



COVINGTON PRIORITIES 2023

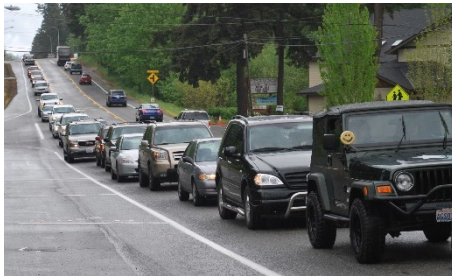


STATE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORTATION

The City of Covington commends the Legislature for the passage of the Move Ahead Washington (MAW) package. As the Legislature begins implementation of MAW and considers future investments, the City requests that the following be prioritized:

State Route 516 Pedestrian Bridge

The City of Covington is committed to providing safe routes within the community for all modes of transportation and abilities. To continue this mission, the City requests \$800,000 to complete a feasibility study and design for a pedestrian bridge over State Route 516. A pedestrian bridge will provide an essential north/south connection for Covington residents living in affordable housing on the south side to safely access essential services on the north side of State Route 516.



Covington Funding Requests

The City of Covington continues to request funding to complete improvements along State Route 516 from 185th to East City Limits, and to replace two culverts at Little Soos Creek on SE 256th Street.

Widening & Safety Improvements on State Route 18

The City is grateful for the state's investment of \$640 million for widening and safety improvements along State Route 18. The City will be closely monitoring the development of the project and urges the Legislature to phase the funds in a manner that allows for the most expeditious delivery schedule.

Maintenance & Preservation

Although the Legislature made significant investments in MAW, there is still more work to be done to address local maintenance and preservation. The City urges the Legislature to identify sustainable, ongoing funding that supports existing transportation infrastructure and meets the unique needs of communities throughout the state.



CAPITAL FUNDING – JENKINS CREEK TRAIL

The City requests \$2 million in the 2023-25 Capital Budget for Jenkins Creek Trail to create recreational connections between Jenkins Creek Park and SoCo Park. This is the first step towards providing a local trail that provides a direct link to the King County regional trails, providing residents from Covington, neighboring cities, and surrounding unincorporated areas equal access to recreational amenities. Trail users will have the ability to reach several local destinations, including neighborhoods, parks, schools, healthcare, and downtown/commercial areas.

AUDITS

The City has experienced concerning delays in the completion of the state-required annual financial statement audit, conducted by the State Auditor's Office (SAO). The SAO conducts all audits of local governments, consistent with RCW 43.09.245. The audit is a thorough process in which a State Auditor spends 10 to 12 weeks at City Hall inspecting records, interviewing staff, and observing and evaluating the City's financial processes. However, the average duration of time it takes to complete the audit has nearly doubled. The City requests a statutory change to address these delays, such as allowing cities to contract with qualified private audit firms to conduct annual audits in compliance with the state's audit requirements.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The City encourages the Legislature to pass public safety-centric laws aimed at protecting the community through safe and accountable police service, swift offender accountability accompanied by required and available treatment, as well as laws that recognize that controlled substances cannot be tolerated. The City supports authorizing law enforcement officers to take custodial action for the possession of controlled substances, and supports investments to meet treatment option needs. Additionally, the City supports adopting legislation clarifying that officers may engage in vehicular pursuits under certain circumstances using a reasonable suspicion standard. The City looks forward to a collaborative and open dialogue with the 2023 Legislature on these issues.



*The City supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities and Sound Cities Association.