

We are your partners in the care of our State's residents! Mount Vernon supports legislation to acknowledge that Cities and Towns are where most residents live, work and play in our State. We pledge to partner with the Legislature and Governor to find ways to adequately fund both state and local priorities.

Public Records Act – We support open and transparent government: We seek solutions to strengthen the intent of the Public Records Act and ways to meet this commitment. We support:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution – with 400 legal exemptions to disclosure, the only resolution offered for disputes about the exemptions is a superior court judge.
- Reasonable charges for providing electronic data – with modern business practice; electronic distribution of requests is routine. We request updating the law which intended was to allow jurisdictions to recoup costs of paper.
- Reasonable charges for fulfilling requests made for commercial purposes – open records laws should not allow commercial purpose requestors to leverage governments.

Local Control/State Partnership: Forest Practices in Urban Growth Areas

The City requests legislative change to amend Chapter 76.09 RCW to close the loophole exempting non-conversion forest practices in UGA's of over 20 acres from the City's critical areas ordinance which are based on best available science. We believe it is sound government practice to promote a uniform system of laws that adequately protect natural resources. Our City has adopted forest regulations that include application of the Cities critical areas ordinance. In 2015, a commercial logging company was able to exploit a loophole in the State law and log a 154 acre site containing 42 wetlands and 4 separate stream channels with virtually no buffers or environmental protections.

Local Infrastructure:

We request the State continue its governmental partnership with local government – specifically in directing 911 tax revenues to their intended use of ensuring local/regional 911 systems using current technology. Funding models are in need of review – and oversight of spending on capital infrastructure should be prioritized in light of VoIP, single point GIS mapping, and Federal mandates of narrowbanding that causes overwhelming capital investment. We support:

- Reformulation of State 911 funding allocation - support to the "medium" size 911 call centers
- No diversion of State 911 funds to other than 911 uses

Human Services & Housing:

Mount Vernon has experienced a noticeable increase in street homelessness. We believe investment in the state's human services network is necessary. Greater access to mental health, substance abuse services, and supportive shelter/housing is essential. We support:

- Local option tools: preservation of property tax exemption authority and demolition fee
- Preserve Housing trust fund – increase contributions for capital projects
- Preserve document recording fee to fund homelessness programs
- Increase funding for mental health services- specifically intensive treatment for indigent individuals

The City of Mount Vernon has committed to a full time social worker embedded within the police department to respond to a significant increase in street homelessness. In addition, the City in partnership with Skagit County is working to implement a Community Court model to address crime and disorder associated with homeless or significantly indigent defendants. We are fully engaged in actions that are within our resources yet need more help to address this crucial need.

