

Washington Recreation & Park Association

End of 2024 Session Report

The 2024 Legislative Session was scheduled for a short, 60-day session that began Monday, January 8, and concluded on Thursday, March 7, 2024. The session was jam-packed as legislators attempted to make progress on various issues, including housing supply and affordability, climate policy, workforce and labor issues, artificial intelligence, and many others. Legislators also received six initiatives by petition signers (who must be registered voters) on what are generally seen as contentious policy topics and passed supplemental budgets on the state's three biennial budgets (operating, capital, and transportation). Further, as part of the state's two-year biennial cycle, all bills that did not pass during the previous 105-day session were automatically reintroduced and alive again for the 60-day session. While many are not acted on, various proposals from 2023 were reconsidered in 2024. And like the 2023 session, Democrats continued to control the agenda in Olympia with strong majorities in both the House (58-40) and Senate (29-20) as well as control of the Governor's office.

Over 1,200 bills were introduced during the 2024 legislative session. In the end, 382 bills passed the legislature and have been sent to the Governor to be acted on. The Governor has until March 30 to review and act on these bills, where he has four options: 1) sign the bill into law 2) veto the entire bill 3) partially veto the bill by removing entire sections (the Governor does not have line-item veto authority) or 4) take no action (the bill would become law without signature). Once signed, bills become effective on June 6, 2024, unless provisions of the bill note otherwise.

2024	Bills Introduced	Passed the Legislature
House	663	201
Senate	569	181
Total for 2024	1232	382

Important Themes of the 2024 Session

Housing

After passing several bills dealing with housing affordability and supply in the 2023 session, advancing ambitious proposals proved to be challenging this session (as is common in 'short session' years). [House Bill 2114](#), introduced by Rep. Emily Alvarado was the primary rent regulation proposal this session and would have limited rent increases on tenants. While the House did pass this bill, this legislation ultimately died in the Senate and did not advance this year. [House Bill 2160](#) on transit-oriented development was introduced by Rep. Julia Reed this year and was intended to increase housing density near mass transit stops. Ultimately, this bill faltered this year over local control concerns and affordability requirement measures that can be difficult for some developers on these projects. [House Bill 2276](#) sponsored by Rep. April Berg related to increasing the supply of affordable and workforce housing, would have raised the ceiling for the state's real estate excise tax (REET) structure and imposed a new real estate tax for properties of a selling price over \$3.025 million, for the purposes of funding the Washington Housing Trust Fund and other housing-related accounts. This bill also failed to gain traction this year.

Climate

Legislators continued to focus on climate issues this session, with much of the time spent by the majority party considering how to respond to [Initiative 2117](#) that – if passed – would repeal the state's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). On top of the list was how to navigate spending CCA funds should I-2117 be approved by voters this fall. Legislators also had to be careful to pass measures that may be deemed an 'alternative' to the initiative or not.

Several bills dealing with climate policy were considered, however two main topics were legislation outlining regulatory approaches for Puget Sound Energy to phase out of providing natural gas service ([House Bill 1589](#)), and clarifying the authority of the state Department of Ecology to link carbon markets with other jurisdictions like California and Quebec ([Senate Bill 6058](#)). In the end, both bills passed the legislature this year and await the Governor's signature.

Workforce & Labor

Several significant labor and workforce related bills were introduced and passed during the 2024 Legislative Session. The most prominent proposals related to authorizing unemployment benefits to striking or locked-out workers ([House Bill 1893](#)), granting workers the right to refrain from attending meetings or listening to their employer's speech on political or religious matters ([Senate Bill 5778](#)), and expanding paid sick leave ([Senate Bill 5793](#)). While House Bill 1893 failed to advance this year, both Senate Bill 5778 and 5793 passed the legislature.

Artificial Intelligence

While various policy proposals on artificial intelligence were discussed and considered heading into the 2024 session, the legislative process quickly narrowed these proposals down to one main bill that would create an Artificial Intelligence Task Force ([Senate Bill 5838](#) sponsored by Senator Joe Nguyen). With acknowledgement by legislators that the advances in artificial intelligence are moving extremely quickly, lawmakers agreed that a taskforce to examine and study this issue would be the best course of action at this time. The legislation will require the 19-member task force to meet at least twice per year and will research and submit reports on several areas pertaining to AI. This bill passed the legislature and has been sent to the Governor for his signature. Additionally, [House Bill 1999](#) sponsored by Rep. Tina Orwall passed the legislature and would modify current Washington state law to set penalties for developing, duplicating or distributing "deep fake" images which can use AI to impose a person's face on a picture or video.

Initiatives to the Legislature – Three Passed by Legislators, Three Head to the November Ballot

This year, there were six high profile Initiatives to the Legislature brought forward by a conservative interest group named Lets Go Washington and filed by the current chair of the State Republican Party, Rep. Jim Walsh (R-Aberdeen). The six initiatives were:

- **I-2113 on Police Pursuits** – this initiative would remove certain restrictions on when peace officers may engage in vehicular pursuits.
- **I-2111 on Prohibiting State Income Tax** – this initiative would prohibit the state, and local jurisdictions, from imposing or collecting income taxes.
- **I-2081 on Parental Notification** – this initiative would allow parents and guardians to review instructional materials and inspect student records, including health and disciplinary records on request.
- **I-2117 on the Gas Tax for the Climate Commitment Act** – this initiative would repeal the Climate Commitment Act passed in 2021 and would prohibit state agencies from imposing any carbon tax credit trading or "cap and trade" or "cap and tax" programs.
- **I-2109 on Repealing the Capital Gains Tax** – this initiative would repeal the state's capital gains tax.
- **I-2124 on the State-run Long Term Care Coverage Act** – this initiative would allow individuals to opt-out of the state's Long-Term Care Program at any time.

Once these initiatives received enough signatures and qualified to the legislature, legislators had three options:

1. They can ignore an initiative. The initiative will be on the ballot for voters to consider the following November.
2. They can propose an alternative. If this happens, the original qualified initiative and an alternative created by the legislature are both placed before voters on the ballot at the next election.
3. They can approve it. In this case it simply becomes law.

Near the end of session, House and Senate [Democrat leaders announced](#) their plans for the six initiatives – they planned to hold public hearings on three, and ignore the other three which will place them on the November ballot. In the final days of the session, legislators ended up passing the three initiatives that they held public hearings on, which were: [Initiative 2113](#) on police pursuits, [Initiative 2111](#) on prohibiting a state income tax, and [Initiative 2081](#) on parental notification. The other three that will be on the November ballot are: [Initiative 2117](#) that would repeal the Climate Commitment Act, [Initiative 2109](#) that would repeal the state capital gains tax, and [Initiative 2124](#) on the state’s Long-term Care program.

Outdoor Recreation Items in the 2024 Supplemental Budget

Here is a snapshot of some of the outdoor recreation items funded in the 2024 supplemental budgets:

- **State Parks**
 - \$2.1 million for climate and clean energy.
 - \$500K for EV charging facilities.
 - **Capital budget:**
 - \$3.7 million for the Nisqually State Park.
- **Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO)**
 - \$250K for Lake Union water safety!
 - \$150K for an economic analysis study of outdoor recreation.
 - \$600K for a recreation and public access analysis on the lower Snake River.
 - \$198K for Hood Canal Fish Passage.
 - **Capital Budget:**
 - \$58 million to expand salmon habitat restoration.
 - \$5.7 million for the Community Forest Grant Program.
- **Department of Fish & Wildlife**
 - \$1.6 million for post-wildfire habitat recovery.
 - \$13 million for the Whidbey Basin Ecosystem Recovery.
 - **Capital budget:**
 - \$2.7 million for the Sekiu boat ramp acquisition.
- **Department of Natural Resources**
 - \$1.8 million for the DNR Conservation Corp.
 - \$1.3 million for a recreational target shooting pilot.
 - \$325K for derelict structures (spending authority).
 - \$300K for float plane dock tire removal.
 - **Capital budget:**
 - \$1.8 million for Recreational target shooting pilot sites.
 - \$3.6 million for YMCA Camp Colman investments.
 - \$10.8 million in Trust Lander Transfers.
 - \$25 million for the Quinault Legacy Forest Acquisition.
- **Department of Transportation**
 - 13 bike/pedestrian projects were moved forward and paid for with Climate Commitment Act funds (this funding will be lost if the Climate Commitment Act is repealed in November due to Initiative 2117):
 - North Aurora Safety Improvements.
 - North Broadway Pedestrian Bridge.
 - State Route 547 Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Trail (Kendall Trail).

- 72nd Ave & Washington Ave Active Transportation Components.
- Bluff Trail Hood River to White Salmon.
- Columbia Heights Safety Improvements.
- La Center Pac. Hwy Shared Use Path.
- SR 240/Aaron Dr Complete Streets Improvements.
- View Ridge Safe Routes to Schools.
- 84th Ave NE Pedestrian and Bicycle Project.
- Communities for a Health Bay electric boat.
- SR 303 Warren Ave Bridge Pedestrian Improvements.
- SR 520 & 148th NE Bicycle/Pedestrian Crossing.
- **Department of Commerce**
 - \$1 million for tourism marketing grants (World Cup).
 - \$1 million for the WA Sports Commission Grant program.
 - **Capital budget:**
 - \$10 million for FIFA World Cup 2026.
 - \$500K for the Seattle Storm Center.
 - New recreation-related community local projects (member requests):
 - \$206K for the Lakebay Marina Renovation and Historic Preservation!
 - \$52K for the Buckley Foothills Trailhead Doc Tait Pavilion.
 - \$151K for a City of Bonney Lake ADA Accessible Playground.
 - \$171K for the City of Sequim Park Acquisition.
 - \$72K for the Ellensburg Community Fieldhouse.
 - \$300K for the Everest Park Facilities Update.
 - \$173K for Florence Robison North Park Equipment Replacement.
 - \$50K for Glenwood Little League Facility Improvements.
 - \$215K for Idylwood Beach Park Accessibility Improvements.
 - \$258K for an Inclusive Playground at Cirque Park.
 - \$206K for an Intergenerational Community and Expanded Aquatic Center.
 - \$72K for the Kelso Rotary Park.
 - \$52K for the Nespelem Community Park.
 - \$300K for a Regional Sports Complex-Site Evaluation and Pre-Design.
 - \$98K to Resurface and Revitalize Prescott Public Pool.
 - \$100K for the Sheffield Trail.
 - \$206K for the Shelton Multi-Use Trail.
 - \$150K for the Spokane Valley Cross Country Course.

Biennial Budgets

After each chamber released and passed their respective biennial budgets (Operating, Capital, and Transportation), budget leaders retreated behind closed doors to negotiate the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budgets. This year, negotiations concluded in the final days of session with the Capital Budget released to the public on day 58, and both the Transportation and Operating Budgets released to the public on day 59 – just one day before the legislature adjourned the regular session. Below are highlights of each budget.

Adopted 2023-2025 Supplemental Operating Budget

The Operating Budget is a two-year plan that pays for the day-to-day operations of state government, including K-12 schools, human services, higher education, the prison system, public safety, and more. The final budget appropriates \$71.9 billion, an increase of \$2.1 billion from the 2023 enacted biennial budget of \$69.8 billion.

This includes a net increase of \$1.1 billion, and \$3.0 billion total budgeted funds at maintenance level to continue current programs and meet statutory obligations. Lawmakers stated that the largest cost drivers are increases in Medicaid medical assistance caseloads, Food Assistance Program caseloads, K-12 enrollment and workloads, and the mandatory Trueblood case judgement.

Budget writers left roughly \$4.1 billion in total reserves – including \$1.3 billion in the Budget Stabilization Account. These amounts represent 11.8% of total revenues and other resources.

Notable investment include:

- K-12 Education: \$335 million in funding for public schools including paraeducator staffing, special education, and increased transportation costs.
- Higher Education: \$76 million to expand grant and loan programs and support students.
- Behavioral Health: \$339 million for opioid and other substance use disorder treatment and prevention, hospital beds and facility support, and behavioral health personal care.
- Housing & Homelessness: \$80 million to support local homelessness services and homeownership programs, and to help housing vulnerable populations.
- Health Care & Public Health: \$232 million for UW Hospital support, health care for uninsured adults, provider rates and reimbursements, and other costs.
- Natural Resources: \$335 million for forest health and wildfire protection, as well as energy and climate and other increases.
- Corrections & Criminal Justice: \$67 million for criminal justice training and certification, law enforcement academy costs, fentanyl and contraband detection, resentencing and reentry supports, and other costs.
- Food Assistance: \$64 million for food assistance for seniors, summer EBT for kids, and support for food banks.
- Information Technology: \$105 million for IT costs, electronic health records, public health data systems, the child welfare information system, and other costs.

Adopted 2023-2025 Supplemental Capital Budget

The Capital Budget is the state’s construction budget, and typically includes investments to state and local agencies for building and infrastructure projects, such as public schools and universities, parks, prisons, but does not include transportation construction. This budget operates over the same two-year period as the Operating Budget. The final supplemental budget appropriates \$1.3 billion in total funds, of which \$130.6 million is from debt limit bonds and \$1.2 billion is from other state and federal accounts. For context, the 2023 approved capital budget authorized \$9 billion in spending.

Funding sources used include:

- \$130.6 million in bonds
- \$688.4 million from Climate Commitment Act accounts
- \$307.5 million from the Common School Construction Fund
- \$123.6 million from federal funds
- \$24.4 million from Model Toxics Control Act accounts
- \$11.3 million in alternative financing authorizations
- \$10 million from the Stadium World Cup Capital Account
- \$8.5 million from the Washington Housing Trust Fund Account

- \$32.7 million from other state accounts.

It's important to note that the majority of the 2024 Supplemental Capital Budget appropriations from the Climate Commitment Act accounts, are assumed to be effective January 1, 2025, and would lapse if the accounts were repealed due to passage of Initiative-2117 to be determined this November. Also, due to Initiative-2109 (if passed, would repealing the Capital Gains Tax), the Supplemental Capital Budget does not appropriate the projected Common School Construction Fund revenue from the tax on capital gains beyond November 2024.

Notable spending in the Capital Budget includes:

- Climate Commitment Account: \$684 million
 - Clean Energy: \$195 million
 - Higher Education Energy Related Programs: \$90 million
 - Salmon Recovery: \$66 million
 - Carbon Storage: \$55 million
 - K-12 Education: \$35 million
 - Local Emission Reduction Projects: \$22 million
 - Trust Land Management: \$11 million
- Housing & Homelessness: \$128 million
 - Housing Trust Fund: \$127 million
- Behavioral Health: \$144 million
 - Behavioral Health Community Capacity Grants: \$83 million
 - Trueblood: \$49 million
 - Harborview: \$5 million
- Commerce Grant & Loan Programs
 - Broadband: \$96 million
 - Local & Community Projects: \$72 million
 - Early Learning Facility Grants: \$27 million
 - 2026 FIFA World Cup: \$20 million
- Higher Education: \$38 million
- Natural Resources: \$47 million
- Human Services: \$34 million
- General Government: \$24 million

Adopted 2023-2025 Supplemental Transportation Budget

The state's transportation budget pays for both the day-to-day operations of state transportation agencies and the construction and preservation of state highways and roads. Most of the revenue that supports the transportation budget comes from the state gas tax, permits, licenses, and other fees. As has been previously reported, gas tax revenue continues to decline, and brings in less revenue than previous projections.

The final Supplemental Transportation Budget spends a total of \$14.6 billion, which is an increase of \$1 billion from the enacted biennial budget from last session. The increased spending is made possible by reappropriated federal funding, increased carbon emission allowance auction revenues (CCA funding of about \$340 million) and increased Move Ahead Washington account spending from available balances (\$308 million).

Major Categories of Spending:

- \$150 million for fish passage barrier removal.
- \$100 million for highway preservation for the remainder of this biennium and \$80 million in each of the subsequent two biennia.

- \$73 million to cover ferry capital cost increases and \$33.1 million for vessel preservation in the 2023-25 and 2025-27 biennia.
- \$25 million to match federal funding for the ultra-high speed rail program.

Highway Projects:

- SR 520 Seattle Corridor Improvements
 - \$78 million in additional funding is provided in 2023-25 to address escalated bid costs.
 - The increased costs over several biennia total \$770 million.
 - The department is directed to apply for a sales tax deferral of \$140 million and other additional funds assist in accommodating the cost increases.
 - The budget assumes the passage of SB 6316 providing a sales tax deferral for the project (this bill did pass on the last day of session).
 - The budget directs WSDOT to begin a traffic and revenue study of tolling on the SR 520 corridor and to coordinate with the Washington State Transportation Commission on planning work regarding updated tolling on the SR 520 corridor.
- \$275 million to address increased costs for the I-405 and SR 167 Corridor Program, including the SR 522/Brickyard Project, but delays three remaining projects in the corridor by two to ten years.
- \$795 million for the SR 167/SR 509 Puget Sound Gateway.
- \$460 million for the I-405/Renton to Bellevue - Corridor Widening.
- \$326 million for the I-405/SR 522 to I-5 Capacity Improvements.
- \$209 million for the I-5 JBLM Corridor Improvements.
- \$192 million for the US 395 North Spokane Corridor.
- \$144 million for the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass-Widen to Easton.
- \$37 million for the I-90/SR 18 Interchange Improvements; and
- An additional \$600 million in federal grant funding has been added to available resources beyond the 2023-25 biennium for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program.
 - The Interstate Bridge Replacement Program receives \$275 million of funding in the 2023-25 biennium.

Studies and Follow-Up Research:

- \$250,000 to carry out engagement on recent Road Usage Charge research.
- \$450,000 to evaluate and provide recommendations on alternative and innovative project delivery practices.
- \$375,000 for the JTC, in consultation with the Municipal Research and Services Center, to convene a work group to evaluate and provide recommendations on streamlining project delivery methods.
- \$250,000 for a review of transit-oriented development conditions in certain cities in the five largest counties in the state.
- \$100,000 for a work group to review Washington State Ferries (WSF) funding requirements and explore dedicated funding sources.
- \$500,000 to explore alternative uses of the state's highway rights-of-way and other review.
- \$500,000 to evaluate options for the state to return to providing state passenger-only ferry service to support existing ferry service routes.

Links to adopted Supplemental Budgets (pending the Governor's signature at the time of writing):

- 2023-2025 Final Supplemental Operating Budget: [Text of the Budget](#) & [Summary Documents](#)
- 2023-2025 Final Supplemental Capital Budget: [Text of the Budget](#) & [Summary Documents](#)
- 2023-2025 Final Supplemental Transportation Budget: [Text of the Budget](#) & [Summary Documents](#)

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Priority	Position
HB 1718 (Dead) (Inactive) (SSB 5095)	Parks/health & wellness	Creating the "parks Rx" health and wellness pilot programs.	H HC/Wellness	Rule		
HB 1896 (Dead) (Inactive) (SB 6080)	Tourism marketing funding	Simplifying the funding provisions of the statewide tourism marketing account.	H Rules X	Ryu		
SHB 1940 (Dead) (Inactive) (ESSB 5778)	Employer political speech	Protecting the rights of workers to refrain from attending meetings or listening to their employer's speech on political or religious matters.	H Rules X	Fosse		
SHB 1997	Parks and recreation comm.	Concerning gubernatorial appointments for the state parks and recreation commission.	H Rules 3C	Ryu		
HB 2051 (Dead) (Inactive)	Small off-road engines	Reducing emissions from small off-road engines.	H Env & Energy	Walen	Monitoring	
SHB 2089 (Dead) (ESSB 5949)	Capital budget, supplemental	Concerning the capital budget.	H Rules R	Tharinger		
SHB 2104 (Dead) (ESSB 5950)	Operating budget, supp.	Making 2023-2025 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations.	H Rules R	Ormsby		
ESHB 2134 (SSB 5947)	Transportation budget, supp.	Making supplemental transportation appropriations for the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium.	Del to Gov	Fey		
SHB 2138 (Dead) (Inactive)	Outdoor learning/state parks	Promoting outdoor learning in state parks.	H Approps	Rule		
SHB 2165 (SB 6043)	Recreational use fees	Concerning the authority of the department of natural resources to determine recreational use fees for activities on agency-managed public lands.	C 18 L 24	Kloba		
HB 2257 (Dead)	Back country search & rescue	Supporting back country search and rescue organizations and	H Rules 3C	Goehner		

		volunteers through the creation of the back country search and rescue grant program.				
SHB 2265	Climbing facilities	Establishing climbing facility regulations and requirements.	H Rules X	Doglio		
HB 2310	State park heritage center	Creating the Julia Butler Hansen state park heritage center.	H Cap Budget	McEntire		
E2SHB 2354 (SB 6230)	Tax increment areas	Creating an option for impacted taxing districts to provide a portion of their new revenue to support any tax increment area proposed within their jurisdiction and clarifying that a tax increment area must be dissolved when all bond obligations are paid.	Del to Gov	Street		
HB 2394 (Dead) (Inactive)	SEPA/trails and paths	Streamlining certain decisions pertaining to the development or extension of a trail or path from the state environmental policy act.	H Local Govt	Duerr		Support
HB 2445 (Dead) (Inactive)	Leasing/state parks comm.	Concerning the leasing authority of the state parks and recreation commission.	H Rules X	Ryu		
HB 2450 (Dead) (Inactive) (SB 6285)	Use of impact fees	Ensuring the timely and balanced use of impact fees.	H Local Govt	Hutchins		Oppose
HB 2451 (Dead) (Inactive) (SB 6284)	Impact fees	Increasing the consistency and transparency of impact fees.	H Local Govt	Hutchins		
HB 2480 (Dead) (Inactive)	Recreational use liability	Addressing the liability of owners or others in possession of land and water areas for injuries to recreational users.	H Civil R & Judi	Klicker		
HJR 4210	Natural resources	Adding a new section to the Washington state Constitution regarding the conservation and protection of the state's natural resources.	H Env & Energy	Lekanoff		

SSB 5095 (Dead) (Inactive) (HB 1718)	Parks/health & wellness	Creating the "parks Rx" health and wellness pilot programs.	S Ways & Means	Nobles		Support
2SSB 5444	Firearms/certain premises	Concerning firearm sensitive places.	Del to Gov	Valdez		
SSB 5770 (Dead) (Inactive)	Property tax	Providing state and local property tax reform.	S Rules X	Pedersen	High	Support
ESSB 5778 (SHB 1940)	Employer political speech	Protecting the rights of workers to refrain from attending meetings or listening to their employer's speech on political or religious matters.	Del to Gov	Keiser		
SSB 5902 (Dead)	State park system/accounts	Reinvesting account revenue for the purpose of supporting the state park system.	S Rules 3	Van De Wege		
SSB 5947 (Dead) (ESHB 2134)	Transportation budget, supp.	Making supplemental transportation appropriations for the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium.	S Rules 2	Liias		
ESSB 5949 (SHB 2089)	Capital budget, supplemental	Concerning the capital budget.	Del to Gov	Mullet		
ESSB 5950 (SHB 2104)	Operating budget, supp.	Making 2023-2025 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations.	Del to Gov	Robinson		
SSB 6010 (Dead) (Inactive)	SEPA/trails and paths	Streamlining certain decisions pertaining to the development or extension of a trail or path from the state environmental policy act.	S Rules 3	Shewmake		Support
SB 6043 (Dead) (Inactive) (SHB 2165)	Recreational use fees	Concerning the authority of the department of natural resources to determine recreational use fees for activities on agency-managed public lands.	S Ag/Water/Natur	Salomon		
SB 6080 (HB 1896)	Tourism marketing funding	Simplifying the funding provisions of the statewide tourism marketing account.	C 130 L 24	Boehnke		
SB 6230 (Dead) (Inactive) (E2SHB 2354)	Tax increment areas	Creating an option for impacted taxing districts to provide a portion of their new revenue to support any tax	S Loc Gov, Land	Rivers		

		increment area proposed within their jurisdiction.				
SB 6284 (Dead) (Inactive) (HB 2451)	Impact fees	Increasing the consistency and transparency of impact fees.	S Ways & Means	Braun		
SB 6285 (Dead) (Inactive) (HB 2450)	Use of impact fees	Ensuring the timely and balanced use of impact fees.	S Ways & Means	Braun		Oppose