

CITY OF SEATTLE

2011 State Legislative Agenda

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SESSION PRIORITIES – 2011

Areas of Primary Focus

Mitigating and Adapting to the Impact of State Budget Cuts

The State faces a nearly \$6 billion budget deficit for the 2011-13 biennium. The process of closing the projected 2011-13 deficit will result in deep cuts and the likely elimination of core programs and services the State provides. The impacts of many of these cuts will be felt at the local level. We would like to work with the State to mitigate the impacts of these cuts, especially on the most vulnerable and to maintain public safety. In order to help the City meet the new challenges we likely face as a result of these unavoidable cuts, we support maintaining current municipal revenue authority and existing city and state shared revenues, greater flexibility in the use of existing revenues, additional options to raise revenue locally, and new regulatory tools where appropriate.

In addition, we will work with the State to make shifts in the budget that help us adapt to the new realities we will face as a result of the ongoing budget crisis. For example, if significant cuts to the Department of Corrections' budget results in the release of inmates to the community at large, it may make sense to make small shifts in funding to expand programs that monitor persons previously incarcerated, programs like the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative.

Preserving the Safety Net

Periods of economic downturn affect people from every walk of life, but their effects are felt most keenly by the vulnerable. To the greatest extent possible, we ask the State to preserve programs that protect the most vulnerable and reduce future social and fiscal costs. In response to the Governor's recent across the board cuts, we have identified Maternity Support Services, the Disability Lifeline, the Senior Services Act, and Immigrant Services as areas of particular importance to Seattle. We also support full funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

Transportation

We support an environmentally sustainable transportation system with stable funding for transit and options to expand transit

service in the future. In the absence of long-term funding, we seek additional short-term funding for transit in order to help prevent cuts to productive and efficient routes.

The City of Seattle strongly supports legislation requiring the State to take full responsibility for all costs associated with the State's portion of the SR 99 deep bore tunnel, including all cost overruns. The City also asks the State to:

- Restore the project's contingency fund;
- Fund METRO as promised in the January 2009 letter of agreement between the Governor, Seattle Mayor, and King County Executive; and
- Fund mitigation for the impact of cars diverted to surface streets by tolling and the lack of downtown exits.

We support a 520 replacement project that is designed from the beginning to accommodate light rail, that is no larger than the existing 520 footprint from Montlake to I-5 and that protects the Arboretum.

Seattle supports efforts to craft a statewide transportation package, for voter approval, that:

- Includes long-term sustainable funding for transit operations;
- Results in expanded transit service;
- Prioritizes safety and maintenance projects, and
- Meets both the City's and the State's greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets.

Public Safety

We support early intervention in juvenile possession of illegal firearms, and believe proactive detention for juvenile offenses can deter potential future convictions under the more severe adult sanctions. We also support investments in youth violence prevention and intervention, and new tools to prevent and reduce gang violence. We support a statewide ban on military-style assault weapons and believe that local governments should have the ability to regulate firearms or weapons in public places to ensure the safety of their communities and local circumstances. We support full funding for the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative partnership between the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement. We support legislation that increases penalties for negligent drivers who injure or kill vulnerable roadway users and support the continued use of automated traffic safety cameras.

Education

The City supports efforts to comprehensively reform education. We support maximum possible funding for Early Learning and Basic Education. We support capital investments in Seattle Public Schools' skills centers. We support one set of licensing requirements for childcare offered in public facilities that recognizes that these sites are already suitable for pre-K and before and after school programs.

During challenging economic times, it is also particularly important to support community colleges, technical colleges, and state universities as they provide access to retraining and workforce development opportunities. Public educational institutions are also a major employer in Seattle and across Washington State and have a considerable impact on our economy.

Other Major Issues

Economic Development

We support extending Main Street tax incentive program to cities greater than 190,000 in population, extending the Washington Filmworks tax incentives, and extending tax incentives for Life Sciences Research and Development. We also support efforts to implement strategies and recommendations for clean energy jobs and businesses proposed by the Washington State Clean Energy Leadership Council. We support the extension of the stadium taxes if those revenues are used in ways that promote Seattle's economic vitality and attractiveness as a destination. We also seek a state capital appropriation of \$1 million in order to help prepare for the 50th anniversary of the World's Fair in 2012. Seattle supports tax increment financing as a tool to encourage economic development and community improvement projects. We seek legislation that will restore local regulatory oversight and enforcement of towncars and limousines, as it existed in the past.

Sustainability

We support a new, long-term state funding source for local stormwater management programs that will help Seattle improve water quality and protect salmon. In addition, Seattle has a number of hazardous waste sites, specifically, Superfund sites in various states of review and clean-up. Funding from the local toxics account is a critical piece of the funding plan as we move forward with these essential clean-up projects. Consequently, we support the protection of MTCA funds that go into the local toxics account. We support legislation to improve water conservation standards for appliances. We also support reductions in the phosphorus content of fertilizers.

General Government

Seattle, in concert with the Association of Washington Cities, seeks the ability to recover costs associated with public records requests, clarification that the Public Records Act does not require ongoing or continuing responses, and an automatic exemption for witnesses. We also support legislation clarifying that we may adopt certain portions of our city code through reference.

Race & Social Justice

Every person has the right to live, work, and learn free from discrimination. We support legislation that prevents discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and in lending practices. We support efforts to promote racial justice in the economy, environmental justice, criminal justice system, health, education and in government policies, programs and procedures. We support efforts to protect the rights of and services provided to immigrants. In the 2011 Legislative Session we give special attention to the

legislative recommendations of the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable working to eliminate the opportunity gap by reducing racial disparities in public high school graduation rates.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

We support development of common industry standards for recycled products, funding for recycling facilities, promotion of product stewardship, and legislative initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling. We support product stewardship for fluorescent lighting products and surplus pharmaceuticals, as well as framework legislation to ensure manufacturers' responsibility for waste products, such as fluorescents, paint, and carpeting.

Homelessness

Seattle continues to 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 require state institutions, including the Department of Corrections, and the foster care system to create and implement informed and responsible discharge practices;
- Measures to facilitate development of low-income and affordable housing; and
- Efforts to use existing funds more efficiently, working to fund provision of services and housing in a coordinated fashion.

Housing

Seattle believes that housing—its availability and affordability—is critical to the quality of life of our residents and neighborhoods. We seek full funding for the Housing Trust Fund. We also support resources for transitional and short-term rent programs for those who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and for increased hospitalization opportunities for the mentally ill. We support policies to stem foreclosures in the region and enhance counseling and data collection, and the right to mediation for homeowners facing foreclosure.

Infrastructure/Finance

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:

- Maintaining and improving Seattle Center as a vibrant regional attraction, including a \$1 million capital appropriation in order to help prepare for the upcoming 50th anniversary of the World's Fair in 2012.
- We support the extension of the stadium taxes if those revenues are used in ways that promote Seattle's economic vitality and attractiveness as a destination; and
- Improvements to the King County Flood Control District that provide for more equitable use of the revenues collected.

Law & Criminal Justice

We support a modern regulatory framework that results in the safe access to medical cannabis for qualified patients and that provides better clarity for law enforcement. We also support safeguards for protected groups from harassment and violence through misuse of the Public Records Act. Violations of anti harassment orders issued by courts of competent jurisdiction should be enforceable in other jurisdictions, not simply in the jurisdiction where it was ordered. We also support efforts that would allow courts of limited jurisdiction to order convicted defendants to pay restitution.

Planning & Development

Seattle believes in the right to impose fees to fund necessary facilities and services related to the impacts of development and to require appropriate infrastructure such as open space and sidewalks associated with new development. We support the expansion of incentive zoning to include provisions that incentivize creating new open space, preserving current open space, multi-modal transportation infrastructure, and the preservation of landmark structures. We support efforts to clarify that local jurisdictions may regulate land use and development to protect the public health, safety and welfare through development regulations. Seattle supports efforts to update the State Environmental Policy Act so that it works more efficiently, promotes growth within urban growth areas while affording the same level of environmental protection. We support exempting farmer's markets from SEPA requirements and clarification that the farmer's market at Pike Place Market meets the technical definition of a farmer's market.