

CITY OF PORTLAND

2018 State Legislative Agenda



CITY OF PORTLAND COUNCIL

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AFFORDABLE AND STABLE HOUSING

OBJECTIVE:

Support legislation to remove barriers for local governments to address the housing affordability crisis and support state investments that increase access to, and supply of, affordable housing units.

ISSUE:

The City of Portland and communities across the state continue to experience an unprecedented housing affordability crisis. Inadequate supply of affordable units, rising rents, no-cause evictions, persistent homelessness and a lack of local tools to address these issues cause renters and working families to be priced out of their neighborhoods. In this environment, vulnerable families and individuals are at increased risk of experiencing homelessness.

Expand Municipal Bonding Authority for Affordable Housing

The City of Portland supports legislation to refer an Oregon constitutional amendment to voters that gives local governments the flexibility to leverage general obligation bonds for affordable housing with other funding sources. Currently, local governments can use general obligation bonds approved by voters to fund affordable housing, but limitations in the Oregon constitution on local government lending of credit mean the affordable housing must be owned and controlled by a local government. An exception to this constitutional provision for affordable housing would allow jurisdictions to partner with private or nonprofit entities that leverage Low Income Housing Tax Credits, private development funding, or other financing.

Allowing municipalities to leverage general obligation bond proceeds, such as the \$258.4 million affordable housing bond passed by Portland voters in 2016, will increase the financing available for affordable housing. Such expanded authority will also allow small and rural jurisdictions that do not have the staff capacity to own and manage housing to consider an affordable housing bond to invest resources in projects with community partners. Expanding general obligation bonding authority for affordable housing will help local governments maximize overall resources and address this immense community need throughout Oregon.

Expand the Document Recording Fee to Invest in Housing Opportunity

The City of Portland supports increasing the document recording fee, which provides funds dedicated to three housing programs: the Emergency Housing Account, the Home Ownership Assistance Program, and the General Housing Account Program. These programs support low- and very low-income Oregonians through assistance for persons who are experiencing homelessness or are unstably housed and at risk of becoming homeless, expansion of the supply of affordable housing and permanent supportive housing, and homebuyer down payment assistance. Since the creation of the fee in 2009, \$79 million has been generated to help Oregonians afford a safe, stable place to call home.

Establish a Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership

The City of Portland supports establishing a task force to address racial disparities in homeownership and compile data on levels of home ownership among people of color in Oregon. The task force may be directed to identify barriers to home ownership and access to mortgage loans, investigate practices for approving mortgage loan applications, identify practices that deliberately discriminate against people of color, and recommend solutions.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE:

Support legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage development of clean energy jobs throughout Oregon. Support legislation and state funding to reduce Oregonians' exposure to airborne toxics.

ISSUE:

Emissions present both global and local challenges to a healthy environment. Climate change presents one of the most far-reaching environmental, economic, and social problems of the 21st century. In 1993, the City of Portland was the first U.S. city to create a local action plan for reducing carbon emissions. Portland's Climate Action Plan is a strategy to put Portland and Multnomah County on a path to achieve a 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050. In June 2017, the City of Portland and Multnomah County committed to a goal of meeting 100 percent of community energy needs with renewable power by 2050. The plan seeks to maximize the economic, social and environmental co-benefits of transitioning away from fossil fuels. To meet this reduction and place Oregon on a path to effectively address climate change, comprehensive and economy-wide climate policies must be enacted, including shifting Oregon's energy supply away from fossil fuels and capping carbon emissions, and providing consumers with clean energy incentives. Emissions of airborne toxics also present threats to public health in Oregon communities. Protection of public health demands a focus on risk- and science-based approaches to air toxics permitting and reduction of local concentrations of air toxics.

Clean Energy Jobs

The City of Portland supports legislation to reduce carbon pollution and mitigate the impact of climate change by creating a market-based solution to reduce carbon emissions statewide. Additionally, the City supports policies to ensure the benefits of legislation accrue justly and equitably to impacted communities. Capping and establishing a price for carbon pollution captures the true cost of this pollution, protects clean air and healthy communities across the state, and creates more clean energy jobs. Clean energy jobs legislation is consistent with 25 years of Portland City Council leadership and policy direction on local climate action.

Reducing Airborne Toxics

The City of Portland supports legislation to improve and protect air quality for all Oregonians, including bolstering funding for state administration of programs to improve and protect air quality. The City participated in the Cleaner Air Oregon rulemaking advisory process and supports funding for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to develop and implement the Cleaner Air Oregon program. The City also supports legislation to reduce harmful diesel emissions. North Portland has the highest level of diesel particulate matter in the state. Reducing diesel particulate pollution yields approximately a 40:1 return in human health benefits per dollar invested in off-road engines, such as construction vehicles. The City of Portland has been working to reduce diesel emissions since 2006, retrofitting nearly all the City's construction equipment with diesel exhaust filters as part of a federal grant project.

COMMUNITY LIVABILITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

OBJECTIVE:

Support legislation to address community livability and public health concerns associated with addiction, mental health, and homelessness.

ISSUE:

The impacts of underfunded addiction and mental health services are felt acutely in Oregon, and especially the City of Portland. Oregon has one of the highest rates of prescription opioid misuse in the nation. The City works in partnership with other jurisdictions to provide public health support for individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction and mental health issues, as well as to address the community livability impacts of these crises.

Remove Barriers to Coordinating Management of Public Spaces and Services

The City of Portland will pursue legislation to remove statutory barriers to allow the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the City of Portland for the management and cleanup of encampments. The City of Portland has demonstrated its ability to successfully manage cleanups in accordance with terms of a judicial settlement agreement. The City goes a step further by cooperating with social service providers, giving additional training to vendors performing cleanups, and differentiating between high-impact and low-impact encampments in its response. Removing statutory barriers to better management of public spaces and services across jurisdictions will improve the City's ability to address the causes and symptoms of homelessness with compassion, and improve public trust in government.

Addiction and Mental Health

To address the growing opioid addiction crisis, the City of Portland supports improving access to treatment, advancing educational resources for providers and patients, and reducing barriers to obtaining and administering drugs for opioid overdoses. The City also supports additional resources for mental health services and treatment to improve Oregon's mental health care system.

LOCAL FUNDING AND AUTHORITY

OBJECTIVE:

Protect and strengthen the City of Portland's authority to address policy issues, raise revenue, and manage City administration.

ISSUE:

The City will strongly oppose efforts to limit its authority to develop and enforce local ordinances, manage its bureaus and their functions, and raise local revenue. Conversely, the City will support efforts to remove state barriers to local action. For example, the City of Portland will actively advocate against restrictions of local authority on:

- Background checks
- Urban renewal
- Franchise fees
- Right of way management
- Utility license fees
- Telecommunications taxes
- Public contracting
- Alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis taxes
- System development charges (SDCs)
- Construction excise tax
- Regulation of emerging technologies
- Transient lodging tax
- Tenant protections and relocation assistance

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