

CITY OF BLAINE
REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION
MEETING DATE: November 13, 2018

SUBJECT: 2019 Legislative Agenda

DEPARTMENT: City Manager

PREPARED BY: _____
(Digital Signature)

AGENDA LOCATION: Consent Agenda Council Action Unfinished Business

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution 1745-18 and attachment
2. Association of Washington Cities 2019 Legislative Priorities

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

The 2019 legislative agenda includes four items.

1. A request for the remaining \$2,000,000 in funding to install infrastructure to East Blaine.
2. A request for funds to support the modification of Blaine Road/Peace Portal Drive/Exit 274 intersection.
3. Support for local transportation funding options, specifically including an option for a second “penny per gallon” tax for border communities.
4. Support for a local share of fish landing taxes collected by the state.

The East Blaine infrastructure funding would supplement the \$1,200,000 received in the previous state capital budget.

For the Blaine Road intersection, we are seeking funds to design and construct the grade separated rail overpass for Blaine Road to interconnect with the Exit 274 freeway ramps. This is a refinement of our 2017 and 2018 priorities which included increasing freeway access as part of that project. We are no longer seeking funding to modify the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) or to add exit or entrance ramps to the freeway. We have not precluded these options, but we are focusing on the more immediate problem of traffic delays caused by the train.

We are seeking state support for an option to collect a second penny per gallon on gas sales in the border communities. We will propose that this be included in any local transportation funding package that the state legislature passes in 2019. We are coordinating with other cities that collect the existing penny per gallon tax.

We are supporting Westport, Washington in their effort to obtain a local share of the state tax on fish landings. We do not support an added tax, only a local share of the existing tax.

In addition, the legislative agenda indicates that the City supports the Association of Washington Cities 2019 legislative priorities.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: In Current Budget New Request Non Budgetary

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council “approve Resolution 1745-18, adopting the City of Blaine’s 2019 legislative agenda and authorize the City Manager to insert final language related to cost estimates and project description of the Blaine Road transportation improvement.”

REVIEWED BY:

City Manager _____ Finance Director _____ City Clerk _____
(Digital Signature) (Digital Signature) (Digital Signature)

RESOLUTION NO. 1745.18

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
BLAINE, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING THE CITY OF BLAINE'S
2019 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA.**

WHEREAS, efforts of representation on behalf of the City of Blaine to influence, affect or guide the passage of legislation in the Washington State legislature are enhanced by a comprehensive package of priorities that have been officially adopted by the City Council pursuant to this resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Blaine, Washington, adopts the attached City of Blaine 2019 Washington State Legislative Priorities as the position of the City of Blaine on the items stated therein.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BLAINE, WASHINGTON, on the 13th day of November, 2018, and approved by the Mayor on the same day.

CITY OF BLAINE, WASHINGTON

Bonnie Onyon, Mayor

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATE:

Samuel Crawford, City Clerk



CITY OF BLAINE 2019 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Fully Fund the East Blaine Infrastructure Project

The City of Blaine is expected to accommodate substantial portions of Whatcom County's projected population growth under the Growth Management Act's required comprehensive plan and regional planning tools. In order to meet these population projections, the City needs to develop infrastructure to support growth in East Blaine. During the 2018 legislative session, the City of Blaine joined private developers in seeking \$3.2 million in State capital funding to design and construct drinking water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure that will extend service capacity to reach the east end of Blaine city limits. The City was funded \$1.2 million in the 2018 supplemental Capital Budget, and **requests the remaining \$2 million during the 2019 legislative session.** The City and local developers are committed to match the State investment.

Allocate Funding for a Grade Separation Rail Traffic Solution at Blaine Road (SR 548)

Due to the City's location on the border, certain border control and security equipment that monitor people and goods passing between the US and Canada are located within the City. One of these pieces of equipment is the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS), which is operated by the federal government through US Homeland Security. Inspection of southbound cargo trains by the VACIS prevents through traffic access across Blaine Road (SR 548) and disrupts flow on and off of Interstate 5 at Exit 274. Blaine Road is one of the main access points into the City from communities such as Birch Bay and Semiahmoo. The operation of the VACIS causes serious local traffic delays. Solving this problem enhances public safety, promotes economic development, and supports the movement of goods into and out of the US.

The City has continued to pursue small updates to the interchange to manage traffic. Currently, we are working to secure funds to add turn lanes for queuing traffic, but we are seeking a permanent solution. The City of Blaine secured \$550,000 in State Transportation funds last year to support improvements at this interchange but needs additional funding for engineering and design costs of the newly identified grade separated rail crossing solution. The City seeks a State partnership in developing the solution. The next stage is completion of design and environmental review of the grade separated rail crossing. **The City requests the necessary funds to complete design and planning of this project in 2019.**

Local Transportation Revenue

Cities throughout the state lack financial resources to adequately maintain and operate the City-owned transportation system. The City of Blaine asks that the State provide increased local funding tools to meet City transportation needs. As a border community, the City of Blaine is unique from other communities. Visitors from Canada frequently travel into the City of Blaine, and utilize Blaine's infrastructure without contributing to the tax base. To address this, the State previously authorized border communities to impose a "border gas tax" with voter approval. The City of Blaine and surrounding communities have utilized this authority. One option to increase local funding tools to meet city transportation needs would be to authorize these communities to increase the border gas tax by one cent.

Fish Landing Shared Revenue

Washington State currently imposes a small tax on enhanced food fish revenue in such communities, but does not share this local revenue with the impacted municipalities. The City of Blaine supports the City of Westport and the Association of Washington Cities' effort to change statute and require that 75% of the revenue from the State landing fee is shared with the municipalities that house such facilities. The City sees a need to develop infrastructure in and around its own port, and sees a viable use for these funds, should the Legislature choose to enact this proposal.

The City of Blaine supports the legislative priorities of the Association of Washington Cities.

Strong cities make a great state. Cities house 65 percent of the state's residents, drive its economy, and provide the most accessible government. The continued success of cities depends on adequate resources and community-based decision-making to best meet the needs of our residents. Preserving local decision-making continues to be one of our core principles.



Support economic development tools to encourage job creation and economic growth

Washington's cities need additional economic development tools that assist in maintaining, expanding, and modernizing local infrastructure to help spur local private sector investment. By supporting value capture financing, the Legislature can partner with cities and towns to advance our shared goals of building a robust and diverse economy for communities around the state.



Keep the Public Works Trust Fund in working order

Cities support ongoing investment in the various infrastructure funding programs sponsored by the state. In particular, the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) is a crucial funding partner in our efforts to provide the necessary infrastructure for our communities. We seek full funding for the Public Works Board's \$217 million budget, funded from the current stream of loan repayments and the 2 percent of REET dedicated to the account. Additionally, we look to expand the program by ending REET fund diversions from the account now instead of waiting until 2023.



Invest in affordable housing

Communities around the state are facing a housing affordability crisis. Cities support an ongoing \$200 million capital budget investment in the Housing Trust Fund, a \$20 million per year local government revenue sharing proposal, and \$1.5 million per year for reinvestment of the sales tax from the construction of multifamily development. In addition, cities support proposals that remove barriers to affordable housing, including voluntary density and infill development solutions, opportunities for creating shared housing, and addressing condominium liability to expand housing choices.



Fund a systems approach to correct fish-blocking culverts

AWC and state agency partners are focused on developing and funding a comprehensive statewide approach to fix salmon-blocking culverts. In order to achieve meaningful salmon and orca recovery, cities need ongoing and significant funding to upgrade city culverts. This critical investment will support fish passage by maximizing collaboration with the state's legal obligation to upgrade its culverts, while also addressing other critical needs like stormwater and water quality. Cities support creating a permanent framework to fund systemwide corrections that begins with fully funding the Fish Barrier Removal Board this biennium, including capacity for a grant program in the second half of the biennium. An effective framework also includes a commitment to future investment.



Provide responsive funding for the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC)

Cities need a responsive funding model for the CJTC to ensure that newly-hired law enforcement officers and corrections officers have timely access to basic training. Cities seek funding for at least 19 Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) classes per year and at least seven Corrections Officer Academy classes per year in order to meet our public safety needs.



Address a failing behavioral health system

Cities are experiencing the ramifications of an overwhelmed mental health and drug abuse response system. The state needs to make investments sufficient to improve access to these systems and their success across the state. Cities will work with the state to pursue enhancements and reforms to the behavioral health delivery systems including engaging with mental health transformation proposals, the *Trueblood* settlement, making permanent the mental health co-responder program, and supporting comprehensive opioid response legislation.

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