

Frequently Asked Questions – Legislative Affairs

1. How does the Legislature work and where does the City fit in?

Every year, Assemblymembers and Senators propose bills throughout the legislative session in the hopes of developing new laws. Throughout the legislative session, these bills undergo numerous rounds of review where the bills are amended based on input from fellow elected officials in the legislature and external sources including lobbyists, local governments, individuals, and more. To learn more about how the legislature works, the United States Congress has developed a video that provides [an overview on the legislative process](#) and CalMatters, a non partisan and nonprofit news agency has developed a [webpage on the California legislative process](#).

Throughout the session, the City has the opportunity to submit position letters stating the City's viewpoint on specified bills to request changes be made, request the bill to not be approved, or express support for the bill. This input can influence future amendments to the bill and whether the bill is signed into law by the Executive Branch (the California Governor or the President).

2. What is a Legislative Platform?

The Legislative Platform outlines the City Council's position on public policies and serves as the foundation for the City to support or oppose various local, state and federal legislation. This platform seeks to not only secure critical financial resources for our City, but also outlines policy statements that will allow City staff to more effectively respond to and influence legislation at the local, state and federal level. By implementing and maintaining an active legislative platform, the City can ensure that the City Council and staff will be fully apprised of evolving state initiatives that may affect the City's key priorities, programs, and operations.

In the realm of local governance, the influence of state and federal legislation is undeniable. The City Council, guided by its goals, the established General Plan, the Old Town La Verne Specific Plan, and other relevant policy documents, has articulated its current stances. However, the absence of a legislative platform leaves the City vulnerable to the potential adverse impacts of proposed legislation on its policies. Implementing a Legislative Platform helps address this gap and enhance the City's ability to either safeguard its policies or endorse legislation aligning with its objectives.

3. How is the Legislative Platform organized?

The Legislative Platform is organized in the following manner:

1. **Purpose** – Defines the goal of the Legislative Platform

2. **Guiding Principles** – Identifies the overarching values of the City that shape the policy statements, which are:

- Preserving Local Control
- Promoting Fiscal Stability
- Supporting Funding Opportunities

3. **Policy Statements by Topic** – Lists support and opposition statements by focused categories, which are:

- Community and Recreation Services
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Governance and Transparency
- Homelessness
- Housing, Community Development, and Land Use
- Human Resources and Risk Management
- Public Safety
- Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Works

4. How was the Legislative Platform developed?

Representatives from every department collaborated in consultation with the City's advocacy firm to develop the 2024 Legislative Platform. Position statements listed throughout the Legislative Platform were developed in consideration of the following items:

- Developed City Plans (General Plan, Old Town La Verne Specific Plan, etc.)
- Current City practices and programs
- Future City practices and programs

5. How will the Legislative Platform be implemented?

The Legislative Platform will be distributed to elected officials representing the City, effectively conveying the City's positions on crucial policy matters and legislative discussions.

By providing clear direction to staff and City advocates, the Platform will streamline the position-taking process, ensuring an efficient and cohesive advocacy approach on legislative matters. As City staff monitor proposed bills, these bills will be compared against the Legislative Platform to identify whether the City supports or opposes the bill's content. Based on these findings, City staff will monitor the bill to see how it progresses throughout the legislative session. With approval from the City Manager and the Mayor, City staff will develop position letters for bills that the City has clear support or opposition for, or request amendments to the bill. These letters will then be sent to Legislature, advocating the City's position. Bills that are not reflected within the Legislative Platform will not be monitored nor will be position letters be written.

Moving forward, the Legislative Platform will be reviewed annually and brought before Council for review and adoption in the fall before the start of the legislative sessions in the following year.

6. What is a position letter?

A position letter is a document that states the City's viewpoint on proposed legislation and is addressed to members of the State or Federal Legislature. A position letter provides the City the opportunity to influence the legislature by expressing support, opposition, or requesting amendments to the specified bill. Within the letter, the City will identify the impacts that the bill will have on the City to explain its position.

Submitted position letters are included within analyses of the bill for future hearings throughout the legislative session and can influence changes to a bill or assist in streamlining the bill through the legislature.

7. How will legislation be monitored?

City staff members will proactively review bills proposed throughout the legislative session and monitor those which are identified within the Legislative Platform as a topic of importance.

The City also receives legislative update reports from various advocacy groups including the League of California Cities, calcities.org, and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, sgvcog.org.

8. What is a legislative session?

A legislative session is the period of time when the legislature convenes for the purpose of lawmaking (bills are proposed and amended). To see the legislative session for California, please visit <https://www.senate.ca.gov/legdeadlines>. For the United States legislative session, please visit <https://www.senate.gov/legislative/DatesofSessionsofCongress.htm>.