



CITY OF SEATTLE

2008 State Legislative Agenda

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SESSION PRIORITIES – 2008

Affordable Housing – Seattle supports a State Business & Occupation tax credit to employers who provide housing assistance to their employees (e.g. a down payment on a home purchase). We also support financing tools that facilitate the creation of affordable housing.

Annexation Incentives – Seattle supports HB 1139 and SB 5330, legislation modeled after 2006 SB 6686, that would allow Seattle to receive a sales tax credit if it annexes all or a portion of the North Highline unincorporated area.

Civil Rights – Every person has the right to live, work, learn and play free from discrimination. We support local discretion with regard to implementing I-200 restrictions in both education and employment opportunities. We support statutory changes to provide gay and lesbian people the legal right to marry. We support the restoration of voting rights of felons once they have completed their prison term or time under community supervision. Finally, we support enacting laws to protect consumers from predatory terms and tactics employed in the lending and collection of payday loans and check cashing.

Climate Protection & Environment – We believe all levels of government should seek to implement practices and policies that provide for strong climate protection and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We believe the state should take leadership on the national level to ensure we are well positioned when the federal government takes action. We support flexible state funding to local government efforts to combat climate change. We support maintaining and improving existing air and water quality programs to protect against adverse effects on humans and the environment.

Seattle supports passage of a fuel efficiency fee to help reduce carbon emissions and fund transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. This sliding scale fee system will be based on vehicle miles per gallon as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Crime Guns – To help keep our communities safe, Seattle supports the ability to collect and share crime gun data among law enforcement agencies statewide, and efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. This includes legislation to close the gun show loophole (HB 1026/SB 5197), requiring universal background checks, the banning of assault weapons and measures that prevent child access to firearms. We also support changing state law to comply with federal law regarding involuntary mental health commitment, requiring reporting to the National Instant Check System, and better funding of the state crime lab to assure timely testing of ballistic materials used in crimes.

Jail Construction – Seattle supports additional funding options to help construct jails located in King County.

Infrastructure/Finance – Seattle believes that growth and density in the region should be focused in urban areas, which will require infrastructure improvements and community amenities to accommodate the expected increase. To meet this goal Seattle supports local control and flexibility in funding sources and additional tools to help attract people, businesses and jobs to the city and state. This includes:

- Efforts to help purchase surplus school property for community use
- The removal of RCW 35.87 which requires the sale of certain city properties to be first made available for purchase to be used for free parking
- Maintaining and improving Seattle Center as a vibrant regional attraction
- State participation in funding for commemorating the Centennial of the Alaskan Yukon Pacific Exhibition (AYPE)

Municipal Electricity – Public power provides low cost electricity and should be allowed to participate in programs similar to water and sewer districts that allow customers options in upgrading or installing electric infrastructure. We support the ability to expand Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULIDs) to include electric utilities.

Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness – Seattle will work with other local jurisdictions and the State to help assure appropriate financial participation by all levels of government for critical human services. To that end, Seattle supports State efforts to assist with the implementation of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness including:

- Measures to reduce the number of people at risk of homelessness or seeking emergency shelter, including increasing the General Assistance – Unemployable (GA-U) benefit and increasing and protecting Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits and eligibility
- Measures to reduce the number of people cycling through our jails, hospitals and institutions, including increasing King County’s share of state Medicaid funding for mental health treatment services and adding mental health as a GA-U Medicaid benefit

STATEMENT OF POLICY - 2008

The policy statements below represent ongoing priorities for the City of Seattle and its residents. The City urges the State Legislature to initiate and support legislation that advances the following principles:

Domestic Violence Protections

We are committed to ending domestic violence for our residents. We support legislative efforts to provide victims of domestic violence with the services, financial assistance and other resources they need to support their safety and leave abusive relationships. We support locating a domestic violence advocate in Children & Family Services offices (HB 1703).

Economic Development

We support state efforts to provide local governments with financing tools and remove needless regulatory barriers in order to attract and retain businesses. We also support incentives that promote increased job and apprenticeship opportunities, wage progression and retention for workers. We encourage efforts aimed at increasing the participation of Women and Minority Owned Businesses (WMBE) in state and local contracting. We support efforts to enhance our tourism industry, and we will work for additional funding for performing arts and cultural organizations and institutions.

Education

A quality education for all students is key to the social and economic vitality of our city and state. We believe it is the State's responsibility to fully fund K-12 education, and to implement programs that close the achievement gap. We believe Washington State should be in the top ten of states for school funding by 2010. We also strongly support provision of state-wide, universal pre-K instruction to help assure all children enter elementary school ready to learn. We support enhanced and stable funding for arts in public education.

Elections and General Government

We support legislation allowing a local campaign-matching program for campaign donations in exchange for limits on campaign spending. We believe the State of Washington should pay for all elections related to state government and state offices.

We support local governance structures that allow flexibility among jurisdictions to meet requirements, such as open public meetings, in a way that reflects the organizational structure of the jurisdiction and does not interfere with public access.

Energy

We support continued state assistance for low-income consumers of energy and efforts to improve the State's green power program. We support the development of a long-term energy strategy that includes planning for adequate energy capacity and supply. We also support measures which assist in our continued ability to meet our zero greenhouse gas emissions goal. We support the inclusion of low-impact hydroelectric power as a renewable energy in any legislation related to renewable energy portfolio standards.

Growth Management, Land Use and Annexation

We support the Growth Management Act (GMA) as the primary means of planning for growth. We support the further integration and streamlining of state land use and related statutes while preserving environmental protections. We support better integration of land use and transportation.

We support efforts to protect and provide local government tools to implement “growth pays for growth” policies. We support state funding to assist jurisdictions in meeting planning requirements and infrastructure needs of the Growth Management Act and the Shoreline Management Act. In addition, we support funding to help support the infrastructure and operating needs of cities where growth is being concentrated or where annexations occur.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

We support cleaning up hazardous waste sites through maintenance of the Local Toxics Control Account, as well as additional state assistance to local governments for the handling, treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. We support measures to reduce toxins entering the waste stream.

We support development of common industry standards for recycled products, funding for recycling facilities, the promotion of product stewardship and legislative initiatives to increase waste reduction and recycling. Specifically, we support HB 1950, which provides business and occupation (B&O) tax reduction incentives to encourage manufacturing businesses in Washington state to expand their utilization of secondary or recycled materials in their production processes. We oppose measures that place undue burdens on local jurisdictions regarding the reporting of recycling information.

Health Care

We support efforts to ensure all persons have accessible, affordable and culturally competent health care. We believe all persons in Washington State should have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, alcohol and substance abuse treatment, comprehensive mental health and dental health services. We support identifying enhanced and stable funding for drug and alcohol treatment programs. We also support identifying stable and increased State funding to local public health agencies. In addition, Seattle supports funding for services specific to individuals and families suffering from traumatic brain injury (TBI), which includes care coordination in order to ensure effective access to services. Coordinated delivery of support services is more efficient and improves outcomes for TBI survivors.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

We support efforts to protect the public from terrorist threats and believe funding should be based on threat and risk assessments, both foreign and domestic. It is also critical that the State implement measures and provide funding to prepare our communities for natural disasters. We support legislation protecting information regarding emergency preparedness and critical infrastructure. We seek funding to support the development of a home safety and disaster training facility in Seattle/King County to improve the region’s emergency preparedness. Finally, we support efforts to balance the need to effectively combat terrorism while protecting civil liberties and freedoms.

Housing

We support funding and incentives to provide affordable and safe housing for all income levels. We support increases to the Housing Trust Fund, Washington Families Fund and Homeless Rental Assistance and case management. We also support the development of discharge planning policies that assist people leaving institutions, including jails, prisons, hospitals, foster care, substance abuse programs and mental health facilities, to obtain stable housing. We support measures to strengthen tenant protections in apartments being converted to condominiums. We support strengthening state laws to protect consumers from mortgage foreclosure rescue scams.

We support legislation to allow courts to issue civil administrative warrants for conducting housing, property and health inspections in order to enforce the City's codes. We oppose efforts to diminish current authority to access property for public safety and other business purposes.

Human Services

We strongly support maintaining and enhancing state funding for critical programs, and preserving the human services safety net to support our vulnerable populations and maintain healthy communities. We support opportunities for self-sufficiency, poverty relief and upward mobility. Finally, we support a restoration in funding of the Senior Citizens Services Act. The City of Seattle supports a funding request for \$975,000 to create the Farmers to Food Banks Pilot Project. In particular, the City sees Farmers to Food Banks as a positive effort to generate a substantial amount of fresh produce, dairy and meat for low-income people, while creating a new market for local farmers, thereby strengthening the agricultural economy and helping to preserve farmland. More generally, Seattle supports policy direction for the State Department of Agriculture to work towards a state food sustainability and security policy, which would advance the goals of race and social justice, environmental sustainability, economic development, and emergency preparedness.

Libraries

We support the current governance structure of libraries that provides for an independent library board. We also support open access to library materials and information on paper and in electronic form. Seattle would like to see increased State funding to improve state operation of the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library.

Parks

We support changes to the Conservation Futures statute to ensure cities receive an appropriate share of the revenues. We support efforts to increase funding for parks, recreation and open space programs. We support efforts to provide non-profit zoos and aquariums tax relief to help existing and future operations.

Public Safety

We strive to ensure all people, including undocumented immigrants, feel safe and protected in their homes, businesses and on our streets. We support measures to increase the ability to use cameras at red lights and arterials. We support holding offenders accountable while

striving to relieve demands on the adult and juvenile justice systems through prevention and early intervention programs, day reporting programs and increased access to alcohol, substance abuse and mental health treatment. We also support enhanced penalties for eluding police officers which can endanger both officers and citizens. Finally, we support increase funding for Liquor Control Board enforcement officers to meet the growing need.

Revenue

We strongly support maintaining and enhancing local taxing and fee authority and local revenue options. This includes support for exploring an increase in local utility business taxing authority. We are opposed to unfunded mandates. Seattle also supports enactment of comprehensive reform of the Washington State tax system to provide revenue stability for cities and counties and a more progressive state tax structure.

Telecommunications and Cable

Seattle is committed to ensuring all our residents are provided affordable, equitable access to telecom and cable services, through competition and consumer protection. Seattle supports preserving local franchising authority to assure local control of our rights of way, ability to guarantee the highest consumer protection standards, protection of local revenue, build-out requirements in all communities and sufficient public, educational and government access channels. We oppose legislation that diminishes these priorities. We also oppose legislation that would diminish cities existing authority to construct and operate a municipal broadband network serving the public.

Transportation

We support efforts to reduce the ongoing transportation problems throughout the city, region and state, particularly when there is an identified safety risk. We believe the State should fully fund the transportation system, including the operations and maintenance of ferries, bridges and highways. We support legislative efforts to improve pedestrian safety and examine strategies to enhance local enforcement of traffic laws. In addition, we support state funding for a regionally administered driver education program to heighten awareness about traffic safety. We support efforts to maintain the effectiveness of HOV lanes and oppose measures that would degrade the passenger-carrying capacity of these lanes. We support program funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycle, pedestrian and transit-friendly development investments. We support efforts to develop a full funding package for replacement of SR 520, which must include full funding for the mitigation required to maximize the transportation efficiency and minimize or eliminate adverse impacts on the environment and Seattle's neighborhoods. We support alternative transportation options that reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles in Seattle. With this goal in mind, specifically, we support an exemption for Flexcar from the state rental car tax. We support efforts to plan and fund transit connections related to Colman Dock and other strategies to reduce ferry trips by single occupancy vehicles. We also support efforts to accommodate passenger only ferries at terminals. Seattle supports tolling and congestion pricing as a demand management tool and encourages development of a regional road pricing system to help fund transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. Finally, we support state funding for a barrier on the Aurora Bridge as a suicide prevention measure.

Tribal Governments

We respect and uphold the unique sovereign status of tribes. We understand their treaty rights, the importance of their efforts to create a sufficient tax base and their reliance on specific sources of revenue to operate programs for the benefit of their people.

Water Stewardship

We support the efficient use of water and promote environmental stewardship, including funding for salmon recovery. We support legislative efforts to address a variety of water issues, including in-stream flows, protection of municipal water rights, disputes over water rights and implementation of watershed planning. We support improvements in water quality through effective storm water management programs that set goals which are achievable and not cost-prohibitive. We support maintaining current funding for priority environmental programs related to water quality.