



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of September 9, 2024

Title/Subject

League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Legislative Priorities Discussion and Recommendation

Summary and Background

Each even-numbered year the LOC appoints members to serve on the following seven policy committees:

- Community and Economic Development
- General Government
- Energy and Environment
- Finance and Taxation
- Broadband, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Water and Wastewater

These policy committees are the foundation of the LOC's policy development process. Composed of city officials, these committees are charged with analyzing policy and technical issues and recommending positions and strategies for the LOC.

Each committee provides a list of recommended policy positions and actions for the LOC to take in the coming two-year legislative cycle. This year, each of the seven committees identified 3 to 5 legislative policy priorities to advance to the full membership and LOC Board of Directors for a total of 23 policy priorities. Each city is now being asked to review these recommendations from the seven policy committees and provide input to the LOC Board of Directors as it prepares to adopt the LOC's 2025 legislative agenda.

Attached you will find first an LOC document with a full explanation of all 23 policy priorities listed by committee. Second, you will find a copy of the last council goal setting report. I worked to try to find ties to the council's adopted values and goals in the list of policy priorities that I highlight below. At the end of each summary there is a page number referring to the LOC document followed by a statement of the applicable values and if possible, the applicable council goal areas. I also asked staff to review the priorities and their input is reflected in the recommendation mentioned below.

Finally, out of the nine policy priorities that I have placed in this report, I have highlighted the five that I suggest might be the most important.

1. Infrastructure Funding

Legislative Concept: *The LOC will advocate for a comprehensive infrastructure package to support increased investments in water, sewer, stormwater and roads. This includes: funding for system upgrades to meet increasingly complex regulatory compliance requirements; capacity to serve needed housing and economic development; deferred maintenance costs; seismic and wildfire resiliency improvements; and clarity and funding to address moratoriums. The LOC will also champion both direct and programmatic infrastructure investments to support a range of needed housing development types and affordability. (page 4) (Livability/Partnerships) (Economic Development/City Facilities)*

2. Shelter and Homeless Response

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will support a comprehensive homeless response package to fund the needs of homeless shelter and homeless response efforts statewide. Funding should include baseline operational support to continue and strengthen coordinated regional homeless response and include a range of shelter types and services, including alternative shelter models, safe parking programs, rapid rehousing, outreach, case management, staffing and administrative support, and other related services. The LOC will also support capital funding for additional shelter infrastructure and site preparation. Oregon's homeless response system must recognize the critical role of cities in homeless response and meaningfully include cities in regional funding and decision-making, in partnership with counties, community action agencies, continuums of care, housing authorities, and other service provider partners. (page 5) (Partnerships/Inclusive) (Housing)*

3. Employment Lands Readiness and Availability

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will support incentives, programs and increased investment to help cities with the costs of making employment lands market-ready, including continued investment in the state brownfields programs. The LOC also recognizes the deficit of industrial land capacity in strategic locations and will support efforts to build a more comprehensive industrial lands program by strengthening the connection between the DLCD Goal 9 Program and Business Oregon IL programs and resources. (page 5) (Partnerships) (Economic Development)*

4. Full Funding and Alignment for Housing Production

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will advocate to maintain and increase state investments to support the development and preservation of a range of needed housing types and affordability, including: publicly supported affordable housing and related services; affordable homeownership; permanent supportive housing; affordable modular and manufactured housing; middle housing types; and moderate-income workforce housing development. In addition, the LOC will seek opportunities to address structural barriers to production of different housing options at the regional and state level. This includes: streamlining state agency programs, directives, funding metrics, and grant timelines that impact development; aligning state programs with local capital improvement and budget timelines; and increasing connections between affordable housing resources at Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) with the land use directives in the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) and Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) programs at the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). (page 6) (Partnerships/Inclusive) (Housing)*

5. Restoration of Recreational Immunity

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will introduce legislation to protect cities and other landowners who open their property for recreational purposes from tort liability claims. (page 6-7) (Livability) (Wellness)*

6. Lodging Tax Flexibility

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will advocate for legislation to increase flexibility to use locally administered and collected lodging tax revenue to support tourism-impacted services. (page 10) (Fiscal Prudence) (Fiscal)*

7. Resilient, Futureproof Broadband Infrastructure and Planning Investment

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will support legislation to ensure broadband systems are built resiliently and futureproofed, while also advocating for resources to help cities with broadband planning and technical assistance through direct grants and staff resources at the state level. The LOC will oppose any preemptions that impede local government's ability to maintain infrastructure standards in the local rights-of-way. Municipalities' have a right to own and manage access to poles and conduit and to become broadband service providers. (Livability/Partnerships) (Economic Development)*

8. Alcohol Tax

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will advocate for increased revenue from alcohol taxes. This includes support for any recommendation by the HB 3610 Task Force on Alcohol Pricing to increase the beer and wine tax that maintains 34% shared distribution to cities. This may also include legislation to lift the pre-emption on local alcohol taxes.) (Livability/Fiscal Prudence) (Fiscal)*

9. Operator in Training Apprenticeships

Legislative Recommendation: *The LOC will advocate for funding for apprenticeship training programs and the expansion of bilingual training opportunities to promote workforce development of qualified wastewater and drinking water operators due to the significant lack of qualified operators. (page 18) (Partnerships/Engagement) (Economic Development)*

Tie-In to Council Goals

See the above list.

Fiscal Information

N/A

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

1. Adopt City of Hermiston recommended policy priorities as presented.
2. Amend and adopt City of Hermiston recommended policy priorities.
3. Request additional information and delay action.

Recommended Action/Motion

Adopt City of Hermiston recommended policy priorities as presented.

Submitted By: Byron D. Smith