



# 2023 Legislative Agenda

## Quality of Life

- **Capital Budget Request of \$2 million for Pavilion Building Public Square:** For design and construction work to establish a public square and festival street that will surround the Pavilion Building, the future site of Logan Place Market—an events/food/retail vendor/ small business incubator facility in downtown Renton with emphasis on assisting minority- and women-owned businesses and historically disadvantaged business enterprises. This request complements a \$1.5 million federal earmark Renton is seeking to renovate the interior of the Pavilion Building.
- **Repurposing of Prior-Year \$206,000 allocation for assisting those in need:** Repurpose existing allocation (2020 Capital Budget) for use toward demolition of the 300 Rainier Avenue building in the southwest corner of the Renton Airport property. A new modular facility is planned for year-round behavioral and mental health services, restroom and shower facilities, emergency hot-weather and cold-weather relief space and shelter, and feeding programs. (Funds were originally allocated for a feeding program and cold weather shelter at a St. Vincent de Paul site no longer under consideration.)
- **Support request being made by the Doug Baldwin Foundation for Family First Community Center:** Foundation asking legislators for capital funding to close a \$1.75 million construction funding gap for the center. Renton supports this request.
- **Support possible 988 Crisis Response System Capital Request:** An area lawmaker may be seeking capital funds for a round-the-clock crisis center to be located in South King County. Renton supports such a request.

## Public Safety

- **Fix for 2021 Blake legislation (ESB 5476):** that ends up allowing a voluntary compliance approach toward getting users of illegal drugs the help and treatment they need. In partnership with other South King County and Snohomish County cities, as well as jurisdictions throughout the state, Renton supports a more accountable solution that starts with an arrest and a charge allowing officers to send offenders into therapeutic courts. Such courts, which will need more robust funding from the state, can prescribe treatment and/or services and expunge offenders' records if they successfully complete their treatment program.
- **Funding for Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) and other public safety/criminal justice investments:** Renton will support efforts to add Operating Budget funding and slots for the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) in Burien, establish regional training academies within other parts of the state (through a Governor Inslee initiative) and invest in public safety and criminal justice efforts, including Body Camera funding and police-hiring funding/incentives.

- **988 crisis response system legislation and funding:** Renton will support legislation and funding requests to continue the work of building out and further defining the new 988 crisis response system.

## Transportation Infrastructure

- **\$2 million request for a solution at Interstate 405/State Route 167 junction for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** Renton will partner with area legislators to include \$2 million in the 2023-2025 Transportation Budget to address a major travel-time delay that will result from having the only off-line station between Bellevue and Burien when Bus Rapid Transit service begins in 2026. There is a major regional need to mitigate the delay that will occur when BRT buses must exit the Express Toll Lanes at 405/167 to access the South Renton Transit Center on Rainier Avenue/Grady Way. The funding will enable Renton, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Sound Transit and other parties to use traffic data, modeling, public outreach, and a Type, Size and Location study to craft a mutually agreeable solution for saving BRT buses valuable time on/off this congested interchange.
- **Ensuring earliest possible construction of 2022 Move Ahead Washington transportation and transit projects in and near Renton:** The landmark Move Ahead Washington package enacted by the 2022 Legislature will invest \$16.9 billion over 16 years in our state's transportation system. However, the 2023 Legislature has the work of formally appropriating and sequencing funds for active transportation and transit projects and programs. Renton will work to ensure that key projects within the Move Ahead package—such as Eastrail corridor investments that extend the multi-use trail to the South Coulon Park/Southport entrance in Renton—receive appropriations enabling them to start as soon as possible.

## Racial Justice & Equity— seeking outside funding & tools

- **Continue to seek outside funding and tools to assist equity, housing and human services:** Renton will continue to support legislative initiatives and funding proposals that assist our Equity, Housing, and Human Services (EHHS) Department in advancing racial justice and equity and deploying additional resources for affordable housing and human needs. In addition, Renton is ready to support legislative initiatives that enable the establishment of "Housing Benefit Districts," enhance funding through the Housing Trust Fund, and amend state statutes to make surplus property available to those financing affordable homeownership projects.





# Issues to Support/Oppose or Track/Monitor

## Budget and Fiscal

**Protect** “state-shared” and other revenue streams for local governments.

**Protect** against initiatives that would undermine local B&O tax revenues and authority, including strong concerns over the redefining of B&O tax treatment of royalties.

**Support** the continuation of a \$20 million funding allocation in the 2021–2023 Operating Budget that helps offset costs of new police reform and public safety bills enacted by the Legislature, which are still a major factor for local governments.

**Support** efforts to revise a 1 percent property tax cap that is arbitrary and unable to keep pace with inflationary cost increases. Renton supports legislation to institute a cap that can be based on inflationary indexes and population growth.

## Criminal Justice/Public Safety/Fire/Courts/Behavioral Health

**Support** legislation to refine statutes on police vehicle pursuits.

**Support** enhanced funding for community-based behavioral health facilities.

**Support** legislation to take the next steps to crack down on catalytic converter thefts.

**Support** legislation brought forth by Municipal Court Administrators to continue authority (otherwise due to expire January 1, 2023) to retain minor over-payments of up to \$10 made in connection with any litigation, traffic matters, and criminal and non-criminal matters.

**Oppose** efforts to place unnecessary limitations or remove current authority to utilize traffic safety cameras.

**Support** increased funding for courts, especially to offset a sharp spike in interpreter costs.

**Support** civil-remedy statutory protections for those victimized by malicious “doxing.”

**Support** a statewide request for funding to enable services for crime victims (including sexual assault and domestic violence), in light of decreasing and unstable federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).

## Economic Development/Infrastructure/Affordable Housing/Homelessness

**Support** measures, tools, and funding to address affordable housing and housing stability, including permanent shelter space and other fund sources for vulnerable residents and those experiencing homelessness.

**Support** initiatives to restore previously-diverted funds to the Public Works Assistance Account.

**Support** efforts to add new investments toward fish barrier and culvert removal projects.

**Support** continued COVID-relief grants and assistance for hard-hit small businesses.

## Environmental Sustainability

**Support** initiatives to enhance recycling and safe packaging practices and bolster disposal of manufactured goods through the Product Stewardship Program.

**Support** efforts to advance the work of K4C (King County–Cities Climate Collaboration), of which Renton is a member.

**Monitor** legislation to incentivize the use of zero-emission equipment for maintenance needs such as mowing, weeding, etc. Renton prefers incentive-based solutions rather than hard mandates on future purchasing.

## Land Use/GMA

**Retain** local discretion to achieve increased density in local communities and add to “middle housing” stock with a variety of housing types. Funding incentives—such as the Real Estate Excise Tax—are key to making progress, rather than prescriptive mandates that unnecessarily tie the hands of local officials.

**Retain** local authority for bringing more Accessory Dwelling Units online in cities throughout Washington State, utilizing incentive mandates rather than prescriptive mandates.

**Support** statutory changes to increase the number of new condominiums inside cities and incentivize the reuse of existing multi-story buildings for condo ownership.

**Support** changes to the state’s Energy Code to decrease costs for projects such as conversions.

**Retain** local authority over permitting small-cell development.

**Support** legislation that would make statutory changes to better enable redevelopment of WSDOT-owned park-and-ride facilities.

## Local Government in General

**Support** Public Records Act statutory changes to decrease the severe burden being put on cities and to enhance cost recovery—especially with broad and time-consuming requests.

**Support** statutory changes that would limit the number of years e-mail records must be stored and retrieved.

## Parks and Recreation, Arts & Culture

**Support** investments in the Capital Budget for outdoor recreation programs such as the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF), Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), etc.

**Support** investment in capital budget programs that fund arts and culture and historic facilities, including Building for the Arts and Heritage grants.

**Support** using a one-time, \$42 million allocation to the Recreation & Conservation Office (from a prior Stadium & Exhibition Center Account) for youth facilities, local parks maintenance needs, and advances in equitable access to outdoor spaces.

**Support** a Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA) initiative to include \$5 million in the 2023-2025 Operating Budget to help local parks agencies address maintenance backlogs.

**Support** an expected State Senate bill that would fund pilot “Parks Rx” programs to prescribe healthier lifestyles through active use of local parks, trails, and community centers.

**Support** continued COVID-relief grants and assistance for hard-hit arts-and-culture sector businesses, performing venues, etc.

## Personnel, Pensions, Human Resources in General

**Proceed with caution** on initiatives that would increase employer/employee pension rates during this period when local governments are still trying to recover from the budget impacts of COVID-19.

## Transportation

**Support** legislative and funding requests that would enhance local roadway maintenance and add funding for agencies such as the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB).

## Water-Wastewater-Stormwater-Utilities in General

Along with a broad array of local governments and local government associations, **support** a legislative review or study of the Department of Ecology “Puget Sound General Nutrient Permit” for concerns over cost impacts on utility rates, growth and density expectations, and more that took effect January 1, 2022.



# 2023 Regional Affairs Agenda

## Transportation/Transit

- **King County Metro:** Push for continual enhancement of service in Renton, ensure implementation of Rapid Ride I line, and pursue Rapid Ride status for Sunset Area-to-Bellevue segment.
- **Sound Transit:** Actively ensure parking facilities are in place to accommodate the opening of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service between Bellevue and Burien in 2026. This includes interim parking and the earliest possible construction of a permanent parking structure at the South Renton Transit Center (Rainier Avenue/Grady Way), and the construction of a park-and-ride facility on city-owned property just east of I-405/44th.
- **PSRC:** Continue to ensure Renton receives its fair share of federal pass-through funding granted within the region.
- **Eastside Rail Corridor:** Prioritize the extension of Eastrail to at least the South Coulon Park/Southport entrance. Retain an active role in the Eastrail coalition.

## Affordable Housing/Homelessness

- **Sunset Area Revitalization:** Continue to work with Renton Housing Authority (RHA), South King Housing & Homeless Partnership (SKHHP), Microsoft, Amazon, and others to build quality affordable housing projects within the area.
- **South Renton Transit Center/TOD:** Continue to partner with Sound Communities, RHA, King County, Sound Transit, and others to explore opportunities for mixed-income TOD projects.
- **Homeless shelter space:** Strive to secure outside funding—through King County, the State Legislature, and others—to help finance construction costs for a modular unit where Renton can contract for behavioral health services, shelter space, and a homeless feeding program on city-owned property on the southwest end of the Renton Airport.
- **South King Housing & Homeless Partnership (SKHHP):** Continue to participate and support early initiatives within SKHHP.
- **King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA):** Support initiatives within KCRHA to find permanent supportive housing for those in need, but strongly oppose calls to require Sound Cities jurisdictions to place new funding into KCRHA.

## Energy/Green Power

- **Ensure** Renton residents and businesses are aware of the benefits of the Green Power program through collaboration with Puget Sound Energy.



## Parks, Trails, Youth Services, Open Space

- **Family First Community Center:** Continue to pursue outside funding to address gaps in construction funding, including a Best Starts for Kids application in the fourth quarter of 2022.
- **Pursuit of funding under the King County Parks Levy:** Continue to request that King County apply funding toward the extension of Soos Creek Trail approved under the levy. Continue to pursue phased funding for Henry Moses Aquatic Center (HMAC).

## Flood Control

- **Project Needs/Investments:** Ensure a fair share of funding goes to Renton projects within the King County Flood Control Zone District (KCFCZD), including a Cedar River capital investment strategy, Renton Levee Certification, Lower Cedar River feasibility study, and Lower Cedar River Maintenance Dredging.

## Racial Justice & Equity, including mental health, human services

- **Seek out funding and tools** at county and regional levels.
- **Seek ways to access funds** for Renton projects and organizations from within the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL).

## Arts & Culture

- Help city stay attuned to **funding opportunities within 4Culture**.

## Solid Waste

- **Ensure** work occurs to place the Operations and Support Center on the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

## Water/Reclaimed Water

- **Retain active role in regional discussions** regarding where King County's reclaimed water should be used, sold, and marketed.





# 2023 Federal Affairs Agenda



- **“Community Project Funding” and “Congressionally Directed Spending” opportunities:** Work with Renton’s U.S. Senators (Murray and Cantwell) and U.S. House Member (Congressman Smith) to pursue these line-item funding opportunities that are offered each spring. Renton is working with Senator Murray/Congressman Smith on a pending \$1.5 million allocation for the Renton Pavilion building/Logan Place Market renovation project.
- **ARPA funding for COVID-19 relief:** Assist with ongoing in-city implementation work to deploy all of Renton’s available America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.
- **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL):** Maximize funding opportunities through grant programs established under the BIL.
- **Racial Justice & Equity, including mental health and human services and affordable housing/homelessness prevention:** Seek out all available funding and tools.
- **Renton Airport:** Continue to assist Airport staff with pursuing federal funds for the buildout of taxiway infrastructure and seismic upgrades to the air traffic control tower.



- **Grant funding opportunities to support public safety, parks and trails, Family First Community Center, Sunset Area:** Assist city with scouting out funding opportunities—including Land and Water Conservation Fund, FEMA grants, Bureau of Judicial Administration (BJA) and Justice Assistance Grants (JAG), and more.





CITY OF RENTON

# Urging Reform of Blake Legislation (ESB 5476)



Renton understands and appreciates that by enacting Engrossed Senate Bill 5476 during the 2021 Session legislators were responding to a State Supreme Court decision. They were also searching for ways to address drug offenses through alternative treatment solutions that avoid incarceration.

Those are laudable goals, and city officials appreciate lawmakers establishing a June 30, 2023, sunset date on the new statute so that an evaluation can be done on its effectiveness.

Unfortunately, Renton and many other cities are experiencing significant increases in criminal activity since the enactment of ESB 5476. The statute is not working, either in protecting public safety or in providing treatment and services to those who need it.

Instead, cities such as Renton are seeing a significant spike in public calls for a police response to open drug use and an overwhelming increase in complaints from our community members.

There is a critical need to retool and strengthen the ESB 5476 laws so the public and judicial system have a more effective way of intervening, handling drug offenses, and getting attention, treatment, and services for those who need them. Renton shares the goal of directing violators toward help and not toward incarceration, but believes the key is through accountability and the court system.

Renton sees the following flaws in the current ESB 5476 statute that make it ineffective:

- Because ESB 5476 stipulates that (at a minimum) the first two drug offenses be non-criminal in nature, it does not mandate any treatment or services for the offender. Asking an individual suffering from addiction to make this choice at a time and place when they are often unable to make sound decisions results in a refusal of treatment in nearly every encounter, leaving both the offender and the public in the same, often dangerous, environment.
- Law enforcement is still being asked and expected to maintain safety in our communities. However, officers are unable to take the necessary steps to bring an individual to treatment and thus not resolving the public's original request. This erodes public trust in law enforcement.
- There is no program or process to track the number of treatment referrals occurring across jurisdictions. Additionally, due to the state of mind of an offender during an encounter, it is not typical that identification is provided willingly or accurately for tracking purposes, thus making the process that relies on this information flawed from the start.
- Community residents and business leaders feel less safe, and violators are much less likely to get the help they need to address addiction, mental health challenges, or other underlying issues beneath the drug use that is occurring.





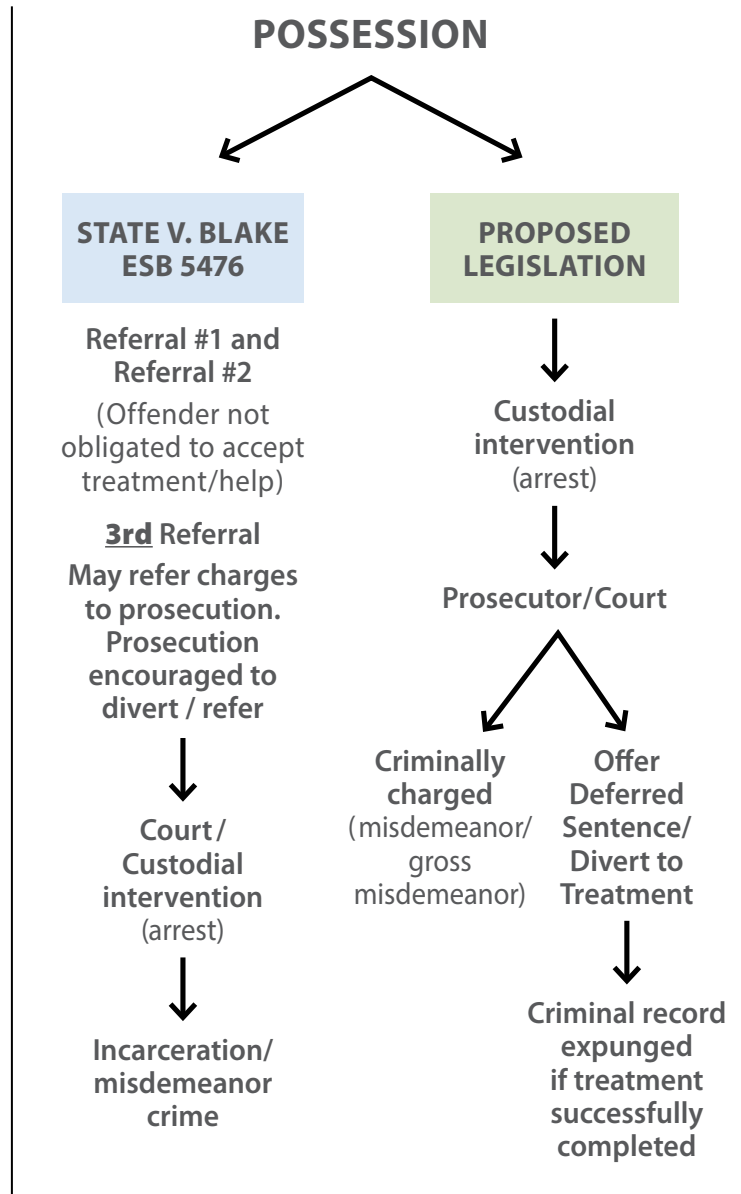
Renton urges that reforms be made to ESB 5476 to address these issues with an approach of taking action that leads to help, not incarceration. The city's specific ideas include:

- Restore accountability to the system and remove what ends up being a voluntary approach with first- and second-offense diversions.
- Adopt a solutions-based philosophy that enables law enforcement to intervene and take enforcement actions including a "custodial action" (arrest) when legally authorized and appropriate. The preference of South King County cities is to start with a gross misdemeanor.
- Establish court-driven solutions to prescribe treatment/ services that:
  - » Offer a deferred sentence on 1st and 2nd offenses, with a willingness to have this extended to additional offenses.
  - » Defer any sentence for offenders who enter a court-approved treatment program containing accountability requirements similar to DUI courts.
  - » Reward those who complete court requirements, including a substance abuse assessment, with expungement of any record of conviction for the offense.
  - » Emphasize and stress the role of court, ensuring there are significant additional resources to go with an enhanced court-services system.
- Establish a statewide database and tracking system so that any revised approach in the law is measured, monitored, and based on performance metrics.
- Combine these efforts with enhanced funding for behavioral health, including increased resources for mental health field response teams.
- Explore complementary funding through "988" and use of the State's portion of opioid settlement revenues. Opioid settlement funding provided to cities and counties could be used as a local match.
- As a fallback, there should still be penalties for repeat offenders or those who refuse help and/or do not complete treatment/service programs.

### Renton's experience in the current ESB 5476 climate

Renton Police are seeing the most noticeable failures of the current ESB 5476 approach in the city's downtown core. Renton police began emphasis patrols last January, following a significant increase in complaints of open drug use, resident and visitors' heightened concerns over safety, and reports from businesses that the downtown core was being avoided entirely due to these concerns.

One method that Renton Police used to address drug complaints involved contact with homeless individuals in the downtown area. During ongoing emphasis patrols



to address the complaints, police contacted 350 people and offered drug and housing resources. Fewer than 10 agreed to the referral and it is unknown how many met with a provider. While the use of a mental health navigator combined with a law enforcement presence could potentially increase these numbers, the problem is that the voluntary-compliance system is a flawed one.

In Renton's case, officers continued emphasis patrols in the area, enforcing associated crimes such as theft, trespassing, and the delivery of narcotics with minimal impact. Based on the interaction between law enforcement and those contacted for drug use/possession, those using drugs feel emboldened knowing there is little in the way of consequences for their activity. Residents and business owners also witness this behavior and continually experience their calls for help going unresolved.





CITY OF RENTON // 2023–2025 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST

# Funding to Create a Community Public Square

OUTSIDE THE RENOVATED PAVILION BUILDING



## **A building sorely in need of being modernized and becoming accessible to the entire community**

The City of Renton's downtown revitalization project is underway, involving the renovation of a nearly two-decades old Pavilion Building into a vibrant and accessible Logan Place Market. The city purchased the Pavilion Building, a former automobile dealership, in 2004.

Since that purchase, the city has experienced explosive growth, particularly among communities of color which now comprise 58 percent of Renton's population. The city sees a dire need to refurbish the Pavilion Building to create a new heartbeat in the center of downtown, and to bring new opportunities and access to historically disadvantaged communities.

While the Pavilion is used for some events in evening hours, it is lacking in terms of day use, has no space to host the city's diverse communities, and does not provide any access to minority- and women-owned and historically disadvantaged businesses, which are in dire need of incubator space to help start-up enterprises flourish.

## **Renton's plan—a vibrant market on the inside, a public square on the outside**

The city's plans for the Pavilion Building, first outlined in a Civic Core planning document, call for the Pavilion to be renovated into a more vibrant Logan Place Market that will have retail space, rotating vendors, and business incubator space on the inside, complemented by a welcoming public square on the outside.

Renton is working with U.S. Senator Patty Murray and U.S. Rep. Adam Smith to secure \$1.5 million in congressionally designated funding that will help to finance the Logan Place Market space on the inside of the redeveloped Pavilion Building. The city's 2023–2025 Capital Budget request to the Legislature is for funding to create the public square on the outside of the building.







**What the public square will contain and Renton’s specific request**

The illustrated renderings show Renton’s vision for the public square, which will become a central gathering place in the downtown where community residents can work, shop, relax, meet with friends, connect to trails, or watch events.

The square will focus on community spaces to include seating, play areas, gathering spots, and hosting events. Public access to restrooms will be addressed to help provide longer visitation access to the public square. Overall design to incorporate the Logan Place Market

with this public square will be critical in the success of placemaking and creating the inclusive space for residents, visitors and our business community.

To fully design and construct this space, the city has a preliminary estimate of \$5 million. However, Renton’s request of the 2023 Legislature is \$2 million—half allocated to pre-construction design and half allocated to building out key portions of the initial space with necessary fixtures for the public square to support the Logan Place Market.







# Access into Transit Center

\$2 Million Toward Improving I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Access into the South Renton Transit Center



## Appreciation for Move Ahead— but a major problem looming at 405/167

The Move Ahead Washington package enacted by the 2022 Legislature delivered critical funding for the Interstate 405 corridor through Renton and other communities. Renton appreciated the package, especially a \$450 million infusion of funding and passage of a sales tax deferral bill for I-405. That enables 405 funding to stay on track and establishes a 2027–2029 construction schedule for an I-405/N 8th Direct Access Ramp, which Renton officials have awaited for decades.

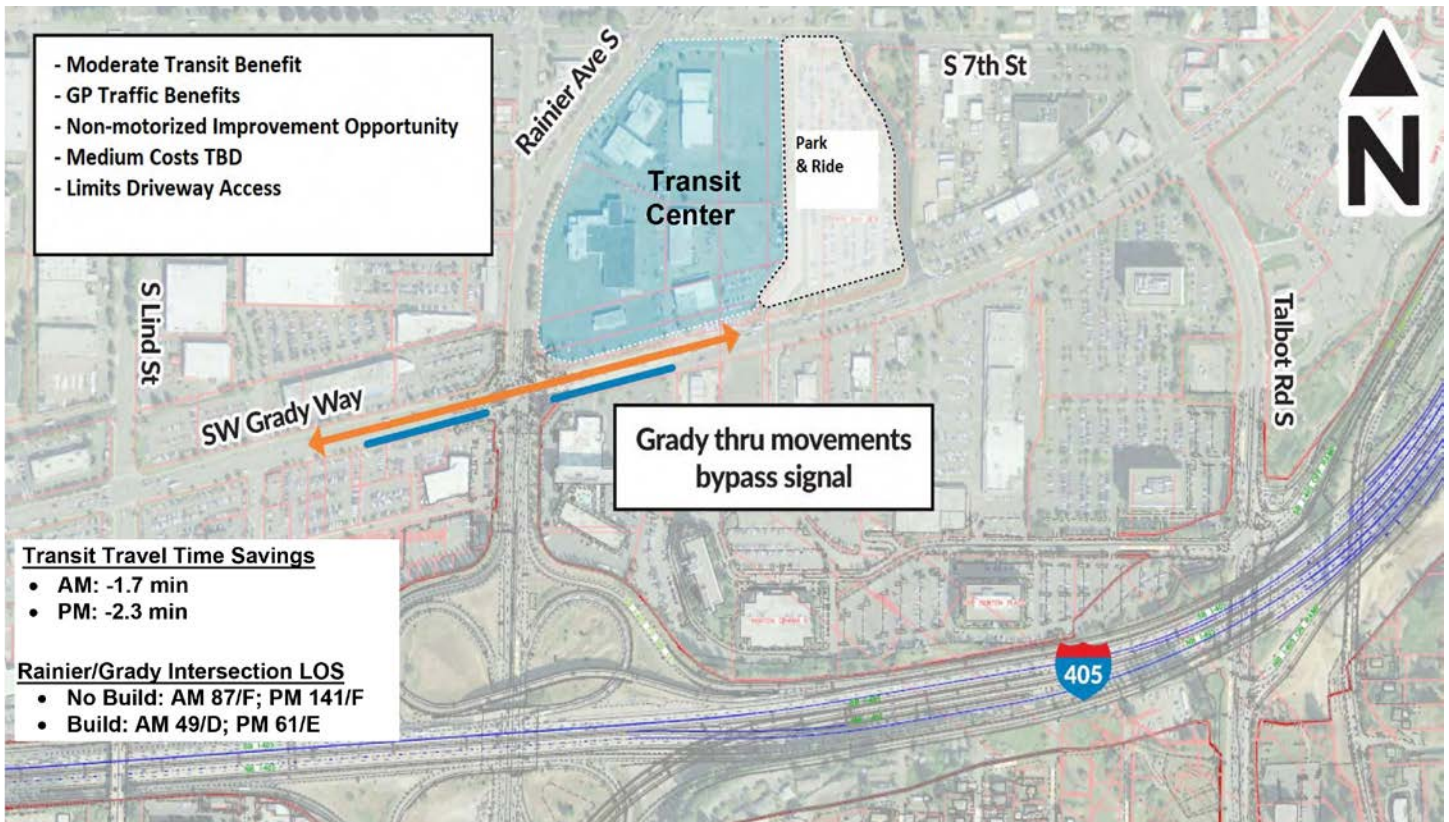
However, the city has concerns over the lack of funding for one particular 405 interchange, where significant regional travel-time delays will occur if action is not taken. Specifically, Renton urges that steps be taken to improve the area between the I-405/SR 167 interchange and the South Renton Transit Center at Rainier Avenue and Grady Way. This is the lone remaining off-line station, where future Bus Rapid Transit buses must depart the 405 Express Toll Lanes to drop off and pick up passengers from a station that isn't on the ETL system.

## Delays that will occur once Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service begins

I-405 BRT service known as STRIDE will begin in 2026 and 2027 in two segments, Burien to Bellevue (STRIDE 1) and Bellevue to Lynnwood (STRIDE 2). Within the I-405 corridor, STRIDE will operate mainly in the Express Toll Lanes that connect with in-line stations or reach them via direct access ramps.

The one exception is the new South Renton Transit Center. Because this station is off the corridor and has no direct access ramps, the buses will need to weave out of the managed access lanes and use the existing Rainier Avenue South on and off ramps. This will result in significant travel time delays for BRT buses and all vehicles using this freeway interchange, impeding travel to the new South Renton Transit Center.





### Possible options to fix problem

Renton has worked with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on several potential solutions to this problem. Further, WSDOT did preliminary work to cost out improvement options. One promising option is an overcrossing of Grady Way at the intersection with Rainier Avenue, which is estimated to reduce traffic delay and queuing and save transit nearly 2 minutes of AM and PM peak travel time (4 minutes total).

This project was a part of the I-405 Master Plan and needs additional planning work to confirm travel time savings, costs versus benefits, and overall feasibility.



### The City of Renton's request

The estimated funding needed to continue the planning work to improve travel times to and from the new transit center is \$2 million. The city requests that the 2023 Legislature include the \$2 million in the 2023–2025 Transportation Budget and direct it to either WSDOT or the city.

That would fund a multi-agency, collaborative process to update traffic data and modeling, further evaluate interim alternatives, conduct public outreach, and perform cost/benefit analyses of those alternatives.

Once an overcrossing of Grady Way at Rainier Avenue—or another bridge or crossing option—is chosen as the preferred alternative, the funding could further cover the cost to complete an engineering type, size and location (TS&L) study or some preliminary engineering for another alternative. This TS&L study will be used to determine acceptability of the basic design for WSDOT's approval.

The intent of any additional study is to obtain concurrence from appropriate parties prior to the preliminary design of the agreed-upon option, thus expediting the process and minimizing delay in project development. The hope is that solutions can be identified and gain consensus before the 2026 opening of STRIDE 1 and in time to plug funding into the Legislature's next major transportation investment package.