

2020

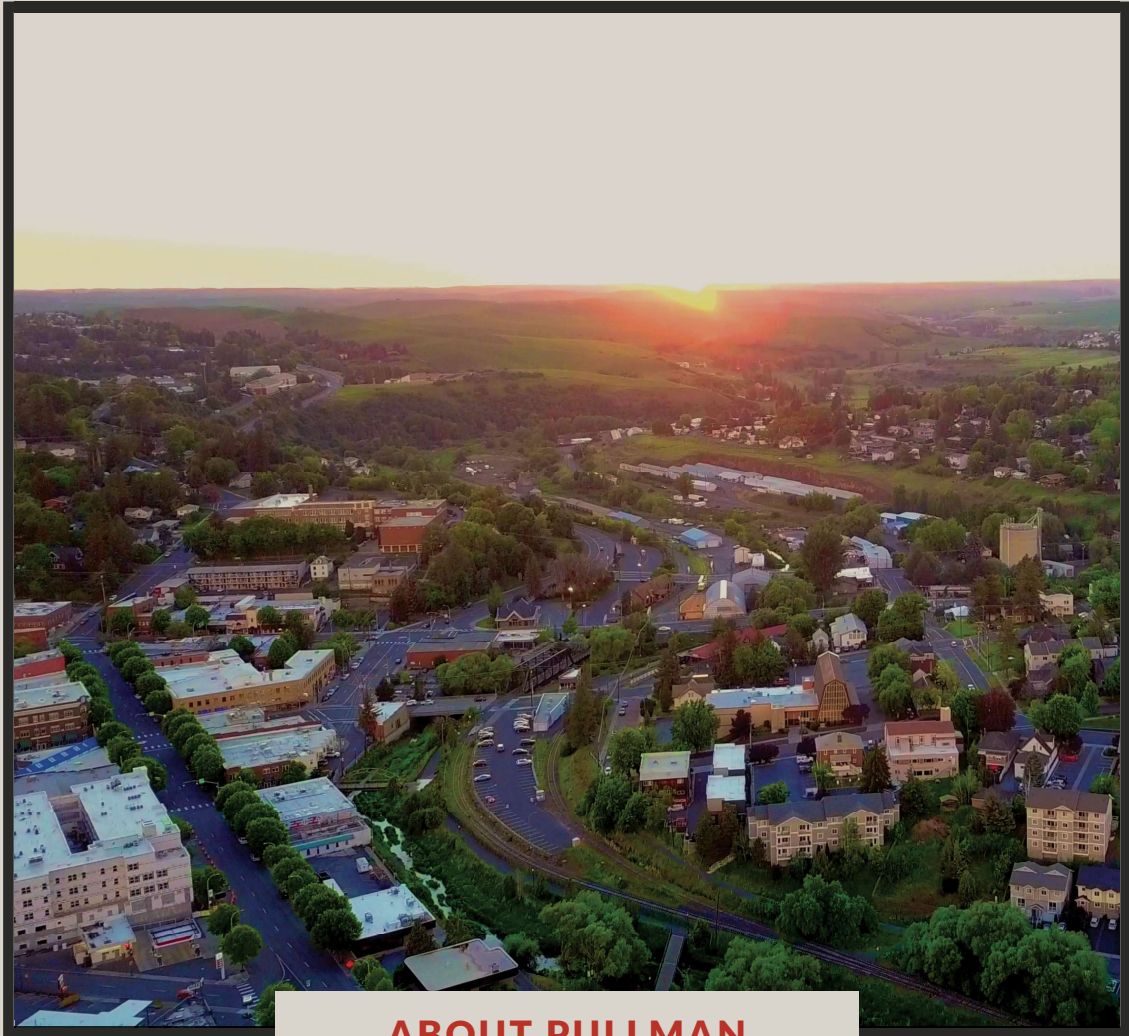
**PULLMAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

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MISSION


The Pullman Chamber and Visitor Center's mission is to promote, advocate and support the businesses and the community of Pullman. In support of that mission, the Pullman Chamber Government Affairs Committee is committed to informing and educating chamber members regarding relevant legislative and regulatory issues. Whether for industry, education or social services, the Committee engages with elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels to support and advocate for a limited, simple and clear regulatory environment ensuring that Pullman is a great place to live, work, and do business.



ABOUT PULLMAN



The City of Pullman is located in the Southeast corner of Washington State. Home to the state's land-grant institution Washington State University, the city has a thriving and diverse community and is the home of leading technology firms. Pullman is surrounded by the rolling hills and farmland of the Palouse, and is the largest city in Whitman County with over 34,000 residents.



Guiding Principles

Our membership supports:

01

Limiting taxation and fiscal policies that make it more difficult for our locally owned businesses to thrive in our community

02

Reducing regulations that may discourage new or continued business in our community

03

Developing and maintaining the infrastructure and funding mechanisms necessary to support the common needs of our growing community

04

Supporting public and private services that create more effective organizations, build stronger communities, and promote equity and opportunity

For 2020, the Chamber membership has prioritized the following legislative items.

Funding Needs

Continue to appropriately fund education and update policies

Washington State's education system is a point of pride. However, there are updates that should be made to policy that will continue to improve the education climate. Things that need additional review are:

- Updating the K-12 staff allocation formula
- Remediating the special education funding shortfall
- Addressing harmful regionalization that intensify inequities between districts
- Remediating unintended consequences of the SEBB Collective Bargaining Agreement, such as requiring school districts to pay for employees who opt-out of coverage, and clarifying that substitute teachers are not benefit eligible

Provide funding for Basic Law Enforcement training

There is a need to maintain funding for Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) classes to ensure that new recruits receive training as quickly as possible. The Chamber in coordination with the Pullman Police Department recommends the legislature to earmark funding for a least two Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) classes in Spokane to serve the law enforcement agencies in Eastern Washington.

Increase passing lanes on SR 26

The Pullman Chamber membership, the Associated Students of WSU and Pullman City Council are grateful for our district's Washington State elected officials and their continued support, particularly with regards to their response to requests to urgently address the safety improvements needed along State Route 26. With their support, the state has brought the timeline for the construction of additional passing lanes from 2025 to hopefully beginning in 2020. SR 26 is the most direct route for travelers coming from the west side of the state, and sees long backups and risky passing frequently. The Chamber would like to encourage improvements to SR 26 to remain a priority for our legislators.

Support Washington State University's Drive to 25

The Pullman Chamber of Commerce will continue to support WSU's Drive to 25 goal. WSU is working to become one of the nation's top 25 public research universities by 2030. The Chamber holds WSU's involvement in the Pullman community in high regard. The Chamber supports WSU's legislative agenda that is working to improve the institution, and to maintain its reputation as a diverse and thriving university.

Support South Bypass Road development

The City of Pullman has put great effort into planning for the creation of a south bypass road that would relieve pressure on State Highways 27 and 270 and allow freight and other large vehicles to circumvent Pullman's Downtown District, which is currently the primary truck route. The Pullman Chamber of Commerce supports this planning in conjunction with the City of Pullman. The development of the South Bypass Road has long been a priority for Pullman residents, and the cost of this project will continue to increase even as the scope of the project remains the same year over year.

Tax Fairness

Taxation and fiscal policies should be stable, predictable, fair, and equitable.

Consider border towns when creating legislation

Washington shares borders with Oregon and Idaho. There are numerous border towns who rely on workforces that may not reside strictly within Washington State lines. The City of Pullman is one of them. Policies beyond just taxation - those that address health care liability, wages, etc. - should take into consideration the ripple effects of these policies upon border towns.

Oppose the creation of a capital gains tax or an income tax

These additional taxations would be burdensome to all Washington State residents, and will hurt the business climate of the state. While the proposal to implement a capital gains tax is well-intentioned to help fund and expand K-12 education in the State, such a tax is categorized by the IRS as an income tax. The Washington State constitution prohibits an income tax, and if one were to be implemented, the Chamber would hope for some tax relief in the form of a reduction in sales or gas tax.

For 2020, the Chamber membership has prioritized the following legislative items.

Policies

Policies should support the needs of rural communities, and provide opportunities.

In the past few years, there have been well-intentioned proposals made in the Washington State Legislature that impact the eastern region of the state differently than the metropolitan areas to the west of the Cascades. Proposed policy changes should take into consideration the different economies in the various regions of the states. The frequent changes to many categories of regulations significantly impacts small businesses, and should be taken into consideration.

Limit carbon policies that burden the local economy

While steps should be made to address climate change, and as a carbon tax continues to be an option, the Washington State Legislature should continue to seek solutions that do not burden small local economies with its ripple effects.

Support necessary levels of mental health assistance

Mental health continues to be one of Washington's greatest public safety challenges, and Washington State continues to fail those who suffer from mental illness. Though having a mental illness is not illegal, law enforcement officers continue to be the "solution" sought for those who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Without an effective state mental health system, law enforcement officers will continue to be forced into violent confrontations with the mentally ill and local jail beds will continue to be filled with those who suffer from mental illness.

Limit agency impacts on the operation of nonprofits

Many policy changes that are proposed focus on the impact to for-profit private entities. It is important to evaluate how these policy changes affect not for profits organizations. For example, changes to the overtime eligibility threshold made by the Department of Labor & Industries in the 2019 legislative session will be harmful to nonprofits whose missions are crucial to supporting local communities, and have limited financial resources available to ensure proper staffing.

Support fast and reliable internet

The Port of Whitman County has worked tirelessly with our Whitman County leadership and the City of Pullman to build out dark fiber infrastructure to our rural communities. Thanks to the ongoing support of our district's Washington State legislators, the Port has been able to continue to work on this project. It remains a priority, as providing high speed internet to our neighboring communities provides opportunities for economic growth, long-distance learning, and improved quality of life.

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