



City of DuPont 2024 Legislative Priorities and Agenda

The City's 2024 legislative agenda focuses on acquiring additional funding to protect our citizen's water supply from PFAS infiltration, developing new revenue sources to keep up with inflation and costs that impede providing municipal services, combatting the degradation of public safety by increasing police recruitment, and continuing to find innovative ways to address the significant lack of affordable housing.

Core Legislative Priorities

- ***PFAS Treatment and Mitigation:*** The City requests a total of \$1.5 million to assist in completing construction of and provide ongoing maintenance for a PFAS treatment facility for the City's water utility. PFAS, an acronym for a "family" of chemicals that has infiltrated water provider systems nationwide, has been determined to be a toxic carcinogen. The City has been in the process of designing and installing a PFAS treatment system for several years; inflationary pressures have brought completion of the project over budget. This is a necessary system for public health and safety and a core priority for the City.
- ***Raising the 1% Property Tax Cap:*** The City requests revisions to the statutory property tax cap, enabling cities to, on their own initiative and in response to the needs of each individual community, adjust the property tax rate up to 3% for better provision of essential public services. The artificial cap impedes the City's ability to raise necessary revenue. The City supports and adopts the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) position on this matter. See previous HB 1362 in 2021 as an example of proposed legislation to address this issue.
- ***Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention:*** The City requests Legislative help to address challenges with police officer recruitment and retention including increased funding options and expanding BLEA training academies to help get officers on the street faster. The City supports and adopts the AWC's position in this matter. Law enforcement recruitment and retention remain at historic lows across the state and the nation.
- ***Expansion of Veteran's Property Tax Exemption:*** The City requests the legislature amend RCW 84.36.381 to eliminate the means test required for disabled veterans to qualify for exemption on paying property taxes. Currently, eligibility is based on, in addition to disabled veteran status, a "means test" based on income. Eliminating the means test would significantly increase the ability for disabled veterans to remain in an affordable home and would bring it in to alignment with other state and federal disabled veterans benefits which are solely based on disability status.



- **Public Records Act:** The City urges the legislature to amend the Public Records Act (PRA) to: 1) allow for initial claims against a municipality or agency under the PRA to be adjudicated by an Administrative Law Judge to reduce costs for both plaintiffs and the agency; and 2) have PRA penalties issued against municipalities or agencies paid into a state fund that can be used for a variety of public uses thus incentivizing obedience to the law, but disincentivizing frivolous and predatory litigation. The City recognizes the importance of public transparency. Unfortunately, the broad language of the act continues to invite predatory PRA lawsuits that seek only profit for the requestor.
- **Mello-Roos Community Facility Districts:** The City advocates for the statutory authority to create Community Facility Districts (CFD), similar to California “Mello-Roos” laws. An enabling statute would allow for CFD’s to be voted into existence and function as independent taxing districts with limited authorities. The CFD would be able to levy uniform taxes on residents in the district expressly for the purpose of creating revenue for public safety, public works, and public property maintenance. The City would welcome the opportunity to work with its representatives to draft proposed statutory language.
- **Auto Theft and Property Crime:** The City supports further amendment to statutory pursuit restrictions to provide law enforcement with a broader array of tools to pursue stolen vehicles. Property crimes and theft of vehicles have increased dramatically. Stolen cars are used in the commission of serious, often violent, crimes because criminals know law enforcement has no ability to stop when operating a stolen vehicle. The City supports and adopts the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) position in this matter.
- **Juvenile Crime:** The City requests the Legislature review RCW 13.40.740 and amend the law to clarify that 1) a parent or guardian may waive the requirement to “provide a juvenile with access to an attorney” prior to consenting to a custodial interview, or granting permission to a search of the juvenile or their property/possessions when detained with probable cause of criminal activity; and 2) waive the requirement if the juvenile and/or their parents or guardian refuse to consult with counsel when opportunity for “access” has been provided; 3) define “access” for the purposes of the law.
- **Behavioral Health Resources:** The City supports interventions by behavioral health experts to establish alternatives to law enforcement response to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis and requests the legislature provide greater access to such services and funding to help the City establish these types of alternative responses. The City supports and adopts the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) position in this matter.
- **Infrastructure:** The City supports and adopts AWC’s position on fully funding the Public Works Assistance Account (PWAA) and to return diverted revenue streams to this account and investment in infrastructure projects on a City and regional level. the City, like many Washington cities, has significant infrastructure challenges as it looks to a future with an expanding population and increased residential development.
- **Affordable Housing:** The City is a member of the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners and fully supports and adopts the legislative agenda of that organization to help alleviate these issues. A lack of affordable housing in the region coupled with historic inflation driven



interest rates has reached a crisis point in Western Washington.

- **Margin Tax:** the City strongly rejects any removal of its authority to apply occupation taxes under the current B&O. Any proposed new tax structure must either include occupation taxing or have a way to make up that revenue. While a replacement of the current Business and Occupation tax with a revenue neutral “Margin Tax” structure is currently in the exploratory/workshop phase, the City cannot support this initiative.
- **Nisqually River Delta and I-5 Mounts Rd to Tumwater :** The City requests the Legislature fund the re-development of this section of I-5 to accommodate increased flow into the Nisqually delta. This project is a key regional legislative priority for the South Sound Military & Communities Partnership (SSMCP). It is a transportation issue, environmental and climate issue, and cultural issue as it relates to the Nisqually Tribe, particularly as it relates to fish passage.