

**CITY OF OAK HARBOR  
POLICY MANUAL: OPERATING POLICIES  
CITY COUNCIL TRAVEL**

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**1.01 Purpose**

**1.02 Policy**

**1.03 Responsibilities**

**1.04 Oversight**

**1.01 Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for City Council travel opportunities. It is the goal of the City to have adequate representation of the City at various conferences, educational classes, legislative meetings, and at national level gatherings when such meetings further the goals and objectives of the City, and when such meetings further the educational knowledge of City Council members on issues that pertain to City business.

The objectives of this policy are to provide city council members and other elected officials with guidelines that outline how often travel may occur, and the how much of the limited financial resources are available to each Council member for travel purposes. In addition, this policy provides an encouragement that Council members seek educational opportunities within the State of Washington for the purpose of becoming knowledgeable about issues affecting our local area.

It is recognized that business related food and beverage expenses for both travel and non-travel purposes will be incurred by City staff where reimbursement will be provided. This policy statement does not address such issues. For information on reimbursement for travel costs see the policy manual on “Travel Expenditure and Reimbursement Approvals Policy.”

**1.02 Policy**

**1.02.001 In-state Travel**

Each year, individual Council members are allocated funds to attend meetings, seminars, conferences and educational opportunities within Washington State. This amount is intended to cover fees, registration, lodging and meals costs, and any costs pertaining to mileage reimbursement. The annual amount allocated to each member will be set by budget.

**1.02.002 Travel Outside the State of Washington**

For out of state travel, \$7,000 per calendar year will be allocated for use by City Council to attend meetings, seminars, conferences, and educational opportunities, outside the Washington State. This amount is intended to cover fees, registration, lodging and meal costs, and any costs pertaining to mileage reimbursement. City Council will need to meet on an annual basis to consensually decide how these funds will be utilized. Travel outside of the United States is not authorized.

**1.02.003 Carryover of Unused Instate Travel Allocation**

During each biennial budget period, the Finance department will appropriate the required amount of funding to ensure adequate monies are available for Council travel. As individual Council members plan their travel requirements for the biennial budget period, there may be

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circumstances that would require an individual incur travel costs that exceed the allocation amount in any given year. Accordingly, Council members will be allowed to carryover or “bank” unused travel allocations in the first year of the biennial period for use in the second year of the biennial period. In addition, if an individual Council member exceeds their annual allocation during the first year of the biennial period, the excess shall be deducted from the Council member’s travel allocation for the second year of the biennial period. In no case will a Council member’s instate travel costs exceed \$1,300 during any biennial budget period. The following are examples to assist in clarifying this method:

- 1) Council member A would like to attend two conferences in Olympia during the *second* year of the biennial period, the costs of which would exceed the allocation for that *second* calendar year. Council member A elects to limit their travel during the *first* year of the biennial period so that they may “bank” their allocation to the second year to cover the additional projected cost.
- 2) Council member B would like to attend the AWC Budget Conference in Leavenworth and a specific conference in Olympia during the first year of the biennial period. The cost of these trips will exceed the individual’s allocation for the first year. Accordingly, any excess will be reduced from the individual’s travel allocation for the second year.

**1.03 Responsibilities**

It will be the individual responsibility of each Council member to plan their travel requirements in accordance with the terms of this policy. In addition, Council members are required to submit travel reimbursement requests on an individual basis so that travel allocations may be correctly recorded. As with travel with all other City staff, it is expected that individuals will fully attend all scheduled meetings to completion, that all travel will be for direct City business, and that Council members should be able to provide their fellow Council members with a brief summary of the results of their travel purposes.

**1.04 Oversight**

The Finance department will maintain individual accounts for Council members travel costs to assist members in tracking their incurred expenses. The current year status of these accounts will appear in the Council’s monthly budget report. It is anticipated that Council member’s will, as a whole, monitor the compliance of Council spending within the appropriate budgeted amounts.