



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Gene Brazel, City Administrator  
(425) 622-9414 | [gbrazel@lakestevenswa.gov](mailto:gbrazel@lakestevenswa.gov)

### **Lake Stevens City Council to Consider Voter-Approved Funding for Transportation Benefit District** *Spring survey revealed residents' priorities; Council determines next steps at upcoming sessions*

CITY OF LAKE STEVENS, WA – Over 900 people participated in a survey by the City of Lake Stevens that asked community members to prioritize transportation improvement projects, such as sidewalks, streets, and pathways. Residents ranked projects for upgrades to improve pedestrian safety and relieve traffic congestion. The next step is for the City Council to discuss a resolution to place a 0.02% (two tenths of one percent) sales tax increase to fund such a Transportation Benefit District on the November 8, 2022 General Election ballot.

The public is invited and welcome to attend the meetings where the resolution will be discussed. A work session on the issue is scheduled for July 5, and Council will vote on the resolution at its July 12 meeting. Both meetings are at 6:00 p.m., and can be accessed through the City's website at <https://www.lakestevenswa.gov/319/CITY-COUNCIL>.

Transportation projects are expensive, and current costs of materials and construction mean that municipal governments must think creatively and proactively. TBDs provide matching funds for millions of dollars in grants from the state and federal governments. For example, the City of Airway Heights in Spokane County collects approximately \$635,000 a year through its TBD, the lion's share of which is from vehicles travelling on Highway 2 that stop for shopping, food or fuel. Airway Heights has used some of this funding to leverage more than \$10 million in grants for critical transportation projects in its city.

Lake Stevens estimates it would collect approximately \$1.5 million per year through its TBD if voters approve. Revenue would be dedicated to annual road preservation and to provide funds to complete important street and sidewalk projects.

More than four dozen cities in the state of Washington have TBD's, including 11 in Snohomish County. Some cities fund a TBD with a non-voted car tab fee; however, most cities – like Lake Stevens – prefer a small, voter-approved sales tax. This funding method ensures that visitors to Lake Stevens for shopping, dining or recreation purposes pay their fair share to reduce traffic congestion and maintain roads they use, as well as local residents.

Washington State allows a city to fund a TBD with a 0.03% (three tenths of one percent) sales tax. The City of Lake Stevens is considering 0.02%, or \$0.20 on a \$100 purchase with voter approval. This rate matches the TBD rate of neighboring communities.

"Our residents spoke up, and they want sidewalk connections to schools and neighborhoods," says Mayor Brett Gailey. "It's about safety first, but they also understand that having consistent, quality walkways create a more active and interactive community. The positive ripple effect of these improvements would be huge."



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With the improvements already underway at the SR 9/204 intersection to alleviate traffic congestion, combined with the possibility of this new funding for sidewalks and street maintenance, the City of Lake Stevens is laying the foundation for long-term community upgrades.

The survey completed by the City of Lake Stevens was part of its agreement with Zencity ([www.zencity.io](http://www.zencity.io)), which identifies the needs of local government based on the voices of more local residents. For a full list of results, please visit <https://bit.ly/3GiTMVF>. City Administrator Gene Brazel is available to answer questions at (425) 622-9414 [gbrazel@lakestevenswa.gov](mailto:gbrazel@lakestevenswa.gov).

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*The City of Lake Stevens, Wash. (pop. 39,000) is located 36 miles north of Seattle in Snohomish County. The City shares the name of the lake it surrounds, and is nestled between the beautiful Cascade Range and Puget Sound. The City's vision is to be "one community around the lake" with a vibrant economy, modern infrastructure, and exceptional quality of life for residents and businesses alike. More information about Lake Stevens can be found at [www.lakestevenswa.gov](http://www.lakestevenswa.gov).*