



To provide leadership through advocacy, education, mutual support and networking to cities in King County as they act locally and partner regionally to create livable vital communities.

## **SCA 2017 Legislative Agenda**

### **Adjust the Property Tax Cap**

Property tax is the largest revenue source for Washington's cities, supporting critical services such as justice, health, and safety. Property taxes are capped at a level that creates an ever-widening gap between the cost of providing public services to a growing population and the revenue available to pay for them. A new property tax limit should correspond to what it actually costs local governments to continue providing services, and keep up with increased public demand.

- *The Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to give local governments the option to replace the arbitrary annual 1% cap on property tax revenues with a growth limit whose maximum is inflation plus the rate of population growth.*

### **Invest in Public Health Services**

Protect our communities by investing in core public health services. The 40% per capita decrease in public health funding since 1999 is reaching crisis levels across the state. The funding shortfall has left Public Health–Seattle & King County unable to fully investigate disease outbreaks. The Washington State Department of Health is requesting \$54 million for local public health jurisdictions to fill critical gaps in disease prevention and response, and to pilot shared services to improve the efficiency of the overall system.

- *The Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to fund basic public health by investing \$54 million in core public health services.*

### **Address the Housing and Homelessness Crisis**

Our communities face an affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Over 4,500 people are surviving unsheltered on any given night in King County, and others, including older adults and moderate and low-wage workers of all ages, are struggling to find affordable, quality housing in our region. Partnerships between state and local governments are critical to create new units of affordable housing. Renewed state commitments to help Washingtonians transition out of homelessness are necessary, as are expanded investments to address behavioral health needs and other root causes of homelessness.

- *The Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to partner with us to address homelessness and increase the supply of affordable housing in the following ways:*
  - *Expand and make permanent the Document Recording Fee*
  - *Invest \$200 million in the Housing Trust Fund*
  - *Allow local governments to create and preserve affordable housing through a Preservation Tax Exemption and other optional local tools*
- *The Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to address other underlying causes of homelessness by making investments in our state's behavioral health system and enacting legislation to prohibit Source of Income Discrimination.*