

Program for 2007-2008

(Accepted May 17, 2007)

In January or February of each calendar year, the units assess current positions and propose new positions for future study or advocacy during the next fiscal year July through June. These positions are voted on at the annual meeting in May.

Local Positions

Comprehensive Land Use Planning

A. Zoning Examiner

Position: Support of a Zoning Examiner System in King County

B. SeaTac Airport and Its Impact

Position: The League of Women Voters of King County South supports cooperation among King County government, the Port of Seattle and the cities of King County surrounding SeaTac Airport in solving and preventing land use problems in the vicinity of SeaTac Airport through comprehensive and innovative planning. Citizens should be involved in the planning process.

Parks for South King County

Position: Support comprehensive planning, acquisition and preservation of parks, open spaces, unique areas, habitats and green belts to provide a wide variety of facilities for all age groups.

1. Increased coordination among departments and all other units of government involved is essential for economy, efficiency, and for effectively informing the public of park needs proposals and programs.
2. Citizen information, education and participation in county parks and open space programs are necessary in order to meet present and future needs.
3. Priority for parks and open space should be based on the character and needs of the population. Land should be acquired now in developed areas and reserved in undeveloped areas for future use. Natural topography should be used wherever possible as buffer zones between development, i.e. river valley, flood plain, slide areas and steep slopes.
4. Financing should be by any feasible method, including fees, gifts, advanced land acquisition funds and special recreation districts.

Public Schools of South King County

Position: The LWV of KCS supports an educational program that provides quality staffing, meets the needs of the individual student and involves the citizens of the school districts in south King County.

1. Auburn District 408
2. Enumclaw District 216
3. Federal Way District 210
4. Highline District 401
5. Kent District 415
6. Renton District 403
7. Tahoma District 409
8. Tukwila District 406
9. Vashon Island District 402

Transportation of Hazardous Materials Through Our Communities

Position: The LWV of KCS supports coordination among all levels of government and industry in order to (1) share equipment, money and expertise and (2) form regulations to control transportation of hazardous material. The response procedure should be simplified, allowing for a distinct chain of command and easy access to resource information. The importance of adequate training, for both the personnel responsible for transporting the hazardous material and the personnel handling the incidents, should be stressed. The funding for enforcement of regulations and training of personnel should be provided by the private sector and government. The state must provide adequate inspection and enforcement regulations.

King County Positions

The Leagues of Women Voters of King County use the following criteria to evaluate King County governmental structures and operations:

- Separation of powers
- A system of checks and balances
- A system of clearly fixed responsibilities
- Sound management practices
- Responsiveness to the electorate and to changing conditions
- Intergovernmental cooperation.

King County Governance

The Leagues of Women Voters of King County

- I. Support a county-wide policy-making body with legal authority to establish policy for functions which require area-wide solutions. (1997, 2000)
 - A. Support the continuation of the Regional Committees as defined in the 1993 Charter Amendments, pending further evaluation.
 1. Encourage County Council members to take their roles on the regional committees seriously and to value committee recommendations. There should be little duplication of effort between council committees and regional committees.
 2. Encourage establishment of a clear definition of the role of the Regional Policy Committee.
 - B. Support a Home Rule Charter free of statutory law.

- II. Support a form of county government that is representative of the areas governed. (1997, 2000)
 - A. Strengthen unincorporated area councils as a way to provide representation for those areas. Encourage greater public visibility for these councils.
 - B. The King County Metropolitan Government should have public involvement as a core value.
 - 1. Provide all citizens meaningful opportunities for effective involvement and recognition of their responsibility to participate.
 - 2. Identify barriers to public involvement and take steps to reduce and overcome them.
 - 3. Take steps to foster trust between citizens and their government.
 - 4. Focus on providing timely and useful public information including using new technologies.
 - 5. Incorporate the common threads of demonstrated successful models for public involvement into its programs.
 - C. Make full use of the media and technology to provide information about the Metropolitan King County Council deliberations, meetings and hearings. These meeting places, times and agendas should be publicized well in advance and meetings should be convenient and accessible.
 - D. Give the voters the opportunity to decide whether King County elections should be partisan or non-partisan.
 - E. Provide ways for citizens to amend the charter. Charter Review Commission recommendations to the Council should be placed automatically on the ballot.
- III. Support a form of county government that would have the power and resources to carry out its functions including adequate financial resources. (1997, 2000)
 - A. Maintain discretionary county services, especially in the areas of health and human services. (2004)
 - B. Contain costs through
 - 1. Efficient administration of county systems,
 - 2. Consolidation of special services where appropriate,
 - 3. Coordination between the cities and the county, particularly in the area of criminal justice, and
 - 4. Preventive services including alternatives to incarceration. (2004)
- IV. Support increased efficiency and cost effectiveness through
 - A. Area-wide administration of those functions that require it.
 - B. Local administration of local functions.
 - C. Integration of services.
 - D. A merit system.
 - E. A shortened ballot.
 - 1. Jobs requiring technical skills should be appointive.
 - 2. Jobs requiring representation should be elective.
 - 3. Candidates appearing unopposed on the primary ballot should not appear on the final ballot.
- V. Support coordination and cooperation among all local governments, including ports, schools and special districts
- VI. Support establishment of long-rang goals, plans to attain them, and a performance budget in an understandable form, including a long-range capital improvement program.
- VII. Support the use of tools that would promote the annexation of urban areas, e.g. education, state mandates and financial incentives. (2004)

Ethics in Government

Position: Support ethics in government and measures to ensure that public officials and employees perform their responsibilities in the public interest in accordance with the highest ethical standards and measures to increase citizen confidence in government. (1994, 2000)

- A. A Code of Ethics should include sections on conflict of interest, improper use of position and public resources, compensation, gifts and disclosure of financial interests. 1994, 2003
- B. Adequate support should be provided to ensure compliance with the Code of Ethics and to enhance public awareness of that code.
- C. The local government should have a Code of Ethics which sets standards of conduct to ensure that public officials and employees perform their duties in the public interest.

Courts

Positions:

- I. Support implementing a strong court administration responsible for unified customer service, efficient management systems and coordinated technology. (1999)
- II. Support reducing jurisdictional overlap except to provide flexibility in dealing with case overloads. (1999)
- III. Support changes to the judicial selection system that would ensure qualified judges, increase public awareness of judicial elections and provide the public the information needed to make informed decisions. (1999)

Special Districts

Position: Support consolidation of like special districts and setting of minimum, enforceable, county-wide standards for special districts.

Farmland

Position: Support a flexible combination of governmental programs to prevent a nonreversible alteration to lands with prime or productive soils. The principal use of those lands should ultimately be food production. Governmental policies and programs including taxation and zoning should support King County agriculture (land and industry). The policies and programs should be guided by two goals:

- A. Highest consideration should be the preservation of the most productive soils.
- B. Second consideration should be the preservation of agriculture as an industry. Policies and programs should recognize the value of private land ownership.

Solid Waste Management (1985)

- I. Support measures to achieve waste reduction and recycling of solid waste as a first priority with environmentally safe disposal of the remainder.
- II. Dependence on landfills for disposal of solid waste should be greatly reduced through:
 - A. Education to increase public awareness and participation in waste reduction and recycling programs.
 - B. Solid waste utility rates which include financial support for waste reduction and recycling programs.
 - C. Incineration of solid waste, provided public health and environmental safeguards are adequate, substantial waste reduction and recycling efforts are not adversely affected and energy is recovered as practical.

Transportation and Growth Management (2004)

The Leagues of Women Voters of King County:

- I. Support the concentration of population growth by coordinating growth management plans in order to support a mass transit system and to reduce sprawl.
- II. Support a diverse, seamless, balanced transportation system that includes such features as regional and commuter rail, passenger-only and auto ferries, maximum development of high-occupancy vehicle lanes, express, local and feeder buses, transportation for special-needs, promotion of bicycle use, and adequate, safe pedestrian access to all transit and community services.
- III. Support growth management/transportation planning and funding that includes cooperation and coordination among transportation systems to implement effective regional multi-modal transportation choices.
- IV. Support the use of public transportation systems through incentives such as convenient, affordable, secure transit services and by using pricing disincentives such as user-based taxes.
- V. Support incentives for additional employer auto-trip reduction programs.
- VI. Support adequate and secure park-and-ride lots, community transportation centers and transit-oriented development where appropriate.
- VII. Support an increase in the amount of state, regional and local transportation funds to implement the most appropriate high priority transportation improvements consistent with adopted growth management and transportation plans.

Public Health

The Leagues of Women Voters of King County support:

- I. Public health as a basic function of government that must receive adequate and sustained public funding.
- II. Activities that are especially critical in sustaining community health include:
 - Community-based preventive services
 - Control of communicable diseases
 - Emergency preparedness
- III. Ensuring a safe and healthy environment

Regional Water Supply

- I. Support water conservation efforts by all users including education programs, voluntary and mandatory conservation requirements that take into account previous conservation efforts and alternative types of water reuse. (1996, 1999)
- II. Support a regional approach to water resources, watersheds, basins, aquifers and the accountability of any decision-making bodies to citizens. (1999)
- III. Support a legal framework to create a regional water entity to manage regional water development. (1996)

Washington State Water Rights and Groundwater Protection

- I. Support of the principle of maximum net benefits including human health and safety, riparian habitat, concurrency of supply with permitted demand, Indian treaty rights, protection of in-stream flow, and hydraulic continuity. (1996)
- II. "Allocation of waters among potential uses and users shall be based on the securing of the maximum net benefits for the people of the state. Maximum net benefits shall constitute total benefits less cost including opportunities lost." (Water Resources Act, 1971)
 - I. Quality should be maintained and enforced.
 - II. Quantity should be determined and allocation adjudicated as necessary.
 - III. Water resource management should be funded through water use fees, development permit application fees, and the state general fund.
 - IV. The Department of Ecology should regulate both water quantity and water quality. There should be coordination, integration and cooperation between the Department of Ecology and the Department of Public Health and other regulating agencies at all levels of government including meaningful public input.
- III. Support of federal and state standards and guidelines on a watershed basis. Other governments should meet or exceed federal and state regulations. County government should be the most restrictive (1996)
 - A. The state Wellhead Protection Program should be enforced to protect aquifers and recharge areas. The management Plan should include effective citizen education element and citizen participation.
 - B. Zoning regulations should limit development in order to protect aquifer recharge areas.
- IV. All wells (Class A, B, and single family residential wells) should be measured and the data regarding water withdrawal, use and claims be reported to King County and the Department of Ecology.

Early Childhood Programs

Support the use of public funds for programs that meet the cognitive, physical and social needs of children from birth to eight; that encourage parent education and involvement; and that provide health and human services to these children and their families. 1990, 2005, 2006

- A. The goal of early childhood programs is to provide all children in our community with quality programs, using sliding scale fees, where appropriate. An interim goal is to increase funding and expand programs to serve more children in greatest need of these programs and services.
- B. Responsibility for meeting the developmental and educational needs of children is shared between the family and society. Federal, state, and local governments and school districts should bear varying degrees of responsibility for ensuring the availability, accessibility and quality of early childhood programs. Local governments and school districts should take the lead in improving coordination of these programs in the community.
- C. The elements which are most critical in improving the quality of early childhood programs are adequate, stable, and dependable funding; education of the public regarding the social and economic benefits of early learning; family involvement; and community and corporate support for doing this.
- D. A quality early childhood program includes the following:
 - An appropriate adult-child ratio
 - A staff well trained in child development, adequately compensated, and focused on meeting the individual needs of each child
 - A safe, secure, and nurturing environment with developmentally appropriate curriculum
 - Encouragement of parental involvement in the care of children
 - Available and accessible hours and location.