

Agenda Report

DATE: November 19, 2001

TO: CITY COUNCIL
THROUGH: LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
FROM: CYNTHIA J. KURTZ, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: REQUESTS FOR LEGISLATION FOR 2002 SESSION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council vote on each of the suggested legislative items below and direct staff to forward those approved to State legislators with a request for sponsorship.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, State legislators ask for written requests for legislation and budget appropriations on behalf of the City. However, with the expected budget deficit expected to be significant in the coming year, legislators are currently focusing on legislation rather than dollar appropriations. The City has been asked to provide a list of priority legislation for possible support by elected officials in 2002.

Council Recommendations:

Amendments to the Brown Act

It has been suggested that amendments may be needed to the Brown Act to allow closed sessions regarding security threats in the City. The City Attorney's Office has advised however, that Government Code Section 54957 currently allows such actions, stating "Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed to prevent the legislative body of a local agency from holding closed sessions with the Attorney General, district attorney, sheriff, or chief of police, or their respective deputies, on matters posing a threat to the security of public buildings, or a threat to the public's right to access to public services or public facilities . . ."

Robinson Park Master Plan Implementation

It has been recommended that a request be made for funding for completion of the Robinson Park Master Plan. Robinson Park is one of the most heavily used parks in the City, serving hundreds of residents every day, yet the park facilities are undersized and worn out. Over the

last two years, the City has worked closely with residents of the area to develop a new master plan for the park. Anticipated cost to implement the new plan is \$12 million and a formidable funding issue for the City.

Public Power

It has been recommended that legislators be asked to sponsor legislation to clarify and protect local control of public power. Despite astronomical fuel supply prices and record level wholesale energy supply prices, municipal utilities have been able to meet the needs of their customers, keep rates down and plan for future needs. The local control that created such stability was threatened, however, when municipal utilities were ordered to curtail service to compensate for the problems of investor-owned utilities. To maintain stability and ensure high levels of customer service, local control of public power must be clarified and protected.

Completion of the 710 Freeway

Many of the major north/south arterial streets in the southwest portion of the City are operating at capacity during peak hours with overflow traffic spilling over onto residential streets. In March 2001, Pasadena voters supported completion of the 710 Freeway through this area of the City. It has been recommended that legislation be sponsored to direct Caltrans to proceed with design work for the portion of the freeway within Pasadena. Although other communities have not yet resolved all freeway issues, it is anticipated that design work on this portion could move forward while those discussions continue toward resolution.

Staff recommendation:

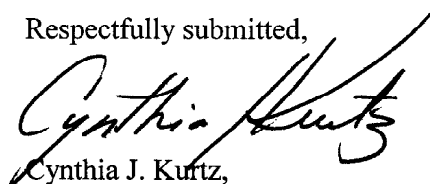
Workers' Compensation

In response to inadequate benefits for some injured workers and escalating workers' compensation costs, staff recommends that the City's legislators cosponsor anticipated legislation, or, if necessary, sponsor new legislation to reform workers' compensation law. Over the past five years, total workers' compensation costs have increased at an annual rate of 10-15% per year despite the fact that the number of claims has decreased. Previous legislation has addressed some issues by providing for increased in benefits, but has not addressed significant cost issues. It is anticipated that legislation to be introduced by Assemblymember Keith Richman will align with the League of California Cities recommendations for reform. Should this not occur, staff would recommend sponsorship of new legislation.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of the above proposed legislation cannot be calculated at this time.

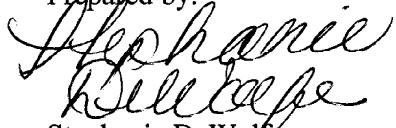
Respectfully submitted,



Cynthia J. Kurtz,

City Manager

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie DeWolfe".

Stephanie DeWolfe

Special Assistant to the City Manager