

Community Engagement Town Hall Meeting Summary

Preview of Draft 2011 State Legislative Agenda

October 19, 2010

Welcoming Remarks. Mayor Adams welcomed meeting participants and stated that he's interested in looking at the upcoming 2011 legislative session with respect to potential legislative issues identified by Portland neighborhoods.

Commissioner Fritz thanked everyone for attending the town hall meeting. She said that City Council will have their first work session on October 27th to discuss the draft 2011 State Legislative Agenda. This town hall meeting was designed to present an opportunity for the community to preview this draft legislative agenda in advance of the Council meeting.

Commissioner Fritz reminded participants that they can continue to advocate with City Council members on legislative issues important to them, as Council is the final decision making body in approving the City's State Legislative Agenda. She introduced Martha Pellegrino, Director of the Office of Government Relations, to provide an overview of the draft legislative agenda.

City's Draft 2011 State Legislative Agenda. Martha Pellegrino noted that the full draft 2011 State Legislative Agenda Executive Summary is provided in the meeting handouts. The Executive Summary provides more detail on the legislative items in the draft agenda.

Pellegrino set the stage for the upcoming session by making the following points:

- It is expected that the economy will continue to overshadow the legislative process in 2011. A \$1.27 billion shortfall in the budget for the 2009-2011 biennium was projected at the September revenue quarterly forecast developed by the state's economist. The next quarterly revenue forecast will be released in November. This will be watched closely to see if there is a continuing decline in state revenue or if it looks like the state's economic condition is improving.
- Following the dismal May revenue quarterly forecast, the Governor called for state agencies to make 9% across-the-board cuts in their current budgets to balance the budget. The forecast also projected a startling \$2.5 billion revenue shortfall for the next biennium.
- As a result of declining revenues, the current budgetary constraints will be front and center during policy discussions in Salem.
- Because of the significant revenue shortfalls, the City doesn't anticipate significant new funding for city projects. In addition, we will have to work to protect the city's existing revenue stream that flows through the state.
- Given the budgetary challenges, the City is pursuing legislative solutions where state investment will aid the economic recovery.
- This draft agenda focuses on maintenance and expansion of local revenue raising authority and policies which help to drive economic growth and maintain critical government services. Additionally, the City is supporting initiatives that will help government work more efficiently and policy issues that will promote public safety, neighborhood livability, and help those members of our community in greatest need.

Pellegrino explained that the City's State Legislative Agenda is organized into three sections. She proceeded to describe each section's draft legislative agenda items.

Legislative Priorities represent legislative issues of the highest priority to the City of Portland:

- Support for pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education and workforce development
- Preemptions of local government authority
- Preserve state shared revenues
- Film and video production incentives
- Business Energy Tax Credit
- Mental health and law enforcement
- Affordable housing
- High capacity transit
- Support for rural communities

Legislative Initiatives are items that represent bills that the City of Portland will introduce in the legislature as the primary sponsor:

- Brownfields redevelopment: incent clean up of brownfields for economic development
- Non-disclosure of 9-1-1 audio tapes
- Affordable housing: tax abatement for multi-unit and transit-oriented development
- Domestic violence confidentiality
- Speed limits: more local authority
- Use of trails

Legislative Policy Issues and Positions represent the City of Portland's position on legislative matters which are important to the City:

- Statewide tax reform
- Climate Change: Building a green economy
- Beer tax increase
- Sex trafficking
- Transportation funding for all modes
- Safety in Establishments serving alcohol
- Energy efficiency
- Vehicle idling regulations

Pellegrino ended her presentation by offering the following resources to meeting participants:

Office of Government Relations website

Legislative agendas, legislative reports

<http://www.portlandonline.com/Govtrelations>

Oregon State Legislature website

Information and important dates for legislative session, legislator information, bill text and summaries

<http://www.leg.state.or.us>

“Find your Legislators” website

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/>

Governor Kulongoski Website

Detailed information on state agencies and their budgets

<http://governor.oregon.gov/>

Legislative Report: Budget Highlights

Detailed information on 2009-11 legislatively approved budget

http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/lfo/2009-11_budget/2009-11_Budget_Highlights_Update.pdf

Draft State Legislative Agenda Discussion. Judith Mowry, ONI staff, facilitated the discussion to obtain feedback from meeting participants on the City’s draft state legislative agenda. The following represents meeting participants’ comments directly or generally related to draft legislative agenda items. The summary is organized by issue area:

Social Equity: A majority of meeting participants stated that the city’s legislative agenda needs to address social equity. Meeting participants stated that social equity was necessary to mitigate disparities that exist between under-represented communities and the dominant culture citing issues of school funding distribution, inadequate mental health services, law enforcement interactions, access to affordable housing and the impact on under-represented communities related to neighborhood gentrification and displacement. Social equity is critical in supporting communities in greatest need. The City needs to ensure that under-represented communities are represented in the legislative agenda in order to address these racial and ethnic disparities. A recommendation was made that the City needs to incorporate a strong statement of intent in the legislative agenda about social equity and need to highlight disparities that exist.

The City needs to use documented data highlighting disparities that can be found in the Urban League’s “The State of Black Oregon” and the Coalition of Communities of Color’s “Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile” reports in order to determine how to incorporate their recommendations into the legislative agenda. This “equity lens” should be used to help support many legislative items in the agenda including the green building initiative, grey water, product stewardship, affordable housing, mental health services, and climate change. There was a recommendation for the City to conduct an equity analysis for their projects.

Other comments related to social equity included a recommendation that the City should have more poverty reduction strategies, support the Earned Income Tax Credit, place more emphasis on job creation for underrepresented communities and develop a metric for transparency and accountability to ensure that outcomes address social equity.

Specific Legislative Agenda Item Comments

Education: It is critical to support a sustainable level of funding for public education and agrees with the linkage between education and workforce development agenda in the draft legislative agenda. (4 comments)

Beer Tax. Support for the City's strategy in advocating for a percentage of the beer tax to be directed to alcohol and drug treatment programs through the Oregon Health Plan was expressed. A suggestion was made to raise the beer tax to 25 cents a bottle. (2 comments)

Brownfields Redevelopment. Support for the brownfields redevelopment legislative item was made with a comment that this is an issue affecting many Portland neighborhoods. (2 comments)

Affordable Housing. Support for the affordable housing legislative agenda items was expressed. (2 comments)

Transportation. Comments were made on the following transportation-oriented legislative agenda items:

- Bikes: Bike safety is an issue that needs to be addressed in the legislative agenda. A recommendation was made to widen road shoulders in the City's bike plan in order to accommodate all street users. The legislative agenda should ensure that bike policies aren't automobile-centric and accommodate the needs of bicyclists. One meeting participant doesn't agree with implementing a bike plan citing the need to divert more funding for schools. (5 comments)
- High Capacity Transit (HCT): A recommendation was made to change the boundary for High Capacity Transit project by using Metro's language defining the SW Corridor area in order to include Homestead Street. (1 comment)
- Pedestrian: Support the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition to ensure pedestrian rights. (1 comment)
- Speed Limits: Supports the legislative agenda item that would establish a reduced speed limit of 20 miles per hour (mph) in particular areas where improvements have been made to address bicycle and pedestrian safety. (1 comment)

Domestic Violence: Supports domestic violence legislative agenda item citing that domestic violence is a pervasive and growing problem that needs to be addressed. (1 comment)

Preemptions of Local Government Authority: Supports the legislative agenda item that would oppose any legislation preempting the City's authority. (1 comment)

Film and Video Production Incentives: Support was given for this legislative agenda item. (2 comments)

Mental Health and Law Enforcement: Support for this legislative agenda item referenced the number of recent deaths as a result of police shootings as a rationale for their support. (3 comments)

Sex Trafficking: Support for this legislative agenda item included a recommendation asking that the City address human trafficking, as well. This issue isn't solely about sex trafficking. Many people are being enslaved in domestic services, for example. (1 comment)

General Legislative Comments

City Priorities: The Business Energy Tax Credit or HCT shouldn't be city legislative priorities, as there are more pressing needs for these funds. (1 comment)

Organization: Organize the legislative agenda by City priorities. (1 comment)

Oregon Farm Workers: There is a need for legislation for Oregon farm workers to ensure that they get overtime pay. There is current a statutory prohibition against this. (1 comment)

Native American Issues. The Native population needs support to help them mainstream back into their lives when they are released from prison; particularly, Native women. Many Native women are domestic violence victims needing support upon their release. Native women who are released from prison need housing and jobs upon release. (1 comment)

Local Business Incubators: City should nurture local community-based economic development strategies; such as, the development of local business incubators. (1 comment)

Housing: The City was asked to research a bill being sponsored by the Oregon Manufactured Homeowners United that would require landlords to open up books to tenants in order to justify rent increases. This is necessary to ensure rent stabilization. (1 comment)

Meeting summary/wrap up. Commissioner Fritz thanked meeting participants for their comments especially the comments about the lack of equity in the legislative agenda. She said she shared their concerns. She reminded meeting participants about the upcoming City Council work session on October 27th and encouraged meeting participants to contact the other City Council members with these comments. She encouraged meeting participants to contact her for an appointment if they wanted to discuss any of these issues further with her. She said that a summary of this meeting will be posted on the ONI website.