

# 2025 Federal Legislative Priorities

## LACEY CITY COUNCIL

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Adopted by Lacey City Council on January 7, 2025

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## COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### 1. Huntamer Park Civic Improvement Project

For decades, the City has actively engaged through planning and public project efforts to transform the Midtown District into a vibrant and community-centered urban core. The “heart” of this area, Huntamer Park, a 1.5-acre civic space, desperately needs updates to meet the growing community's needs. Previous major improvements at Huntamer Park last occurred in 2005. Since then, the surrounding Midtown District has grown significantly with new mixed-use and residential (re)developments. This project would strengthen opportunities for civic engagement, improve equity by increasing park access and amenities in Community Development Block Grant qualified census tract, increase environmental resiliency, improve public health and wellness, and expand opportunities for economic growth and development. The City of Lacey is seeking \$400,000 to improve Huntamer Park, including adding plaza spaces, a water feature, new landscaping, pathways, and furniture designed to for daily use while maintaining civic spaces for important community-wide events.

## 2. COLLEGE STREET CORRIDOR SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The College Street corridor carries an estimated 32,000 vehicles each day and is the primary north-south link connecting the City, as well as other Thurston County communities. The corridor is a vital access point to local schools, services, and multimodal transportation options for many, including several low-income communities. College Street has over 130 driveways, many T-sections and inefficient four-way intersections that result in serious vehicle safety hazards. Other corridor users (including elementary school children traveling to school) face narrow sidewalks, the absence of bike infrastructure, and a scarcity of welcoming infrastructure that compounds these safety challenges.

While the City intends to apply for a RAISE grant again, the City of Lacey is seeking an additional \$1M for this project.

## 3. I-5 CORRIDOR FROM TUMWATER TO MOUNTS ROAD AND THE NISQUALLY RIVER DELTA

Interstate 5 (I-5) is crucial to the Puget Sound Region for commerce, transportation, and Joint Base Lewis McChord's (JBLM) mission readiness. The current configuration negatively impacts the Nisqually River by impeding critical ecological functions essential to salmon survival while also increasing flood risk that creates safety, national security, and freight mobility concerns. In 2022, the Washington State Legislature recognized the need to address these challenges and allocated \$75 million for planning of the Nisqually River delta (Mounts Road to Marvin Road) portion of the corridor.

The City continues to work with local partners to advocate for the advancement of this project as a unified voice and recognizes the need for federal investments.

## POLICY POSITIONS

### 1. PROVIDE BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA FLEXIBILITY (BABA)

While the City supports the underlying goals of the Build America, Buy America Act, it presents significant challenges for communities like Lacey that are eager to put federal investments from the Infrastructure and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act to use. The City has significant concerns about meeting daunting BABA requirements. The City urges efforts to provide increased BABA flexibility for infrastructure projects.

2. CLEAN WATER PROGRAMS: CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND & SEPTIC-TO-SEWER CONVERSION PROGRAM

Within city limits and its Urban Growth Area, there are nearly 10,000 septic systems in older, urban neighborhoods where public sewer is unavailable. As these systems age, they can fail undetected and cause significant harm to community health.

While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) made historic investments to help communities across the country address their clean water challenges, not all resources are accessible. BIL's creation of two new funding streams within EPA's State Revolving Fund (SRF) program for emerging contaminants and lead line replacement is a key pillar of the legislation's water investments. Unfortunately, the additional funding does not allow states to determine how best to allocate the additional resources, resulting in Washington returning funding to the federal government. The City urges Congress to provide states with greater flexibility in using EPA's State Revolving Fund resources.

In the past few years, the City approved over \$5 million for water and wastewater improvements, including septic-to-sewer conversions, in a neighborhood where contaminants from septic systems were impacting groundwater and aquifers. The City wants to continue investing in these conversions in future years. The City urges Congress to appropriate funding to the Connections to Publicly Owned Treatment Works grant program, an ideal funding stream for the City's Septic-to-Sewer Conversion Program.

3. SUPPORT THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (DCIP)

An estimated 70% of the active-duty members serving at Joint-Base Lewis-McChord live off base and in communities across the South Sound.

Approximately, 10% of off-base, active-duty members call Lacey home. The City urges continuing support for the DCIP program and that the program remain eligible for needed capital investments on and off military installations.

4. SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING AND HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE

The City supports efforts to address the nation's childcare crisis, including reducing barriers for providers, building new facilities, increasing workforce development, increasing access to subsidized childcare slots, and increasing

childcare in all areas. To help address these challenges locally, the City continues to explore opportunities to access programs such as the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP), which could provide resources to enhance the availability of high-quality early learning and childcare.

5. **SUPPORT A NATIONAL HOUSING AND HOMELESS OUTREACH STRATEGY**  
The lack of a consistent, coordinated homeless strategy means the impact of homelessness is disproportionately borne by local communities and jurisdictions across the nation. The City strongly supports legislation like the Ending Homeless Act to provide resources programs need to effectively address the housing and homeless crisis in America, in addition to increasing the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to encourage private investment in the production and preservation of affordable housing. The City also believes investments in our nation's mental health systems are critical and supports efforts such as the Bipartisan Addiction and Mental Health Task Force.
  
6. **CONTINUED SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS — COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM, COPS GRANT, AND MORE**  
The City urges continuing support to provide and enhance funding for community programs such as CDBG and COPS, critical funding streams for communities like Lacey seeking to enhance public safety and the community's quality of life.
  
7. **SUPPORT THE HOMES FOR EVERY LOCAL PROTECTOR, EDUCATOR, AND RESPONDER (HELPER) ACT**  
The City strongly supports the HELPER Act which would create a home loan program within the Federal Housing Administration allowing law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, and pre-K-12 teachers, across the country to obtain a low-interest, fully insured home loan with no down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance costs.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **CITY OF LACEY**

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### **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

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