

Sound Cities Association 2023 Legislative Agenda



SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

38 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

Address Housing Instability

The state and cities must partner to preserve and increase the supply, diversity, and affordability of housing as well as address root causes of homelessness. SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Provide local option tools and incentives that recognize the diverse needs of our communities and maintain local decision-making authority
- Continue to provide funding to assist local jurisdictions in bringing more affordable and workforce housing units online

Address Behavioral Health Needs

Behavioral health treatment is at a crisis level across the state. Cities are committed to working with the state to develop solutions. SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Provide continued funding to increase the capacity of the behavioral health system, including inpatient, outpatient, and intermediate care
- Support and fund behavioral health workforce development programs to address the shortage of behavioral health care providers
- Continue to fund programs that support local jurisdictions in establishing alternative response programs like co-responder programs, diversion programs, and others that provide alternatives beyond law enforcement for responding to calls related to behavioral health
- Remove barriers to community-based behavioral health services, including substance use disorder treatment and dual diagnosis treatment facilities

Invest in Transportation Infrastructure & Mobility

The economic recovery and vitality of our state demands that we invest in our existing transportation infrastructure and prioritize new investments that improve the mobility of people and goods and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The passage of Move Ahead Washington was an important step in this direction. SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Continue investing in new resources and options for local governments to address multimodal transportation and mobility needs, including funding for state highway maintenance
- Honor funding commitments made in Move Ahead Washington and ensure that designated and ready-to-go active transportation and transit projects throughout King County are scheduled for construction as soon as possible

Promote Public Safety

SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Support additional investments to help cities with the costs created by the changes resulting from the *Blake* decision on how possession of controlled substances is handled by the criminal justice system
- Clarify the legal status of the possession of a controlled substance so individuals, law enforcement, and treatment providers can respond appropriately
- Establish a statutory minimum offense under which vehicular pursuits are permissible

Address the Fiscal Needs of Cities to Provide Local Services

Cities play an essential role in providing basic core services to residents. SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Ensure that state-shared revenue distributions remain whole
- Support local infrastructure and fully fund the Public Works Assistance Account
- Support potential improvements to the tax structure, including replacing the 1% cap on annual property tax increases with a limit that allows cities to respond to local needs
- Provide greater flexibility with existing revenue sources

Promote Economic Recovery

Current economic conditions including supply-chain disruptions, hiring challenges, and high inflation have had a significant impact on Washington's businesses and workforce. SCA urges the Legislature to:

- Provide tools and resources to promote local economic recovery, particularly support for small businesses
- Be cognizant of tax implications and do no harm to individuals and businesses already hurt by the economic downturn
- Support workforce development pipeline, including funding training programs for youth and adults in trade and other critical fields with hiring shortages

Legislative Principles

SCA adopts the following legislative principles against which all legislative proposals will be measured:

- Advance racial equity and social justice
- Improve the social safety net
- Honor commitments to shared revenues
- No unfunded mandates to cities
- Preserve local decision-making authority