



SOCIAL POLICY

Public Transportation

The League supports subsidized, low cost, convenient transportation for all citizens. We recommend a system of bicycle and footpaths that would extend throughout the city and county. (1973, '79, '87, '89, '95)

Public Education

The League supports and works toward community concern, knowledge and participation in local education. The League supports the principle of the school district's use of local property taxes for capital expenditures, including maintenance. (1976, '84, '95)

The League supports a full day, developmentally oriented kindergarten program for all Santa Fe Public School children. (1998)

The League supports career and technical education as an important component of an educational system that should meet the needs and interests of all students. The League believes that using careers as a context for learning along with high academic standards may lead to greater success in the workplace and in higher education. The League supports:

- policies that require the study and consideration of career-technical education program needs in determining budgets and before additional capital expenditures are made at the high schools.
- policies that ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in a career-technical education program where the program is offered,
- the required compliance with NMAC Career Readiness Standards with Benchmarks and NM Next Step Plan legislation (2004) designed to help ensure students are prepared for career pathway choices, and
- the active pursuit of all avenues of funding for career-technical education and transparent accounting and reporting of funds received and expended.

Medically Indigent Fund

The League supports local government funding of health care for the medically indigent. (1954, '72, '95, 2000, '19)

Sexual Offense Statutes

The League supports legislation making criminal sexual penetration of a child under the age of eighteen a felony when the perpetrator is in a position of authority over the child and uses that authority to coerce the child. The LWV supports publicly funded counseling for adult sexual offenders while they are in prison. (1998, 2020)

Santa Fe Community College

The League supports 1) preparation by SFCC of a comprehensive schedule of proposed funding before presenting a bond issue for public vote, 2) the use of bond funds for capital expenditures only, 3) a written schedule of regular meetings times and dates, 4) regularly scheduled reviews of existing programs and 5) an open administration that seeks public input. (2001)

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Land Use Planning

The League supports development of a City Master Plan and County General Plan including: City-County coordinated planning, maximum participation of citizens in the formulation and review process for land use regulations, and a periodic review and update of the plans. The League also supports:

- Division of the planning process into two parts, one dealing with infrastructure, and the other with human services.
- An approval process that encourages educational dialogue among the public, governing body, and planning staff.
- An approval process that allows for comment by both the planning staff and the public before any changes proposed by members of the governing body are adopted.
- Annual reports by both the County and the City to governing bodies and public on the progress in implementing the general plan.
- Measures to ensure that the plan is not weakened by decisions made by review bodies. (1997)

Dedicated Land

The League supports City policies and guidelines that have consistent criteria for determining that land to be dedicated to the City is useable. We support cooperation between the appropriate departments and the community in developing plans for the use of City-owned land.

Regional Planning

The League supports City/County regional planning in the Santa Fe area for growth management

and joint powers agreements as an efficient and appropriate means of solving inter-jurisdictional problems. The League position also supports:

- City/county cooperation in developing joint powers agreements that comply with the NM Extraterritorial Statutes NMSA 1978 as amended.
- City/county agreement on defining urban growth and urban service areas.
- Assessment of developer paid impact fees adequate to cover the costs of new infrastructure needs by new developments.
- Equitable sharing of administrative and staffing costs of joint regional planning.
- Adherence by the City and County to their respective ordinances when reviewing requests for variances and exceptions. (1999)
- The LWVSFC supports amending the NM Regional Planning Act to include financial incentives to implement and enforce completed regional plans.

Open Space

The League supports the establishment of green belts, open spaces and parks in developing areas. The League encourages the use of indigenous vegetation and encourages measures to prevent the unnecessary removal of trees. Highway corridors should aim to retain scenic approaches and include, where possible, walking, biking and riding trails.

The League supports the establishment of, and management plans for green belts, open spaces and parks in the City and County. This includes long range planning and adequate funding for acquisition, development and management of lands. Provision for public safety on public lands is the responsibility of local government police and parks departments. (2002)

The League supports terrain management techniques to control drainage, prevent erosion of land and protection of watersheds and designated vistas. The League supports the protection of traditional villages and historical sites; and maintaining the historical character of Santa Fe. (1970, '73, '80, '90, '96)

Housing, Commercial and Infrastructure Development

The League encourages the development of zoning and land use regulations which discourage inappropriate strip commercial areas. We support attracting clean industry to provide jobs for local citizens.

The League supports, for any development proposal, a careful analysis to determine its effect on schools, traffic patterns and density, water consumption, waste-water impact and erosion in its own area and on that of adjoining landowners.

The League supports mixed density neighborhoods, including low- and moderate-income housing. The League believes this can best be accomplished with the development of city and county policies and plans to increase the availability of affordable housing in the region. When the city and county adopt housing policies and programs, they should give priority to programs that provide affordable housing. Such housing should remain affordable in the future.

We support creation of self-sufficient new towns and/or villages, only where there is an adequate water supply. (1970,'73, '77, '80, '90, '96, 2003; '05)

Northwest Sector Plan

In the absence of a current City plan to develop the land, the League supports using the Northwest Quadrant for the benefit of the community by providing trails and other passive recreation opportunities and by providing for such appropriate light-impact uses as solar collection facilities as long as they do not impede potential long-term development. Any proposed development should include detailed environmental studies of the impacts on the site and surrounding areas. (1983, '86, '96, 2015)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources

The League supports regional planning for water, with the goal being elimination of competition for water and cost-efficiency in harvesting and delivery of water. (1999, 2010)

In addition, the League supports:

- Linking development to the available water supply.
- Adoption of a drought management program with a specific program of water conservation to be pursued under all supply conditions. (1973, '77, '79, '80, '89, '96)

Air and Water Quality

The League supports City and County attention to the environmental impacts of their decisions. The League further supports joint city/county environmental consultation and management; citizens' rights to file class action environmental suits; fines for air and water polluters; adequate funding for environmental control and enforcement of industrial and development compliance with standards, odor pollution controls, and regulations for solid waste disposal. (1971,'86, '96)

Alternative Energy

Passive solar design and use of solar panels to heat water should be considered when new government facilities are built. All new facilities whose function would allow eventual installation of solar photovoltaics should be designed to facilitate such installations. Local governments considering the use of alternative sources of energy should take the following factors into account: predicted costs, future availability, greenhouse gas emissions, and future competing demands.

Local governments should consider use of biofuels only when they are energy efficient, environmentally appropriate, and cost effective.

Geothermal heat pumps should be considered as a possible method of heating and cooling for any new buildings constructed by local governments. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as much as possible of their electricity requirements should come from renewable sources such as wind or solar energy.

When local governments adopt a green building code, it should not only recognize energy conservation achieved through quality of building components and construction methods, but should also tie the amount of energy conservation required to building size.

Local governments, perhaps with state cooperation, should develop methods to reduce the burden of energy costs on local residents by making it easier for them to increase the energy efficiency of existing houses. Methods to consider include education, training, and helping residents get financial aid.

Local governments should support initiatives that reduce energy used in transportation. They should endeavor to reduce the number of single-occupant car trips. They should set an example by promoting carpooling or other transit options among their own employees. (2008)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The League supports City and County personnel ordinances based on qualifications and merit. (1956, '75, '95)

The League supports City-County cooperation. (1974, '95, '96)

The League supports a home rule Charter for the City of Santa Fe with a Mayor/Council form of government. The rights of initiative and referendum should be available to the citizens of Santa Fe. (1966)

The League supports a firm set of guidelines to direct the establishment and operation of City and County Public Improvement Districts. These guidelines should include provisions for full disclosure of costs to be borne by prospective buyers. (?)

Mail Ballot Elections

The LWVSFC supports all-mailed ballot elections as approved by resolution of the governing body for any bond election, any election on the imposition of a mill levy or a property tax rate for a specified purpose or any special election at which no candidates are to be nominated for or elected to office, in order to increase voter participation, and subject to the following considerations:

- The governing body judges that the mailing can be done in an accurate and timely manner. The governing body should develop a timetable that ensures there is adequate time for the ballots to be received and returned.

- Drop stations with adequate security are provided around the jurisdiction to provide an alternative to returning the ballots by mail.
- If information in addition to the ballot is included in the mailing, it should be objective and balanced.

The LWVSFC supports documented, transparent processes to ensure election integrity. (2011)

Transparency in Local Governments

The League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County expects local governments to follow the requirements of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA). The League recommends that local governments adopt the following policies and practices regarding open meetings and public records, over and above what is legally required by the OMA and the IPRA, within reasonable budget constraints:

A. Open Meetings:

1. Maintain a comprehensive list of all meetings that are open to the public, along with their time, place, and agenda. With the exception of emergency meetings, announce public meetings at least one week in advance, using display ads in standard public media and on the government web site. To the extent that is practical, have all written materials that will be used in a public meeting available a week in advance, preferably on-line, or let the public know where and how such materials can be obtained.
2. Broadcast as many public meetings as possible, in both real-time and an archived format, preferably on-line.
3. Allow time and access for public input on important issues.
4. Develop and publish a policy concerning public attendance and participation at meetings of government bodies that are not covered by the OMA.
5. Make draft minutes of public meetings available to the public as soon as they are filed with the clerk or other appropriate official.
6. In order to avoid the possibility or the perception that executive sessions may be used to keep from informing the public on certain issues, the League recommends the following policies on executive sessions:
 - Hold meetings in executive session only when absolutely necessary, even though the OMA may allow otherwise.
 - Include an explanation of the purpose of the executive session in the meeting agenda.
 - Keep a public record of all attendees at executive sessions and make that information public when the public body reconvenes after executive session.
 - On important matters of wide public interest that have been discussed in executive session, publish a draft motion based on what was discussed in executive session and allow public input on it at a public meeting before a vote is taken.

B. Inspection of Public Records:

1. Create an inspection of public records policy and procedure whose goal is to help the public obtain the maximum amount of information they may want to discover about their government and do so in a timely and cost-effective manner.
2. Publish a price list for copying different types of public records.
3. Develop a policy regarding the production and cost of spreadsheets, lists, and other reports which may not already exist as public documents but whose data exist within government files and in which there is a public interest.
4. Use the government website as a repository of all information that is most likely to be needed by the public, including (but not limited to) open meetings and public records policies, meeting lists, proposed agendas, minutes, contents of meeting packets, frequently requested documents, contact information for government employees, resolutions and ordinances, personnel and procurement policies, and the location and mission of various departments and divisions.
5. Use the government website as a repository for searchable budget and financial records, including operating budgets, expenditures over a specified amount, checks/warrants and any other budget and financial information made available to the governing body.
6. Ensure that the government website is easy to use and search, that the information posted there is timely and up-to-date, and that it provides for interactive processes, such as requests for public records, whenever feasible.

C. The LWVSFC recommends that local governments go beyond open meetings and inspection of public records in their efforts toward open, accessible governance. We especially recommend these practices:

1. Local governments' resolutions, ordinances or published policies should cover ethics and conflict of interest, providing sanctions for violations.
2. Managers responsible for transparency should be trained and evaluated according to relevant statutes, policies, resolutions and ordinances. Elected officials should receive training on statutes and other mandates applicable to them.
3. Local governments should encourage input and listen to their constituents. They should make it easy for constituents to comment on local issues, and as budgets allow, they should periodically assess the needs, desires and satisfactions of their constituents. They should respond to constituents' recommendations by changing policies and practices or providing explanations when they reject such input.
4. Local governments should provide timely and complete information to their constituents on current topics.
5. Local governments should provide up-to-date, easy-to-find information about their office locations, building directories, organization charts, and contact information for managers of key functions.

D. The LWVSFC encourages local governments to conduct elections with maximum transparency. We especially recommend these practices:

1. Local governments should alert voters about elections using all available media.
2. All tax and bond measure elections should be preceded by a clear and comprehensive schedule of proposed expenditures.
3. All candidates for elective boards in Santa Fe County should be required to report, in a timely manner, campaign contributions and expenditures. (2010)

Local Economic Development

The League supports strategic economic development plans at the local government level, with a clear mission and specific goals that guide policy and expenditures. The plans should be developed, and updated periodically, with community input.

The League supports accountability and oversight of local governments' local economic development investments, including evaluation criteria and metrics for local economic development initiatives, and a process for evaluating the success of initiatives over time.

- Results should be documented, accessible, and retained to provide a historical context for all future economic development efforts.
- Applicants should be required to identify costs and benefits of their projects, including an itemized budget for the project with timeframe, revenue, expenditures, and both short-term and long-term benefits.
- Recipients should be required to provide annual reports that include detailed revenues and expenses.

The League supports city and county collaboration with education providers to offer relevant education and training.

The League supports local government investment in public infrastructure to support local economic development such as roads, transportation, water systems, sewer systems, public buildings, and technology such as broadband.

The League supports protection of government investments in local economic development against financial loss, including security interest such as a performance bond, mortgage, or claw-back provision. (2018)