions to sunset at the end of fiscal year 2023 and refraining from further transfers to other infrastructure programs or other non- infrastructure accounts.
- Issaquah supports state funding and grants for stormwater.
- Issaquah supports key Capital and Transportation budget grant programs for cities such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF), Safe Routes to Schools, Bicycle-Pedestrian grants, etc.
- Issaquah supports legislation allowing local governments expanded use of “Small Works Rosters” to do small-scale infrastructure and public works jobs in-house.
- Issaquah appreciates the Legislature’s decision to authorize tax increment financing in Washington State and will monitor any proposal that alters the existing authority.

- Issaquah supports the Main Street Tax Credit Program and the use of a State Business & Occupation (B&O) or Public Utility tax (PUT) credit for private contributions given to eligible downtown revitalization organizations.
- Issaquah supports allowing local businesses to continue outdoor alcohol service on public property. This Liquor and Cannabis Control Board Policy was relaxed during the pandemic and is set to expire on July 1, 2023.

## Environment/Natural Resources

- Issaquah supports efforts to strengthen and clarify energy codes and work towards net zero buildings.
- Issaquah supports legislation to expand “Product Stewardship” programs to address the overall rising costs and increased challenges of recycling. Specifically, Issaquah supports Extended Producer Responsibility policies, which will increase the reuse and recycling rate of residential packaging and paper products across the state to 75% by 2030 and reduce residential recycling costs for rate payers.
- Issaquah supports expanded investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy grant programs, such as the Department of Commerce Energy Efficiency and Solar grants.
- Issaquah supports protecting the core provisions of the Clean Energy Transformation Act, the Clean Fuel Standard and the Renewable Portfolio Standard and ensuring an impactful and equitable implementation.
- Issaquah supports a watershed-based strategic plan to address local fish-blocking culverts along with State culverts, including allocating funds for locally owned culverts downstream from state culverts.
- Issaquah supports statewide efforts to achieve meaningful salmon and orca recovery through funding of strategic actions including habitat conservation and funding.
- Issaquah supports legislation that facilitates the transition away from fossil fuels through the electrification of buildings and transportation systems.
- Issaquah supports using funding from state and federal climate action policies and investments (such as the federal Inflation Reduction Act and state Climate Commitment Act) for on the ground implementation of local climate action plans.

## Land-Use/Growth Management Act (GMA)/Housing

- Issaquah supports the goals and purpose of the Growth Management Act and opposes amendments to the GMA that weaken or undermine the Act.
- Issaquah supports the current Urban Growth Area boundary and would oppose any efforts to modify it, or other actions that would result in additional growth that is not connected to transportation funding.
- Issaquah supports establishing zoned capacity goals and expecting local jurisdictions to achieve those goals by a certain date.
- Issaquah supports statewide approaches to land use decisions that recognize the unique challenges of individual cities.
- Issaquah supports policies that require climate preparedness, climate equity and GHG emissions reduction in Comprehensive Planning.

## Local Government in General/Miscellaneous

- Issaquah supports legislative initiatives that can help reduce operation costs for cities and counties or make service delivery more efficient.
- Issaquah supports enhanced funding for emergency management functions of local governments.
- Issaquah opposes any initiatives on cybersecurity that would result in unfunded or “under- funded” mandates on local governments.
- Issaquah supports legislative proposals to fund local government cybersecurity initiatives such as software and professional services.
- Issaquah supports tools such as Alternative Dispute Resolution to settle conflicts over burdensome public records requests.

## Personnel, Pension, and other Human Resource Issues

- Issaquah joins the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and other local government and business organizations in opposing legislation that would add new costs and requirements to employee benefit programs without accompanying funds.
- Issaquah joins others in opposing legislation that would expand “presumptive disease” laws and definitions relating to Workers’ Compensation claims.
- Issaquah opposes bills or budget initiatives that would result in increased employer/employee pension rates.

## Transportation/Transit

- Issaquah supports initiatives that proactively provide regional transportation solutions, especially funding for State Route 18 improvements.
- Issaquah supports the expansion of state grants and other funding for demand management, shuttles, transit and rideshare infrastructure to help address regional travel shed traffic impacts on the Issaquah community.
- Issaquah supports enhanced funding for Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs.
- Issaquah supports expanding the use of electric vehicles in the State of Washington including incentives and investments for electrification of public and private fleets.
- Issaquah supports legislation for transportation funding that aligns with state climate policy goals to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles and reduce miles travelled.
- Issaquah supports additional revenue authority for local governments for maintenance, operations, and new construction of the local transportation system.

## Water/Water Resources/Water Quality

- Issaquah supports legislative proposals by the Cascade Water Alliance, Seattle Public Utilities and others to ensure that reclaimed water purveyors be required to enter into agreements with water-supply utilities to address such issues as service area needs, wellhead protection, and water quality, before moving to sell reclaimed water on the open market.
- Issaquah will monitor all legislation and state budget policies related to PFAS chemicals. The City is actively working with regional partners to evaluate and ultimately remove PFAS/PFOS chemicals from the Issaquah Valley Aquifer.