

CITY OF VANCOUVER

2024 State Legislative Priorities

I-5 Bridge Replacement | Budget Item

During the 2022 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature passed the Move Ahead Washington transportation package, which included \$1 billion to fund Washington's share of the anticipated costs needed to complete the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program. The IBR has identified \$137 million from Washington during the 2023-2025 biennium as necessary funds to advance this project and City of Vancouver urges the WA legislature to allocate those funds.

Homelessness Response Support Policy Item

As cities continue to assume increased responsibility for responding to the homelessness crisis in the state, the City supports the creation of additional tools for the express purpose of providing direct homelessness response. The City appreciates the opportunity to partner with state agencies to create facilities to support homelessness response and would encourage the state to continue to seek out opportunities to streamline the sharing of state resources with local jurisdictions seeking to respond to individuals experiencing homelessness. The City also recognizes the intersection between childcare availability and homelessness and encourages further efforts to address the lack of affordable and accessible childcare across the state.

Housing Availability And Affordability Policy Item

Recognizing that the housing crisis is a statewide issue needing a statewide approach, the City applauds the adoption of HB 1110 and encourages the expansion of its requirements into UGAs adjacent to covered jurisdictions. The City was supportive of efforts at condominium reform and encourages further expansion of liability protections. Lastly, the City would like to see an expansion of the Multi-Family Tax Exemption to cover projects of two units or greater from the current minimum of four units.

Property Tax Cap | Policy Item

The City supports changes to the existing 1% property tax cap to allow for factoring in both population growth and inflation.





Rendering of the Vancouver Heights project

Vancouver Heights | Future Budget Item

In 2017 the City purchased nearly 12 acres of the shuttered former Tower Mall in one of the community's oldest neighborhoods, Vancouver Heights. Adjacent to vacant property already under City ownership, this strategic purchase created an unprecedented opportunity to revitalize a 63-acre area of the City that has seen decades of decline. The City's vision for the site's redevelopment is built around connectivity, equity, climate action and economic opportunity. The Heights will become a vibrant and diverse 15-minute walkable neighborhood that includes engaging public spaces, mixed-income housing, retail, and multimodal travel options. Infrastructure construction is poised to begin in 2024 and the full redevelopment will be completed over the next 10-20 years. In addition to significant City funding, this project will require investments by the state in the form of capital and transportation funds, the federal government, and private stakeholders.

Comprehensive Plan Extension Policy Item

Actions taken last legislative session to require GMA cities to include housing and climate elements to their comprehensive plan updates are admirable goals but have increased the complexity of the planning process. To allow jurisdictions adequate time to appropriately evaluate and integrate these new planning element requirements, jurisdictions that are currently required to complete their comprehensive plan update by June 2025 are requesting a six-month extension to December 2025.

Annexation | Policy Item

The City believes that annexation laws should encourage the incorporation of urban areas designated under the GMA. This supports logical development and expansion of cities to provide for a healthy and growing local economy and efficient and effective provision of urban services. There are approximately 180,000 residents living in the unincorporated urban area of Vancouver that, under the

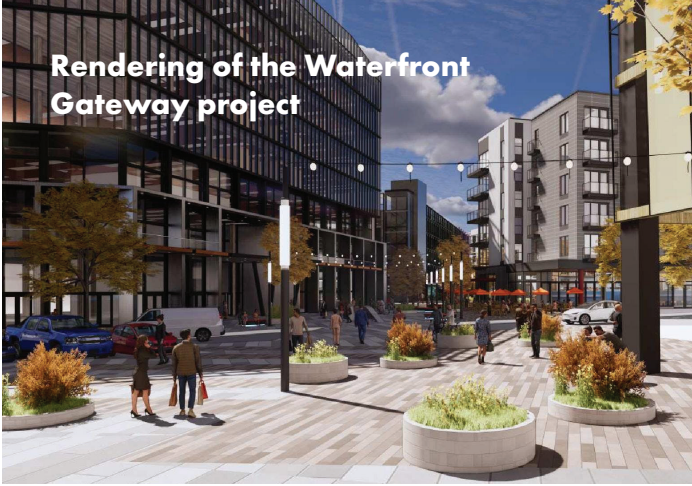
City's and County's adopted GMA plans, are intended to be annexed by the City. The City applauds the adoption of HB 1425 to provide additional funding in support of annexation efforts. To better facilitate the timely annexation of unincorporated urban areas into adjacent jurisdictions, the City requests an analysis of extraterritorial zoning within the UGA by GMA cities or similar tools.

Climate Planning | Policy Item

The City appreciates the funding that has been made available to jurisdictions to support climate planning in conjunction with the GMA and also requests additional funding be made available to support the implementation of local efforts towards achieving local and state emission reduction goals. One program to consider is the creation of a contractor climate training facility to help address the unfamiliarity within the trades of energy efficient and decarbonized building features.

Climate Incentives | Policy Item

The City supports policies that would incentivize property owners, consumers, and businesses to move towards lower carbon solutions. These include allowing public utilities to offer incentives for customers to switch fuel types (e.g., from methane gas to electric power) for building heating and cooling; for State augmentation of federal incentives available under the Inflation Reduction Act for low- and moderate-income residential property owners and commercial building owners who convert their building heating and cooling to high-efficiency electric heat pumps; additional point-of-sale rebates on the purchase of electric vehicles, especially if the owner is converting from medium- and heavy-duty vehicles; and rebates for alternative fuel vehicle conversions and retrofits that modify existing vehicles to use cleaner fuel sources (for example, converting a diesel truck to run on propane.)



Rendering of the Waterfront Gateway project

Waterfront Gateway Plaza Capital Budget Item

Building upon the highly successful waterfront redevelopment, the City is transforming an adjacent 6.4 acres of city-owned, vacant land in downtown Vancouver into the Waterfront Gateway district. The district is one of the largest undeveloped properties in the area and will include mixed-income housing, retail, office, and a 2-acre public plaza at its center. The plaza will create a sense of place, with public art highlighting Vancouver's rich history and cultural diversity and serve as a flexible event space for year-round events. The City is seeking **\$2 million** to leverage general fund dollars to complete the project.

Product Stewardship | Policy Item

Vancouver supports a statewide systematic approach to recycling that ensures those who manufacture, design, consume or sell products are also responsible for reducing impacts to the environment, economy, public health and safety.

Garrison Sidewalk Funding Budget Adjustment

With the opening of the Mill Plain Vine, the need for a continuous sidewalk along Garrison Road north of Mill Plain Blvd is more urgent than ever. Completion of the sidewalk improvements will provide a safe pedestrian route that links many multi-family developments with the Vine as well as the retail establishments located along the Mill Plain corridor. We also have several folks living along Garrison that have mobility challenges. The lack of sidewalks only furthers their challenge to reach these destinations.

Allowing the funding to advance to the 2025-2026 biennium ensures that we can fully complete this much needed improvement in the next two years. If we have to wait until 2029, rising construction process will likely put the project in a partially funded status and force us to find other funding sources. And finally, in addition to the funds earmarked in the legislature, we've also obtained \$350,000 in funding through the Federal Highways Administration Transportation Alternatives (TAP) program. These funds are earmarked for expenditure in 2024-2025. Delaying the project to 2029 will most likely put the TAP funds into jeopardy.



Clark County Transportation Alliance

Support the 2024 Policy Statement of the Clark County Transportation Alliance, including:

- Support for the I-5 bridge replacement and influence area improvements.
- Fruit Valley Freight Access and Safety Improvements (\$130 million): planning, engineering, environmental review, and construction for new north-south freight arterial.
- MacArthur between N Blandford and S Lieser (\$40 million): corridor improvements including multi-modal path, roundabouts at key intersections, and traffic safety enhancements.
- SR-500/Fourth Plain/SR-503 (\$20 million): following recent planning study, provide funds for initial intersection improvement to address congestion hot spot.
- I-205/SR-500 to Padden Expressway (\$50 million): following recent planning study, provide funds for initial intersection improvement to address congestion hot spot.
- Public Transit (\$10 million): help fund construction of C-TRAN's extension of the Fourth Plain BRT line that will interconnect with its Mill Plain BRT line.

Regional Police Training Facility Capital Budget Item

The City applauds the work of the Legislative Delegation during the 2023 Session to support the establishment of a Southwest Washington Regional Training Academy. The long-term vision includes a fully built-out training facility in Clark County. The site will provide training access to our surrounding communities, including the Cowlitz Nation, and create a clear nexus between the Training Academy and the Community College System. In addition to law enforcement training, the Academy should serve as a regional center for other public safety training needs.

The City is seeking **\$3.5 million** in planning dollars to the CJTC and legislative direction that those funds should be used to help fully develop the vision for the permanent Southwest Washington Regional Training Academy Campus.



Vancouver police officers
with their K9 partners

Association of Washington Cities' Top Priorities

The City supports the Association of Washington Cities' top priorities, including:

- **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
 - 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 disorder (SUD) treatment for adults and juveniles.
 - 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.

For More Information

Brian Enslow, Lobbyist, Arbutus Consulting
brian@arbutusllc.com | 360-489-8121

Aaron Lande, Program & Policy Manager, City of Vancouver
aaron.lande@cityofvancouver.us | 360-487-8612