

SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

2026 County Priorities



For the benefit of the County, the region, and the residents of our cities, members of the Sound Cities Association (SCA) seek to strengthen King County's partnerships with local governments. By strengthening this partnership, cities and the County can build a solid foundation for consistent communication and collaborative action on countywide priorities, including those outlined below.

Collaboration on Levy Development

Ensure early and ongoing engagement with cities throughout the levy development process. Enhanced collaboration between King County and its cities is essential to ensure the effective allocation of funding and the sustained delivery of vital programs and services for our shared residents. This includes levies by King County's special taxing districts.

SCA supports:

- Coordinating with cities on levy timing to reduce tax fatigue;
- Early transmittal that provides sufficient time for discussion and potential changes;
- Incorporating or addressing input from city staff and elected officials during development;
- Equitable distribution of levy revenues, including transparent reporting of the geographic distribution.

SCA will continue to emphasize increased communication between our member cities and SCA appointed members already engaged in levy development processes.

Siting County Facilities and Infrastructure

Communicate effectively with all cities, including small cities, on land use decisions. SCA cities face financial and logistical challenges when properties are purchased by King County within city limits or adjacent unincorporated properties without prior coordination. Strengthened coordination and transparency between King County and its cities will advance effective planning and facilitate streamlined, regionally integrated decision-making.

SCA supports:

- Early engagement with cities on siting facilities, including collaboration in identifying potential properties;
- Increased collaboration concerning land use near schools, residential areas, and on adjacent unincorporated lands;
- Discussion on the potential environmental and quality of life impacts of planned facilities; and,
- Supporting cities in communicating with their residents regarding land use decisions.

Public Safety Funding

SCA cities request greater involvement in decision-making related to public safety funding to ensure they are consistently engaged in and adequately prepared for any potential changes.

SCA supports:

- Engagement with cities during the public safety contracting process to ensure mutual communication of potential rising costs and city priorities;
- Providing advance notice of court and other fee increases to ensure cities have adequate time to adjust their budgets accordingly;
- Incorporating a phased-in approach for cities to implement rate changes to the extent possible; and,
- Aligning city and county public safety funding priorities and usage of House Bill 2015 (2025 Session) funds.

Along with these priorities, SCA cities wish to remain actively engaged in broader public safety discussions, including the Regional Safety Task Force implementation, with increased representation and a more prominent role in shaping policy decisions.

Long-Term Solid Waste Disposal Strategy

To address the region's long-term solid waste disposal challenges, **King County should continue to recognize the growing concerns of its cities** and work collaboratively to develop solutions that reflect shared priorities and city input. Solid waste disposal involves not only waste management but transportation concerns.

SCA supports:

- Adding the following in the current environmental impact evaluation and upcoming draft State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) report:
 - A comprehensive traffic analysis on the impacts that waste export by rail would have on cities with rail lines. Both long-term disposal options under consideration require a waste export by rail component.
 - An analysis of the impacts of a potential waste-to-energy facility on communities surrounding potential sites.

Utility Rates Affordability

Following the 2025 Regional Utility Rate Summit, **SCA cities remain committed to ongoing dialogue and engagement to ensure utility rates remain sustainable and affordable for residents.** Cities are particularly interested in mitigating rate increases while ensuring long-term sustainability of local and regional utility systems. Utility rates are tied to overall affordability in this region and are a key piece of equity and cost of living.

SCA supports:

- Assistance in communicating county rate changes to our shared populations;
- Advocating for a data-driven regulatory approach that ensures that infrastructure investments deliver meaningful benefits;
- Coordinating local and county-wide rate increases, when necessary, to ensure local infrastructure and capital needs for utilities continue to be funded adequately; and,
- Engagement between cities and King County on supporting low-income residents who are impacted by rising utility rates.