



SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

38 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

SCA Legislative Committee AGENDA

September 29, 2020 - 2:00-3:00 PM

The committee meeting will be held virtually via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85827433104?pwd=RnJrQ1Z2NzF4b3JjdS83TXRkenhmdz09>

Or, by phone: +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) / Meeting ID: 858 2743 3104 / Passcode: 145929

2:00 PM **Welcome & Introductions**

2:05 PM **Updates on AWC Legislative Agenda & September PIC meeting feedback**

2:10 PM **Updates on outreach to legislators**

2:15 PM **Discuss Possible SCA 2021 Priorities**

- Draft priorities

2:55 PM **Discuss next steps / Schedule next meeting**

3:00 PM **Adjourn**

Possible 2021 SCA Legislative Priorities

Legislative Priorities

- Invest in Economic Recovery
- Address the Fiscal Needs of Cities to Provide Local Services
- Address Housing Instability
- Invest in Transportation and Other Infrastructure
- Enact Law Enforcement Reform
- Clarify the Open Public Meetings Act Regarding Remote Meetings

Legislative Principles

- Advance Racial Equity and Social Justice
- Limit State Interference in Local Democracy



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SCA 2020 Legislative Agenda

Address the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Crisis

The state and cities must partner to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing as, well as address behavioral health needs and other root causes of homelessness. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Allow cities to create and preserve affordable housing through optional local tools, including extending the timeline to approve a “qualifying local tax” provided under HB 1406 adopted in the 2019 legislative session*
- *Continue to expand investment in the Housing Trust Fund*
- *Address other underlying causes of homelessness by providing support to cities to implement innovative local solutions and increasing investments in our state’s behavioral health system*

Invest in Transportation Infrastructure and Mobility

The economic vitality of our state demands that we invest in our existing transportation infrastructure and prioritize new investments that improve the movement of people and goods. Cities have increased investments in local transportation systems, but still face an annual funding gap for maintenance and operation of those systems of \$1 billion statewide. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Partner with cities to develop a comprehensive transportation bill that provides new resources and options for local government to address transportation and mobility needs*

Fully Fund the Public Works Trust Fund and Provide Options for Local Infrastructure Needs

Today’s cities are building the infrastructure necessary to accommodate a growing population and economy. Investments in infrastructure keep communities vibrant, protect the environment, and attract economic development. Cities need tools to lower the cost of providing local infrastructure and to avoid further exacerbating the housing affordability crisis. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Fully fund the Public Works Trust Fund*
- *Support economic development tools that help maintain and expand local infrastructure, such as Tax Increment Financing and similar tools*

Preserve Local Decision-Making Authority

Cities possess strong local knowledge and authority to keep communities safe, healthy, and improve quality of life. It is critical cities maintain the authority to provide the necessary services and retain local control over land use planning that will help communities thrive.

Provide the Tools for Cities to Address Local Priorities

City revenue streams are limited and are not structured to sustainably keep-up with rising costs. Cities need flexible local funding tools, fewer unfunded mandates, and continued support from the state for shared responsibilities. Sound Cities Association urges the Legislature to:

- *Replace the arbitrary 1% cap on annual property tax increases with a limit tied to inflation plus population growth*
- *Meet the state’s commitment to revenues intended to be shared with cities to serve our shared constituents*
- *Continue streamlined sales tax mitigation to affected cities*

AWC 2021 City Legislative Priorities

The AWC Board will consider these recommendations at the October 2 Board meeting and take final action to adopt 2021 priorities.

The five recommended priorities ask the Legislature to:

- **State-shared revenues** – Maintain existing shared revenues and oppose any further cuts. Cities support a corresponding increase in distributions to cities if the Legislature increases marijuana or liquor taxes. Cities also seek flexibility in spending Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account funds to best support local public safety efforts, including programs that use alternatives to traditional policing.
- **Transportation revenue package** – Support a new transportation revenue package (with an emphasis on maintenance/preservation funding) that provides an equitable level of local funding while seeking additional revenue options for cities.
- **Fiscal flexibility** – Provide greater flexibility to use funds from existing revenue sources to help cities manage the impacts of the economic crisis.
- **Housing instability assistance** – Work in a coalition to develop additional resources to address housing instability created by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including rent assistance and foreclosure-prevention assistance.
- **Statewide policing reforms** – Support the need to retain local control over city law enforcement policy decisions to ensure they meet community needs and expectations and appropriately contain costs. Cities are cognizant of the need to address race equity in all aspects of policing in both state requirements and local policies. Support the following statewide reforms:
 - Develop a statewide standard for use of force so long as local jurisdictions are not prohibited from enacting a more robust standard.
 - Create a database to track officers who have been fired from their employment for misconduct.
 - Expand grounds for decertification to include use of force violations.
 - Require an investigation of an officer to be completed, regardless of whether the officer resigns prior to the investigation being completed.
 - Establish a duty for all law enforcement officers to immediately intervene and report misconduct or illegal activity on the part of another officer.
 - Require that all officers receive a psychological evaluation on a regular schedule and after a fatal use of force incident, prior to the officer returning to duty.

The issues recommended as significant include:

- **Property tax** – Revise the property tax cap to tie it to inflation and population growth factors so that local elected officials can adjust the local property tax rate to better serve their communities.

- **Broadband internet** – Support policies and funding that provide greater access and equity for broadband services, including the potential expansion of authority to cities and other public entities.
- **Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF)** – Continue to pursue full funding for the PWTF and defend against the redirection of PWTF program funds.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – Authorize property tax-based tax increment financing, with a constitutional amendment if necessary.