

2005 Draft LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Local Government Finance

Local Government Aid (LGA) reductions in 2003, 2004, and 2005 (\$26 million, \$35 million, and \$2 million respectively) have severely reduced essential services and have widened disparities in tax rates between Minneapolis and surrounding communities.

Several features of the 2001 property tax act are continuing to result in a shift of the total property tax burden from non-homestead properties to homestead properties. Among these features is the scheduled phase-out of the limited market value program, which will contribute to homestead property tax increases over the next four years. Due to changes enacted in 2001 and subsequent years, homestead property taxes will increase more rapidly than city spending.

The priority issue for Minneapolis:

- Full funding for the current LGA program

Minneapolis supports:

- Suspending the phase-out of the limited market value program for residential properties
- Diversifying revenue sources for municipalities, including but not limited to street use utility, sales tax, and other user fees

Minneapolis opposes:

- Legislation including constitutional amendments that would arbitrarily limit government revenues and authority

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. Funding for the Bioscience Development Fund so that infrastructure improvements of \$13 million to the University Research Park can proceed in a timely manner
3. \$5 million to be used at the site of the former Sears store near Chicago and Lake Streets to pre-design, design, acquire, construct public infrastructure, and support development
4. Minnesota Shubert Performing Arts and Education Center: \$10 million to construct, furnish, and equip the center

Affordable Housing

Providing all residents with safe, decent, and affordable housing is a priority in Minneapolis. As few resources are available, Minneapolis can achieve this goal by partnering with statewide housing advocates and agencies, including HousingMinnesota and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA).

Other affordable housing priorities in Minneapolis include safeguarding the current MHFA programs that serve low-income residents.

The priority issue for Minneapolis:

- Legislation authorizing state bonding or general fund appropriations for MHFA at a level significant enough to have statewide impact on shelters as well as permanent, supportive, assisted, and transitional housing that serve affordable housing needs throughout the state

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation authorizing the creation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) mixed-use and mixed-income housing districts for developments that contain both owner-occupied and rental units
- Statewide regulation of predatory lending. This includes support for:
 - Full funding of the Consumer Education Account so that the Commerce Commissioner may assist and educate consumers to avoid being victimized by unscrupulous lenders
 - Legislation which provides for registration, background checks, and continuing education for mortgage brokers
 - Legislation requiring lenders to provide loan applicants with a written statement strongly urging them to discuss their loan paperwork with an independent loan counselor
 - Legislation authorizing the Minnesota Attorney General, in addition to the Commerce Commissioner, to enforce the current provisions of Minn. Stat. Sec. 58.13, the “Minnesota Residential Mortgage Originator and Servicer Licensing Act” and appropriate sufficient funding for enforcement
- Restoring the 4d class rate or enacting a similar mechanism in the tax code to encourage affordable housing production
- Legislation exempting claims within the City of Minneapolis from the \$8,500 cap on damages for housing discrimination lawsuits
- State income tax credits for both affordable housing and historic buildings

Transportation

Both Minneapolis and metropolitan communities benefit from a strong public transit system. Multi-modal transit systems such as bus transit, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Commuter Rail, and Light Rail Transit (LRT) ensure mobility to jobs throughout the region and promote economic 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:

- Dedicated funding for transit
- Legislation that increases state funding for the Tier 1 Corridor projects as identified by the Metropolitan Council: 35W BRT, Northwest Busway, Northstar Commuter Rail, Cedar Avenue BRT, and Central Corridor LRT
- 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 greater Minnesota. This task force would advise MnDOT as it updates its aviation plan. In addition to passenger movement, the task force should incorporate air cargo and environmental concerns into the plan, withholding recommendation of any expansion of Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport (MSP) until the task force aviation study is complete
- Legislation creating alternative sources of revenue for transportation improvements. These could include authority to create and utilize a transportation utility and authority for more extensive use of special assessments.

Public Safety

Keeping residents and visitors safe is a top priority for the City of Minneapolis.

Priority issues for Minneapolis:

- Funding for the entire public safety system, including such critical functions as police, fire, prosecutors, public defense, communication systems, probation and the courts. Providing public safety, a core responsibility of local government, is threatened by insufficient funding.
- Ensuring a statewide coordinated plan for addressing gang activity through funding of the State Gang Strike Force and expanded representation
- Funding for the development and implementation of criminal justice information systems such as CriMNet and MNCIS that will allow local law enforcement agencies to share criminal justice information with jurisdictions statewide

Minneapolis Supports:

- Amending the trespass statute to increase the length of time that a person trespassing on the property can be barred from the property
- Chronic Offenders/Enhancement of Crimes:
 - Changing the criminal code to address chronic offenders of indecent exposure and interference with privacy laws
 - Adding the following to the list of qualified domestic abuse offenses: murder in the first, second and third degree, manslaughter in the first and second degree, interfering with an emergency phone call, false imprisonment, kidnapping, and violation of a no contact order

- Streamlining statutes in order to more effectively prosecute prostitution-related offenses
- Legislation making driving under the influence of any drug that makes a person an unsafe driver a crime
- Increasing penalties for chronic offenders by including theft; receiving stolen property; trespass; disorderly conduct; crimes involving transit; violations of local ordinances prohibiting unlawful aggressive solicitation; consuming alcoholic beverages in public; and loitering or lurking with intent to commit a crime as enhancable offenses
- Increasing the 911-surcharge to provide adequate funding to all public safety answering points in Minnesota
- Expanding the vulnerable adult statutes to prescribe felony level punishment for neglect
- Amending domestic assault provisions of the criminal code to require courts to furnish criminal history information to prosecutors without charge
- Amending the “Ted Foss” law to require a full lane buffer between non-emergency vehicles and emergency vehicles
- Allowing for a gross misdemeanor careless driving offense if driving conduct results in a fatality and increasing penalties for all other driving offenses resulting in fatalities
- Making possession of any amount of marijuana with intent to sell a misdemeanor
- Creating a statewide coordinated plan for dealing with released sex offenders that addresses the overall concentration of offenders located within the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. To ensure this equitable distribution of sex offenders, the State must fund additional housing options and placement of half-way houses and should require the county of commitment to bear financial responsibility for released offenders

Minneapolis Opposes:

- Legislation that re-enacts the Minnesota Personal Protection Act
- Reducing sentences for drug offenders and changing criminal thresholds for selling and possessing controlled substances

Municipal Government

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

Priority issues for Minneapolis:

- Legislation granting the Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund (MERF) the authority to invest funds with the State Board of Investment (SBI)
- Legislation removing the “liquidity trigger” in the current MERF statute, which requires the City of Minneapolis to fully fund each retiree’s pension immediately upon the date of retirement. The proposal will reduce and extend the City and the State’s payments to MERF to 2020, the date set for full funding of MERF’s liabilities
- Legislation that excludes the MERF executive director from the Governor’s salary cap

- Legislation that facilitates the City's collection of impound and storage fees from owners of abandoned vehicles
- **Legislation permitting cities to enter into agreements regarding the placement of advertisements on trash receptacles in the public right of way through a license, permit or franchise process**

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation which allows for alternatives to the public bidding process for transit facilities
- Legislation extending the current special service district law
- 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
- Altering MN Statute 118.07 so that the City would be able to exercise the same investment option authority already in use by Hennepin County
- Amendments to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act that protect business proprietary data

City Livability

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

Priority Issues for Minneapolis:

- Legislation fully addressing the effect that airport noise has on surrounding neighborhoods, including fully funding noise mitigation programs to the 60 DNL as committed to by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)
- Legislation creating a tax credit for building owners resolving lead contamination issues in housing units
- Maintaining the current formula that provides state funding to local governments for core public health activities

Minneapolis supports:

- Legislation that holds managed care plans and health care providers accountable for lead screening for children on medical assistance and increases state funding for lead control activities
- Policies that promote early intervention to remove lead hazards in homes before children are poisoned

- 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 health and human services 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 increasing the cigarette tax no less than \$1 per pack
- Legislation protecting the well-being of children such as the Children's Health Security Act
- Re-authorizing the "This Old House" program
- Statewide smoking ban providing that the ability of local units of governments to enact more restrictive ordinances is not prohibited
- **Legislation proposed by the Minnesota Department of Health to lower the mandatory environmental intervention blood level**

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

Costs associated with land recycling, specifically remediation and redevelopment, are major barriers to creating jobs and providing housing opportunities for older cities. State assistance in financing the development of brownfields and the elimination of blight, along with other tools that facilitate successful and sustainable redevelopment, are top priorities for Minneapolis.

Minneapolis supports:

- Statewide Tax Increment Financing (TIF) legislation to facilitate the redevelopment of large projects such as the University Research Park and the Urban Renewal Area proposal
- Funding for the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Redevelopment Account and restoring statewide jurisdiction for the account
- Safeguarding the funding level of the DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant Program
- Continuation of the Livable Communities Act programs
- \$2 million in state bonding for the Minnesota Historical Society and Local Preservation Grant Program, contingent upon the agency's willingness to lift the \$75,000 cap on grants from the program
- State funding for the "Close the Gap" employment initiative
- Establishing a state income tax credit program to facilitate the preservation of historic property

- **Legislation removing the existing \$1.0 million limit on state tax credits to facilitate bioscience development**