



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/7/2025

DEPARTMENT: City Manager

SUBJECT:

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PLATFORM FOR 2025-2027

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Adopt the proposed 2025-2027 Legislative and Regulatory Platform.
 2. Receive and file a presentation from Best, Best & Krieger, the City's Federal Lobbying Services provider.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Every year, the City adopts a Legislative Platform to provide broad policy direction to staff. This information is used by the City Manager's Office to administer the City's legislative advocacy program, which includes evaluating legislative proposals, providing recommendations for the City Council, and working with the City's contracted lobbyists to address the City's legislative and regulatory priorities. The Legislative Platform also provides staff with direction to take more immediate action in the event it is necessary to respond to a legislative proposal prior to receiving City Council direction. This is more common toward the end of the legislative session with "gut and amend" bills or trailer bills introduced concurrently with the State's budget adoption process.

In July 2024, the City Council reached consensus to form a Legislative Ad hoc Committee ("Legislative Ad hoc") composed of then Mayor Tettemer and then Mayor Pro Tem Voigts. The Legislative Ad hoc reviewed and provided feedback to update and restructure the Legislative Platform into a Legislative and Regulatory Platform ("Platform") for 2025-2027. Substantive changes to the Platform include:

- Shifting the adoption of a Platform from an annual basis to a biennial basis;
- Expanding the Platform to include regulatory matters;
- Adding Guiding Principles to provide broader guidance in addition to existing Policy Statements;
- Adding a list of local and regional agencies to monitor their positions when the City shapes its own positions and priorities; and,
- Including Legislative Procedures in the Platform.

In addition to the broad structural changes to the platform, the Legislative ad hoc also reviewed the policy statements and proposed additional statements under public safety, environment, and transportation, shown in Attachment 1. The proposed Platform would include all these changes and update policy statements based on the discussion and feedback from the Legislative Ad hoc. Changes to and adoption of the Platform are at the discretion of the City Council. Staff recommend the City Council adopt the proposed 2025-2027 Legislative and Regulatory Platform (Attachment 2) substantially in the form attached.

Additionally, staff from Best, Best & Krieger (“BB&K”), the City’s Federal Lobbying Services consultant, shall provide a brief presentation before the City Council regarding the upcoming legislative cycle.

BACKGROUND:

The City has adopted a Legislative Platform as part of its legislative advocacy program. In adopting the Legislative Platform, the City Council authorizes a menu of policy directives that advance the City’s interests. Historically, policy directives have included the opposition of new legislation that restricts the City’s home rule authority, the imposition of unfunded mandates, and the diminishment of the City’s financial autonomy. Upon adoption of the legislative platform, staff track bills proposed in the California legislature that are inconsistent with the City’s policy preferences. Then, staff author position letters (in support or opposition) that are signed by the mayor and delivered to State legislators associated with the proposed bill(s). Often, position letters from numerous California cities are aggregated by the League of California Cities (“CalCities”) to strengthen the impact of the message.

Pursuant to the City’s Strategic Business Plan Initiative SP#19 – Legislative Advocacy, the City solicited proposals for a multi-year government affairs contract to advocate for the City’s interests at the state and federal levels. In July 2024, the City awarded contracts to two firms for state and federal lobbying services. The state lobbying services agreement was awarded to Joe A. Gonsalves and Son by the City Council and the federal lobbying services agreement was awarded to Best, Best & Krieger (“BB&K”) under the City Manager’s purchasing authority. Since the adoption of the 2024 Legislative Platform in February 2024, the City has contracted and onboarded two new lobbying services. To develop meaningful priorities and strategic advocacy at both the state and federal level, the City Council formed the Legislative Ad hoc to review the City’s Legislative and Regulatory Program.

DISCUSSION:

In July 2024, the City Council reached consensus to form a Legislative Ad hoc Committee (“Legislative Ad hoc”) composed of then Mayor Tettermer and then Mayor Pro Tem Voigts. The purpose of the Legislative Ad hoc is to review current legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts. Since its formation, the Legislative Ad hoc met three times to discuss the direction of the City’s Legislative and Regulatory Program and review the City’s current Legislative Platform, adopted in February 2024. The Legislative Ad hoc reviewed and provided feedback to update and restructure the Legislative Platform into a Legislative and Regulatory Platform (“Platform”) for 2025-2027. Substantive changes to the Platform include:

- Shifting the adoption of a Platform from an annual basis to a biennial basis;
- Expanding the Platform to include regulatory matters;
- Adding Guiding Principles to provide broader guidance in addition to existing Policy Statements;
- Adding a list of local and regional agencies to monitor their positions when the City shapes its own positions and priorities; and,
- Including Legislative Procedures in the Platform.

In addition to the broad structural changes to the platform, the Legislative ad hoc also reviewed the policy statements and proposed some additional statements under public safety, environment, and transportation. Prior to the proposed structural changes to the Platform, the Legislative Platform was composed of 25 policy guidelines. Attachment 1 includes a redline version of the Platform that shows the proposed changes to these policy statements only. This simplified redline version includes the added policy statements and a table showing the sections under which each policy statement is listed in the proposed Platform. The final version of the proposed Platform is provided as Attachment 2.

Changes to these policy statements are proposed to focus and prioritize the City’s advocacy efforts to address legislation and regulations within the realm of the City’s business (i.e., municipal services). The proposed Platform provides focused guidance to staff and the City’s lobbyists while also directing staff to monitor other local and regional agencies for information on other regulations that may impact the City’s residents and businesses. The Legislative Ad hoc will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to review any upcoming legislation or regulations and monitor the City’s legislative advocacy efforts.

If the proposed 2025-2027 Legislative and Regulatory Platform is approved, staff will craft position letters consistent with the Platform and in accordance with the State and Federal Legislative schedules (Attachments 3 and 4). The City Manager’s Office will continue to exercise day-to-day oversight of legislative and regulatory matters. In addition to coordinating formal action through the City

Council, the Assistant to the City Manager will administer the City's legislative advocacy program by performing the following functions:

- Continue to work with the City's Management Team and other staff to identify matters of legislative and regulatory importance and develop positions on federal and state legislative proposals and general matters of interest;
- Communicate matters of legislative or regulatory importance to the City Council through periodic updates, and identify and coordinate positions for formal action by the City Council;
- Review positions and analysis conducted by CalCities, the Association of California Cities – Orange County ("ACC-OC") and other government and professional associations when formulating positions;
- Monitor and track key bills through the legislative process;
- Communicate the City's positions to federal, state, and county legislators;
- Participate as needed in the drafting and amending of legislative proposals that significantly impact the City;
- Work with local and regional agencies, other cities, and local government professional associations on legislative matters of mutual concern; and,
- Participate and attend legislative briefings and meetings to actively engage and stay appraised of legislative trends and upcoming legislation.

Approval of the proposed 2025-2027 Legislative and Regulatory Platform would continue the practice of responding to legislative proposals that do not fall under the City's adopted Platform as follows:

- (1) Once a determination has been made that a legislative proposal may impact the City, a letter outlining the City's position (support, neutral, or oppose) will be drafted for the Mayor's signature;
- (2) The draft position letter will be agendaized for City Council approval at a City Council meeting;
- (3) If the letter is approved, staff will finalize the position letter and forward it to the bill's author, CalCities, and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate; and
- (4) A copy of the final letter will be distributed to the City Council.

Staff recommend the City Council adopt the proposed Legislative and Regulatory Platform. In addition, staff recommend the City Council receive a brief presentation from BB&K, the City's federal lobbyist, regarding the upcoming legislative cycle.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Redline Changes to Platform Policy Statements
2. Proposed 2025-2027 Legislative and Regulatory Platform
3. Tentative 2025 State Legislative Calendar
4. Tentative 2025 Federal Legislative Calendars

Initiated By: Nidia Ruelas, Assistant to the City Manager

Submitted By: Debra Rose, City Manager

Approved By: Debra Rose, City Manager