



City of Kelso 2017-2019 Legislative Biennium Agenda

(Adopted October 4, 2016)

Tam O'Shanter Athletic Complex Improvements

Centrally located in Kelso, Tam O'Shanter Park is a regionally-significant athletic complex which provides recreation and expansive public space for residents. The park contains three baseball and softball stadiums, soccer fields and disc golf, in addition to river trails, playgrounds and community gathering space. The park's heavy usage and limited ingress/egress points have created a need for additional parking facilities that improve access for both patrons and emergency vehicles. Tam O'Shanter's current paved parking areas are insufficient for demand, and auxiliary lots are difficult to maintain or prone to standing water. Kelso requests \$1 million to construct additional parking facilities to improve emergency access and accommodate the expanded use of city parks.

West Main Street Realignment Completion

Kelso requests \$5 million for Phase II of the West Main Street Realignment Project. The West Main Corridor provides a direct route from SR 4 to I-5 through Kelso and improves access to SR 411. Phase II will complete the project and includes right-of-way acquisition, widening of the corridor, and intersection improvements at the SR 4 junction. This project will enhance safety and relieve congestion by offering a direct route between two major state highway facilities.

Public Works Infrastructure Funding

Throughout the last several years, funding for public works infrastructure projects has effectively been eliminated with defunding of the Public Works Assistance Account, culminating in a sweep of \$16 million from project repayments in 2016. Moving forward, cities must have access to a program that allows for the expansion and preservation of essential infrastructure. The City supports efforts to create a long-term funding source for public works infrastructure.

Indigent Defense Standards:

Kelso requests additional funding assistance to meet the new Supreme Court-mandated caseload limits. Under new standards, Kelso's indigent defense costs increased over 60% from \$90,000 to \$145,000 annually. Although expansion of the current public defense grant programs is appreciated, this is not a sustainable funding mechanism to address local financial burdens long-term. Kelso requests that the Legislature provide additional relief for the financial impact of these new caseload standards.

Basic Law Enforcement Academy Funding

Law enforcement and public safety is a top priority in the City of Kelso. In five years, 46% of the department (12 officers) is eligible for retirement, and one-third is eligible today. Delays in training new officers due to wait-listing at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy are costly for cities and dangerous, both to fellow officers, and potentially to the public at-large. Kelso requests new and sustainable funding to add sufficient classes at the Criminal Justice Training Center in order to minimize delays and provide appropriate law enforcement training.

The City supports the Association of Washington Cities' legislative agenda.