



To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Shane Fineran, City Administrator

Date: January 8th, 2019

Re: 2019 Legislative Priorities

Attached is the legislative priorities document. Added is some highlighted language for potential addition. The City Council should discuss possible amendments during the work session.



The Watertown City Council has adopted the following legislative priorities for ~~2018~~2019. These are issues that will be monitored by city staff and elected officials and the positions of the city will be shared when appropriate. This list is not intended to be comprehensive of all issues of importance to the community at large, but a list of priorities for the organization. During legislative session, other issues may arise that require the city's attention. The City Council will consider its approach or response to those issues on a case by case basis.

Transportation

The City of Watertown benefits from being the convergence point of multiple significant local and state road corridors. Conveniently located between two major transportation corridors, U.S. Highway 12 and State Highway 7, the city urges the development of a sustainable road improvement plan that maintains and enhances these and other important regional corridors and access points. The city has been a proven partner in investing local resources cooperatively in upgrading road facilities within the community along state and county roadways.

The city supports legislation and policy that:

- Creates a dedicated and sustainable state funding source for non-MSA city streets in small cities.
- Creates a sustainable and dedicated funding plan for MnDOT roads within Carver County, and specifically State Highway 25, State Highway 7, and State Highway 5 that increase capacity, improves safety, and provides adequate maintenance.
- Increases funding to offset the burden placed on cities for improvements completed on state and county highways within city limits.
- Implements policy and adequately funds multi-modal pedestrian routes adjacent to county and state road ways within city limits.
- Provides funding to improve safety and access to U.S. Highway 12 between CSAH 6 and Delano as identified in the US 12 Road Safety Audit: Technical Report.
- Begins to evaluate and determines the needs of the intra-county corridor of CSAH 20 in Carver County and CSAH 6 in Hennepin County to adequately serve projected growth of the communities connected by this corridor.
- Provides funding for local and regional trail connections to the Luce Line Trail within the City of Watertown and Carver County.

Natural Resources

The City of Watertown is bisected by the South Fork of the Crow River and is the heart of the Luce Line Regional Trail. Both of these amenities have helped to establish and shape the identity of the community throughout history and as we look to the future. Connection to, preservation, and interaction with the natural world is an important quality for the lives of local citizens.

The city supports legislation that:

- Protects or limits run-off into the South Fork of the Crow River that has a potential to further impair the waterway or increase flood impacts.
- Recognizes the potential for greater occurrences of flood conditions and subsequent natural disaster related damages and provides financial assistance for mitigation or recovery efforts.
- Supports the enhancement and maintenance of the Luce Line Trail through the City of Watertown and the region.
- Supports dedicated funding sources that assist local governments in protecting, creating, and enhancing access to recreational opportunities and natural resources.

Economic Development

The City of Watertown has a long history of supporting local businesses and economic development via grants, loans, TIF, and abatement tools. As a small community in the metro that competes with much larger and developed cities in the region, our city supports legislation that offers greater flexibility and expanded use of economic development tools to support investment efforts of local residents and business owners. Smaller communities like Watertown often work closely with local entrepreneurs, investors, and developers that are less versed in local, state, or federal regulatory requirements related to development or redevelopment. Often city staff provide a higher level of service and advocacy through the regulatory and entitlement process to aid in local investment by these partners.

The city supports legislation that:

- Does not restrict the current or future use of TIF, but rather expands the types and scope of development that can be supported by TIF.
- Allows for the extension of already certified TIF districts, redevelopment areas, and eliminates the "Five-Year Rule" for districts taking longer to develop.
- Provides creative grant opportunities and partnerships with DEED for small metro fringe communities to provide similar incentives available to outstate communities.
- Streamlines review and approval processes related to development or redevelopment by state agencies and commits to a 60 day application response.
- Develops a "one stop shop" service for entrepreneurs, small businesses and their advocates that provide technical assistance on regulatory matters, guidance for accessing grants, loans, and other financial incentives that support small businesses, job creation, and local investment.

Local Governance and Support

The City of Watertown, with a population of approximately 4,300-400 residents, provides a unique blend of ~~small towns~~small-town charm and lifestyle while offering metropolitan convenience within the ~~seven county~~seven-county metropolitan area. As a Rural Center within the metropolitan planning area, the city prides itself on offering a full slate of municipal services efficiently and effectively and often in partnership with other area units of government. The city operates and maintains its own water and wastewater processing facilities, provides fire protection to surrounding townships, contracts with Carver County for law enforcement, and shares resources and knowledge with surrounding municipalities.

The city supports legislation that:

- Recognizes, supports, and protects the influence and authority of local elected officials and governments in the governance of their communities. Legislation that recognizes the need for partnership between the local, state and federal level should be encouraged and the bypassing of local authority should be avoided.
- Maintains the Local Government Aid (LGA) formula currently in use and opposes the freezing, reduction, appropriation, or limitations placed on the distribution or allocation of support funds. In addition LGA should be increased to aid in cities' responses to inflationary and population pressures.
- Maintains the Fiscal Disparities Program and opposes any diversion of pool funds to specific programs or projects.
- Allows for greater participation and influence by local cities in the appointment and representation of members of the Metropolitan Council. The city favors representatives that have shown a commitment to understanding the importance of local governance and expertise we have in managing our local communities.
- Provides for flexible and adequate staffing for the Carver County Sheriff's Office in order to service community needs not met through the assignment of full-time deputies. This will be done through over-time shift scheduling, part-time contract coverage options, or flex-type positions deployed throughout municipalities in Carver County.
- Recognizes and provides support for operators of municipal waste water treatment plants, or point-source dischargers. Legislation should support the equitable treatment of small plants discharging in close proximity, permitted effluent and TMDL's discharged, and provide equitable funding for independent treatment facility upgrades around the state.
- Provides adequate funding for state programs for municipal water and wastewater permitting and technical support programs that provide financial resources to city treatment facilities, storm water management, or other water quality improvement projects undertaken by a municipality.
- Supports the Point Source Implementation Grant program administered by the Public Facilities Authority with at least \$100 million in appropriations in the next biennium to support eligible infrastructure projects listed on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Project Priority List

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Watertown (pop. 4,273,451) is a vibrant and connected community located in northwest Carver County projected to grow by an additional 3,0002,800 residents by 2040. The “Heart of the Luce Line” is situated along the banks of the South Fork of the Crow River. An easy and picturesque drive to the 494 loop, and conveniently located between US Highway 12 and State Highway. 7, our community offers a robust and convenient lifestyle to its residents. A thriving downtown commercial district connected to the world via free public WiFi and direct access to the Luce Line Trail regional trail, draw consumers and visitors alike. Great local schools, affordable living, and a variety of housing choices await you!

For more information please visit www.ci.watertown.mn.us or Shane Fineran, City Administrator at sfineran@ci.watertown.mn.us or 952-955-2681.