

**Group 3 - cover sheet with  
LWVOR and LWVPDX POSITIONS 2021-2022 PROGRAM PLANNING**

**TOPICS: Neighborhood associations, racial justice, diversity/equity/inclusion,  
housing density**

Monday, January 25, 2021, 7 pm

Kim Mason and Brian Harvey, discussion co-leaders

**LWVOR POSITIONS (relevant parts are highlighted in yellow)**

Individual Liberties (LWVUS position)  
Housing (LWVUS Position) “Criteria for Housing Supply”  
LWVUS Equality of Opportunity

**LWVPDX POSITIONS (relevant parts are highlighted in yellow)**

Neighborhood Associations  
Public School Districts in Portland  
School Funding  
Housing  
Affordable Housing Financing and Administration  
Community Residential Facilities  
Urban Growth Management

**If there is a topic for which there is no LWVUS, LWVOR or LWVPDX position, the League cannot advocate for public policy changes on that topic. If your group believes we need a position on a topic, you may suggest a study or concurrence with a position from another state or local League. A study, restudy or concurrence must be approved by the membership before it is adopted.**

You also may suggest forming a LWVPDX Interest Group for topics related to positions about which members want to learn or presenting an educational event on any public policy topic.

**NOTE the difference between a LWV POSITION AND a LWV POLICY.**

(A policy for the League is not an advocacy position that we can use to advocate for public policies. See *Definitions for 2021-2022 LWV Program Planning*)

**LWV Policy from LWVUS DEI website resources:**

<https://www.lwv.org/diversity-equity-inclusion/guide>

**DEI Policy:** LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

See also: Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Two Oregon local Leagues (Deschutes Co. & Umpqua Valley) are studying DEI. The studies may or may not lead to positions.

### **Group 3 - LWVOR Positions**

**Individual Liberties (LWVUS position)**, “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged.” This would include the 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments.

**Housing (LWVUS Position) “Criteria for Housing Supply”**

The following considerations can be applied to programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family:

- A) The responsibility for achieving national housing goals rests primarily with the federal government, which should:
  - 1) Assure that our economic system is functioning to produce and maintain sufficient

- decent housing for citizens at all income levels;
- 2) Compensate for any failure or inadequacy of the system by building, financing, renting and selling homes to those citizens whose housing needs are not being met;
  - 3) Give a variety of incentives to local jurisdictions to encourage them to provide within their boundaries an adequate supply of decent housing for low- and moderate-income groups;
  - 4) Withhold federal funds from communities that fail to encourage such housing.
- B) State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.
- C) Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.
- D) When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.
- E) Government programs providing subsidies to the building, financing and insuring industries for housing for lower-income families should be evaluated in terms of units produced rather than in terms of benefits accruing to these industries.
- F) Government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment.
- G) Regional and metropolitan planning should be promoted to prevent haphazard urban growth, and housing for low- and moderate-income families should be provided as a part of all planned neighborhoods or communities.
- H) Lower-income families should not be segregated in large developments or neighborhoods. As their economic status improves, lower-income families should be enabled to continue to live in the same units as private tenants or as homeowners, if they are so inclined.
- I) Housing should be designed to meet human needs and should be built with amenities that will encourage economic integration within apartment buildings as well as neighborhoods.
- J) Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provision for quality public services and facilities, including schools, transportation, recreation, etc., that will encourage integration and stability.
- K) Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.
- L) State and local governments should adopt and enforce:
- 1) Uniform building codes with standards based on performance;
  - 2) Housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens.
- M) State and local tax structures should be examined and revised to:
- 1) Benefit communities that build housing for lower-income families;
  - 2) Encourage private owners to improve their homes; · Reduce speculative land costs.
- N) Government, industry and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.

- O) Rights of tenants to negotiate for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.
- P) Housing programs should be administered by individuals trained for the jobs and sympathetic with the needs of their clientele.
- Q) Citizen groups should participate in the development of publicly assisted housing programs by:
  - 1) Evaluating performance;
  - 2) Activating nonprofit sponsorships;
  - 3) Supporting legislation;
  - 4) Developing public awareness of housing discrimination and need.

**Other LWVUS positions cited by LWVOR under Women's Issues:**

The League further believes that governments at all levels share the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, including quality of health care, income assistance, housing and public transportation access.

LWVUS position on Equality of Opportunity

Statement of Position on Equality of Opportunity, as revised by the National Board in January 1989, based on positions announced by the National Board in January 1969, adopted by the 1972 Convention, expanded by the 1980 Convention and the 2010 Convention:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Employment opportunities in modern, technological societies are closely related to education; therefore, the League supports federal programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged people. The League supports federal efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education, employment, and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems.

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all regardless of sex. The League supports action to bring laws into compliance with the ERA: a) to eliminate or amend those laws that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex; b) to promote laws that support the goals of the ERA; c) to strengthen the enforcement of such existing laws.

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all under state and federal law. LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same- gender couples with those available to

heterosexual couples. LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved.

### **Group 3 - LWVPDX Positions**

#### **Neighborhood Associations** (2007, 1975, 1973)

1. The LWV of Portland believes that Portland's Neighborhood Associations have the potential to serve the public good by providing important opportunities for civic participation and improving neighborhood livability. To meet this potential, Neighborhood Associations must be integrated into city networks of communication and decision-making, and they must be adequately supported by city funding and services. **Neighborhood Associations, in turn, need to consistently invite and include all residents in their operations.**
2. Portland's neighborhood system structure:
  - Neighborhood Associations should continue to be autonomous entities separate from city government.
  - **Because Portland's neighborhood system is grassroots in nature, diversity of NA character should be honored.** A decentralized system of service delivery is appropriate.
  - District Coalitions, in their varied organizational formats, should remain in place as long as they are effective, with funding from the city.
  - Uniformity and equity should be pursued where possible but should not come at the expense of effectiveness.
3. The city's role in supporting Neighborhood Associations should consist of:
  - At the Council and Bureau level:
    - Informing Neighborhood Associations of city projects and activities affecting them
    - A willingness to solicit and receive neighborhood input
  - Consideration of neighborhood needs within city budgeting process
    - Funding that is adequate to maintain this system
  - Through the Office of Neighborhood Involvement:
    - Ensuring a neighborhood voice in city operations
    - Encouraging better communication between city bureaus and neighborhoods
    - The setting forth of healthy governance practices in guidelines for Neighborhood Associations
      - Support for neighborhoods and District Coalitions including assistance and adequate funding for communication, outreach, leadership training and technical assistance

4. Successful Neighborhood Associations should:

- Be independent with the authority to set their own agenda
- Have the ability to interact with all government and non-governmental entities • **Work to engage the various populations in the neighborhood**
- Respond to neighborhood needs
- Represent neighborhood interests effectively to the city
- Utilize effective means to communicate with neighborhood residents at least twice a year

**Neighborhood Associations should not be the only avenue for civic engagement with Portland's government. If resources are adequate, city assistance could be offered to groups other than Neighborhood Associations to increase organizational capacity. When Neighborhood Associations are functioning effectively, with both the resources to do their work, and city's acknowledgement of their role, encouragement should be given to other community groups to channel work on civic issues through the neighborhood system.**

**Public School Districts in Portland** (2011, 2006 revised, 1980, 1979, 1976, 1975, 1973, 1972, 1971, 1969, 1968)

The League of Women Voters believes that public schools should provide a **quality education for all children** to develop the greatest potential in each individual, and that public education is critical to the success of our city.

Therefore, the League supports:

1. A quality basic education provided for all students, with **services available in an equitable way so that all students have access to comparable services, regardless of circumstances such as income, race, ethnicity, geographical location, or family background.**
2. Programs or services provided by districts which **offer an alternate approach or focus for students with different learning needs**, including a strong mix of off-site and on-site vocational education programs.
3. Teacher evaluation that improves teaching quality and student learning.
4. Grade organization that is determined by a number of factors, including evidence-based research, student needs, logistical impacts, and community input.
5. Adherence to set school boundaries with few exceptions, which may be based on educational, emotional, behavioral, or medical criteria, and offering all students access to a consistent and broad spectrum of classes.
6. **Creative approaches to achieve diversity in school populations.**

7. Changes in the school education structure (use of buildings) which positively affect the quality of education and which take into consideration the preservation of neighborhoods and the needs of the community.
8. Adequate physical facilities, with buildings and all facilities meeting state and local standards.
9. School districts' decisions on future use of land and buildings based on a plan that takes into account population projections, physical conditions, land use designations, and community needs, with coordination between the City of Portland's Comprehensive Plan and relevant infrastructure facility plans.
10. Effort made to generate income to offset the costs of maintaining desirable underused facilities. Public announcements of all district facility plans, including all underused or not-in-use facilities, with adequate information and opportunity for public discussion and participation in the decision-making.

### **School Funding** (2011, 2000)

The League supports adequate and sufficient funding of public education with public money. While the League of Women Voters of Portland recognizes that the major responsibility for funding public schools has shifted to the state level, the League supports local measures when necessary to ensure quality education.

Therefore, the League supports:

1. Using local taxes such as local property tax and business income taxes to augment the funding provided by the State.
2. Using grants and other temporary funding for professional development, pilot projects, or for other one-time needs.
3. Using a combination of local, state, federal or private sources of funding for special education for the gifted and physically, emotionally, and mentally challenged students.
4. Allowing private funds to be raised in support of individual schools, provided those funds are shared across the district in an equitable and transparent manner.
5. Tracking and making available to the public information in an understandable format, including class size, per-pupil expenditures, costs for educating special-needs students, or other cost data.
6. Employing the services of a chief financial officer to provide strong, transparent fiscal leadership.
7. Participation by local schools and their communities in budget discussions via

site-based management.

### **Housing** (2001, 1989)

City, County and private sectors should continually monitor changes in the population needing affordable housing and address their housing needs.

Criteria to be used when selecting areas for neighborhood revitalization should include neighborhoods: a) at risk of further deterioration; b) showing some evidence of stability, citizen involvement and community support; c) having a community focal point, such as a school, park, community center and/or convenient transportation.

We support a variety of means to encourage private investments in low-income housing, such as tax abatement, tax credits, low-interest loans and grants.

We favor consolidation of City, County and private agencies involved in housing within the City of Portland. Benefits derived from the consolidation include: less duplication, cost efficiency, convenience to the public, shared knowledge and heightened awareness of the importance of adequate housing.

### **Affordable Housing Financing and Administration** (1981)

The League of Women Voters of Portland supports:

- Retention of single-room-occupancy (SRO) housing units and support by the City of Portland for rehabilitation for existing units;
- Retention of downtown low-income housing supported by federally subsidized loans, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and federal rent subsidies; • Encouragement of privately developed, middle-income housing downtown through incentive low-interest loans;
- Avoidance of building closures for building and fire code violations by: a) establishment of a hearings officer position with authority to enforce the code and, b) provision of low-interest loans to building owners for complying with code;
- Consolidation of information on the availability and location of subsidized housing in a master list, which could be located with Home Forward (formerly named Housing Authority of Portland);
- Sufficient housing expertise within the Planning Commission to facilitate effective attention to housing issues in Portland.

As a general policy, the League of Women Voters of Portland does not favor city acquisition of buildings for low-income housing or SRO units. Only if all other means for retaining low-income housing or buildings of historical importance have failed, should the city purchase such property. The League recommends that some entity other than the city administer buildings acquired in this manner.



The League favors financing of any such building acquisitions by tax increment funds, housing and Community Development Block Grants or revenue bonds.

### **Community Residential Facilities** (2007, 1977)

The League of Women Voters of Portland supports the use of Residential Care Facilities for socially dependent individuals as defined by state law, Residential Training Facilities for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities and Residential Treatment Facilities for individuals with alcohol and/or drug dependence and those with mental and/or emotional disorders.

The League supports Community Residential Facilities for individuals with a criminal history provided clients are carefully screened and monitored and consideration is given to the impact on the community.

Community Residential Facilities are licensed by the State. Standards should provide for quality staffing, facilities and care.

### **Urban Growth Management** (2000, revised 1994, 1992)

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County support the concept of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), including designation of urban reserve lands for future needs. The UGB should be difficult to change to ensure well-managed growth. Metro should work closely with local jurisdictions to ensure that funding is identified for planning, infrastructure, and services to urban reserves.

Requests for amendments to the UGB should be allowed from Metro, counties and cities with jurisdiction, and landowners. Notice of proposed amendments should be provided to the petitioners, affected property owners, cities and counties, neighborhood associations, and the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). In addition, notice must be published in local newspapers.

Public hearings should be held at all stages of the amendment process, including the city/county level before that governing body makes its recommendation, the Metro hearing officer, the Metro Council before its final decision, and the Metro Council when it hears an appeal. Notice of public hearings should be sent at least 30 days before the scheduled hearing.

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County support the concept of Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives. We support the development and maintenance of functional wildlife and recreation corridors to create metropolitan greenspace. We also support retention and development of well-planned economic communities, which can include the following components: a mix of housing options, employment, social services, industry, and amenities.

Existing urban land should undergo continuous redevelopment and infill where appropriate.