

2004 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

City Bonding Priorities

The bonding priorities for the City of Minneapolis are as follows:

1. Minnesota Planetarium and Space Discovery Center: \$24 million to complete design, construct, furnish and equip the planetarium.
2. Heritage Park: \$9.625 million to construct public infrastructure improvements and enhancement of public amenities.
3. University Research Park, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota: \$9 million for design and construction of the primary stormwater management pond in the University Research Park.
4. Minnesota Shubert Performing Arts and Education Center: \$10 million to construct, furnish and equip.
5. Health Careers Institute: \$3 million for construction of space in the Sears tower.

Local Government Finance

The overall goal of the City is to limit and, if possible, lower property taxes. Within this overall goal the City will have budget goals of delivering essential services and correcting deficiencies caused by past budget decisions. The Local Government Aid (LGA) reductions in 2003 and 2004 (\$26 million and \$35 million respectively) have resulted in severe reductions in essential services, including public safety and road construction, and have widened the disparity in tax rates between Minneapolis and surrounding communities. The cuts to the LGA program enacted by the 2003 legislature were greater than those cuts to other parts of the State budget and amount to a shifting of the State's budget problems to local government.

The 2001 property tax reform act resulted in a dramatic shift of the total property tax burden from non-residential properties to the residential sector. This shift will continue over the next five years because of the scheduled phase-out of the limited market value program.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- Increased funding for the current LGA program
- Suspending the phase-out of the limited market value program for residential properties

Minneapolis supports:

- LGA or similar programs funded by the state so as to relieve pressure on the property tax.

- Altering of how the concept of sales ratios is applied to the LGA formula so that state mandated exclusions from market value (such as limited market value) are not included.
- Diversifying revenue sources for municipalities.
- Re-authorizing the “This Old House” program

Minneapolis opposes:

- Further cuts to state aids.
- Cuts to state aids that would shift tax increases from state tax sources to property tax sources.
- Levy limits.
- Reverse referendum proposals.

Affordable Housing

In Minneapolis, providing all residents with safe, decent and affordable housing is a citywide priority. Local governments have few resources available for this purpose, particularly in the wake of aid cuts and diminishing commercial industrial property taxes. Not only is the State the more appropriate governmental unit to provide adequate public subsidies for this purpose, but because of the statewide nature of the need for this type of assistance, Minneapolis actively supports other housing advocates such as HousingMinnesota in order to achieve this goal. Significant attention must be given to safeguarding current MHFA programs that serve low-income residents in our City. Times of economic distress demand that we increase public support for housing, rather than further deplete these scarce resources.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- Legislation that authorizes creation of TIF mixed-use and mixed-income housing districts for developments that contain both owner-occupied and rental units.
- Regulating predatory lending on a state-wide basis.

Minneapolis supports legislation:

- Authorizing state bonding for MHFA at a level significant to have statewide impact in the area of permanent assisted housing and to serve other affordable housing needs in the state.
- Which reinstate reductions in one-time funds in the Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs; reinstate statewide Emergency Assistance program, funding and criteria; and restore funding to homeless youth programs that were part of funding reductions and block granting to the counties.
- Allowing at city discretion for the conveyance of tax forfeit property in targeted neighborhoods to the cities having jurisdiction over these properties for \$1 when the proposed end use is affordable housing or other public interest being served.

- Restoring the 4d class rate or the enactment of a similar mechanism in the tax code to encourage the production of affordable housing.

Transportation

Both Minneapolis and metropolitan communities benefit from a strong public transit system. Bus and Light Rail Transit (LRT) ensures mobility to jobs throughout the region and promotes downtown growth. Public transportation helps sustain a healthy environment and economy, and, with careful planning, can increase neighborhood livability. Minneapolis strongly believes that all transportation improvements must be done in a manner that is compatible with neighborhood livability.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- Legislation that increases state funding for transportation and transit.
- The creation of a statewide task force to put forth a state airport strategy that incorporates the interests of the entire state, including citizens, the business community, the metropolitan area and outstate regions. This task force would be advisory to MnDOT as it updates its airport plan. In addition to passenger movement the task force should incorporate air cargo and environmental concerns into the plan.

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation creating alternative sources of revenues for transportation improvements. These could include authority to create and utilize a transportation utility and authority for more extensive use of special assessments.
- Dedicated funding for transit
- Increased planning for bus rapid transit
- Funding for the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor.
- Funding for the Northwest Busway

Minneapolis opposes:

- Legislation that negatively impacts LRT or treats LRT differently from other regional transportation projects.
- Legislation that further restricts a city's approval process of state highway designs within its jurisdiction.
- Extra lanes on 35W/Crosstown project unless the lanes are dedicated to bus rapid transit.

Public Safety

Public safety concerns are issues that the City of Minneapolis takes seriously. Providing public safety to residents is one of the highest responsibilities of government.

Priority Issues for Minneapolis are:

- Sustaining the City’s authority to use administrative fines for local regulatory ordinances such as building codes, zoning codes, health codes and public nuisance ordinances; also for the use of fines for matters that are not duplicative of misdemeanor or higher levels state traffic and criminal offenses..
- Restore funding for the CriMNet statewide information system, including components related to public access to criminal justice information..
- Restoring funding and expand representation for the State Gang Strike Force without jeopardizing current criminal justice resources to ensure a state-wide coordinated plan for addressing gang activity.
- Making possession of any amount of marijuana with intent to sell a misdemeanor.

Minneapolis Supports:

- Including “palm” and “writer’s edge of hand” prints to be taken of juveniles in custody.
- Chronic Offenders/Enhancement of Crimes:
 - Changes to the criminal code to address chronic offenders in the areas of indecent exposure and interference with privacy.
 - Adding murder in the first, second and third degree along with manslaughter in the first and second degree to the list of qualified domestic violence related offenses.
 - Streamlining of the statutes used to more effectively prosecute prostitution-related offenses.
 - Legislation that makes it a crime to drive while under the influence of any drug that makes a person an unsafe driver.
 - Legislation that includes metabolites and derivatives in Minnesota’s “per se” controlled substance law.
- Increasing the 911-surcharge to provide adequate funding to all public safety answering points in Minnesota.
- Amendments to the data practices act to enable sharing of private and confidential mental health data among health and human service agencies, law enforcement, corrections departments and court systems when the different agencies are providing services for the same person.
- Local authority for the use of “photo cops” to monitor and cite red light traffic offenses.
- Legislation requiring certain multi-line phone systems and operators to provide more precise caller information to 911 centers.
- Repeal of the Personal Protection Act or at the least, amendments to allow municipalities to post signs prohibiting handguns in the same manner businesses are currently allowed.
- Amending the trespass statute to increase the length of time that a person trespassing on the property can be barred from the property.

Municipal Government

Minneapolis' ability to conduct business in an orderly and efficient manner is frequently regulated by State law.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- Legislation allowing the City to utilize existing state law relating to storm water utility charges.
- Legislation which extends the design/build process to transit facilities.

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation allowing for the creation of a special services district in the downtown.
- Local authority to extend benefits to domestic partners.
- Changes in the legal notification law allowing the Internet to be used more frequently to notify citizens about public actions.
- Including gas-fitting competency in the current State plumbing examination.
- Altering MN Statute 118.07 so that the City would be able to exercise the same authority in terms of investment options already in use by Hennepin County.

Minneapolis opposes:

- State ordered city council elections before regularly scheduled election.
- Changes in the composition of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission without a commensurate change in the funding formula.
- Legislation in this session which would further add to property taxes as a funding mechanism for pension obligations.

City Livability

The City works to keep Minneapolis a desirable place to live, work, conduct business and play.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- Legislation that creates a tax credit for owners of older housing units seeking to resolve lead contamination issues in their homes.
- Maintaining funds for the grant program to reduce and eliminate health disparities in targeted health categories.

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation fully addressing the effect that airport noise has on surrounding neighborhoods, including a fully funded noise mitigation program.

- Legislation that holds managed care plans and health care providers accountable for lead screening for children on medical assistance; and increasing state funding for lead control activities.
- Sustaining the minor consent law permitting adolescents to see medical providers for reproductive, mental health and chemical dependency issues without informing a parent or guardian.
- Protecting the funding for safety net programs.
- Restoring or maintaining the funding for early childhood programs.
- Restoring funding for youth development programs.
- Improving dental health care for children and low-income adults.
- Ensuring efficient public health emergency preparedness and response.
- Legislation to prohibit the possession/ownership of certain exotic animals (primates, big cats and bears)
- Legislation increasing the cigarette tax

Minneapolis opposes:

- Legislation allowing the purchase of wine in grocery stores or other changes making it easier for minors to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Jobs & Economic Development

Often, the first barriers to be overcome in creating jobs and providing housing opportunities in older, built-up cities, are the costs of land recycling, which include remediation and redevelopment. Many of the programs listed below are a high priority for the city because they provide state assistance in financing the development of brownfields and elimination of blight and other tools to facilitate successful and sustainable redevelopment in our City.

Priority issues for Minneapolis are:

- TIF legislation to facilitate the redevelopment of the University Research Park
- Statewide TIF legislation to facilitate the redevelopment of large urban renewal projects.

Minneapolis supports:

- \$10 million in state bonding for the Redevelopment Account, administered by DEED, and restoration of statewide jurisdiction for the program.
- Safeguarding the Contamination Cleanup Grant Program, administered by DEED, from cuts designed to bring the state budget into balance.
- \$3 million in state bonding for the Livable Communities Infrastructure Fund, the counterpart to the Rural Economic Development Infrastructure Fund.
- \$2 million in state bonding for the County and Local Preservation Grant Program administered by the Minnesota Historical Society, contingent upon the Agency's willingness

to lift the \$75,000 cap on grants from that program. Continue laying the groundwork for a state tax credit program to support the preservation of historic property.

Minneapolis opposes:

- The expansion of TIF for purposes that would conflict with the use of this tool for housing, redevelopment and the cleanup of contaminated lands or otherwise unfairly disadvantage the City of Minneapolis.