



## **Local Public Policy Manual**

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## **1.) Why should MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE have a Local Public Policy Manual?**

By having a Local Public Policy Manual approved by the MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Government Affairs Committee and Board of Directors, MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE is armed with a more streamlined Government Affairs Program, ready at a moment's notice to accurately speak and advocate on behalf of the chamber membership in response to local public policy proposals. A Local Public Policy Manual will permit the MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Government Affairs Division Chair and President/CEO to speak confidently on MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE's position regarding a whole host of local public policy issues without the time-consuming need to always first run it by the GAC or Board.

MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE's Government Affairs Committee will also work on statewide issues through the Skagit Business Alliance agenda approved yearly by the board of directors. The division will update this "Local Public Policy Manual" each year. By creating a Local Public Policy Manual it ensures the Government Affairs Division fulfills these tasks as set forth by the MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Board of Directors.

## **2.) Approval Process**

The Mount Vernon Local Public Policy Manual will need to be debated and approved by the MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Government Affairs Committee, and then ratified by the MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Board of Directors.

## **3.) MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Local Public Policy Manual**

### **I.) Overarching Philosophies:**

- a.) Land Use Planning:** As our population increases and available land becomes scarcer, land development becomes increasingly challenging. There are more government regulations and impact fees today than ever before, plus a host of local restrictions that make development difficult. As our population grows, we must use land more efficiently and plan for growth smarter than before. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE promotes sound approaches to comprehensive land use planning that includes well-planned infrastructure and allows for innovative land development techniques that will keep commercial and housing affordable and attractive.
  
- b.) Transportation:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE believes that our transportation systems are a crucial component to the viability of the local building industry. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports policies that increase road capacities to promote efficient movement of people and freight, balance costs and benefits to achieve efficient and timely public transportation services, and recognize the unique important and value of the ferry system to our region.

- c.) Natural Resources:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE believes in protecting our natural resources so the beauty of our region can be fully enjoyed for all future generations. To that end, MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports policies that create flexible options designed to ensure preservation of our natural resources, while still promoting the viability of the local economy.
- d.) Environment:** Development and growth, by their very nature, have an impact on our environment. In many cases, that impact can be positive, as proactive planning works to preserve open spaces and protect environmentally sensitive areas. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE believes that the protection of our natural environment and a vibrant local economy can go hand in hand.
- e.) Economic Growth and Prosperity:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE believes that certain conditions help create a stable economy, economic growth and job creation. Among the conditions that best meet these ends is a reduced tax and fee burden on local businesses, and meaningful incentives which encourage economic prosperity. The businesses in Mount Vernons are the primary economic driver in our state and in our region. As such, MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE believes a reduced tax and fee burden on the business community along with incentives and cooperation from local jurisdictions is the best way to promote economic growth and prosperity in our region.
- f.) Taxes:** Taxes which are spread across the broadest segments of society are the most equitable and fair. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE prefers the use of broad based taxes such as property tax, Real Estate Excise Tax and the Motor Fuel Tax to fund common goods such as public infrastructure.
- g.) Impact Fees:** As communities turn increasingly to impact fees to help cover the growing costs of government services, existing and potential homeowners suffer as these fees serve as a tax on home buyers and put the price of housing beyond the reach of many families. A growing number of local governments recognize this and are using innovative strategies for financing and managing infrastructure. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports alternative financing methods to impact fees for local governments looking for ways to cover the costs of infrastructure and government services resulting from new development.
- h.) Education and Workforce Development:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE recognizes the importance of education and workforce development in order to remain competitive in an increasingly demanding marketplace. As such, MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports a wide range of educational opportunities in our local schools which aim to strengthen the labor force in our region. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE recognizes that continuous skill development of workers is an essential component to the long term prosperity of local businesses.

## **II.) Local Issues:**

- a.) **Efficient and Timely Permitting:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports streamlined and predicable permitting by local, state and federal agencies. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE further believes that local governments should be required to issue final permit decisions within 120 days of filing a complete application and be held accountable for timely permit decisions.
- b.) **Flood Management:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports a cooperative effort between the various interested parties, including the business community, with a stake in comprehensive flood management strategies throughout the Skagit River Watershed.
- c.) **Local Shoreline Management:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports balanced protection of local shorelines that foster reasonable uses and protects private property rights.
- d.) **Sign Ordinances:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports fair policies regarding signage within the City of Mount Vernon to ensure success of businesses.
- e.) **Business Improvement Districts:**

## **III.) Local Fees**

- a.) **Transportation Impact Fees:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports meeting transportation needs through sources of funding such as the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and opposes transportation impact fees and concurrency.
- b.) **School Impact Fees:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports broad based taxes to finance school construction. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE opposes the imposition of impact fees to fund school construction.
- c.) **Park Impact Fees:** MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE supports broad based taxes to fund parks. MOUNT VERNON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE opposes the imposition of impact fees to fund parks.