



**Skagit County
2020 End of Session Report
Government Relations Services**

Dear Skagit County Commissioners:

It was our privilege to advocate for Skagit County during the 2020 Legislative session. This was the second session that Gordon Thomas Honeywell Governmental Affairs has represented Skagit County, and we sincerely appreciate our partnership.

Skagit County played a significant role in securing the passage of HB 1590, allowing the local option housing sales tax to be imposed councilmanically, which was one of your top priorities. While every 60-day session is a whirlwind, this one was particularly fast-paced. There were more bills introduced in this short session than in the long 105-day session of 2019. In this environment, passage of a bill like HB 1590 is a particularly significant accomplishment.

Skagit County is fortunate to have a fantastic partnership with its legislators: Sen. Ron Muzzall, Sen. Keith Wagoner, Sen. Liz Lovelett, Rep. Norma Smith, Rep. Dave Paul, Rep. Carolyn Eslick, Rep. Robert Sutherland, Rep. Debra Lekanoff, and Rep. Alex Ramel. As the Legislature continues to trend away from transparency and desire to partner with local governments, the individuals in the 10th, 39th, and 40th legislative districts consistently show concern for the needs of Skagit County. Please let these legislators know that they are appreciated.

Legislative success requires consistent, proactive engagement, and our state currently faces great uncertainty. As your governmental relations partners, we stand ready to provide the services that you need to respond to the challenge, and look forward to working with you through the interim months to prepare for the 2021 Legislative session.

Sincerely,

Josh Weiss and Annika Vaughn

Overview of the 2020 Legislative Session

The 2020 legislative session was the second in the two-year biennium and scheduled to last 60 days. The Legislature adjourned on time, finishing around 8:15 P.M. on the 60th day. This year was the supplemental session, meaning the Legislature made adjustments to the capital, operating, and transportation budgets passed in the 2019 Legislative Session.

As with last session, the House and the Senate retained stronger Democrat majorities than in prior years: The House was comprised of 57 Democrats to 41 Republicans and the Senate 27 Democrats to 22 Republicans. These strong majorities, coupled with campaign fundraising restrictions in place during this important election year, led some to suspect that the Legislature would adjourn early. However, emergent events, including \$1.5 billion in additional operating revenue, passage of Initiative 976 and the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), had budget writers scrambling to adjust and re-adjust their budgets. Final budgets include significant investments in homelessness, affordable and supportive housing, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and revenue loss from Initiative 976.

An astounding 2,233 bills were introduced, surpassing the first half of the biennium; of which, 386 bills, or about 17 percent, passed the Legislature. As the majority party, Democrats set an ambitious agenda addressing tribal sovereignty, affordable housing, taxation, healthcare, climate change, GMA reform, and more; however, the tight turnaround of the short session halted many of these discussions until next year.

Since the Legislature concluded its work, state government has focused heavily on the response to COVID-19, and the Governor has indicated that a special session may be necessary if his office is not able to under his executive authority to make all necessary policy changes and funding appropriations.

Legislative highlights and summaries of each budget follow.

2020 Supplemental Operating Budget

The final supplemental operating budget is smaller than originally anticipated. In the final days of the legislative session budget writers reduced the budget from earlier proposals to proactively prepare for an economic downturn stemming from the COVID-19 epidemic. The February revenue forecast estimated that budget writers would have \$1.5 billion in new revenue available to them for the current biennium. The budget that passed the Legislature commits \$961 million of this to new spending. To further prepare for fiscal challenges ahead, the Governor line-item vetoed 147 separate expenditures, for a total reduction of \$235 million this biennium and \$210 million in the next. This brings the state's total biennial budget to \$53.3 billion over the biennium and leaves \$3 billion in reserves.

\$200 million was appropriated to fund public health activities to manage and mitigate for the Coronavirus epidemic. \$175 million is provided from the state's budget stabilization account, more commonly referred to as the "rainy day fund," and \$25 million is provided in federal funding. This policy is enacted in House Bill 2965. The bill dedicates \$25 million of the allocated \$200 million to the COVID-19 Unemployment Account, which aids individuals temporarily laid off as a result of COVID-

19. The bill also expands unemployment waiting period credits or benefits to individuals seeking employment under quarantine.

The Department of Commerce is providing \$30 million to counties under a formula grant: disbursement amounts for each county found [here](#). Funding is for counties to establish quarantine housing or additional sanitation, including handwashing stations or portable toilets, by the beginning of April. While counties are the funding recipients, they are expected to partner with cities and local health departments to determine funding uses, which must be approved by local public health jurisdictions. While the funding is flexible, preferred uses include rental/leasing of motels or motel rooms for quarantine and improvement of sanitation in existing shelter and housing. Housing must accommodate individuals experiencing homelessness, those lacking housing appropriate for self-isolation, and those displacing individuals in need of medical care in a health care facility.

The Legislature may be called into a special session to make further budget and policy changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, local governments will experience a significant decline in revenue as sales tax and gas tax collections decline, and as utility tax and property tax collections are delayed. Local governments should prepare for the special session by identifying potential implications of this reduced revenue and identify budget and policy requests for the Legislature to take to assist local governments in continuing to provide vital services like police, fire, solid waste collection, and more.

Some additional items in the supplemental operating budget to local governments include:

- \$160 million for housing and homelessness. This includes increased funding for shelter capacity, construction of affordable housing, housing and essential needs, and permanent supportive housing.
- \$28 million in Foundational Public Health Services funding.
- \$1.8 million to fund a grant program for measures increasing election security, administered to county auditors.
- A one-time 3% increase for PERS 1 retirees; for local governments that have PERS 1 retirees, this will result in a cost increase at the local level. While the supplemental operating budget provides resources for its own costs, it does not provide additional resources for local governments.
- Two additional Basic Law Enforcement Academy classes are funded each fiscal year, increasing the number of classes from 19 to 21 per year. Three classes will be held at the Spokane training center.
- Resources are provided for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to map and identify fish blocking culverts.
- A study is funded to identify how to incorporate a “net ecological gain” standard into the Growth Management Act and Shoreline Management Act.
- \$750,000 to Puget Sound local governments to address stormwater permit requirements and provide assistance to small businesses for stormwater permitting.
- \$748,000 to the Department of Ecology to undertake continuous freshwater monitoring at the mouth of the seven largest rivers discharging into the Puget Sound.
- \$100,000 for technical assistance to small forestland owners.
- A proviso was included that establishes a growth management stakeholder group to develop recommendations from the 2019 Ruckelshaus report; however, the Governor **vetoed** this section to reduce spending.

- Funding was included to expand the existing Department of Corrections pilot program installing body scanners into correctional facilities; however, this provision was **vetoed** by the Governor to reduce spending.
- \$80,000 was allocated to the Department of Ecology to work with the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee to follow on to a U.S. Geological Survey study of the island's aquifer recharge areas, to quantify an updated water budget, and to provide accurate water-level analysis and a water-table map of the two aquifers on the island. This funding was **vetoed** by the Governor to reduce spending.
- \$300,000 was provided to implement elk fencing, with priority given to the Concrete School District, and to conduct other measures for solving elk-related conflicts in Skagit County. This funding was **vetoed** by the Governor to reduce spending.

2020 Supplemental Capital Budget

The 2019-21 biennial capital budget appropriated roughly \$3.18 billion and left \$70 million for the 2020 supplemental budget. An additional \$19.8 million was realized by adjusting various accounts within the budget, which allowed for a total supplemental capital budget of \$89.9 million. Some highlights of significant investments include:

- \$7.8 million for projects that enhance shelter capacity around the state.
- \$5 million for a new competitive grant program for community and cottage housing.
- \$1 million for preservation of manufactured and mobile home communities.
- \$10 million for the Community Economic Revitalization Board for projects that construct, repair, and acquire local public facilities to encourage business development and expansion in areas seeking economic growth.
- The \$95 million that was previously allocated to the Public Works Assistance Account was maintained, but there was no change made to the ongoing diversions to the Education Legacy Account.
- \$33.7 million for the Model Toxic Control Account for cleanup projects by local governments.
- Although no additional funding is allocated toward fish barrier removal in the capital budget, the Fish Barrier Removal Board is directed to develop a comprehensive statewide culvert remediation plan that fully satisfies the requirements of the injunction. The plan will include recommendations for non-state barrier corrections that maximize fish habitat gain and other benefits that will assist in salmon recovery. The plan is due to the Legislature by January 15, 2021.

A list of Capital Budget projects funded in your County is included as Appendix A to this report.

2020 Supplemental Transportation Budget

The final supplemental transportation budget assumes that Initiative 976 will ultimately be upheld by the Court, resulting in a \$453 million loss of transportation revenue in the 2019-21 biennium. The supplemental budget authorized all project contracts that were put on "pause" prior to the beginning of the legislative session to proceed forward on schedule. To make up for the funding gap, the supplemental budget delays or reduces rail capital projects into the 21-23 biennium, delays WSDOT Public Transportation Program grants in the 21-23 biennium, makes project reductions based on updated information from WSDOT and incorporates savings from other cancelled or closed out projects. All of these are short-term strategies; several transportation accounts have negative ending fund balances in the next biennium. Altogether, there is a \$600 million shortfall for the 21-23 biennium.

The supplemental budget adds spending authority for agency needs that concern safety, security and support. Some of these investments include:

- \$6.0 million to the State Ferries System at WSDOT for training, inspections, and naval architecture support.
- \$2.3 million to the State Patrol to address backlogs of impaired driving case submissions at the state toxicology lab.
- \$13 million to WSDOT for the transition to a new back office system and customer service center for the Tolling Program.

There are a few adjustments within the final budget that both positively and negatively affect local governments:

- \$275 million for state-owned fish passage barrier correction, retaining proviso language to coordinate with Fish Barrier Removal Board on watershed approach. The budget directs WSDOT to consider factors while complying with injunction, including presence of other barriers and directs WSDOT and the Fish Barrier Removal Board to develop a statewide comprehensive plan.
- The Safe Routes to School grant program received a \$7.3 million increase for a total of \$36.5 million over the biennium and the Bicycle and Pedestrian safety grant program received an increase of \$13.3 million for a total of \$38.3 million over the course of the biennium.
- A \$10 million reduction in gas tax distribution to local governments (as a result of declining revenues).

A list of transportation projects funded in your County is included as Appendix B to this report.

Both the House and Senate Transportation Committee Chairs have indicated that a transportation revenue package will be needed in 2021. In light of that, dozens of legislators signed a letter indicating that the Legislature would need to adopt a low carbon fuel standard before they would be willing to vote on any transportation revenue package. The Legislature considered a low carbon fuel standard through [House Bill 1110](#), sponsored by [Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon](#) (D-Burien). The bill was originally introduced in the 2019 session and it passed the House 53-43 but died in the Senate. This session the bill passed the House again, 52-44 and was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee where there was a lengthy public hearing with equal representation from supporters and those opposed. However, the bill was not voted out of the Senate Transportation Committee and died. One of the primary concerns with the policy is the expectation that it will increase gas prices and not result in additional tax revenue for the state to make investments in the transportation system, which is the largest contributor of greenhouse gases. In particular, the Senate Transportation Chair is more interested in a carbon pricing policy that will reduce carbon emissions and create a revenue stream for transportation needs such as fish barrier replacement and stormwater management.

2020 November Elections on the Horizon

Now that the 2020 Legislature has concluded its work, attention will shift to the 2020 November elections. All members of the House of Representatives and approximately half the members of the State Senate will need to seek re-election to maintain their position. Several Legislators have already announced that they will not seek re-election, including:

Rep. Sherry Appleton (D-Poulsbo)

Rep. Eric Pettigrew (D-Seattle)

Rep. Christine Kilduff (D-Tacoma)
Rep. Pat Sullivan (D-Covington)
Rep. Gael Tarleton (D-Seattle) – *running for Secretary of State*
Rep. Mike Pellicioti (D-Federal Way) – *running for State Treasurer*
Rep. Beth Doglio (D-Olympia) – *running for 10th congressional district*
Rep. Chris Gildon (R-Puyallup) – *running for the Senate to replace Sen. Hans Zeiger*
Rep. Norma Smith (R-Langley)
Rep. Richard DeBolt (R-Chehalis)
Sen. Maureen Walsh (R-Walla Walla)
Sen. Randi Becker (R-Enumclaw)
Sen. Hans Zeiger (R-Puyallup) – *running for Pierce County Council*
Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib

2020 Legislative Priorities

Historic Skagit Courthouse Seismic Repairs

Skagit County requested \$150,000 in the capital budget for design and preconstruction of seismic repairs on the historic Skagit County Courthouse. The County will be undertaking a redesign of its law and justice campus in the next few years, and the courthouse, identified as a substantial seismic safety risk, requires significant work. This request was intended to be the first in a series of capital requests to update the County's aging law and justice campus. This project was also highlighted in the pre-session briefing GTH-GA and the County conducted with the legislative delegation in early December.

Prior to session, we worked with County staff to prepare a one pager and the necessary budget request forms for the project. Once session began, we worked to find legislative sponsors for the request. [Rep. Debra Lekanoff](#) (D- Bow) agreed to sponsor the request in the House with support from [Rep. Dave Paul](#) (D- Oak Harbor), who submitted a letter in support of the request to capital budget leadership. While staff with [Sen. Liz Lovelett](#) (D- Anacortes) initially indicated that she would sponsor the request in the Senate, the forms were not submitted. GTH-GA attempted to identify an alternative path forward for the request in the Senate, including a possible operating budget request sponsored by one of the other members of the Senate serving Skagit County; however, time constraints limited these options, and ultimately, alternatives fell through. The Senate capital budget proposal did not include funding for any local projects within Skagit County.

In addition to delegation members, we also met with Capital Budget Chair [Rep. Steve Tharinger](#) (D- Sequim) with Commissioner Janicki. Rep. Tharinger was supportive of the project but reminded the County of how limited capital budget funding was this session. Unfortunately, the project was not funded in either chamber's proposals and did not receive funding in the final budget. While this outcome was disappointing, it was not surprising, considering the fierce competition for capital budget resources in a supplemental session. Over the interim, it would be prudent to determine a strategy to advance this proposal, including a possible tour of the building, should the County choose to pursue this request next session.

House Bill 1590 – Councilmanic Local Option Housing Sales Tax

Skagit County supported [House Bill 1590](#), sponsored by [Rep. Beth Doglio](#) (D- Olympia), and its companion [Senate Bill 6126](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sam Hunt](#) (D- Olympia), as a potential tool for the County to fund affordable housing and human services programs. As one of the few proposals providing substantive resources to generate affordable housing, the bill emerged as priority housing legislation for many key players, including the Association of Washington Cities and the Low-Income Housing Alliance; however, the bill underwent a dynamic journey to passage requiring coordinated stakeholder efforts.

Both versions of the bill advanced rapidly: because House Bill 1590 was introduced in the 2019 legislative session, the bill retained in previous status and remained in the House Rules Committee, while the Senate bill quickly passed its policy committee and was referred to the Senate Rules Committee. At the hearing on the Senate version of the bill, GTH-GA testified on behalf of the County.

Despite its initial movement, the bill soon hit major roadblocks in both chambers: negotiations in the House stalled as the bill became tied up with [House Bill 2709](#), a King County-specific proposal authorizing a business tax for affordable housing and human services; however, stakeholders could not agree on bill provisions and efforts shifted back to passing and amending House Bill 1590 to include certain King County specific requirements negotiated over the interim. Unfortunately, House Republicans, opposing its councilmanic authority, aimed to stop the advancement of House Bill 1590 by tacking on multiple amendments. With limited time left to pass the bill, House Democrats aimed to bypass lengthy partisan debate on the amendments by requesting a ruling on their scope; however, Rep. Doglio's striking amendment, which included the language negotiated between King County and their cities, was also ruled out of scope of the bill. There was not political support for the underlying version of the bill.

Stakeholders shifted their efforts to moving the Senate version of the bill; however, internal caucus discussions subsequently fell apart, and Senate Democrats could not secure sufficient votes for passage. In a last-ditch effort to move the proposal, the House passed the underlying version of their bill with the agreement that provisions in Rep. Doglio's striker would be added in the Senate. In the Senate Local Government Committee the bill was amended to include most provisions in Rep. Doglio's striker and passed out along party lines. Commissioner Ron Wesen and Deputy County Administrator Kayla Schott-Bressler testified in support at the hearing. Senate support for the bill waffled, and although the bill was pulled from the Rules Committee to the floor calendar, the bill was not debated until the last minute. The bill finally passed the Senate floor on Friday, March 6th, with a narrow 27-21 margin. Member votes were mixed, with Republican support coming from [Sen. Maureen Walsh](#) (R- Walla Walla) and opposition to the bill from moderate democrats [Sen. Steve Hobbs](#) (D- Lake Stevens) and [Sen. Mark Mullet](#) (D- Issaquah). The House concurred on the Senate amendments well before Sine Die on March 12th.

We met with many legislators over the duration of session to discuss this request, including members of the delegation and bill sponsor [Rep. Beth Doglio](#) (D- Olympia). We also shared the County's perspective on the bill at bi-monthly stakeholder meetings on housing conducted by Speaker of the House [Rep. Laurie Jinkins](#) (D- Tacoma). Particularly impactful was Commissioner Wesen's testimony in support of the bill in the Senate Local Government Committee, which provided credibility to Republican legislators taking a less-confrontational stance on the bill during Senate floor debate.

Involuntary Treatment Act Support

Skagit County supported the effort by the Association of County Human Services to establish a separate funding stream for involuntary treatment costs, which currently eat up critical non-Medicaid dollars. ACHS submitted proviso language to budget writers creating this separate funding stream; however, neither chamber's budget proposals included this language. The final operating budget instead creates a 70%-30% split of non-Medicaid funds to BHASOs and MCOs respectively in 2020. In 2021, \$4 million is provided to BHASOs, without a split to MCOs; the other non-Medicaid funds are distributed 80%-20% to BHASOs and MCOs respectively. The additional \$4 million and updated split are ongoing.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Skagit County supported additional funding for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in county jails. This was also a priority this session for the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), who led efforts to obtain additional MAT funding for city jails. The final operating budget includes AWC's requested language, which allocates \$50,000 to complete a study of how to replicate services currently offered at the South Correctional Entity (SCORE) in south King County. SCORE provides a high-level of service, including MAT.

Increased Share of Marijuana Revenue

Snohomish County led efforts this session to try and increase the amount of state-shared marijuana revenues appropriated to local governments. The county worked with [Rep. Strom Peterson](#) (D-Edmonds) who introduced [House Bill 2900](#) which removed the \$15 million cap on local government marijuana revenue distributions. The bill did not move; however, Rep. Peterson is planning a work session on the bill during Committee Assembly Days in the fall.

While meager compared to the Snohomish County proposal, the House proposed operating budget included \$3.5 million in additional shared marijuana revenues. This was not retained in the final budget as budget writers slimmed down appropriations.

Bills of Interest

The Legislature considered several bills of particular interest to the County and passed a few.

HB 2797 – Affordable Housing Sales Tax

[HB 2797](#), by [Rep. June Robinson](#) (D- Everett) makes a number of changes to the statute enacted in 2019 through [HB 1406](#) which allowed counties and cities to collect a portion of the state sales tax for affordable housing purposes. HB 2797 extends, until December 31, 2021, the deadline for cities to adopt a qualifying local tax, thus making them eligible to receive the funding. A city that intends to adopt a qualifying local tax to adopt a notice of intent to do so by July 28, 2020. The bill also requires the Department of Revenue to calculate a preliminary annual maximum amount of tax distributions for each county or city levying the tax by January 1, 2021, and to calculate a final annual maximum amount of tax distributions by June 30, 2022. This change was necessary in to correct DOR's interpretation of the 2019 law which would have resulted in jurisdictions receiving less revenue than was intended. The bill authorizes cities and counties to use revenues collected from the tax on staffing related to the daily operations of permanent supportive housing. Small cities are authorized to use up

to 6 percent of the revenues collected from the tax on administration related to the tax. Counties are prohibited from pledging for repayment of bonds any revenues from the tax collected within cities levying the tax: (1) before July 28, 2020; or (2) before June 30, 2022, within cities that have adopted a notice of intent to authorize a qualifying local tax. The bill was widely supported by local governments and housing advocates, and passed the Legislature with mixed votes; however, the **Governor vetoed the bill** in early April to reduce spending in anticipation of COVID-19 revenue impacts.

HB 2421 – Even Year Election Costs

[House Bill 2421](#), sponsored by [Rep. Gael Tarleton](#) (D- Seattle), and [Senate Bill 6134](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sam Hunt](#) (D- Olympia) commit the State to paying for the cost of State elections in even-years. This has been a Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) priority for many years, with the support of the Washington State Association of Counties. With a significant increase in revenue and a positive revenue outlook, fiscal committee leadership was more favorable to this request than in prior years. Both vehicles moved out of their policy and fiscal committees; however, Senate Ways and Means Chair, [Sen. Christine Rolfes](#) (D- Bainbridge Island), added a problematic amendment to the Senate Bill precluding the Legislature from providing any additional funding for future elections mandates. While not conclusive, WSAC's outside counsel has suggested that the unfunded mandate language would be unenforceable in court. The House version of the bill was amended by [Rep. Steve Bergquist](#) (D- Renton), to include this provision on the House floor. Despite discomfort with the amendment, WSAC decided to continue support of the bill. The House version of the bill passed the Legislature 96-1.

SB 5522 - Annexation

[SB 5522](#) by [Sen. Dean Takko](#) (D- Longview) allows counties and cities to jointly initiate an annexation process for unincorporated territory by adopting an interlocal agreement. A public hearing is required, but a vote of the people is not required. Cities proposing to annex territory are required to give notice of the annexation to an adjacent city and to impacted special purpose districts, and allows such an adjacent city or special purpose district to prevent the proposed annexation. Areas zoned for residential use within the annexed area must maintain a zoning designation that allows residential development for five years after the annexation. The bill was started in the 2019 session, and consistently received support from cities and counties. It passed the Legislature with bipartisan votes.

HB 2415 – Special District Elections

[HB 2415](#) by [Rep. Zack Hudgins](#) (D-Tukwila) was brought in response to media reports over the summer about fraud occurring in very small special districts, using a very small flood control district in King County as an example. The bill would have significantly changed the election process for special purpose districts, including removing the land ownership requirement for irrigation, diking/drainage, conservation, and flood control districts. The bill was widely opposed by representatives of special purpose districts; Skagit County also opposed it. The bill moved out of the House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee, and was heard in the Appropriations Committee, but did not move further.

SB 6314 – Property Tax Penalties

[SB 6314](#), by [Sen. Jeff Holy](#) (R- Spokane) moved further through the process than its companion [HB 2526](#) by [Rep. Mike Volz](#) (R- Spokane) but the ideas contained in the bills are Rep. Volz's. These bills would have eliminated penalties and reduced the interest collected on late property tax payments. Rep. Volz has pushed this idea for several sessions now, and is dedicated to this policy change. This

session, an amended version of SB 6314 passed out of the Ways and Means Committee, signaling a frightening level of support. Legislators have not committed to backfilling the loss of county revenue should this policy eventually pass the Legislature.

HB 2550 – Net Ecological Gain

[HB 2550](#), by [Rep. Debra Lekanoff](#) (D-Bow), would have established that the policy of the State is to achieve net ecological gain in the Growth Management Act, Shoreline Management Act, Model Toxics Control Act, and for Hydraulic Project Approvals and required the adoption of state agency rules consistent with a standard of net ecological gain. The bill also directed the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to report to the Legislature by the end of the year on how this standard could be integrated into the same laws. The bill was heard, amended and approved by the House Environment and Energy Committee but did not advance past the Appropriations Committee. The final budget includes a requirement for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to contract with the Washington Academy of Sciences to report on how to incorporate net ecological gain into land use, development and environmental laws.

House Bill 2427 – Climate Change as a Goal of the GMA

[House Bill 2427](#), sponsored by [Rep. Davina Duerr](#) (D- Bothell), would have added climate change as a GMA goal for Buildable Lands counties and counties over 300,000. The bill applied to Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties and the cities within these counties. A more problematic version of this bill was briefly considered and died: [House Bill 2609](#), which required climate change as a GMA goal and element and assigned emissions reductions to local governments. Neither bill provided additional funding for local governments to implement the goal. Receiving some opposition from affected local governments, an “exchange” of House Bill 2427 for [House Bill 2342](#), which changed GMA/SMA update cycles to every ten, rather than eight, years was briefly considered. Under this compromise, Benton, Clark, Franklin, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties and the cities within them would also have been required to perform a housing and critical areas check-in every 5 years, if funding was provided. Applicable cities or counties would have been required to update these elements if they failed to meet certain criteria. If funding was not provided, affected cities and counties would remain on the 8-year update cycle. Ultimately, caucus enthusiasm for the GMA goal waivered and House Bill 2427 did not move forward while a simplified version of House Bill 2342 passed. Adding climate change considerations to the GMA will be a topic of the stakeholder work group that is created in the state operating budget, with recommendations returning to the Legislature for consideration during the 2021 session. While WSAC will participate in this work group, if Skagit County wants to have a voice in the discussions it will need to make a proactive effort to do so.

HB 2420 - Indigent Defense

WSAC pursued bi-partisan legislation, [House Bill 2420](#), sponsored by [Rep. Morgan Irwin](#) (R-Enumclaw) to address State funding of trial court indigent defense costs. Unlike previous efforts the bill did not include a phased in approach to increasing State funding—instead, it simply stated that it is the State’s responsibility to fully-fund trial court indigent defense. This approach anticipates a lawsuit brought against the state for underfunding indigent defense. The bill did not receive a hearing.

Comprehensive Bill List

The following bill list includes all of the bills that GTHGA tracked on behalf of Skagit County during the session, whether the County formally took a position or not. The bills are separated into those that passed and those that did not, are ordered by bill number, and include the final status of the bill at the conclusion of the legislative session. Bills vetoed by the Governor are bolded.

Bills That Passed the Legislature

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Sponsor	Position
SHB 1293 (SB 5420)	Discover pass penalty dist.	Concerning the distribution of monetary penalties to local courts and state agencies paid for failure to comply with discover pass requirements.	Tharinger	
HB 1590	Housing tax/councilmanic	Allowing the local sales and use tax for affordable housing to be imposed by a councilmanic authority.	Doglio	Support
ESHB 1622 (SB 5675)	Drought preparedness	This bill provides the Department of Ecology the authority to take action and assist water users when a drought emergency occurs.	Blake	
HB 2230 (SB 6080)	Indian tribe-owned property	Subjecting federally recognized Indian tribes to the same conditions as state and local governments for property owned exclusively by the tribe.	Gregerson	
ESHB 2342	Comprehensive plan updates	Aligning the timing of comprehensive plan updates required by the growth management act with the timing of shoreline master program updates required by the shoreline management act.	Fitzgibbon	
SHB 2343 (SSB 6334)	Urban housing	Concerning urban housing supply.	Fitzgibbon	Neutral
ESHB 2421	Election cost reimbursement	Concerning state reimbursement of election costs.	Tarleton	Support
2SHB 2499	Correction officer cert.	Certifying corrections officers.	Appleton	

E2SHB 2528 (SSB 6355)	Forest products/climate	Recognizing the contributions of the state's forest products sector as part of the state's global climate response.	Ramos	Support
HB 2545	Jail records/managed health	Making jail records available to managed health care systems.	Davis	Support
SHB 2567 (SB 6522)	Courts/arrests	Concerning open courts.	Thai	
SHB 2758	911 dispatch personnel/PTSD	Recognizing posttraumatic stress disorders of 911 emergency dispatch personnel.	Corry	
EHB 2797 (SSB 6631)	Housing/sales & use tax	Concerning the sales and use tax for affordable and supportive housing. Governor vetoed.	Robinson	Support
ESHB 2919	REET county fees	Adjusting the amount and use of county fees on the real estate excise tax. Governor vetoed.	Chopp	
EHB 2965	Coronavirus response	Concerning the state's response to the novel coronavirus.	Cody	
ESSB 5522	City annexing/interlocal ag.	Providing code cities with the ability to annex unincorporated areas pursuant to a jointly approved interlocal agreement with the county.	Takko	
E2SSB 6128 (HB 2381)	Postpartum period/Medicaid	Extending coverage during the postpartum period. Portions of the bill funded in the operating budget for training and technology costs vetoed.	Randall	Support
SB 6212 (HB 2489)	Affordable housing/prop. tax	Concerning the authority of counties, cities, and towns to exceed statutory property tax limitations for the purpose of financing affordable housing for very low-income households and low-income households.	Das	
SB 6229 (HB 2348)	Housing funds/quality award	Streamlining reporting for recipients of housing-related state funding by removing Washington state quality award program requirements.	Kuderer	Support

ESSB 6592	Tourism authorities	Concerning tourism authorities.	Holy	
ESSB 6617	Accessory dwelling units	Concerning accessory dwelling unit regulation.	Liias	

Bills That Did Not Pass

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Sponsor	Position
HB 1718	Existing resources/local gov	Providing cities and counties flexibility with existing resources.	Volz	Support
HB 1829	Veterans' assistance levies	Concerning veterans' assistance levies.	Chapman	Support
HB 2145	Property tax revenue growth	Modifying the annual regular property tax revenue growth limit.	Pollet	Support
HB 2247	Marijuana licensing/zoning	Aligning marijuana licensing decisions by the liquor and cannabis board with local zoning ordinances.	Goehner	Support
HB 2260	Dependency proceeding notice	Concerning the publication of notice for dependency proceedings.	Griffey	
HB 2275	Sewage wastewater discharges	Concerning certain illegal discharges of sewage wastewater into Puget Sound.	Stokesbary	
HB 2282	Unused public buildings	Creating a grant program for converting unused public buildings to housing for homeless persons.	Walsh	
HB 2362 (SB 6652)	Local transportation revenue	Addressing local transportation revenue options.	Ramos	
SHB 2415	Special district elections	Conforming elections for certain special districts with Title 29A RCW.	Hudgins	Oppose
HB 2420	Indigent defense/state	Requiring the office of public defense to assume duties for the provision of trial court indigent defense services.	Irwin	
ESHB 2427 (SB 6453)	Climate change/GMA	Tackling climate change as a goal of the growth management act.	Duerr	
SHB 2494	Public facilities tax/rural	Concerning sales and use tax for public facilities in rural or border counties.	Stonier	Support

HB 2506	Marbled murrelet committee	Increasing transparency in the marbled murrelet advisory committee process by requiring advance public notice of all committee meetings.	Walsh	
HB 2526 (SSB 6314)	Home foreclosure/taxes	Protecting taxpayers from home foreclosure.	Volz	Oppose
HB 2549	Salmon recovery efforts/GMA	Integrating salmon recovery efforts with growth management.	Lekanoff	
SHB 2550	Net ecological gain	Establishing net ecological gain as a policy for application across identified land use, development, and environmental laws.	Lekanoff	Neutral
HB 2553	Water resource policy group	Creating a joint executive, legislative, and interagency work group on water resource policy for the purpose of developing a statewide water action plan.	Lekanoff	
HB 2559 (SB 6365)	WDFW/payments in lieu of tax	Concerning payments in lieu of real property taxes by the department of fish and wildlife.	Springer	
2SHB 2570	Accessory dwelling units	Managing growth by planning and zoning for accessory dwelling units.	Gregerson	
SHB 2603 (SSB 6494)	Trust water rights	Concerning trust water rights.	Springer	
HB 2609 (SB 6335)	Climate change/GMA	Addressing climate change through growth management.	Duerr	Neutral
ESHB 2625	Local parks funding options	Concerning local parks funding options.	Eslick	
SHB 2649	Homeless shelter capacity	Concerning homeless shelter capacity.	Ryu	
HB 2668	Affordable housing options	Providing local governments with options to preserve affordable housing in their communities.	Ryu	
HB 2671	Short subdivisions	Concerning short subdivisions.	Walsh	
HB 2672	Intensive rural development	Concerning limited areas of more intensive rural development.	Barkis	Support
SHB 2679 (SB 6451)	Nonprofit health carriers	Concerning funding for individuals who are not eligible for federal insurance subsidies and for	Robinson	

		foundational public health services.		
EHB 2687	GMA/affordable housing plans	Planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.	Barkis	
SHB 2714 (SB 6498)	Riparian easement carbon val	Valuing the carbon in forest riparian easements.	Hoff	
HB 2729 (SB 6354)	Small rural hospital payment	Providing enhanced payment to low volume, small rural hospitals.	Dufault	
HB 2765	Committee on water	Creating a joint select committee on water.	Lekanoff	
HB 2778	Community redevl. financing	Concerning community redevelopment financing in apportionment districts.	Sullivan	
HB 2780 (SSB 6536)	Single-family zones	Creating more housing options in traditionally single-family zones.	Macri	Neutral
ESHB 2786	Opioid response council	Establishing the opioid epidemic response advisory council.	Robinson	
HB 2863	Therapeutic alternatives	Expanding therapeutic alternatives and interventions through courts of limited jurisdiction.	Davis	
HB 2866	Transfer of water rights	Prohibiting transfers of water rights out of their original water resource inventory area.	Goehner	
HB 2886	Local government permitting	Concerning local government permitting and land use decisions.	Gildon	Neutral
HB 2900	Marijuana excise tax distrib	Concerning marijuana excise tax distributions to local governments.	Peterson	
HB 2915	Public health services/taxes	Increasing vaping taxes and provides at least \$6 million/year for the foundational public health services account.	Pollet	
HB 2940	Wild Skagit river	Restoring a wild Skagit river.	Kretz	
HJR 4212	Community redevl. financing	Providing for community redevelopment financing in apportionment districts.	Sullivan	
SSB 5366	Urban centers/multiple-units	This bill allows all cities and towns to provide property tax exemptions for eligible multi-unit residential housing projects in urban centers until July 1, 2022.	Wagoner	Support

SB 6150	GMA actions effective date	Concerning the effective date of certain actions taken under the growth management act.	Salomon	
SB 6186	Homelessness diversion	Prioritizing homelessness diversion services.	Zeiger	
SSB 6253	Early care and ed. system	Creating a comprehensive statewide early care and education system by improving accessibility and affordability of early care and education programs for families.	Wilson	Support
SB 6260	Water resources/tribes	Concerning tribal traditional and cultural interests in water resources.	McCoy	
SB 6292	Water rights sales	Concerning water rights sales.	Salomon	
SB 6301	Surface water rights	Concerning public interest considerations in the transfer or change of surface water rights.	Van De Wege	
SSB 6328	Local infra. investment prg	Creating a local infrastructure investment program to support the development of affordable housing, workforce housing, and revitalization efforts.	Warnick	Support
SB 6335 (HB 2609)	Climate change/GMA	Addressing climate change through growth management.	Salomon	Neutral
SB 6354 (HB 2729)	Small rural hospital payment	Providing enhanced payment to low volume, small rural hospitals.	King	
SB 6365 (HB 2559)	WDFW/payments in lieu of tax	Concerning payments in lieu of real property taxes by the department of fish and wildlife.	Warnick	
SB 6386	Low-income housing/fees	Reducing impact fees for low-income housing.	Zeiger	
SB 6387	Housing/impact fee timelines	Accelerating housing infrastructure investments by adjusting impact fee timelines.	Zeiger	
SB 6388	Housing/impact fees	Concerning impact fees for multifamily and single-family housing.	Zeiger	Neutral
SB 6446	Lodging taxes/housing	Concerning lodging taxes for affordable housing.	Kuderer	
SB 6451 (SHB 2679)	Nonprofit health carriers	Concerning funding for individuals who are not eligible for federal insurance subsidies and for	Frocht	

		foundational public health services.		
SB 6453 (ESHB 2427)	Climate change/GMA	Tackling climate change as a goal of the growth management act.	Salomon	
SB 6454	Salmon habitat planning	Concerning local salmon habitat recovery planning in critical areas.	Salomon	
SSB 6457	American dream homes	Promoting housing affordability by incentivizing the construction of American dream homes.	Fortunato	
SB 6461	Project permit timelines	Concerning permit timelines.	Fortunato	
SB 6463	Comp. plans/environment	Eliminating environmental analysis and mitigation requirements on projects within the comprehensive plan.	Wilson	
SB 6484	CTC property tax levy	Allowing counties to seek voter approval for a property tax levy to fund community and technical college districts.	Frockt	Neutral
SSB 6494 (SHB 2603)	Trust water rights	Concerning trust water rights.	Rolfes	
SB 6498 (SHB 2714)	Riparian easement carbon val	Valuing the carbon in forest riparian easements.	Braun	
SSB 6514	Irrigation dist. elections	Addressing irrigation district elections.	Schoesler	
SB 6519	Archaeological sites	Requiring protection of archaeological and cultural sites by state agencies, local governments, and all recipients of state revenue.	McCoy	Neutral
SB 6544	GMA/agricultural land	Encouraging the success of agriculture on agricultural land.	Zeiger	
SSB 6545	Voluntary stewardship prog.	Concerning the voluntary stewardship program.	Zeiger	
SSB 6585	Medication-assisted tx/jails	Encouraging the use of medication-assisted treatment within jails.	Zeiger	Neutral
SB 6618	Housing benefit districts	Establishing housing benefit districts.	Liias	

SSB 6649	Emerg. homeless shelters/tax	Establishing a local sales and use tax option to fund emergency homeless shelters.	Zeiger	
SB 6652 (HB 2362)	Local transportation revenue	Addressing local transportation revenue options.	Nguyen	
SB 6696	Coronavirus response	Making expenditures from the budget stabilization account for declared catastrophic events.	O'Ban	

Appendix A Skagit County Capital Projects

New Appropriations

Total Skagit County	8,179
Commerce	
2019-21 Early Learning Facilities #	
Anacortes Family Center (Anacortes)	309
Club Discovery Early Learning (Mount Vernon)	100
Samish Longhouse Early Learning Center Expansion (Anacortes)	273
2021 Local and Community Projects #	
Skagit Pump Station Modernization Design (Mount Vernon)	52
Enhanced Shelter Capacity Grants #	
YMCA Oasis Teen Shelter (Mount Vernon)	100
Ecology	
2020 Remedial Action Grants #	
Dakota Creek Industries Shipyard	810
Whitmarsh (March Point) Landfill	2,500
Fish and Wildlife	
Wiley Slough Dike Raising	972
Natural Resources	
Whitmarsh (March Point) Landfill Site Cleanup	3,063

Appendix B Skagit County Transportation Projects

Project	Leg Dist	Prior	2019-21	2021-23	2023-25	2025-27	2027-29	Future	Total
Projects only in Skagit County		6,254	5,715	3,546	17,154	17,478	17,086	23,489	90,723
Route	Regional Mobility Grants Reappropriated and Four Year	498	639	0	0	0	0	0	1,138
000	Skagit Transit Connector Services Expansion Project - 20170002 39	498	639	0	0	0	0	0	1,138

Route	Other		292	858	0	0	0	0	0	1,150
000	Lyman - Prevedal Road Repairs - L2000276	39	292	8	0	0	0	0	0	300
000	Jones/John Liner Road BNSF Railroad Undercrossing - L2000361	39	0	850	0	0	0	0	0	850
Route	WSF - Terminal Improvements		5,464	1,832	0	0	0	0	0	7,296
020	Anacortes Tml Improvement - 902020D	40	5,464	1,832	0	0	0	0	0	7,296
Route	WSF - Terminal Preservation		0	2,386	3,546	17,154	17,078	16,158	20,317	76,639
020	Anacortes Tml Preservation - 902020C	40	0	2,386	3,546	17,154	17,078	16,158	20,317	76,639
Route	Connecting Washington - Pedestrian & Bike Projects		0	0	0	0	400	928	3,172	4,500
000	Guemes Channel Trail - G2000020	40	0	0	0	0	0	328	3,172	3,500
000	Trestle - Park & Ride - Trail - G2000025	40	0	0	0	0	250	0	0	250
000	Washington Park to Ferry Terminal - Trail - G2000026	40	0	0	0	0	150	600	0	750