



CITY OF PORTLAND

2017 Federal Legislative Agenda

CITY OF PORTLAND COUNCIL

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FEDERAL PRIORITIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESS ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

Affordable Housing

The City of Portland advocates for secure funding for the Community Development Block Grant, the HOME Program, Housing Choice Vouchers, the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program for homeless veterans, as well as provide needed reforms and updates to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit to ensure they provide assistance to those most in need. The City will oppose any weakening of protections under the Fair Housing Act. The City will also advocate for consideration of affordable housing development as part of federally funded transit investments.

Homeless Assistance

The City advocates for stable funding for programs within the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act to provide services to homeless children and youth, and will urge the continuation of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness that is coordinating a cross-agency strategy to end homelessness.

Support Services

The City advocates for funding programs and services through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to serve those in need, ensure the flexibility of Medicaid funding to provide supportive services, advocate for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program that provides services to very low-income families living in or transitioning to permanent housing, support re-entry programs to break the cycle of incarceration and homelessness, and support programs through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that provide job training and remove barriers to employment.

SANCTUARY CITIES

The City of Portland will strongly oppose legislative and administrative actions to limit eligibility of federal funding based on a city’s status as a “sanctuary city”. The removal of a city’s eligibility could have severe impact on the ability to provide public safety or public services, and could harm public trust within immigrant communities.

INVESTMENT IN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

The City will advocate for federal funding programs, partnerships, and finance opportunities (such as public-private partnerships) to address the infrastructure needs of our nation's cities, including surface transportation infrastructure, drinking water systems, sewer systems, broadband systems, and utility grid investments.

URBAN AREAS SECURITY INITIATIVE

The Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program assists high-threat urban areas build their capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from natural disasters and terrorism. The City provides regional leadership for the Portland UASI region, which covers the Portland metropolitan area, including Clark County, Washington. UASI funding has been important in increasing our regional preparedness, including resources to build our capacity to be a resource to throughout our state.

MUNICIPAL BONDS

Municipal Bonds are an essential tool used by cities across the country to fund transportation, drinking water, sewer, and other critical infrastructure projects. The City opposes changes to the federal tax code that would negatively impact the federal tax exemption on municipal bonds. Such changes could threaten the City's ability to fund infrastructure projects by raising the costs of financing, thereby increasing the burden on taxpayers and ratepayers in Portland.

FEDERAL POLICY POSITIONS

PROTECTING LOCAL DECISION MAKING

National Flood Insurance Program Compliance with Endangered Species Act

A recent Biological Opinion (BiOp) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) management of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) will play a role in future land use decisions in Portland and across Oregon. The City implements floodplain regulations necessary to provide discounted insurance to property owners. The City seeks assistance from Congress and the administration to identify a path for compliance for communities. The City will advocate for prioritized remapping of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers using protocols that include climate change, request FEMA and NMFS issue timely guidance and resources to implement reasonable and prudent alternatives, request additional funding for FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation program to assist communities, and support legislation to help flood-prone areas move susceptible flooded development out of the floodplain.

Climate Change and Energy Policy

In 1993, Portland and Multnomah County created the first local action plan for cutting carbon in the United States, with a goal of achieving a 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels). Now, local governments throughout the world are demonstrating leadership in implementing climate policy, but action by the federal government is also needed. The United States should continue to implement the full agreement forged by the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, including fulfilling the commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Federal action on climate change and energy policy should promote, and not interfere or preempt, current or future actions by cities.

Ensuring Access to Health Care

The City supports the work of its community health providers and partners to address the needs of the community. The City will oppose attempts to preempt access or limit health coverage, such as access to reproductive health, mental health, addiction treatment services, to those in need.

Protecting Local Authority on Revenue and Telecommunications Service Enhancements

Communications Act Rewrite

Cities play an important role in encouraging competition among broadband, telecommunications, and video providers. Local tools include managing the public right-of-way, implementing local zoning policies, providing local consumer protection, enforcing build-out requirements, and ensuring vibrant community media. The City will advocate for continued local government input into issues having impacts on land use and access.

Local Revenue Generation through Digital Delivery

The City will oppose legislation that would preempt state or local taxing authority on wireless service providers and their property, preventing the City's ability to bring fairness and equity to our existing phone tax system. The City will also oppose preemptions on state and local governments ability to tax "digital goods and services", creating a nationwide "tax preference" for online goods and services over competing brick-and-mortar sales.

Chemical Security

Portland seeks continued assistance from Oregon's congressional delegation to maintain local authority over chemical treatments and processes for drinking water systems, and for the Environmental Protection Agency to maintained as the agency in charge of chemical security-related matters related to drinking water systems.

Tribal Sovereignty

The City will continue to build relationships with tribal partners in the Portland region, across the state, and across the country, and support in ensuring that their sovereignty and treaty rights are upheld.

Protecting Funding for Arts and the Humanities

The City supports the work of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and opposes any reductions in funding. Grants from the NEA and NEH have a direct impact on local institutions, libraries, non-profits, and artists. The impact of the arts and humanities on our communities is immeasurable and should be a shared commitment by our nation.

INVESTING IN VITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Vision Zero

Portland is a national partner with other communities that have adopted a Vision Zero strategy to address safety for all users. The US Department of Transportation should prioritize discretionary funding to cities that have adopted Vision Zero strategies to implement their plans and provide safer streets for all road users.

Capital Investment Grant Programs

The City will advocate for enhanced funding for competitive programs within the Department of Transportation, such as the FASTLANE program (focused on freight and highways), TIGER program (multimodal, focused on economic development), and the New Starts/Small Starts programs (focused on transit) to provide essential investment in the growth of cities. These are important tools to meet the growing transportation demands of the Portland metropolitan area.

Bike Share as Transit

Congress should clarify that bike share systems are capital projects eligible to receive federal funding as a transit improvement, that memberships in bike share programs should be treated as a benefit akin to a transit pass, and that bikes share systems be an eligible project under the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program.

Transportation Research Funding

To meet growing demands on the transportation system and create dynamic new solutions at the local, regional, and national level, the City supports continued investment in the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). The City also advocates for further investment in programs like the Smart City Initiative, bringing multiple levels of government and private partners together to help build safer, more efficient transportation systems.

Levee Ready Columbia

The City will continue to work with Multnomah County Drainage District #1, Multnomah County, the Port of Portland, and other stakeholders through Levee Ready Columbia, to ensure the Columbia Corridor levee systems are recertified, remain accredited, and continue to reduce the risk of flooding. Continuing their work with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the project partners are requesting the selection of the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project as a USACE General Investigation New Start Feasibility Study in the USACE FY17 work plan.

Portland Harbor Superfund Clean-Up

The Willamette River is critical to the health and well-being of our citizens and economy, and the City has a vested interest in a successful clean-up of the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The City will lead with other public agencies and private parties to make sure the cleanup is completed successfully and responsibly. The City's interests include, environmental protection, economic development, job training, fiscal responsibility and livability. The City supports the Record of Decision issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The City also supports the reinstatement of the Superfund tax.

Willamette River Restoration Projects

The Bureau of Environmental Services is pursuing funding for the Lower Willamette River Environmental Ecosystem Restoration Project, and the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project. The City will work with project partners to seek funding for these projects.

High Quality Liquid Assets

The City supports legislation that would classify municipal securities as High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA). Qualifying a broad range of municipal securities as HQLA-eligible increases the demand for these bonds and has a beneficial impact on the City's borrowing costs.

PROVIDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND RESILIENCY

Domestic Violence Prevention

The City will continue to work with the congressional delegation and local partners to advocate for programmatic funding and legislation to assist victims of domestic violence. Examples include advocating for specific resources and policies to mitigate homelessness among survivors of domestic violence, and to ensure access to justice for victims in both family and criminal court proceedings.

Department of Justice Grant Programs

The Portland Police Bureau requests continued funding for programs that support the Bureau's mission, including the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the Transit Security Grant Program. These programs fund community policing efforts and support a broad range of efforts to prevent illegal drug activities and human trafficking, control violent crime, and improve the criminal justice system.

Department of Homeland Security Grant Programs

The Portland Bureau of Fire & Rescue requests continued funding for programs impacting the Bureau's core mission, including the Metropolitan Medical Response Systems program, and the Fire Prevention & Safety Grants program. These programs fund the ability to respond effectively to complex incidents such as CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives) events, human caused disasters, and pandemics. The City will also advocate for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program to help the Portland Bureau of Fire & Rescue better serve the public through training, enhanced operations efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience.

Earthquake Early Warning System

The City supports funding of the full development and deployment of the U.S. Geological Survey's ShakeAlert system, including installing seismic sensors throughout the West Coast. The system could provide the public and local authorities up to several minutes of advance warning depending on the location of the quake.

Federal Cannabis Regulation

The City seeks assistance from the Federal government to obtain legal and regulatory clarity in order to protect the community and livability of Portland, while continuing to provide for state and local regulation and authority over the cannabis industry. Regulations allowing legal cannabis businesses within Oregon to conduct business under the same banking and insurance laws as other businesses would benefit the community, the consumer, and law enforcement.