

CONSENSUS POSITIONS
OF THE
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY

CONSENSUS POSITIONS

The following statements represent the consensus positions of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County as adopted after studies of the issues involved. These positions provide the basis for all action taken by the League on these issues.

GOVERNMENT:

Forms of City Government

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports the City Manager- Council form of city government. The city government should be representative of and responsive to the needs of all the residents of the city. City government should be accountable to its citizens. City government should provide information on any important issue and provide for citizen participation on any crucial matter. City government should provide services to its citizens as efficiently and as economically as possible.

Adopted April 1979

County Government

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports a county government that will provide:

1. A system with clearly defined responsibilities in which the legislative functions are separated from the executive functions.
2. Responsible budgeting with a long-range capital improvement plan.
3. A shortened ballot requiring qualified personnel to be appointed.
4. Uniform personnel practices.
5. Sound management practices.
6. Responsiveness to the electorate and to changing conditions
7. Initiative, Referendum, and Recall

Adopted April 1973

Cooperation and Coordination among Local Governments for Public Utilities

The League of Women Voters of Yakima county supports the cooperation and coordination among various units of local government to provide (public) utilities, i.e., sewage and domestic water systems, and to encourage the building of a joint law enforcement facility.

Adopted April 1973/April 1980

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments' efforts to encourage community cooperation. We also support the continuation of the A-95 Review Process currently mandated by the Office of Management and Budget in order to provide a review of long range plans and policies of local communities. Such a process allows an orderly development of projects consistent with state, regional and local comprehensive plans.

Adopted May 1984

Administration of Justice

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County believes that all county residents are entitled to court proceedings in a safe environment. We encourage the establishment of adequate security procedures, personnel and separate facilities for all participants in court proceedings.

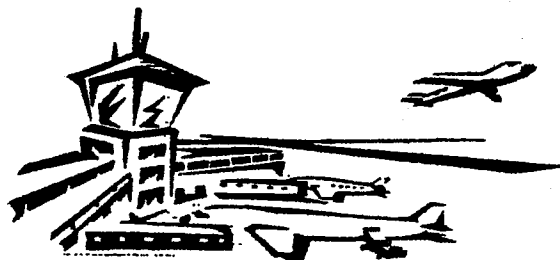
Adopted January 11, 1994



Airport

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County believes that the Airport should be as self-supporting as possible, but fees should not be raised so high that they would discourage business. The League supports the proposal of a joint operation of the Airport by the city and the county.

Adopted February 1982



Historic Properties:

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports:

- Retention of Yakima's historic properties and encourages the City of Yakima and Yakima County to establish special valuation programs and to adopt preservation policies which would encourage the restoration of historically significant buildings and districts. (Adopted May 1989)
- That the following criteria be applied in designating an historic landmark: *historical, architectural, and aesthetic* values.
- Historic preservation policies that decide each designation on a case by case basis, taking into consideration other public priorities, particularly human needs.
- Sharing the costs and benefits of historic preservation by the public and private sector.
- A process for determining land mark designation that includes a broad-based commission, public hearing, and final approval by the City council, with provisions for appeal. (adopted by concurrence May 2000 from a position of the LWV of Seattle)

Adopted May 1989/Revised May 2000

Yakima's Downtown Core and Support Systems:

The League of Women voters of Yakima County believes that a healthy, safe, attractive and convenient Central Business District is important to the quality of life in the Yakima urban area and to its identity

We support planning efforts which enhance the role of the Yakima's Downtown Core as a major retail center in the area and which ensure a mixture of stores, financial institutions, professional and governmental services; convention and tourist facilities; houses and apartments; cultural and entertainment facilities; and areas where people can meet and talk. Yakima's Downtown Core should include adequate parking, as well as pleasant walkways serving those who come by car, by foot and by public transportation.

We support the preservation of historic properties in the downtown core and the establishment of compatible design standards for newer construction.

We support land use policies that encourage retail businesses to locate in the downtown area and that discourage major new regional shopping centers outside the downtown which substantially reduce the vitality of the city center.

Adopted January 1990/ Revised May 1998

Air Quality

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports bringing the Yakim area into compliance with the federal Clean Air Standards through the following:

- Formation of a citizens' advisory committee to attend Clean Air meetings and to monitor offensive sewage plant odors.
- Appropriations of funds for air quality monitors in areas outside the city of Yakima for testing devices for automobile emissions and for updating wood stoves for those of low-income.
- Increasing the frequency of air-quality checks.
- Increasing public awareness of air pollution (hazards of air pollution and restrictions of no-burn days).
- Participation in Pacific Power and Light's Citizens' Advisory Committee

Adopted April 1988

AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The 1999-2000 study to update the LWVYC position on air quality was not completed by the annual meeting last year because the committee had "not yet met to come to consensus on the update of the 1988 position." In its report, the committee suggested that the "new position will quite likely be similar to that of the position taken by the American Red Cross."

Because of time constraints, illness, and other work of its members, the air quality study committee has not yet met at this date, so there is still no change in the LWVYC positions. However, something like the following has (similar to that of the positions taken by the American Red Cross) been suggested as positions for the LWVYC in the twenty-first century.

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports compliance with the federal Clean Air standards, which promote the following:

- Sufficient funding to implement and enforce local air quality programs and regulations by the Yakima Regional Clean Air Authority.
- Protection of sensitive population (children, elderly) from air pollution as defined in the federal and state Clean Air Acts.
- Land use and transportation planning that would result in improvement of air quality.
- Enforcement of air pollution regulations and improved monitoring of air quality.
- Increasing public awareness of air pollution and prevention.
- Indoor air pollution control.

NATURAL RESOURCES:

Land Use

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County believes that Yakima County's land is its most valuable but finite resource; that land ownership and use, both public and private, implies stewardship to preserve and enhance that resource.

Planning for and management of land resources must be a recurring and shared responsibility of all appropriate levels of government. Inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination is necessary to insure consistent, simple, efficient and responsive service.

Public as well as private interests must be respected in land use decisions, taking into consideration the factors of economics; social, environmental and energy concerns; and design and performance standards.

Effective citizen involvement must be insured from early and continuing stages in both planning and management of land resources.

To these ends, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports efforts of government(s) to:

1. Maintain an effective comprehensive plan:

- Support processes for planning which are long range and recurring, allowing for creativity, innovation and flexibility to meet changing conditions.
- Support effective planning in and between county, municipalities and the Yakima Nation.
- Encourage active citizen participation in all phases of planning.
- Encourage neighborhood planning efforts
- Enforce land use regulations consistently.

2. Preserve the county's agricultural lands:

- Require a minimum of twenty (20) acres in areas zoned agricultural, except where specialized or intensive crops provide for productive and economic farm units at lesser acreage.
- Develop flexible and/or alternative mechanisms to encourage retention of lands in productive agriculture.
- Encourage development in and near towns and cities, establishing buffer areas within which future in-filling will be contained.
- Investigate feasibility of developing hillsides for home-sites, with concern for environment, engineering, utility and service impact such as fire and police.
- Support efficiencies of irrigation systems to maximize use of water for agricultural production.

Adopted April 1976

Solid Waste Management

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports the concept of a sanitary landfill for disposing of solid waste in Yakima County at the present time. However, other management methods and new techniques should be observed and investigated continually. When necessary, changes should be made for more efficient and economical disposal practices which will continue to uphold and enhance sanitary, health, safety and ecological standards.

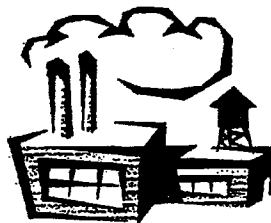
Disposal Sites: Sites for sanitary landfill should be located away from heavily settled areas, but relatively close to centers of solid waste generation. They should be accessible without traveling through residential and other densely populated areas, and should be engineered for efficiency and designed aesthetically. The terrain should provide: capacity for long life, sufficient cover material, minimum ecological disturbances (pollution of surface and underground waters, offensive odors, etc.), and capacity for reclamation and improvement for future site development.

Storage and Collection Standards: If a county-wide mandatory system is initiated, standards for storage and transportation should be established for the county areas. Loads of refuse should be covered and secured to prevent blowing litter. This regulation should apply to both public and private haulers.

Recycling: Recycling should be encouraged to reduce volume of waste. Until governmental units establish recycling practices, ordinances should be enacted to facilitate private operators to salvage recyclable material. More collection centers are needed for glass, cans, etc. However, they should be maintained at efficiently and kept as attractive as possible.

Citizen Participation: Concerned citizens interested in solid waste management can be instrumental in disseminating information to the public. They can help ensure the maintenance of health and ecological standards and work toward more efficient and economical operation. Citizens can encourage governmental units to consider recycling practices or adoption of new techniques.

Adopted February 1975



SOCIAL POLICY

Local Housing

IV. Local Housing: Action to implement our National position on availability of low and moderate income housing.

"The League's dual commitment to work for fair housing and an expansion of housing supply for low-income families continues at every level of government. During the late 60's and early 70's the League worked for federal housing assistance programs set up under categorical grants; in 1974 its support for housing was channeled into aspects of the Housing and Community Development Act which consolidated federal assistance under the block grant approach.

"The League continues to work for implementation and adequate funding for the full range of authorized housing subsidies for both rehabilitation and new construction. At the local level, literally hundreds of Leagues work for local housing initiatives and for enforcement of fair housing laws in their own communities; League members sit on housing commissions; Leagues work to remove obstacles to equal access to housing, such as discriminatory mortgage practices and restrictive zoning ordinances." (LWVUS "Impact Issues 1978-80")

Adopted April 1980



Juvenile Services

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports juvenile services that include:

- Adequate, competitive salaries for staff
- Use of qualified staff
- Separate facilities for dependent children
- Reduced caseload for probation officers
- A citizens advisory committee
- Intensive counseling, additional group homes and support of alternatives to foster and receiving homes
- Development of community counseling

Adopted May 1971



Public Parks within Yakima County

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports measures to achieve and maintain a diverse and secure parks and recreation system accessible to all.

Community Involvement: The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports the encouragement of youth and volunteer groups in participation in park work under appropriate park supervision. This supervision should come from paid staff so that activities and projects are well organized with appropriate goals and proper equipment.

Funding: Money should be set aside for future land purchases. Bonds can be used for land purchases. Use of fees is appropriate for some activities but should not be expected to fund total programs. Fees should not limit participation in park programs or use of parks, especially for children.

Administration: A strong Parks Department is necessary in the city and the county. The director should be directly responsible to the top administrator or administrative body, i.e., city manager or county commission. There should be citizen involvement in policy formulation and park planning, i.e. an active parks and recreation citizen advisory committee.

Adopted January 1982



YAKIMA HEALTH DISTRICT

1. The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports stable funding of the Yakima Health District in the amount necessary to enable the District to provide protection for District citizens according to known, acceptable public health procedures and its continued setting aside of moneys in a contingency and reserve fund for unforeseen expenses and emergencies. Among dependable means of funding that the League supports are:

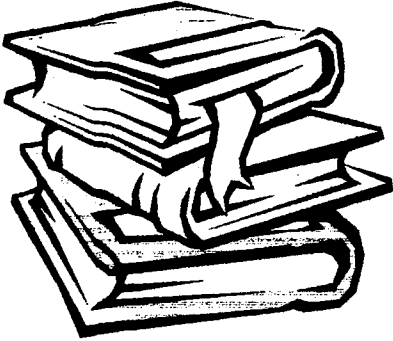
- (a) Fee for service -- where appropriate.
- (b) The Health District as a junior taxing district.

2. The League of Women Voters of Yakima County supports the belief that the following health services are essential:

- (a) Prevention and control of communicable diseases
- (b) Inspection of restaurants and others food providing services, including classes for food handlers
- (c) Planning and provision for proper handling of vaccines for immunizations
- (d) Maintenance of records of vital statistics, births and deaths.
- (e) Collaboration with State and U.S. government on preparedness for bio terrorism activity
- (f) Education of the public about best health practices
- (g) Investigation and reporting of hazardous substances, such as methamphedamins
- (h) Collaboration with other health providers to carry out essential public health protection
- (i) Provision of the services of public health nurses

3. The League of Women Voters of Yakima County further supports increased communication among concerned agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Ecology, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Health District in order to promote collaboration on health problems.

Adopted May 2002



PUBLIC LIBRARY

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County (LWV-YC) supports adequate funding for library operations, maintenance, and expansion and replacement of facilities as needed, described in RCW 27.12 and related law. These include the following:

- current and diverse collections with increased access to information in all formats;
- enhanced and expanded programs, partnerships and collaborations;
- heightened awareness of the public library system and its diverse services; and
- safe physical infrastructure, innovative programming for all ages, and dedicated, responsive, and well-trained personnel.

Therefore, LWV-YC supports Yakima Valley Libraries (YVL) as it offers individuals full access to information by providing resources and services that are an essential support to an informed citizenry and the democratic process.

LWV-YC endorses the freedom to read, to learn, and to discover. In a changing environment with an ever-growing population, LWV-YC supports the library system in its mission to provide equal access to information, ideas, and knowledge through books, programs, and other resources, while promoting enjoyment of reading, study, and lifelong learning. LWV-YC endorses the system's initiation of a variety of creative, problem-solving approaches and community partnerships to deliver broadened services and to establish new programs.