



COVINGTON PRIORITIES 2022



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Highway 18

The City of Covington joins the South East Area Legislative Transportation Coalition (SEAL TC) in requesting the Legislature to include the necessary funding within the next transportation revenue package to address the safety and congestion issues along Highway 18 from the Issaquah Hobart Road to Deep Creek. This stretch of Highway 18 experiences lane reductions causing increased congestion and safety concerns, including an increased likelihood of head-on collisions. The Legislature made investments to advance the project to “construction ready” status, however, construction remains unfunded.



State Route 516

State Route 516 bisects Covington’s downtown, and carries regional traffic from Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and Covington to Highway 18. As these communities continue to grow, this two-lane regional arterial has reached capacity. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, SR 516 has become increasingly popular in both pedestrian and bicycle use. The 1.7-mile section of the corridor from 185th to the east city limits at 212th remains unfunded. The City requests that \$30.8 million be included in the next transportation revenue package in order to complete the widening of SR 516, which will improve safety for all modes of transportation.



Local Transportation Preservation & Maintenance Funding

In addition to improving the state routes that run through the City of Covington, the City is responsible for maintaining the City’s network of roads that are the first and last mile for any trip a Covington resident makes. The Joint Transportation Committee completed a study indicating that there is over \$1 billion in unmet local transportation needs. The City supports legislation that provides cities with the funding and tools to better meet these local needs.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Pipe Lake Water Quality Improvements

The City of Covington requests \$310,000 to complete a water quality project to Pipe Lake by installing a water quality treatment facility and a separate groundwater drainage system. The City has completed similar improvements to two other discharge points at Pike Lake, making this the final untreated discharge point. This 52-acre lake is home to numerous species of plants and animals, several large private parks, and Camp McCullough that provide habitat, recreation, and year-round access to the lake for surrounding residents and visitors.

SOCIAL JUSTICE REFORM

The City of Covington encourages the Legislature to revisit the criminal justice reform proposals enacted in 2021 to address the unintended consequences around public safety. As a City that contracts out for local law enforcement services, Covington is limited in the ability to directly take part in the implementation process. The City would benefit from the Legislature providing greater clarification and implementation direction, funding for implementation, and increased funding to address the statewide mental health crisis to encourage a more uniformed approach.

LOCAL CONTROL

The City of Covington encourages the Legislature to avoid policies that preempt local control on city regulatory issues, particularly around local land use authority. Instead, the City encourages the Legislature to incentivize communities that are improving equitable access to housing by allocating resources to offset the cost of impact fees and providing grants for planning. These investments would support communities like Covington that are proactively working to increase density by focusing on multifamily housing development.



*The City supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities and Sound Cities Association.



LEGISLATIVE 2022 POLICY DOCUMENT

In addition to the City's 2022 adopted legislative priorities, the City has adopted the following policies. The policy document provides direction to city staff and the city lobbyist. These are issues that the City will monitor or weigh in on, along with AWC and other stakeholders, but are secondary to the City's 2022 legislative priorities.

STATE-SHARED REVENUES

The City of Covington requests that the Legislature preserve and enhance state shared revenues, including liquor revolving account revenues, liquor profit revenues, marijuana excise tax revenues, and others.

PROPERTY TAX

The City of Covington supports lifting the 1% property tax ceiling to allow city revenues to increase with inflation/increasing costs.

CULVERT FUNDING

The City of Covington has significant culvert funding needs. The City applied for funding within the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board Grant Program (FBRB) to replace two culverts at Little Soos Creek on SE 256th Street in Covington. However, only a quarter of the ranked culvert projects received funding over the last biennium which does not include the City's project. The City encourages the Legislature to include additional funding for the FBRB to adequately fund the list of recommended projects and identify other opportunities for the state to support local culvert restoration.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The cities of Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond will continue to advocate jointly for federal and state funding for State Route 169 and State Route 516 improvements and for transit alternatives in the three rapidly growing communities.

CONTINUED ON BACK

UNFUNDED MANDATES

The City of Covington opposes unfunded and under-funded mandates on local governments. The City supports funding for existing mandates including comprehensive plan updates, Shoreline Management Act updates and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements.

OPMA PROPOSAL

The City of Covington supports amendments to the Open Public Meetings Act providing cities with greater flexibility to hold virtual meetings.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The City of Covington supports continued and increased funding for the Public Works Assistance Account to meet local infrastructure needs, including redirecting Real Estate Excise Tax revenues and Utility Tax revenues back into the Public Works Assistance Account.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMEOWNERSHIP TOOLS

The City of Covington joins housing advocates in requesting funding tools for affordable housing, funding for the Housing Trust Fund, and other creative solutions to funding or incentivizing affordable housing, which have become even more imperative due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PARKS

The City of Covington is grateful for state investments in parks and the Legislature's most recent capital budget appropriation for SoCo Park. To continue to build upon those efforts and meet the City's adopted level of service for both parks and trails, the City encourages the Legislature to increase the level of investment in grant opportunities within the Recreation and Conservation Office.

** The City supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities and Sound Cities Association.*