

Resolution No. 22-305

**Resolution establishing the City of Iowa
City’s 2023 state legislative priorities**

Whereas, the Iowa City City Council seeks to encourage legislation that enhances the quality of life for residents in Iowa City as well as the State of Iowa; and

Whereas, the City of Iowa City and other cities play a critical role in the future of the State; and

Whereas, it is in the interest of the residents of Iowa City that the City Council establish legislative priorities and convey said priorities to our State delegation and other relevant stakeholders.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Iowa City City Council hereby outlines its legislative proposals to the Iowa City area legislative delegation for the 2023 Iowa State legislative session as follows:

Strategic plan objective: Demonstrate leadership in climate action.

Support for Climate Action Initiatives

Support initiatives and legislation that further the goals contained in Iowa City’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and Accelerating Iowa City Climate Actions report. Iowa City encourages the State to adopt the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code and provide cities the ability to make local amendments. The City also encourages the state to initiate a statewide climate action plan and invest directly in environmental and ecological efforts that will support all Iowans.

Support legislative changes to allow investor-owned utilities (such as MidAmerican) to implement community solar project. Also known as “Virtual Net Metering” this allows citizens to buy into community solar projects for utility bill credits. This could be an excellent solution for interested rate users who don’t have space, ownership, or sunshine for their own solar installation.

Strategic plan objective: Advance social justice, racial equity, and human rights.

Support reform measures to reduce racial disparity in the criminal justice system and address systemic racism

In the state of Iowa, black people and persons of color represent a small percentage of the population but are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Discriminatory criminal justice policies and disparate enforcement outcomes should be addressed through state standardized and streamlined data collection for traffic stops, uniform minimum implicit bias and cultural competency training requirements for law enforcement, and decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana. Iowa City supports the recommendations issued by the Governors FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform to promote unbiased policing, which include requiring and automating data collection on race/ethnicity from traffic stops and adopting a statutory ban on disparate treatment in law enforcement activities. Additionally, the City requests the State conduct a statewide review of community police review boards and corresponding legislative policies to ensure these bodies have adequate oversight powers.

Law enforcement agencies also need expanded legal avenues for addressing hate related acts. Currently, the State Hate Crimes provision, Iowa Code Chapter 729A, enhances the penalty for certain crimes when they are committed because of a person's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability, but harassment and trespass with the intent to harass are not included as enhanceable offenses. Iowa City encourages the State to amend the existing Iowa hate crimes law to include harassment as an enhanceable offense.

Support crisis intervention efforts and provide adequate funding for localities to implement a mental health care continuum of services responsive to local need

Local law enforcement agencies are developing innovative solutions for preventing or improving the response to calls for service which involve individuals experiencing a behavioral health, substance abuse, housing, or other similar form of crisis. One strategy being explored involves law enforcement documenting information about the contact made with an individual in these types of incidents and sharing this information with licensed health care or social service providers. The goal of information sharing is to provide opportunity for referral or intervention and reduce the likelihood of the need for future police involvement. To ensure an effective response is not dampened by confidentiality concerns for the crisis victim's information, Iowa City supports confidentiality protections for reports by law enforcement regarding contact with a person experiencing a crisis that contain personally identifiable information.

Additionally, Iowa City encourages the State to enhance and expand support for mental health care and intervention services to better treat those individuals who are at-risk for hospitalization or jailing. Specifically, the City supports lifting the moratorium on specialty courts and increasing funding through the Iowa Department of Corrections and Iowa Department of Justice for specialty courts, including the proposed Sixth Judicial District Civil Mental Health Court. Additionally, the State is encouraged to seek additional capacity for mental health care in Iowa, including investing in Assistive Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and increasing the reimbursement rates for mental health providers.

Strategic plan objective: invest in public infrastructure, facilities, and fiscal reserves

Modernize Municipal Bonding Laws

State law provides municipalities the authority to issue general obligation bonds, within two defined categories: 'essential corporate purpose' bonds which do not require a referendum vote, and 'general corporate purpose' bonds which do require approval by voters. Iowa Code sections regulating how cities may issue these bonds are outdated (30 years since last updated) and create inefficiencies that cost taxpayers more and strain public facilities. For example, causing projects to be subjected to unnecessary phasing resulting in additional bidding processes and elevated construction costs due to projects having to experience multi-year price adjustments/increases. According to the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA), typical construction increases approximately 4.4% - 7% in normal years. Post-COVID these increases range from 14.6% - 20.7% for multifamily and commercial structures. Anecdotally, horizontal construction has reflected similar increases.

First, the definition of 'essential corporate purpose' bonds does not include public facilities which the City considers essential to operations, including public safety facilities, general public works functions, and trails. Additionally, the City cannot bond for modernization updates to 'general corporate purpose' facilities that were previously approved by referendum vote and must re-seek voter approval. Iowa City would like to propose legislation that updates the Iowa Code to

amend this definition of 'essential corporate purpose' bonds to include the aforementioned facilities.

Second, for 'general corporate purpose' bonds, cities in Iowa are subject to bond limitations based on population size. Iowa City is subject to a \$700,000 limit annually for general-purpose bonded projects. These limitations were last updated in 1992, which was the only update since the thresholds were adopted in 1975. Again, due to inflationary factors, the limitations established in 1992 are no longer adequate. Another viewpoint might be to use the annual Consumer Price Index to establish 1992 levels as a baseline, the current bonding limit for a city the size of Iowa City would increase from \$700k to \$1.4 million, which is a more effective amount for needed public facilities and improvements. Therefore, the limits imposed by the 1992 thresholds force cities to break up projects over multiple years, thereby increasing costs and the disruption caused by project construction. For this reason, the City further advocates for the State to adopt an amendment that would apply an annual CPI factor to bonding limitations and/or a construction cost index based on municipal population thresholds from the U.S. Census Annual Population Estimates, rather than the Decennial Census.

Continue Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding

The REAP grant program has been critical for improvements and protection of Iowa City's natural resources, park areas, and open spaces. In the 2021 Session, REAP was re-authorized to receive \$20 million in funding until Fiscal Year 2026. However, the state legislature has historically appropriated less. For FY 2022, REAP was appropriated \$12 million (approximately \$12.45 million including interest income). The City encourages the State to continue supporting REAP annually and to increase the FY 2023 annual appropriation to ensure continued conservation of Iowa's natural resources.

Strategic plan objective: Foster healthy neighborhoods and affordable housing throughout the city.

Protect Home Rule authority for local governments

Local governments are uniquely positioned to respond to the needs and priorities of our residents and taxpayers. Cities innovate in response to local conditions and implement new ideas that can benefit the State as a whole, and more closely reflect the priorities of the public we serve. This includes local flexibility in local building codes, revenue options, and land use decisions.

Support University of Iowa Student Government (USG) proposal regarding rental property move-in checklists

During the 2021 Iowa legislative session, a bill was introduced which would require landlords to provide and use an inventory checklist at the start and end of a tenancy and included a process for implementation. Important requirements which protect tenants against unfair withholdings of rental deposits are detailed in the bill, including a list of required items to be included on the checklist, a file retention period, and a requirement for landlords to provide a copy of this documentation to tenants. Iowa City registered in support of this proposal.

With University of Iowa students representing a significant portion of rental tenants in the Iowa City, the University's student government has advocated for these protections. Iowa City stands with USG in encouraging the State to pursue rental property move-in checklists.

Support legislation protecting the rights of manufactured housing residents

Recent sales of manufactured housing communities statewide and the resulting impact on those communities has led to discussions at both the state and local levels regarding how best to protect the rights of the families living in these communities. The City of Iowa City supports rights for the residents of manufactured housing which include: rent protections including a

statewide cap on frequency and percentage of increases and lengthened notice periods for proposed increases, uniform good cause eviction statewide standards, fair fee regulations including standardized time frames for assessing late fees, and fair lease provisions and effective enforcement mechanisms to combat illegal provisions.

Additionally, when manufactured housing communities are put up for sale, residents should be offered first right of purchase and be protected from premature eviction during pursuit of local ownership. If displacement is forced as a last resort, the owners profiting from the sale of the park must be required to provide fair relocation assistance. The City also encourages the State to consider a tax credit program which incentivizes the transfer/sale of land to residents of the community, allowing them to build equity, and protects against “bad-actor” ownership.

During the 2021 state legislative session, the City of Iowa City registered in support of several bills, which addressed many of these issues. Iowa City continues to support the protections for manufactured housing residents outlined in this bill and encourages the State to adopt such legislation.

Promote equitable access and affordability of high-speed, broadband internet, including sustainable investment in cities’ critical technological infrastructure

High-speed broadband is a driving force behind the local and state economy and is an indicator of quality of life alongside minimum basic needs such as clean water and maintained roadways. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed many inequities in availability and affordability of high-speed broadband internet access in cities across Iowa. It is critical that Iowans of all income levels are on a level playing field when it comes to broadband access, speed, choice, and cost. This will require the State to pursue significant investments in and sustainable funding for critical infrastructure, such as fiber, and next-generation technology which will drive education, employment, and basic human services.

Iowa City encourages the State to take measures which will expand access to high-speed, affordable broadband in cities, specifically for low- and moderate-income Iowans in urban neighborhoods. Additionally, the City supports efforts which incentivize public-private partnerships and ensure reasonable local flexibility as communities work towards cost-effective, universal broadband access.

Strategic plan objective: Promote an inclusive & resilient economy throughout the city.

Support the continued excellence of the State’s primary, secondary, and higher education institutions and advocate for additional education funding

Iowa’s primary and secondary schools are fundamental drivers of the State’s economic growth, standard of living, and future prosperity. It is essential for the success of the State and our local communities that support for our schools is a top priority in the State’s budget and funding is responsive of COVID-19 impacts.

The City also encourages the State to expand access, affordability, and quality of early childhood education and care. Specifically, the City supports increased reimbursement rates for Child Care Assistance (CCA) providers, to ensure families with parents who wish to enter the workforce can find and afford quality child care

The University of Iowa plays a critical role in the supporting statewide economic, social, and cultural growth. It is important the State of Iowa provides the university the needed resources to ensure the university’s continued ability to facilitate growth opportunities in varied sectors of the business community. Likewise, community colleges play an important role in ensuring the continued competitiveness and inclusivity of the state’s economy. The City encourages the State to carefully consider and support the legislative and financial priorities of the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College.

Continue use of federal funding to support residents and businesses in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

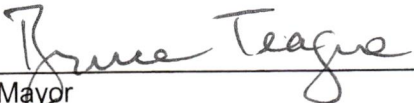
Cities across Iowa are experiencing severe economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Direct and flexible funding allocations to cities are essential to ensuring local needs are addressed adequately through locally viable and effective solutions. Iowa City encourages the State to continue investing available American Rescue Plan Act dollars and other federal funding in local municipalities to support Iowa residents and businesses in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategic plan objective: Strengthen community engagement and intergovernmental relations.

Support the legislative efforts of the Iowa League of Cities and the Metro Coalition


In previous years, Council's adopted priorities included support for legislative efforts of the Iowa League of Cities and Metropolitan Coalition, an organization comprised of the State's largest cities. The 2023 legislative priorities will continue this practice.

Passed and approved this 6th day of December, 2022.

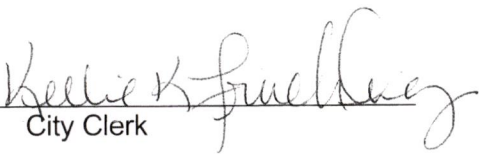


Mayor

Approved by



City Attorney's Office
(Sue Dulek - 12/01/2022)

Attest: 

City Clerk

It was moved by Alter and seconded by Harmsen
the Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

Ayes:	Nays:	Absent:
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Alter
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Bergus
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Harmsen
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Taylor
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Teague
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Thomas
<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u> Weiner