

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Discussing the 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities		
DEPARTMENT:	City Manager's Office		
PRESENTED BY:	Jim Hammond, Intergovernmental Program Manager		
ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Motion
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing	

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

This staff report discusses the City's proposed 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities ("Priorities"). For 2020, staff proposes a continued focus on funding policies that support investments in the NE 145th Street Corridor and the associated I-5 Interchange.

The City has long prioritized the success of the Shoreline South/145th light rail station as an overarching goal that supports the full range of City goals for the 145th Corridor. With Sound Transit's success in finally attaining full federal funding for Lynnwood Link, City policy more directly focuses on the interchange replacement, a pedestrian overpass serving the light rail station and redevelopment of the station area for housing and economic development. These identified federal priorities are complementary with state and regional priorities, ensuring that the City's key messages are clear and consistent across all audiences. In addition, the proposed priorities encourage Congress to tackle pressing federal challenges that line up with the community's values, such as sustainability, addressing climate change, the enhancement of community and economic development, and other important social goals.

Tonight, Council is scheduled to discuss the proposed 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities. The proposed Priorities are scheduled to be brought back to Council for adoption on February 24, 2020.

RESOURCES/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This item has no direct financial impact.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required tonight; this item is for discussion purposes only. Staff recommends that the City Council move to adopt the 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities when this item is brought back to Council for adoption on February 24, 2020.

Approved By: City Manager **DT** City Attorney **MK**

BACKGROUND

This staff report discusses the City's proposed 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities. Given the partisan divisions in federal government, there is a lack of certainty over whether, when and how opportunities for constructive policy changes will present themselves. However, one factor common to both parties is, under the right circumstances, a desire to demonstrate that the federal government can continue to operate, apart from external activities. Accordingly, staff are watchful for opportunities to advocate for meaningful policy change and funding support.

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This staff report outlines a proposed strategy for the City to pursue in 2020 that addresses the identified priorities and builds the relationships necessary for success. The Mayor, City Manager, Intergovernmental Program Manager, and the City's federal lobbyist will be visiting with the City's Federal Legislative Delegation in April, 2020, to promote these priorities.

DISCUSSION

Staff proposes the attached draft 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities ("Priorities", Attachment A) for Council for review and potential approval. While these issues constitute the defined recommended federal agenda for the City of Shoreline, staff and consultants will respond to any opportunities as they arise from Congress. These issues could include a transportation and infrastructure bill, a Water Resources Development Reauthorization bill or a tax reform bill, among others.

Additionally, staff follow the work being done by partner agencies and organizations and will levy support when and where appropriate. Some of these organizations include the Association of Washington Cities, Sound Cities Association, the Puget Sound Regional Council, and King County, among others.

The items listed below generally track the summarized Priorities and provide additional information and context:

1. 145th Shoreline Station Area and Transportation Policy

The City has made the success of the Shoreline South/145th light rail station a top policy priority. This will be the “home” station for the communities of Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell and Woodinville, in addition to residents of North Seattle. The City has gone through a rigorous community-oriented process to rezone the area so that housing density is created with affordable and mixed-use options that is served by transit infrastructure. The City has partnered with all regional, state and federal agencies to make sure that the identified transportation challenges that exist for this station are addressed, prioritized and funded.

However, despite this work, significant challenges remain before the station opens in 2024. Some of these challenges – and the work that the City can do to address them – are listed below.

Priority: Continued pursuit of a BUILD Grant for the I-5/145th Interchange Project

The City has identified a plan to redevelop the 145th interchange and applied for federal BUILD grants in the summers of 2018 and 2019 to complete the project. Unfortunately, the City did not receive this grant, although the applications were highly rated. The City did receive support from Senator Patty Murray and the rest of the congressional delegation. Securing these funds and coordinating with our partners in the region will be a key priority, especially since the Trump Administration has objected to funding transit-oriented infrastructure grants. Staff intends to resubmit and improve the City’s application to best meet federal criteria in 2020.

Priority: Changing federal funding policy to set aside funds for medium-sized cities

Even as staff prepares for another round of BUILD funding, the City will advocate for critical policy changes to give Shoreline a level playing field for competition for this vital federal resource. To that end, Shoreline is supporting potential new federal legislation, BUILD UP, which will establish, for the first time, a set-aside fund for medium-sized cities in the 10,000 – 75,000 population range. It is too soon to know whether legislation will be introduced and passed in time to impact the 2020 BUILD funding cycle.

Priority: Elevating the need for 145th roadway improvements for transit and other traffic from I-5 to SR 99

The City is leading a coalition to improve 145th Street to serve the light rail station opening in 2024. The project will redesign this corridor to facilitate transit, traffic and pedestrian access to the light rail station at I-5 and 145th. This plan is still assembling the necessary funding to complete work before the station opens and the City of Shoreline continues to renew its relationship with the City of Seattle as a key regional partner. Staff is working to establish a Mayor to Mayor meeting between the two cities on this issue and the delegation should be asked to support this process and this discussion.

The City should first and foremost make sure that the delegation continues to prioritize the full scope of the 145th Street project and why it is a shared priority to enable the

success of the planned light rail stop. The delegation should be asked to be the City's advocate with state and regional partners to ensure that funding for 145th is a key priority for the region.

Priority: Request funding for the 145th Corridor in any federal transportation bill, including preserving bicycle and pedestrian funding

The Trump Administration and congressional leadership in both parties have endorsed conceptually the need for a federal infrastructure bill. The City will lobby the delegation to make sure that any bill has funding options for the City of Shoreline to complete the 145th Corridor project and to include potential funding for the 148th Street Non-Motorized I-5 Bridge.

Priority: Allocation of federal infrastructure dollars to transit and non-motorized projects

For decades, Congress has debated the amount of funding from the federal gas tax revenues that should go towards projects that are not directly highway-related. These projects include transit systems and non-motorized projects like sidewalks, trails and other programs. The share of federal dollars being made available to non-motorized projects has diminished over the past few transportation bills and there is a concerted effort to eliminate funding for transit and non-motorized access all together.

As Congress debates a new Transportation bill and considers the continued funding of the BUILD Program (formerly known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER, discretionary grant program), the City should continue to lobby for a portion of federal infrastructure dollars be allocated for transit and non-motorized projects. This will help support the City's goal to construct a pedestrian / bicycle overpass serving the Sound Transit Light Rail station and facilitate sidewalk redevelopment in the area West of I-5 within the station access area.

Priority: Addition of a medium-sized city set aside, similar to the current rural set aside, to better enable smaller communities to compete for federal dollars, both in a new Transportation bill and in the next round of BUILD grants

Most federal infrastructure spending has a rural set aside which is critical for smaller communities to be able to access federal dollars. There is no comparable medium-sized city set aside. Instead, medium-sized cities compete against large cities like Seattle, Portland and Los Angeles for limited resources. Medium-sized cities need a defined pool to compete within so as to make federal funds available in a way that they simply aren't in their current status.

As Congress debates a new Transportation bill and considers the continued funding of the BUILD Program, the City should lobby for a portion of federal infrastructure dollars be set aside for medium-sized cities. This policy position is supported broadly by similar sized cities throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The proposed BUILD UP legislation provides groundbreaking precedent for a medium city set-aside, and staff will advocate for its application to the broad range of transportation funding.

Priority: Increase in share of federal transportation funding directed to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (such as the Puget Sound Regional Council) for local distribution

Federal transportation funding is generally distributed in Washington State via the State Department of Transportation (DOT) or via a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) like the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). In the most recent Transportation bill from 2016, Congress changed the allocation of funds from 50%-50% between DOTs and MPOs to 55%-45% with MPOs gaining the larger amount.

As Congress starts to consider the next Transportation bill, the City should support increasing this proportion to the benefit of MPOs and oppose any attempt to preclude the formation of new MPOs to meet regional needs. This should dovetail with the City's work at PSRC to invest in critical infrastructure to meet our regional growth challenges.

2. Community and Economic Development Programs

Priority: Increased funding for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

The City of Shoreline uses CDBG and HOME funding to support local initiatives that benefit the City's vulnerable populations. Funding in the CDBG program increased by 30% in 2018 after falling to a decade low in 2017. The City should support the CDBG and HOME program at the federal level and lobby for increased funding that could be put to use in Shoreline immediately.

Priority: Preserving access to internet-based sales taxes and supporting other municipal tax authority

Following state action, the mechanism for collecting these revenues at the local level is in place. However, there remains a risk of action at the federal level that could reverse these gains. The City should urge its delegation to continue to support the current arrangement and oppose any efforts at the federal level that pre-empt these funds from coming to the City.

Congress has adjusted various tax policies that have a direct impact on the City of Shoreline, including the New Markets Tax Credit, the Affordable Housing Tax Credit and the State and Local Sales Tax Deduction. These policies, in addition to policies that would negatively value municipal bonding authority, will remain under debate in Congress in 2019 and the City should advocate for strong municipal authority and tax credits that facilitate economic development and meet our region's critical housing needs.

Priority: Restoration of Congressionally Directed Spending

Congress is considering restoring the earmarking authority to the legislative branch following the election. The Trump Administration is currently not funding the obligations directed by Congress and many elected officials want more authority over how funds are allocated.

The City should support earmarks with the following criteria:

- Only available to public agencies.
- Fully transparent process for requests.
- Limited to economic development, infrastructure, transportation and human services funding programs.

3. City Support for Other Key Policy Challenges

The City of Shoreline has a deep interest in an array of other federal policy issue areas that are in alignment with the City's core values. Key priority policy areas include:

- *Climate change.* Shoreline supports immediate action to reduce the impact of climate change, including legislation that moves our country to a carbon-neutral future.
- *Funding for salmon recovery and watershed restoration.* Policy ideas being examined include federal funding for culvert replacement, adding green stormwater treatment as a criterion for federal transportation funding, and federal tax credits for private property owners who undertake stormwater management. Staff continue to build partnerships with local federal representatives, including the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- *Support for marginalized communities.* Shoreline values all members of its community and works to prevent discrimination against anyone.
- *Gun safety.* Shoreline supports passage of universal background checks and other measures to enhance the safety of our community.

RESOURCES/FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item has no direct financial impact.

RECOMMENDATION

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft 2020 Federal Legislative Priorities



2020 Shoreline Federal Legislative Priorities [DRAFT]

Shoreline-specific local needs:

Federal support to complete the infrastructure improvements on State Route (SR) 523 (145th Street) from Corliss Avenue to SR 522, connecting the Shoreline South/145th Link Light Rail Station at I-5, scheduled to open in 2024.

- Continued support for a BUILD grant for the Interchange at I-5 and 145th Street, including changes to the BUILD program that would set aside money for medium-sized cities.
- Elevating the need for federal, regional and state funding support for to complete this project.
- Supporting funding efforts for a non-motorized bridge spanning I-5 that will connect newly upzoned neighborhoods with affordable housing requirements to the Shoreline South/145th Street Light Rail Station.

Reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act with the following priorities:

- Permanent authorization of the BUILD Grant Program.
- Designating a portion of BUILD Grant funding to medium-sized cities with a population between 10,000 and 75,000 akin to the rural community set aside.
- Increasing the funding allocation to Metropolitan Planning Organizations like the Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Prioritizing transit and non-motorized transportation funding.

Support, in the form of early phase funding, for reconstruction of NE 145th Street from SR-99 to Corliss Avenue that will link SR-99 with light rail and alleviate a major regional bottleneck.

- This will be a priority segment after the Corliss Avenue to SR-522 projects are completely funded and in construction. Early phase funds are needed now and can be put to use.

The City of Shoreline also urges Congress to tackle the pressing policy challenges that are aligned with the City's values, including the following:

- Immediate federal action to curtail the impact of climate change, including legislation to meet carbon reduction goals and transition our economy to a carbon-neutral future.
- Funding for salmon recovery and watershed restoration.
- Increased funding for Community Development Block Grants and the Home Investment Partnership Program.
- Preservation of municipal authority over tax authority and local public revenue streams.
- Passage of the EQUALITY Act to protect LGBTQ+ citizens in all communities from discrimination.
- Opposing any policies that would prevent our community from being a safe, inviting and equitable community for everyone without regard to immigration status.
- Passage of significant gun control legislation to enhance the safety of our community, including universal background checks and Red Flag laws.
- Restoration of Congressional Directed Spending.