



City of Bellevue | 2024-2025 Federal Agenda

Bellevue champions the programs, projects, and opportunities that position our city to thrive for today and for tomorrow. This federal agenda advances the City Council's vision, values, and priorities to get us there. Bellevue is the city where you want to be.

PRIORITY ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Investment in mobility and transportation infrastructure is a top priority for the City and its growing residential and business community. We appreciate the opportunity created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for cities to apply directly for competitive grants and not necessarily await additional process at state and regional bodies. Bellevue's mobility, land use, equity, and climate goals depend on a robust and integrated transportation network.

- **Eastrail:** Bellevue supports King County and other regional partners in the 42-mile north-south rails-to-trails corridor, where there is a critical funding gap for the segment crossing I-90 toward Renton. The city supports King County, the City of Renton, and community partners in seeking federal funding, including a 2024 RAISE application pending at USDOT.
- **Grand Connection Crossing:** Bellevue will create a multimodal, active transportation crossing from downtown Bellevue to Wilburton, creating a critical east-west crossing over I-405. The project is in early design, intending to reach the 30% design milestone the end of 2024. Alongside private partners and community supporters, the city sought design support in fiscal year (FY) 2025 and will seek federal competitive grants support for construction in coming years.

- Smart City technology: Bellevue's Smart Mobility Plan will manage growth and improve safety by leveraging technology to enhance and optimize transportation systems throughout the city. Investments will help Bellevue plan for shared-use mobility, autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, and data management. In 2024, Bellevue won a USDOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Program competitive grant award, which will help the city deploy pedestrian-focused technology treatments sooner.

ESSENTIAL AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The health and safety of our growing community and our high quality of life require continued investments in essential and sustainable infrastructure at the federal level.

- Funding for utility infrastructure: Bellevue and King County ratepayers alone cannot pay the enormous cost to maintain and improve aging wastewater and stormwater treatment systems. We need a significant new federal funding source to address the urgent water infrastructure issues across the region and nationwide. We request your support of additional federal grant funding resources for water infrastructure and for more utility bill assistance help for low-income households. In addition, in the FY 25 round of congressionally directed spending, Bellevue seeks program development funding for the Lake Washington Sewer Lake Lines Management Plan, which will guide the replacement of 15 miles of sanitary sewers along the shoreline of Lake Washington.
- Reducing climate pollution: Our City is eager to access resources from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), including Climate Pollution Reduction planning grants and others, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution.
- Affordable internet access and connectivity: Deployment of digital connectivity infrastructure is essential to support the growing needs of Bellevue, its employers, and residents. Access to high-speed internet connectivity is an essential part of bridging long-standing gaps in equity.

HOUSING AND SAFETY NET PROGRAMS

Bellevue is a caring community, and diversity is our strength. We want our entire community to have equitable access to services. We seek to create an inclusive community where equitable outcomes are something we take distinct actions to achieve.

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC): The LIHTC program is the single most important source of financing for multi-family affordable housing projects in Bellevue, including preservation and new construction projects serving families, seniors, low-wage workers, and people moving out of homelessness. We encourage its expansion in this Congress.
Childcare and resources for working families: Limited sources exist to help families pay for the costs of childcare, and one-time pandemic sources are fading. Tax credits for working families and childcare help increase employment rates and the earnings of parents, as well as reduce child poverty. Bellevue supports Congressional action to support these programs.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FEDERAL INTEREST

The City of Bellevue has an enumerated vision and goals, structured around six strategic target areas. They are: High performance government, Vibrant economy, Safe & efficient transportation system, High quality built and natural environment, Community safety & health, and Thriving people and communities. Because federal budgets and proposed legislation may evolve throughout the year, we will weigh in on important items that advance the strategic target areas of the City's adopted priorities. Below are a number of current federal interests:

Emergency services and community safety: Bellevue leads and partners with our neighbors in the region to advance common goals. We are at the center of the eastside crescent formed by the cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Issaquah, and Renton. We celebrate the benefits of working as one region, as well as in partnership with other governments. In 2023, Bellevue and Redmond became the first in the state to begin to electrify our fire engines, successfully securing multiple grants. Together, we received a congressionally directed spending investment in FY 24, and we have applied in FY 25 for the portion of our FY 24 request that Congress was unable to fund in the last cycle.

Public safety and accountability: Bellevue strives to enhance public trust and transparency. Equipping police officers with body-worn cameras is an important step in that effort and is among the recommendations developed for the city by its Office of Independent Review Group, as part of the city's pledge to improve public safety strategies. Bellevue deployed this technology in 2024, with support from congressionally directed spending. Looking forward, the department may also seek resources to equip police vehicles with in-car video, harness artificial intelligence to improve officer efficiency, and work with community partners to develop a real time intelligence ecosystem.

Safety: Bellevue's Vision Zero Plan implements a safe systems approach to accommodate a growing, diverse population and workforce. It will create a blueprint for prioritizing pedestrian and bike safety, while creating connections to transit in preparation for the opening of the complete Sound Transit 2 Line across Lake Washington in 2025.

Energy efficiency and transformation: The City supports policies and investments that promote renewable energy and combat climate change, including implementing energy-efficient building codes, electrifying fleets, and deploying vehicle charging infrastructure. One of our collaborations is the Energy Smart Eastside Program, comprised of the cities of Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah, and Mercer Island. We also support additional funding for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants and incentives to retrofit buildings.

Immigration and asylum: The nation is facing an asylum and refugee crisis, and the Eastside is affected by and interested in ways to prepare for these needs. Collaboration between public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and communities is imperative. These challenges should not be faced alone by any one community, but approached with coordinated planning and leadership. Comprehensive immigration reform is needed that will resource asylum and refugee programs, process applications faster, and remove the federal prohibition on employment for newly-arrived asylum-seekers. Federal investment is needed to support community response systems, including grant programs that fund housing and other needs.

Environmental health: The City supports policies and investments that improve environmental health, including the programs that support active transportation alternatives, protect open space and advance habitat restoration. The City applied to the National Culvert Removal, Replacement and Restoration Grant Program in 2023 and will apply again, seeking opportunities to leverage local, state, and federal funds to restore and protect habitat.

I-405 corridor: Bellevue supports infrastructure improvements to maximize the effectiveness of the I-405 corridor, update and implement the I-405 Master Plan, and upgrade the efficiency of state highways and regional corridors. Key segments of this corridor that need investment include: Interchange improvements at SR 520 and 124th Avenue NE; I-405 Improvements at I-90 and SR 520; and South Downtown I-405 Access/Lake Hills Connector.

Economic development, workforce development, and arts: Bellevue provides an attractive and welcoming business environment. Bellevue supports partners to promote apprenticeships and programs to retrain, upskill, and transition workers impacted by business automation and structural changes in the economy. The City supports regional efforts to build interest in STEAM fields among students. Bellevue's Economic Development Plan supports investments in capacity building and partnerships, support to small businesses and microbusinesses, entrepreneurship, workforce development, the BelRed Arts District, and tourism.

Cybersecurity: Additional funding support to local governments is needed to enhance the ability to protect critical government functions, systems, and services from cybersecurity attacks and threats. We are eager to work with our state agencies and private partners to deploy funds such as State and Local Cybersecurity Grants (SLCGP) to enhance and harden our systems. Bellevue was awarded an SLCGP grant award in late 2023.

5G readiness: Bellevue's infrastructure must support 5G development (i.e., connectivity and power to enable Bellevue's utility poles to be ready for 5G and allow for rapid deployment of small-cell technology for private sector entities) so our Smart City strategy can be fully deployed for the benefit of the public, for safety, connectivity, equitable access, and more.

Financing and credit assistance: Credit assistance, tax incentives and other financing mechanisms have been effective tools in expanding the available revenue for public works projects and investments. Federal direct loans, loan guarantees, and credit line assistance through programs like infrastructure banks and the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) are valuable for cities. Bellevue recommends raising the federal population cap for communities accessing the best available borrowing rates to ensure that growing, thriving communities can appropriately utilize flexible, low interest financing tools.



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