



November 12, 2020
SCA PIC Meeting

Item 9:

SCA 2021 Legislative Agenda

POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTION

SCA Staff Contact

Jackie Wheeler, SCA Policy Analyst, jackie@soundcities.org, 206-495-3020

SCA Legislative Committee Members

Mayor Dana Ralph, Kent (Chair); Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond; Mayor Leanne Guier, Pacific; Mayor Amy Ockerlander, Duvall; Mayor Mary Lou Pauley, Issaquah; Deputy Mayor Wendy Weiker, Mercer Island

Discussion

The SCA Legislative Committee is working to develop the SCA 2021 Legislative Agenda to recommend to PIC. At the November PIC meeting, members will receive an update on the work of the Legislative Committee, review initial ideas under consideration, and provide input on potential priorities.

PIC members are encouraged to provide information on any work that has already begun in your city to identify priorities for 2021 and to provide input for the SCA Legislative Committee to consider as it develops recommendations.

Background

The SCA Legislative Committee, made up of members from each geographic caucus, is working to develop the 2021 Legislative Agenda to recommend to PIC for consideration. Using the SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda ([Attachment A](#)), AWC's Legislative Priorities ([Attachment B](#)), and feedback from previous PIC meetings, the Legislative Committee met again on October 26, 2020 to continue refining the 2021 priorities.

The SCA Legislative Agenda typically reflects legislative priorities found in common in city agendas across our membership. The draft legislative priorities and principles remain very high-level as many cities were still at the early stages of discussing their legislative priorities at the time of the October PIC meeting and the most recent SCA Legislative Committee meeting. City legislative agendas that have been received so far, can be found on the [SCA website](#).

Based on feedback from the September and October PIC meeting, the Legislative Committee continue to identify the following policy areas to focus the 2021 Legislative Agenda.

Draft Legislative Priorities:

- Invest in Economic Recovery
- Address the Fiscal Needs of Cities to Provide Local Services

- Address Housing Instability
- Invest in Transportation and Other Infrastructure
- Address Law Enforcement Reform¹
- Clarify the Open Public Meetings Act Regarding Remote Meetings

Draft Legislative Principles:

- Advance racial equity and social justice
- Limit state interference in local democracy
- Do not eliminate the social safety net
- Protect shared revenues
- No unfunded mandates to cities

Past SCA Legislative Agendas included several specific policy solutions to address the legislative priorities. For the 2021 Legislative Session, the committee discussed providing more of a narrative to explain why these issues are important to cities, emphasize that the legislative principles must be reflected in any proposed legislation, and urge legislators to include local governments in discussions that impact cities and their ability to provide basic services.

Next Steps

PIC members are encouraged to provide input for the SCA Legislative Committee on the priorities being considered and if they are reflective of city agendas. PIC members are also encouraged to share your city's legislative priorities to help shape the 2021 SCA Legislative Agenda. SCA will share adopted city agendas on the [SCA website](#) once available.

The SCA Legislative Committee will continue to meet over the upcoming weeks to refine the list of priority issue areas and make recommendations for the SCA 2021 Legislative Agenda. At future meetings, PIC will review the recommendations of the Legislative Committee and recommend the proposed Legislative Agenda to the SCA Board, by whom it may be formally adopted.

Questions or feedback can be provided to SCA Policy Analyst Jackie Wheeler, jackie@soundcities.org, 206-495-3020.

¹ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) proposed law enforcement reforms ([Attachment C](#))

SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda

Address the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Crisis

The state and cities must partner to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing as, well as address behavioral health needs and other root causes of homelessness. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Allow cities to create and preserve affordable housing through optional local tools, including extending the timeline to approve a “qualifying local tax” provided under HB 1406 adopted in the 2019 legislative session*
- *Continue to expand investment in the Housing Trust Fund*
- *Address other underlying causes of homelessness by providing support to cities to implement innovative local solutions and increasing investments in our state’s behavioral health system*

Invest in Transportation Infrastructure and Mobility

The economic vitality of our state demands that we invest in our existing transportation infrastructure and prioritize new investments that improve the movement of people and goods. Cities have increased investments in local transportation systems, but still face an annual funding gap for maintenance and operation of those systems of \$1 billion statewide. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Partner with cities to develop a comprehensive transportation bill that provides new resources and options for local government to address transportation and mobility needs*

Fully Fund the Public Works Trust Fund and Provide Options for Local Infrastructure Needs

Today’s cities are building the infrastructure necessary to accommodate a growing population and economy. Investments in infrastructure keep communities vibrant, protect the environment, and attract economic development. Cities need tools to lower the cost of providing local infrastructure and to avoid further exacerbating the housing affordability crisis. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Fully fund the Public Works Trust Fund*
- *Support economic development tools that help maintain and expand local infrastructure, such as Tax Increment Financing and similar tools*

Preserve Local Decision-Making Authority

Cities possess strong local knowledge and authority to keep communities safe, healthy, and improve quality of life. It is critical cities maintain the authority to provide the necessary services and retain local control over land use planning that will help communities thrive.

Provide the Tools for Cities to Address Local Priorities

City revenue streams are limited and are not structured to sustainably keep-up with rising costs. Cities need flexible local funding tools, fewer unfunded mandates, and continued support from the state for shared responsibilities. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Replace the arbitrary 1% cap on annual property tax increases with a limit tied to inflation plus population growth*
- *Meet the state’s commitment to revenues intended to be shared with cities to serve our shared constituents*
- *Continue streamlined sales tax mitigation to affected cities*