



King County

King County 2024 Policy Guidance

Local Government Funding and Tax Reform

- The Legislature should take actions to remedy the local government fiscal crisis in the making.
- Work to streamline the senior/disabled persons property tax exemption program, making it more efficient and less burdensome for applications to be submitted, reviewed and approved.
- Enact an equitable homestead exemption for residential property tax.

Strengthening Access to Behavioral Health Care

All Washingtonians deserve access to quality behavioral health services where and when needed. The State has made recent progress in expanding and preserving behavioral health access. Still, more work must be done to provide immediate crisis services and behavioral health treatment on demand. Centering communities most harmed by racism, the State should build on previous efforts, including taking the following actions:

- Develop and sustain the essential behavioral health workforce.
- Preserve and enhance community-based behavioral health operations, including adopting policies and increasing funding for programs that support individuals and families in treatment for and recovery from substance use disorders.
- Fund capital investments to protect existing treatment beds, expand capacity, and enhance access to care.
- Address and work to streamline administrative obstacles to the efficient provision of behavioral health support and treatment, including transportation reimbursement for responders, insurance and billing practices that prevent appropriate financial remuneration for behavioral health services, and licensure requirements for workers in behavioral health facilities.
- Enhance the community-based response to behavioral health crises, including providing necessary resources to raise 988 crisis line public awareness, education and outreach, particularly for our youths.

Housing/Zoning/Land Use

King County needs more equitable access to healthy, safe, and affordable homes for individuals experiencing homelessness and communities at risk of severe cost burden and displacement. The State made historic housing investments in 2022, but the scale of the homelessness and housing crises exceed even these resources.

- Enhance past budget and policy actions, including making robust investments in housing capital, operations, and services.
- Improve housing stability for renters.
- Enact state policies to advance development and construction of missing middle housing, and that drives more housing in incorporated areas.
- Address water for growth through the comprehensive planning process.
- Battery energy storage sites—how to zone, financial responsibility for environmental harm, size, etc.
- Look to support programs that provide farm land to farmers of color, immigrants, and other disadvantaged individuals.

Providing an Equitable Public Safety and Justice System

- Invest in all components of local governments' public safety staffing.
- Maintain the intent of previous law enforcement accountability reforms while seeking improvements for operational implementation—we can have public safety and ensure that communities of color are not subject to harsher interactions and punishment for crimes.
- Expand innovative diversion efforts that address root causes and have better long-term outcomes for public safety and the wellness of our communities.
- Examine methods to increase juror participation and diversity, including increased juror pay and improved juror accessibility.
- Improve conditions for juveniles in detention.
- Support changes to law enforcement pension and minimum hour requirements which would provide more scheduling flexibility and hiring capacity for law enforcement agencies.

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Environmental Stewardship

- Maximize local distribution of state and federal infrastructure funds to help counties address climate change at the local level through investments in transit, building decarbonization and vehicle electrification, clean energy supplies, sustainable and safe transportation systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, and clean water and healthy habitat programs.
- Continue to enhance and grow product stewardship programs to make products safer for people and the planet, from design to disposal.
- Support updates to land use planning and permitting that align policies with state emission reduction goals and accelerate resiliency and habitat recovery.
- Support equitable climate solutions and an equitable green jobs transition by investing in expanded partnerships with frontline communities and community-based organizations across sectors such as policymaking, workforce development, economic development, environmental education, and community health and services.
- Create a capital investment grant program for long term care and similar facilities to upgrade HVAC systems that reduce harm from wildfire smoke.
- Establish greenhouse reduction goals at the regional and county level and a framework for implementation via reasonable regional, county, and local efforts.
- Promote policies and funding approaches that break down regulatory silos and emphasize outcome-based water quality benefits, including pollution prevention, necessary to promote long-term resilience for Puget Sound.
- Pursue funding sources to upgrade wastewater infrastructure in coming years.
- Waste to energy—look to explore alternatives to municipal waste as Cedar Hills reaches capacity. Explore municipal solid waste as a renewable resource.

Maintaining and Expanding Pro-Equity and Anti-Racist Policies

- Increase community-based resources that address hate and bias crimes and incidents.
- Pursue legislation that seeks equity for people with disabilities.
- Continue funding until courts have addressed all cases needing resentencing under the Washington State Supreme Court's Blake decision.

Ensure Access to Complete Health Care

- Support policy and budget efforts that address challenges with discharging patients who no longer need acute hospital-level care to settings that provide the appropriate level of care, particularly for patients with significant medical and behavioral complexity.

Mobility

As more and more people call King County home, our transportation system continues to need support. This support includes expanding funding for commute trip reduction and transit demand management systems, roads, and other forms of transportation including state and county ferry systems.

- Preserve maximum flexibility in new revenue tools for transportation, such as the road usage charge.
- Federal Way triangle project completion.
- Link Light rail—get project back on track or at least prevent further delays, particularly in south King County communities.

Good Governance

- King County asks that the Legislature continue to adopt legislation addressing governmental modernization and streamlining procedures, such as aligning civil service requirements with cities, accounting for technological advances, and making procurement processes more equitable.
- Enact protections for our electoral process and seek opportunities to meet voter access needs.
- Recognize that social service providers are critical partners in taking care of residents across the state, and allow social service providers to be reimbursed for the full amount of their costs by eliminating caps on administrative and overhead costs.

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