



# REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**MEETING DATE:** December 12, 2023

**TITLE:** LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS PROGRAM FOR THE CITY OF IRVINE

*Oliver Chi*

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City Manager

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Approve the development and implementation of a Legislative Affairs Program for the City of Irvine, as defined by the Legislative Affairs Policy;
2. Authorize the establishment of an Ad Hoc City Council Legislative Affairs Subcommittee for 2024; and
3. Direct and authorize staff to produce an updated 2024 Legislative Platform and return to the City Council.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Irvine is on a growth trajectory that necessitates a more comprehensive approach to its State and Federal advocacy. Given current and ongoing Citywide priorities, the City's growth and diversity, new partnerships, and enhanced resources, staff proposes the development of a Legislative Affairs Program (Program). It is imperative for the City to maintain a continuous, prompt, and transparent system for bringing new legislative information and grant opportunities to its attention. The Program would provide a means to advance and protect the City's interests on issues at the federal and state levels.

Establishing the Program will align the City with other large modern cities, providing Irvine with a cohesive and organized voice for its advocacy endeavors. Approval of the Program would include dedicated existing staff members, the establishment of an ad hoc City Council subcommittee, and the creation of the City's short- and long-term legislative and funding priorities based on Council direction. Positions on pending legislation impacting Irvine may be taken based on the priorities established by the City Council, with further action directed by subcommittee members and supported by legislative advocates. The ad hoc subcommittee for calendar year 2024 would be selected during the City's annual appointment process in January 2024.

The City's legislative platform would present guiding principles and legislative and funding priorities for City Council adoption. Additionally, to ensure appropriate public engagement and transparency, a webpage would be developed to include the City's established priorities, post adopted position letters, and share grant successes and updates.

### **COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Not applicable.

### **ANALYSIS**

The City of Irvine Legislative Affairs Program may consist of an adopted legislative platform, dedicated City staff, an ad hoc City Council subcommittee, and collaboration with legislative advocacy firms, grant-writing firms, and local stakeholders.

Approval of the Program would enable the City to produce an updated legislative platform (Platform). The Platform is a public document that will identify guiding principles and department priorities for the year, approve methods of targeted issue advocacy, and foster robust stakeholder relationships. Legislative Affairs staff and legislative advocates will develop the Platform based on City Council and Executive Team input. The Platform may be re-evaluated for annual approval by the City Council to correspond with State and Federal legislative sessions. Publication of the Platform increases transparency so elected officials and residents can see what bill positions the City takes and what priority projects and funding the City pursues. The policies established within the Platform do not preclude City Council consideration of additional legislative matters arising throughout the year.

The proposed Division of Legislative and Government Affairs will manage the City's Legislative Affairs Program and monitor federal and state legislation that may impact Irvine. Legislative Affairs staff and to-be-determined ad hoc City Council subcommittee members will serve as the City's representatives to business and education stakeholders, other local governments, and State, and Federal agencies. By establishing City-adopted legislative priorities, the City's advocates in Sacramento and Washington D.C. will effectively respond to legislative proposals with a unified voice and apply for grants that could bring more funding to City programs and projects.

Existing staff members and legislative advocacy firms have worked in tandem to keep the City Council and department grant writers informed, resulting in several million dollars of State funding in the past few years.

### Next Steps

Should the City Council approve the establishment of the Program, staff, in conjunction with the City's legislative advocates, will develop a draft Platform. This will include meetings with members of the City Council and Department Directors to solicit feedback and priority definition. Per the attached Legislative Affairs Program Policy, the ad hoc Legislative Affairs Subcommittee may act in an advisory manner throughout the State and Federal legislative sessions. The subcommittee shall be comprised of the Mayor, who serves as the City's spokesperson and representative on California's Big City Mayors Coalition, and Councilmember(s) totaling less than a quorum of the governing body. The subcommittee will exist for calendar year 2024 only for purposes of establishing the Program and the Platform. The City Council would determine whether to establish a Legislative Affairs Subcommittee for calendar year 2025 in January 2025. Upon the appointment of the subcommittee members, staff will establish a regular meeting cadence and feedback loop. The draft Legislative Platform will be presented to the City Council for its full consideration.

The Legislative Affairs Program may formalize efforts to build coalitions of support and engage with community partners and representatives. This includes intentional outreach to various stakeholder communities, advocacy days in Sacramento and Washington D.C., and support for initiatives.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The City Council may choose to continue legislative advocacy efforts on an as-needed basis. Staff will continue to apprise the City Council of opportunities and challenges impacting the City.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Approval of the City's Legislative Affairs Program will not incur additional unbudgeted costs. Funds for City staff and current legislative advocates are included in the FY 2023-25 biennial budget.

### **REPORT PREPARED BY**

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Rebecca Moss, Senior Management Analyst

### **ATTACHMENT**

1. City Council Policy / Procedure, Legislative Affairs Program



# City Council Policy / Procedure

## Legislative Affairs Program

Reference: Minute Order **XXXX**

### Purpose:

To establish a Legislative Affairs Program that addresses the dynamic trends of the Federal and State legislative processes and advances the City's priorities on emerging issues.

### Background:

The City of Irvine is on a growth trajectory that necessitates a comprehensive approach to its State and Federal advocacy efforts. The Legislative Affairs Program (Program) established by this Policy provides a means to advance and protect the City's interests on issues at the federal and state levels. The Program may consist of an adopted Legislative Platform, dedicated City staff, an ad hoc Legislative Affairs Subcommittee of the City Council, and collaboration with legislative advocacy firms, grant-writing firms, and local stakeholders.

### Procedure:

#### 1. Division of Legislative Affairs:

- a. The Division of Legislative Affairs will manage the Program and monitor federal and state legislation that may impact the City of Irvine.
- b. The Program will maintain a continuous, prompt, and transparent system for bringing new legislative information and grant opportunities to its attention.
- c. The Division of Legislative Affairs and members of the ad hoc Legislative Affairs Subcommittee will serve as the City's representatives to business and education stakeholders, other local governments, and State and Federal agencies.

#### 2. Ad Hoc City Council Legislative Affairs Subcommittee

- a. The ad hoc Legislative Affairs Subcommittee shall act in an advisory manner and should be comprised of the Mayor and Councilmember(s) totaling less than a quorum of the governing body. An ad hoc Legislative Affairs Subcommittee will be formed for calendar year 2024. Thereafter, on an annual basis the City Council will determine in January of each calendar year whether a subsequent ad hoc committee will be formed for that year.
- b. The subcommittee will guide the preparation of the City's Legislative Platform (Platform), for ultimate presentation to the full City Council for its review, revision, and approval.

**ATTACHMENT**

3. Legislative Platform:

- a. The Platform will be produced and updated annually for adoption by the City Council near the start of the legislative session in coordination with Councilmembers, Department Directors, and the City's legislative advocates.
- b. The Platform is a public document that may identify guiding principles and priorities for the year, approve methods of targeted issue advocacy, and foster robust stakeholder engagement and relationships.
- c. The Platform shall be designed to focus and enhance the ability of the City and its state and federal advocates to respond effectively to legislative proposals with a unified voice.
- d. The Platform shall be designed to streamline Irvine's grant-seeking efforts, bringing the potential for additional funding to City programs and projects.
- e. The Platform will serve as the basis for advocacy positions on regional, state, and federal legislative issues.
- f. The Platform will be published on the City's Legislative Affairs webpage, thereby increasing transparency, and allowing elected officials and residents to see what bill position the City may take and what priority projects the City aims to pursue.

The Program may also formalize efforts to build coalitions of support and engage with community partners and representatives. This includes intentional outreach to various stakeholder communities, advocacy days in Sacramento and Washington D.C., and support for initiatives.