



Snohomish County Legislative Report

February 24, 2024

SESSION CUTOFF CALENDAR

February 21, 2024	Opposite Chamber Policy Committee Deadline
February 26, 2024	Opposite Chamber Fiscal Committee Deadline
March 1, 2024	Opposite Chamber Deadline
March 7, 2024	Session adjourns - Sine Die

Weekly Overview

The House and Senate have each released their respective 2024 Supplemental Operating, Capital, and Transportation budget proposals. Each chamber held public hearings on and is in the process of approving their respective budget proposals. During the final weeks of session, the House and Senate will reconcile differences between their proposals to adopt final budgets.

Supplemental Capital Budget Summary

The House and Senate each released their respective supplemental capital budget proposals. Supplemental capital budgets tend to be more constrained in their spending and these proposals were no different. Both budgets spend approximately \$1.3 billion. Appropriations to local and community projects averaged \$278,000 per project. Many of the appropriations within the budget proposals are contingent on the Climate Commitment Act *not* being repealed. A complete breakdown of the Senate's proposed capital budget can be found [here](#) and the House's proposed capital budget can be found [here](#).

Supplemental Operating Budget Summary

The House and Senate have each released their 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget proposals. Both budgets assume an additional \$1.1 billion in spending to pay for current

programs and services. Beyond maintaining existing services, both the House and Senate propose new investments, with the House proposing \$1.1 billion in new spending compared to the Senate's \$722 million. [Click here](#) to read an overarching summary of the two proposals. [House 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget Documents](#) and [Senate 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget Documents](#).

Supplemental Transportation Budget Summary

The House and Senate have each released their 2024 Supplemental Transportation Budget proposals. As expected, the transportation budget faces significant revenue shortages. Both proposals spend Climate Commitment Act funds on projects, but don't release that funding until January 1, 2025, and only if the Climate Commitment Act is not repealed. [Click here](#) to view the House Transportation proposal and [click here](#) to view the Senate Transportation proposal.

City and County Association Budget Comparisons

For further supplemental budget breakdowns, the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties have created budget comparison documents for review. The AWC's breakdown can be found [here](#), and the WSAC's breakdown can be found on the right side of their website under the "[2024 Budget Comparison Document](#)" tab.

Other Items of Note

Last week members indicated that they plan to have public hearings on three of the six initiatives sent to the Legislature. Below is the schedule for the three initiatives that will be heard.

- [Initiative 2111](#), prohibits the State or local jurisdictions from enacting a personal income tax. The initiative will be heard in a joint meeting with the Senate Ways & Means and House Finance Committee on February 27th at 12:30 PM.
- [Initiative 2081](#), provides parents with a right to review educational materials, receive certain notifications, and opt out of sexual health education. The initiative will be heard in a joint meeting with the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee and House Education Committee on February 28th at 8:00 AM.
- [Initiative 2113](#), changes the state's vehicular pursuit law to allow an officer to engage in a pursuit if there is reasonable suspicion to believe the person has violated the law. The initiative will have a joint public hearing in the Senate Law & Justice Committee and House Community Safety, Justice, and Reentry Committee on February 28th at 9:00 AM.

Finally, after 5PM on Friday March 1st, only initiatives, alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, matters that affect state revenue, messages pertaining to amendments, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session may be considered.

Legislative Issues

Budget Reconciliation Letters

All 6 proposed budgets have been released. There are several items of interest to Snohomish County included in the proposed budgets. GTH has sent an initial list to County staff for review; meanwhile, we are drafting budget reconciliation letters that highlight items in each budget proposal that we prefer to be included in the final Supplemental Capital, Operating, and Transportation Budgets, which will be sent early next week.

Marysville Riverwalk Capital Request

The Senate Capital budget proposal includes \$309,000 for the Marysville Riverwalk project. The House budget, released on Monday of this week, does not include funding for the project. GTH is working on a budget letter to House and Senate budget writers asking for the Senate proposed funding to be included in the final budget.

Responding to the Drug Crisis

Regional Drug Task Force Funding: The Governor provided \$2.7 million in his proposed Operating budget to continue the operation of regional drug task forces, which play a key role in seizure of drugs being distributed in mass amounts to communities. Both Operating budget proposals include funding for regional task forces.

The Senate Operating budget provides \$4 million, ongoing, for multijurisdictional task forces. The House Operating budget provides \$2 million for multijurisdictional drug task forces. The funding is not ongoing, and \$50,000 must be used for Commerce to convene three roundtables with the Governor's office to discuss policies, regulations, and fiscal investments for the task forces. The roundtables must have representatives from local, state, and tribal governments. The report is due by June 30, 2025.

Public Safety

County Emergency Management Plans: [SB 6164](#), sponsored by Senator Keith Wagoner (R-39th LD), requires local organizations that produce a local comprehensive emergency management plan to include a communication notification plan, and one public meeting, for citizens during a hazardous materials spill or release. The House Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans Committee unanimously voted an amended version of the bill out on February 20th. Among the changes in the amended bill, it limits the communication and public meetings to only Type 1 and Type 2 hazardous spills. The Department of Ecology is also required to provide the public meetings, rather than the local emergency management organization. Finally, it requires the party responsible for the spill and not the party liable for the spill to attend the public meeting. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Basic Law Enforcement Academy: [SB 6301](#), sponsored by Senator John Lovick (D-44th LD), allows the Criminal Justice Training Commission to accept donated money or properties to fund the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. The House Community Safety,

Justice and Reentry Committee voted the bill out unanimously on February 19th. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Public Defense: [SB 5780](#), sponsored by Senator Nikki Torres (R-15th LD), expands training opportunities for public defense. The bill directs the Office of Public Defense to administer a law student rural public defense program, expand capacity for its defense training academy program, and directs the Criminal Justice Training Commission to provide a similar program for prosecutors and the administration of a law student rural public prosecution program. The House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee heard from the Washington State Office of Public Defense in support of the bill, as it would help address the crises that are being faced in public defense and prosecuting offices in the state. Additionally, it will give students the opportunity to be an intern in these offices and to encourage a career in these fields. The Committee unanimously passed the bill out on February 21st. The bill has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee.

Automated Traffic Safety Cameras: The House of Representatives approved [HB 2384](#), sponsored by Representative Brandy Donaghy (D-44th LD), with 58 voting in favor and 39 opposed. The bill allows cities and counties expanded authority to use automated traffic safety cameras (school zone cameras, red-light cameras, and speed cameras) and allows cities and counties to retain all the revenue generated from those cameras; current law only allows cities to receive 50% of revenue generated from speed cameras. The House approved an amended version of the bill modifying several provisions. Revenues generated from the cameras must be used for traffic safety purposes, and a proportionate share of the revenue must be spent in census tracts with household incomes in the lowest quartile and in areas that experience above average rates of injury crashes. Cities currently utilizing revenue from red-light cameras and school-zone cameras are exempt from this requirement and may continue to spend revenue consistent with purposes outlined in an existing ordinance. Additionally, rather than allowing any city or county employee to review traffic camera violations, as was outlined in previous versions of the bill, the employee must be a civilian employee who works for the law enforcement agency, public works or transportation department, and must be sufficiently trained and certified by peace officers or traffic engineers. Several other operational changes are made to the use of automated traffic safety cameras in the bill. The Senate Transportation Committee heard testimony for the bill on February 20th. Testimony was mostly supportive, as the bill could promote safer driving and reduce accidents. Some testifiers spoke in opposition as it could be an incentive for local jurisdictions as a revenue generator. A vote is scheduled for February 26th.

Speed Safety Camera Systems: [SB 6115](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis King (R-14th LD), and [HB 2356](#), sponsored by Representative Jake Fey (D-27th LD), is Department of Transportation request legislation. The bill modifies the administration, penalty structure, and enforcement of speed safety camera system violations in state highway work zones. It requires the Department of Transportation to make a website to educate the public about the speed safety camera system. Additionally, speed safety camera system infractions must be processed as parking infractions. The House's bill, which passed unanimously last week, has been referred to the Senate Transportation

Committee. SB 6115 had a public hearing on February 22nd in the House Transportation Committee. The testimony was similar to the other public hearings on the matter, with supporters testifying that this will make the roads safer, and opponents saying that this bill will be used as a revenue generator instead of a safety measure. SB 6115 is scheduled for a vote in the Committee on February 26th.

Courts

Office of Public Defense: [HB 1911](#), sponsored by Representative Jamila Taylor (D-30th LD), amends the statute prohibiting the Office of Public Defense (OPD) from providing direct representation of clients by allowing managing and supervising attorneys within the OPD to provide limited, short-term coverage of initial client consultations if contracted counsel is not available to provide the consultation services. The bill also allows OPD to coordinate with law schools to place law clerks, externs, and interns with OPD contracted counsel, and allows OPD to provide pro bono legal services. The Senate Law & Justice Committee voted the bill out on February 20th and sent it to the Rules Committee.

Emergency Management Infrastructure Assistance Program: [HB 2020](#), sponsored by Representative Joe Timmons (D-42nd LD), is request legislation from the Military Department. It creates a state administered public infrastructure assistance program (program). The program will provide assistance to counties and tribal governments for costs associated with disaster related response if public infrastructure is damaged during a Governor’s emergency proclamation. The bill allows the Military Department to initiate rulemaking to implement the program’s funds from county governments to recipients within the county. The Senate State Government & Elections Committee unanimously voted the bill out on February 20th with no amendments. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which had a public hearing for the bill on February 24th.

Environment

Wildland Urban Interface Fix: [SB 6120](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Van De Wege (D- 24th LD), is a “fix” to address concerns with past legislation. The bill changes the Wildland Urban Interface Code to make necessary fire safety updates in the state building code standards. The bill requires a revised map of areas at greatest risk of wildland fire, instead of the wildland urban interface which applies much more broadly. Further, it also allows counties, cities, and towns to complete their own map of areas at greatest risk of wildfire when applying these fire safety codes, so long as substantially similar criteria is applied. Counties, cities, and towns issuing commercial and residential building permits in areas identified as high risk or very high risk on the map must only apply the fire safety code considerations in these areas. The State Building Code Council may not adopt more restrictive fire safety requirements than what is included in statute. The House Local Government Committee held a hearing on the bill on February 20th. Many stakeholders testified in support of the original version of the bill, and many stated that a proposed amendment to adopt the full code will result in unintended consequences. The Washington State Building Code Council testified in opposition

because they feel that development codes belong in the policy realm rather than the rulemaking domain. The Committee passed the bill out on February 21st. The bill was passed with an amendment that requires DNR to develop a method by which local governments may update the wildfire hazard map and the wildfire risk map. The House Appropriations Committee had a public hearing this week and has scheduled a vote for the bill on February 26th.

Clean Buildings: [HB 1976](#), sponsored by Representative Mary Fosse (D-38th LD), relates to changing the incentive structure for tier 1 and tier 2 buildings. The Department of Commerce may provide incentives greater than the base incentive payment for upgrading tier 1 and tier 2 buildings under the Early Adoption Incentive Program. This week the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee unanimously voted the bill out and referred it to the Senate Ways & Means Committee, which had a public hearing on February 24th.

Organic Material Management Systems: [HB 2301](#), sponsored by Representative Beth Doglio (D-22nd LD), makes various changes related to organic material management. The bill establishes several grant programs for projects and programs that reduce food waste, requires source-separated organic solid waste collection services to be provided year-round starting in 2027 and additional requirements in 2030. Bin colors for solid waste collection services must be standardized across local governments. Additionally, cities are required to adopt compost procurement ordinances and report to the Department of Ecology (DOE) on the amount of organic material diverted. The Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee voted out an amended version of the bill this week. The amended version requires the DOE to develop guidance under which local jurisdictions may exempt persons from the requirement to only use source-separated organic solid waste collection services to discard unwanted organic materials. It also makes exemptions regarding the collection container color-coding requirements. Finally, DOE is also directed to adopt new rules or amend existing rules related to permitting requirements for anaerobic digester facilities or other facilities preparing organic materials for delivery to anaerobic digester facilities. The bill had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 24th.

GMA/Planning

Urban Growth Areas: [SB 5834](#), sponsored by Senator Shelly Short (R-7th LD) relates to urban growth areas (UGAs). The Senate unanimously approved a version of the bill that allows counties to conduct a “UGA swap” during the annual review of a comprehensive plan and requires a county to meaningfully consult with a Tribe impacted by the UGA revision. Specific language is included addressing critical areas, and requiring a two-year waiting period if the swap includes areas designated as agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance. The House Local Government Committee unanimously voted the bill out with no amendments on February 21st. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development: [SB 6140](#), sponsored by Senator Shelly Short (R-7th LD), provides an exemption for the square footage

requirements for new or existing retail or service space within a limited area of more intensive rural development (LAMIRD), given the area is located at least 10 miles from an existing urban growth area (UGA) and provides an essential rural retail service. The version of the bill that was unanimously passed by the Senate requires that an existing retail or food service space in a LAMIRD at least ten miles from a UGA must not exceed the footprint of the previously occupied space or 10,000 square feet, whichever is greater. The House Local Government Committee voted the bill out on February 21st with no amendments. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Housing

State Building Code Council: [SB 6291](#), sponsored by Senator Lynda Wilson (R-17th LD), is bi-partisan legislation establishing criteria and altering the process for adopting statewide amendments to the state building code. The bill requires that the State Building Code Council adopt amendments on a 3-year cycle, in line with their existing 3-year model code adoption cycle. Substantive amendments may only be made once during the update cycle must meet a narrower set of criteria. The Council cannot act on emergency amendments at the meeting in which it is introduced. Additionally, the bill makes several changes to Council membership, organization, including clarifying that ex officio members do not count towards quorum, for purposes of calling special meetings, or voting thresholds. The bill also allows the Council to appoint technical advisory groups to review petitions for statewide amendments. The House Local Government Committee unanimously voted out the bill with no amendments on February 20th and referred it to the Rules Committee.

Short Term Rental Tax for Affordable Housing: [SB 5334](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Lovelett (D-40th LD), provides a local government option for the funding of essential affordable housing programs. The bill allows the legislative authority of a county or city to impose up to a 10% excise tax on the sale of lodging of short-term rentals. The House Local Government Committee voted out an amended version of the bill on February 20th. The [amended bill](#) made several changes to the bill, including removing the ability for a local government to exempt up to one short-term rental per operator from the tax based on age and/or income. The amended version instead adds an exemption for rooms in an owner-occupied building in which all rented rooms share a single entryway. Funds from the tax must be used for construction, maintenance, and operation of affordable housing, affordable housing related services, rental assistance, and housing nonprofits. The bill was referred to the House Finance Committee which had a public hearing on February 23rd. The bill is scheduled for a vote February 26.

Property Tax Exemptions for Nonprofits: [HB 2012](#), sponsored by Representative Chipalo Street (D-37th LD), allows voter-approved levy lid lifts, and certain city and county funds as qualifying funding sources for the nonprofit housing property tax exemption. The Senate Ways & Means Committee had a public hearing on the bill for February 22nd.

Finance

Match Act: [HB 1870](#), sponsored by Representative Stephanie Barnard (R-8th LD) promotes economic development for local communities by increasing the capacity of the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to assist local communities in securing federal funding. A program is created to provide a state pool of matching funds for use by local communities submitting applications for federal grants. The Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming & Trade Committee heard public testimony and voted out the bill on February 20th. All testimony was in support of the bill noting its importance because it gives technical assistance to communities wanting to apply for federal funding and secures more state investment which will help attract more federal funding, and it is a vital resource for rural underserved communities. The bill was passed unanimously by the Committee with no amendments. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which had a public hearing with no one testifying on February 23rd.

Procurement

No Longer Under Consideration

Local Government Procurement Rules: [SB 6167](#), sponsored by Senator Bob Hasegawa (D-11th LD), increases, until July 1, 2026, the limit for contracts that require competitive bidding to \$150,000 if two or more trades are involved, or to \$75,000 if only one trade is involved. This past week the bill the Senate voted for the bill unanimously with an amendment regarding the effective date of the thresholds. The House Local Government Committee had a public hearing on February 20th, with no testimony opposed to the bill. The bill did not get voted out of the policy committee prior to the cutoff deadline and will not be considered this session.

Tribal Relations

Tribal Warrants: [SB 6146](#), sponsored by Senator Manka Dhingra (D-45th LD), establishes a process for state law enforcement officers to enforce tribal arrest warrants. The bill also forms a process for state law enforcement officers and state/local detention facilities to deliver tribal fugitives to tribal authorities. The House Community Safety, Justice & Reentry Committee received public testimony on February 19th, and voted the bill out the next day. We supported the bill at the hearing. The Committee voted the bill out with an amendment that creates a work group on the bill's implementation. It also provides specific immunities for law enforcement officers and their legal advisors, prosecuting attorneys, and the Attorney General's Office. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

John McCoy (Iulilaš): [HB 1879](#), sponsored by Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-40th LD), names the curriculum used to teach public school students about tribal history, culture, and government as the John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial curriculum. The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee voted the bill out on February 21st and referred it to the Rules Committee.

Elections

Even Year Elections: [HB 1932](#), sponsored by Representative Mia Gregerson (D-33rd LD), permits cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts to choose to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years. The version that passed the House of Representatives also allows jurisdictions that switch to even-numbered elections to switch back to odd-numbered elections if they so choose, and to modify the term lengths for elected municipal court judges to shorten term lengths if a jurisdiction chooses even-numbered elections. The Senate State Government & Elections Committee voted an amended version of the bill out on February 20th along party lines. The amended version limits the authorization to move general elections to only cities and towns. Additionally, to move the general election cities and towns are required to both adopt an ordinance or policy by its legislative body and receive approval by voters. The Senate Ways & Means Committee held a public hearing on February 23rd. Proponents testified that the bill would increase voter turnout and would allow greater local control. Secretary of State Steve Hobbs and former Secretary of State Sam Reed, and various county auditors, testified against the bill due to cost increases, and the possibility of voter fatigue for down-ballot races with longer ballots.

No Longer Under Consideration

Election Access: [HB 2023](#), sponsored by Representative Clyde Shavers (D-10th LD), requires counties to provide language assistance during elections when more than 2.5 percent of voting-age citizens in certain language minority groups in the county do not speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process and have not completed the fifth grade at a rate higher than the national average. The bill did not get voted out of the policy committee prior to the cutoff deadline and will not be considered this session.

General Government

Intergovernmental Relationship Between BC/US: [HB 2000](#), sponsored by Representative Sharlett Mena (D-29th LD), relates to the Office of International Relations and Protocol (OIRP). The OIRP's authority is expanded to create an advisory committee, and support state government relationships with foreign jurisdictions. The bill also creates an Interparliamentary Exchange with British Columbia. The OIRP is prohibited from designating foreign jurisdictions of strategic importance. The Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming & Trade Committee voted out an amended version on February 20th. The amended bill increases the membership of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations (LCEDIR). It clarifies that a foreign jurisdiction may not be considered a "jurisdiction of strategic importance" if it is currently subject to U.S. government sanctions or has been identified as a state-sponsor of terrorism. Modifications to the reimbursement of LCEDIR members is also included in the amended bill. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee for a possible floor vote.