

**RESOLUTION NO. 1908-23**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLAINE,  
WASHINGTON, AMENDING RESOLUTION 1905-22 AND THE CITY OF  
BLAINE'S 2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA.**

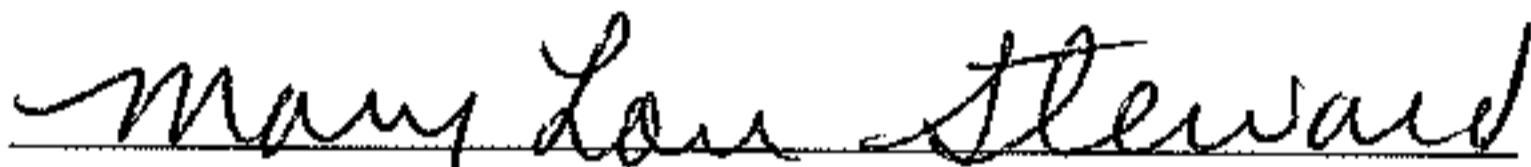
**WHEREAS**, after the 2023 Legislative Agenda was approved by City Council on November 14, 2022, new projects and information was received that affects the priorities of the City in 2023; and,

**WHEREAS**, efforts of representation on behalf of the City of Blaine to influence, affect or guide the passage of legislation in the Washington State legislature are enhanced by a comprehensive package of priorities that have been officially adopted by the City Council pursuant to this resolution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Blaine, Washington, adopts the attached City of Blaine 2023 Legislative Priorities as the position of the City of Blaine on the items stated therein.

**PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BLAINE, WASHINGTON**, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023, and approved by the Mayor on the same day.

**CITY OF BLAINE, WASHINGTON**

  
Mary Lou Steward, Mayor

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATE:

  
Samuel Crawford, City Clerk



## City of Blaine 2023 Legislative Priorities

### **East Blaine Wellfield**

The East Blaine Infrastructure expansion project for water, sewer and electric, continues to be a high priority for the City. The City is appreciative of the Legislatures previous investments to East Blaine, including \$500,000 for the water booster pump station. The funding for the Wellfield Site Project is an essential element to the City's water infrastructure extension project, which extends the current water systems east to the Grandis Pond project site development of roughly 1,000 new homes (both market and workforce housing with donated home sites from the developer, multi-family units and apartments, and commercial areas). The City is also in the process of developing and implementing a Tax Increment Financing District (TIFD) in 2023 in East Blaine.

As Blaine continues to build upon these efforts and its mission to increase housing availability and economic vitality within the region, the City requests \$2 million to support the Wellfield Site Project, which includes the development of a water reservoir and the necessary piping installations located at Pipeline Road.

### **Addressing Train/Vehicle Delays at Bell Road (State Route 548)**

Bell Road (SR 548) connects the communities of Birch Bay and Semiahmoo to downtown Blaine and Interstate-5. There are serious local traffic delays on this roadway caused by the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS). The VACIS is operated by US Homeland Security to monitor goods leaving or coming into United States from Canada. Cargo trains going through the VACIS move very slowly, and block traffic across Bell Road (SR 548). This traffic backs up on to Interstate 5 at Exit 274. For several years, the City of Blaine has worked with local and state partners to identify a solution to the delays. The state appropriated \$2.75 million in 2021 to support intersection improvements to Bell Road. Just recently, coordination between the City, BNSF Railway and WSDOT has resulted in further efforts to address the totality of the issue by developing a grade separation over SR 548 and to replace the Dakota Creek Bridge.

The Bell Road-BNSF Railway Grade Separation project will eliminate these substantial delays to vehicle traffic at this location and provide safe and reliable access between unincorporated Whatcom County, Interstate 5, and emergency services in Blaine. The City is currently in the design phase of the project and in partnership with BNSF, applying for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. In addition to the potential funding opportunity through RAISE, the City requests that the remaining state funds for the intersection project be reappropriated to the Bell Road-BNSF Railway Grade Separation project.

### **Fiscal Sustainability**

The City of Blaine continues to experience the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations, as commerce spurred by Canadians crossing the US-Canadian border has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels. To address the City's fiscal challenges, Blaine joins the Association of Washington Cities and other local jurisdictions in requesting legislative action to allow local jurisdictions to have the option to increase property tax levies with inflation, instead of the current 1% annual growth limit. Additionally, the City respectfully requests that the Legislature increases revenue sharing with City governments to accomplish shared objectives.

**Local Transportation Maintenance & Preservation**

The City of Blaine is appreciative of the Legislature's recent change in statute that authorizes border communities to impose an additional 1-cent on fuel tax to support local transportation needs. As the state explores alternative transportation funding sources to replace declining fuel tax revenues, the City requests that the Legislature dedicate a portion of those revenues toward local transportation maintenance and preservation.

**Housing Availability & Affordability**

The City of Blaine supports policies that provide communities with resources and tools to address their unique availability and affordability housing challenges. The City continues to prioritize and plan for increased housing for all affordability types, as exemplified through the ongoing developments occurring in east Blaine, which is projected to support almost 40% of the City's needed housing stock over the next 20 years. The City supports state funding sources such as the Housing Trust Fund to continue building homes that serve all income levels.

*The City of Blaine supports the legislative priorities of the Association of Washington Cities.*

