

# Excerpt - Seattle 2014 Leg Agenda

allow for a more equitable application of the tax; and more progressive options regarding MVET.

To help better manage on-street parking and improve access to local businesses for all drivers (including those with disabled parking placards), we seek improvements to the disabled parking placard administration process and enforcement such that disabled parking placards are distributed to and used only for the benefit of those who need them.

We support the development of a full funding package for the SR 520 Replacement Project (SR 520 Project) that improves safety, improves the movement of transit, bikes, and pedestrians throughout the corridor and is consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between WSDOT and the City of Seattle. We urge the State Legislature to fund continuing efforts in 2014 to advance the design of the West Side of the SR 520 Project and build upon the successful outreach and engagement efforts completed as part of the Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) in 2012. Substantial progress has been made in refining project design near Seattle's neighborhoods and the Arboretum through collaboration with members of the community and the City of Seattle. Continued funding in 2014 is necessary to maintain the momentum, build upon the progress being made with the community and implement recommendations identified in the SCDP Final Report. We support the completion of analysis of tolling I-90. We also support establishing the authorization for tolling I-90.

We support additional resources for commercial vehicle safety enforcement and policies that equitably share the burden of responsibility for safety violations between drivers and equipment owners.

## **Public Safety**

In addition to the issues identified in our highest priorities, we also support the continued use of automated traffic safety cameras and legislation that improves transparency and accountability. We seek legislation to remove barriers that currently limit the City's ability to release Digital In Car Video footage to the public. We also support a waiver of the two party consent rule pertaining to police video cameras (body-cams), identical to the exemption for Digital In Car Video.

We believe that local governments should have the ability to regulate firearms or weapons in public places to ensure the safety of their communities and local circumstances.

We support funding for WIN 211, which helps the public access important information and government programs and services, including after disasters.

## **Education**

In addition to supporting efforts to reform education, the City supports maximum possible funding for Early Learning and Basic Education and seeks state support and recognition of Seattle's work to be an Innovation City offering universal preschool.

From: MRSC Insight

## Emerging Issue: Police Body Cameras in Washington State

Posted on October 14, 2014 by Byron Katsuyama

The recent fatal shooting of the unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, has greatly accelerated an already growing interest in the use of police body-worn cameras across the country and in several Washington communities.

These officer-activated cameras, which are small enough to clip to the officer's uniform or sunglasses, can record audio and video of police interactions with the public, providing a record of events that goes well beyond the limited view provided by the more familiar dash-mounted vehicle cameras. But what are the benefits, and what have police departments done in Washington?



Police body cameras have surged in popularity. Photo courtesy of West Midlands Police.

### Benefits of Body Cameras

From the perspective of a suspicious public and media, body cameras are seen as a way to improve transparency and police accountability. For law enforcement, the cameras offer a way to effectively counter wrongful claims of misconduct. *Governing* magazine reports that more than 1,000 police departments nationwide are **currently using body cameras**, and many law enforcement officials believe that much of the violence and unrest that occurred in the Ferguson community could have been avoided if the officer had been wearing a camera. (According to *Governing*, all of Ferguson's police officers have now been equipped with the cameras.)

Several studies have supported these findings, demonstrating better accountability, reductions in police use of force, and improved behavior among both officers and citizens. Once people know that they are being recorded, they generally tend to moderate their behavior.

One **widely publicized study of the Rialto, California police department** in 2012 found that the cameras decreased the number of police misconduct claims by 88 percent and reduced the number of times officers had to use force by 60 percent. These findings alone offer some intriguing possibilities for significantly improving police-citizen interactions and avoiding what can sometimes be very costly judgments in misconduct cases.

### Body Cameras in Washington State

In recent years, several Washington jurisdictions have either begun pilot programs to test body cameras in their own communities, or have already implemented the systems department-wide. MRSC has not conducted a survey, but according to news reports, these communities include:

- **Airway Heights** (cameras issued to all officers around 2009)
- **Bainbridge Island** (issued to all officers in 2011)
- **Bellingham** (began phasing in for all officers in Aug. 2014)
- **Bremerton** (pilot program, plans to issue to all officers in 2015)
- **King County** (pilot project proposed in Sept. 2014)
- **Liberty Lake** (voluntary use beginning in 2013, mandatory use beginning in 2014)

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- [Pullman](#) (issued to all officers in 2013)
- [Seattle](#) (pilot program, hopes to issue to all officers by 2016)
- [Spokane](#) (pilot program, will issue to all officers in 2015)

One unique challenge is Washington's two-party consent law ([Chapter 9.73 RCW](#)), which requires the permission of both parties to record private conversations, although there are exceptions for urgent situations such as criminal activity and threats of bodily harm. It is unclear when and where body cameras may record audio, and the Attorney General's Office [has been asked for guidance on this issue](#) but has not yet issued an opinion.

Local jurisdictions have taken several different approaches so far, in accordance with what they think is permissible under state law. According to the articles above, Bremerton records audio and video, Bellingham records audio and video in public but officers must request permission to record in a private residence, officers in Spokane may record inside private residences but must turn off the cameras if asked by the occupant, and Seattle will only record video until the state legislature approves a specific exemption for body cameras, similar to the exemption for dashboard cameras that was approved in 2000 ([RCW 9.73.090\(1\)\(c\)](#)).

Has your community studied or deployed police body cameras? Have you developed policies for the use of body cameras? If so, please let me know by adding a comment below or [emailing me](#).

### Other Questions and Resources

A number of other questions about usage, privacy, public records retention, cost, and management must be addressed before departments deploy body cameras. Here are some resources to help answer some of these questions.

- [Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras – Assessing the Evidence](#), by Michael D. White, PhD, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014
- [Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program – Recommendations and Lessons Learned](#), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014
- [Police Body-Mounted Cameras: With Right Policies in Place, a Win For All](#), By Jay Stanley, ACLU Senior Policy Analyst, October, 2013
- [Body-Worn Cameras Model Policy](#), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (can be purchased for \$9.25 from IACP)

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**About Byron Katsuyama**

Byron has over 30 years of experience in local government policy and administration research including such areas as forms of government, strategic planning, performance measurement, and general local government management. In his own community of Kirkland, Byron served for eight years as a member of the city's planning commission.

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