2011 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In drafting the City’s legislative agenda, the Office of Government Relations has solicited input from council offices, City bureaus and the public. The draft legislative agenda was developed with consideration for the difficult economic times facing the state and the ramifications the current economic crisis has had on state and local government revenue sources. Given the budgetary challenges facing Oregon, the City is pursuing legislative solutions where state investment will help 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.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES (legislative issues of the highest priority to the City of Portland)

SUPPORT FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – Actively advocate for adequate and stable operations and facilities funding for pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education including funding for full-day kindergarten and a summer jobs program for students and job training. Support legislation that empowers local work force boards.

PREEMPTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY – Strongly oppose any legislation that would preempt the City’s authority to develop and enforce local ordinances, manage its bureaus and functions, raise local revenues, or avoid state imposed tax expenditures on local government. Support legislation that would lift preemptions and grant cities greater authority.

STATE SHARED REVENUES – Preserve the City’s share of state liquor, tobacco and 9-1-1 emergency communications revenues. These revenues fund essential public services such as police and fire.

FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION INCENTIVES – Support the extension of the Oregon Production Investment Fund (OPIF) and the Greenlight Labor Rebate program, both of which are set to sunset January 1, 2012, so that Oregon is competitive in attracting film and video production to the state.
BUSINESS ENERGY TAX CREDIT – Support extension of the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) to provide incentives for public and private sector investments in energy and fuel conservation projects, small-scale renewable energy development, and renewable energy technology manufacturing facilities. Maintenance of the BETC is critical to projects that provide a significant public benefit, such as upgrades to community centers and other public facilities, as well as helping to facilitate the development of an energy efficient economy.

MENTAL HEALTH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT – The City will engage in the development and support of legislation, policies and budget proposals that decrease the number of mentally ill individuals involved with the police and criminal justice system and mitigate the potentially adverse outcomes of an encounter between a mentally ill individual and the police. Such proposals may include the design and funding of the community mental health system.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Support the Oregon Housing Alliance’s legislative agenda that seeks to maintain the funding dedicated to putting affordable housing -- both rental and homeownership opportunities – within reach for more Oregonians and to fund programs designed to end homelessness.

HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT – Support funding for high capacity transit projects from Portland to Lake Oswego and along the Southwest Corridor.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES – Support and advocate for issues of importance to our rural partners that will enhance the health, safety, and economic vitality of the entire state.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES (The City of Portland will be the primary sponsor for the following bills)

BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT – Introduce legislation to incent the cleanup and economic reuse of brownfield properties.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF 9-1-1 AUDIO TAPES – Introduce legislation prohibiting the release of 9-1-1 audiotapes without the consent of the victims, their families, or the caller. The public will be provided with written transcripts, upon request.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Introduce legislation to increase the supply of affordable housing and support livable communities by renewing tax abatement for multi-unit housing in core areas/transit-oriented districts.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFIDENTIALITY – Seek a narrow exemption from state public records law for records pertaining to domestic violence victims who are receiving support services from a domestic violence center that is also a public agency.
SPEED LIMITS – Introduce legislation creating a “Neighborhood Greenway” designation 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.

USE OF TRAILS – Introduce legislation to encourage the development and use of trails by extending the same immunity protections for property owners enjoy for the recreational uses of trails on their land to include the use of trails as a means of travel.

FORFEITED DRUG ASSETS – Introduce legislation to allow the use of civil forfeiture money from drug cases to be used for drug treatment programs.

LEGISLATIVE POLICY & ISSUE POSITIONS (The City of Portland’s position on legislative matters which are important to the City)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ENTERPRISE ZONES – Support legislation extending the Enterprise Zone program, an important economic development tool which has helped to attract and retain family-wage jobs in Portland.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

9-1-1 CLOSING PREPAID WIRELESS LOOPHOLE – Support legislation that would establish a mechanism to collect from pre-paid wireless devices the same 75 cents per month tax that is levied on every other device capable of accessing 9-1-1. This fee is critical to supporting the operation of the emergency communications system.

ENVIRONMENT

ECOSYSTEM CREDIT MARKETS – Support potential legislation emerging from the Ecosystem Services Markets working group to promote watershed restoration projects.

GREEN BUILDING – Support for legislation containing recommendations related to the creation of Energy Performance Scores for new and existing buildings and updates to related energy and green building codes.

CLIMATE CHANGE: BUILDING A GREEN ECONOMY – Monitor and support legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency and encourage the development of green jobs throughout Oregon.

GRAY WATER – Monitor legislation pertaining to gray water reuse and disposal systems. The City supports regulations which would allow for gray water systems, while simultaneously providing the necessary protections to public health.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP – Support legislation that would establish a statewide product stewardship program for compact fluorescent light bulbs and other products containing toxins.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES PROGRAM – Support full implementation of the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Technology (EEAST) program, making it easier for business and households to finance energy efficiency upgrades, saving money on utility bills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Full implementation will support Clean Energy Works Portland and Clean Energy Works Oregon.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS – Support legislation that would establish a statewide ban on single-use plastic shopping bags.

HOUSING

FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES – Support efforts to minimize cuts to the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) budget – specifically, the department’s funding for alcohol and drug treatment programs, community mental health programs, and mental health services for adults and families, including young adults exiting foster care. The City also supports policies that would direct more DHS resources to alcohol and drug treatment programs, community mental health programs, and mental health services.

PUBLIC RECORDS

DRAFT AUDIT REPORTS – Support legislation amending ORS 192.502 to include preliminary draft audit reports and public work papers among the materials that are exempt from public disclosure. All records would be made fully available once the audit is completed. This legislative change will allow for errors to be addressed and the audit to be completed in a manner that will prevent misinformation from being released prior to the audits completion, which can undermine the credibility of the audit.

PUBLIC SAFETY

GUN SAFETY – Support statewide legislation to reduce illegal gun use and restrict access of minors to guns.

SEX TRAFFICKING – Support legislation aimed at reducing the incidence of sex trafficking and ease the way for those coerced into prostitution, to access appropriate services.

SAFETY IN ESTABLISHMENTS SERVING ALCOHOL – Support legislative proposals that will allow local governments to address immediate threats to public safety that arise out of the sale and service of alcohol and provide the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) with criteria to intervene earlier to address problem establishments. Given the connection between alcohol service and public safety, the City will also support a requirement that the OLCC membership include a position for a public safety representative on the commission.
TAXATION AND FINANCE

STATEWIDE TAX REFORM – Support changes to the state and local tax system that will provide stability for state and local government and avoid regressive results.

BEER TAX – Support legislation that will increase beer taxes in Oregon, providing increased funding for local public safety. Additionally the City would support an increase that also includes funding for mental health and drug and alcohol treatment.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CHARGES – Monitor efforts that would substantially alter the system development charge (SDC) framework that has been in place since 1989. Oppose efforts that would combine and/or cap existing SDCs with new SDCs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

RIGHT-OF-WAY MANAGEMENT – Oppose legislation that would limit the City’s ability to manage and maintain the public right-of-way.

POLE ATTACHMENTS – Oppose legislation that would classify local governments as “licensees” for purposes of being subject to fees imposed by pole owners.

TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING FOR ALL MODES – Support efforts to maintain and expand funding for all transportation modes including automobile, transit, rail, ports, pedestrian and bicycles.

IDLING REGULATIONS – Support legislation to limit unnecessary vehicle idling. Unnecessary vehicle idling wastes gas, money, and generates needless greenhouse gas emissions, and restrictions on vehicle idling is an easy, low-cost way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions statewide.

WATER

STATEWIDE INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY – Support the Oregon Water Resources Department in their development of a Statewide Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

MUNICIPAL WATER CONSERVATION – Monitor potential legislation pertaining to water conservation mandates for municipal water providers, oppose legislation that would expand water conservation requirements to municipal water suppliers and tie the requirements to water right processes.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY DEPARTMENT BUDGETS – Monitor budget cuts and possible fee increases relating to the budget for the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Drinking Water Program.