



CITY OF
BRIER
ESTD 1965

CITY HALL ● 2901 – 228TH STREET S.W. ● BRIER, WASHINGTON 98036-8399 ● 775-5440

NEWSLETTER – PAGE 1

FALL 2025

From the Desk of the Mayor
City Voters Decline Levy Lift –
A Message from the Mayor

While we are disappointed that Proposition 1 did not pass, we remain committed to delivering essential city services to the best of our ability. We respect the decision of the voters, even though we had hoped for a different result. The budgetary challenges that prompted this proposal remain unresolved, and City leadership will now focus on determining how best to move forward in light of these financial constraints.

Without additional revenue, the City will need to evaluate potential impacts to service levels across all departments, including administration, police, public works, and other core operations. Currently, we face an annual budget shortfall of approximately \$500,000. If left unaddressed, our financial consultant projects the General Fund could reach a negative balance by 2029. We have already begun taking steps to reduce expenditures across the board.

Our primary funding source is property tax revenue. Due to state-imposed limitations, we were only able to increase property taxes by about \$12,000 last year—far below the rate of inflation and rising costs across the budget. Among the 21 cities in Snohomish County, Brier's property tax rate is lower than all but three.

This is especially significant given our limited commercial sales tax base. With the exception of the Town of Woodway, all surrounding cities benefit from substantially higher sales tax revenues.

For the average Brier homeowner, Proposition 1 would have added approximately \$37 per month to their property tax bill. The last voter-approved property tax increase in Brier occurred in 1992 for a general property limited lid lift that lasted for 6 years. In 2009, the EMS levy was reinstated back to the full 50 cents per thousand, but the city no longer collects EMS levy funds as the voters chose to join the Regional Fire Authority. Following discussions with City Council and staff, we have already implemented or are actively considering the following reductions:

Reductions Implemented or Under Consideration

- Leaving the Building Official position vacant and contracting those services.
- Eliminating a full-time position in Public Works.
- Reducing City Hall office hours.
- Limiting maintenance of the Locust Creek Park trail.
- No restrooms in Bobcat Park during the summer.
- Discontinuing maintenance at City Light Park (owned by Seattle City Light).
- Canceling the rental of a portable stage for City events.
- Eliminating seasonal public works positions.
- Reducing watering, fertilizing, and mowing in parks.
- Exploring changes to our Sno-Isle Library contract.
- Reducing the Capital Equipment Fund.

- Canceling planned purchases of city vehicles.
- Extending the replacement cycle for police vehicles.
- Eliminating police vacation house checks.
- Reducing snow and ice removal hours.
- Postponing the redesign of the City website.

Revenue Increases Under Consideration

- Raising fees for business licenses.
- Increasing fees for home occupation permits.
- Adding a vehicle fee under a Transportation Benefit District.

It's important to note that Washington State law restricts how certain city funds can be used. Revenues for sewer, streets, stormwater, and capital funds are limited to specific uses and cannot be used to fund general operations. The General Fund—which supports police services, staff salaries, administration, planning, maintenance, and legal functions—is non-transferable and must be managed independently.

We encourage residents to visit the City website at www.ci.brier.wa.us to review our Frequently Asked Questions, detailed financial reports, and budget forecasts developed by our financial consultant.

As always, your input is welcome. Please attend a City Council meeting on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7pm or email me directly at dkaemingk@ci.brier.wa.us.

Utilities and Transportation Benefit District

We are exploring other sources of revenue for our City to help address the significant shortfall in our budget.

After considerable discussion, the Brier City Council has recently approved an ordinance to our municipal code to levy utility tax on City sewer services, storm water services and water distribution services. These added taxes will begin in January of 2026. This approval happened by action of the City Council on August 12, 2025, during a regular City Council meeting.

In addition, we have begun the process of establishing a transportation benefit district in pursuant of Chapter 36.73 of the Revised Code of Washington. This process is incredibly involved and will require numerous public meetings and public hearings. We encourage Brier residents to refer to City Council agenda's so they can offer input to the City Council should they desire. If all the required procedures are met, this would place the City Council in a position to imposed car tab fees for appropriate vehicles in our City should they deem it necessary.

It should be noted that more than 206 Washington State Cities impose utility taxes and over 120 impose car tab fees on their residents.

City Covered Stage / New Picnic Area

As many of you know, one of our most popular events in the summer is our annual Music in the Park celebration. We often host local musicians who share their talents with us. This event attracts more people each year.

For many years we have been talking about how much better the event would be if we had a covered stage area. We are pleased to announce that we have gathered sufficient funds to complete the structure. I recognize that this will generate several questions as we are currently cutting city budgets, staffing levels, and other expenditures.

It should be noted that the source of the funding for this project is from Park Impact fees and the Park Acquisition & Development Fund which was established through Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) dollars, which we have been collecting for several years. The Park Mitigation and REET funds are restricted and cannot be used for maintenance or repairs of the parks like the Brier Park restrooms. By Washington State law, they can only be used for new construction in our parks.

This new structure will also serve as a new covered picnic area. Our existing covered area is very popular for large and small groups. This new space will also generate modest income as it will be rented out. In addition, we anticipate that city events like the holiday tree lighting, Music in the Park, National Night Out and future performances could use this facility.

The location of the structure is in a mostly unused space as shown on the park master plan. Construction began in July. Please feel free to contact me with questions

Brier Park Restrooms

I have some good news. After perusing fund sources from my contacts in the Federal, State and County government,

we have finally received two positive responses.

First, we have received \$155,000 from the Snohomish County Parks and Recreation component of the County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan. This grant was received with the support of Snohomish County Councilmember Jared Mead.

Second, we have been awarded a Local Community Project grant from Washington State Department of Commerce in the amount of \$475,000. This grant was sponsored by Senator Derek Stanford.

These two grants will allow us to proceed with design and eventually construction of this badly needed building in our most used city park.

We are very grateful for the support of Councilmember Mead and Senator Stanford in the receipt of these grants.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Requirements

The Federal Government through the Clean Water Act and the Washington State Department of Ecology, requires ongoing maintenance of all our stormwater conveyance systems. This includes private residential systems as well as storm water control systems built in association with Short Plats and Subdivisions. You will receive a notice from Public Works if you are required to provide documentation to the City of the required maintenance. If you have any questions, please contact us at City Hall at 425-775-5440.



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Reporting Spills

Department of Ecology spill hotlines
- DOE Spill Line: (360) 407-6300
- Oil Spills: 1-800-OILS-911
- City of Brier: (425) 775-5440 - During Normal Business Hours
- Dial 911 - After Hours and on Weekends and Holidays

Parks & Events

Dog-O-Ween –October 25th, 2pm
Holiday Tree Lighting – First Saturday, December 6th, 6pm Santa arrives.
Complete details available at
<http://ci.brier.wa.us/cityhall/events.htm>

SEWER/STORMWATER BILLING

We received notice as we do every year that King County Metro is increasing their rates for our sewer system to flow into their system, as did Alderwood Water District. To meet the requirements from state & federal agencies the City must raise stormwater rates significantly and due to budget constraints, the City adopted a Utility Tax of 10% to water, sewer and stormwater rates. Your new rates will be effective January 1, 2026.

Rates will be either \$208.38 or \$256.41 every two months depending on which system your connection flows through. For people with stormwater only the amount will be approximately \$45.10 every two months.