



City of Cle Elum 2026 Legislative Priorities

Fire Prevention and Mitigation

Cle Elum is among the communities most at risk of catastrophic wildfire in Washington State. The city will work with legislative partners to support efforts to increase funding for fuels reduction and fire hazard mitigation. We will seek to ensure some of this funding is directed into areas surrounding the community.

Workforce Housing

Like many communities with tourism-based economies across our state, Cle Elum struggles with available, affordable housing for our workforce. We look forward to working with those in Olympia, as well as our city partners through the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) to explore additional resources and programs that could assist with this issue.

These could include:

- Expanding the allowable uses or adding additional capacity to Lodging Tax to include workforce housing. Additionally, increasing the flexibility of these funds to serve residents up to 120% of the area median income (AMI).
- Changing the current law to allow for additional taxes or fees to be assessed on homes purchased as non-primary residences. This could be at the time of sale on their annual property tax rate and used by the city for the purposes of workforce housing serving residents up to 120% of the area median income (AMI).

Regulating the Sale and Distribution of Kratom Products

The Cle Elum City Council has expressed deep concern, as evidenced by enacting a local ban, on the sale and distribution of Kratom products within the city limits. We urge the legislature to take action on a statewide level to at minimum, enact age restrictions on its sale and distribution, but we strongly urge joining us in banning its sale and distribution altogether for the health, safety, and welfare of all Washington state residents.

City of Cle Elum Capital Requests

- The city will submit a capital budget request to support our 14% match for the 1st & Pine intersection improvements as laid out in the Bullfrog Flats Project Development Agreement.
- With the cooperation and agreement of our regional utility partners, we will submit a capital budget request to replace the improperly bedded water transmission line serving Zone 3 of our water system. This transmission line has already suffered two major breaks and is a critical distribution point to the western portion of our water system.

Support the Legislative Priorities of the Association of Washington Cities

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) has set four umbrella priorities for its government affairs team to focus on during the 2026 legislative session. As a member of the association, it's important to adopt these priorities into ours:

- **Indigent defense:** Increase state support and funding for indigent defense services to meet existing needs as well as the new lower caseload mandates ordered by the Washington Supreme Court. Enhance state support for increasing the indigent defense workforce with incentives and programs to encourage more public defenders.
- **Transportation:** Increase sustainable revenue that supports local transportation preservation, maintenance, and operations and includes direct distributions to cities and towns. Continue to support efforts to improve traffic safety. Explore revenue tools such as a highway usage fee, a retail delivery fee, expanded transportation benefit district (TBD) authority, or a “sidewalk utility.”
- **Housing supply:** Provide time to implement recent state housing legislation. Increase housing investments to meet needs across the housing continuum, including construction and preservation of affordable housing, home ownership, and senior housing. Support tools to better coordinate urban growth area (UGA) development and funding options such as a local option real estate excise tax, short-term rental tax, and expanded use of lodging taxes for housing.
- **Shared revenues:** Continue the historical revenue-sharing partnership between the state and its cities and towns, which provides stability and continuity for local budgets. Preservation of these resources, such as liquor revenues and criminal justice assistance funds, are indispensable to local fiscal sustainability and predictability.