

City of Riverside, California Legislative Platform

Introduction

The City of Riverside, named for its location beside the Santa Ana River, is the most populous city in Inland Southern California and 12th-most populous city in California. Known as the City of Arts & Innovation, Riverside is home to the Mission Inn, the Fox Performing Arts Center, the California Citrus State Historic Park, University of California Riverside, and the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture.

Riverside is a full-service city with municipal water and power utilities, police and fire services, an airport, numerous museums, recreational facilities and other high quality municipal programs and services. As a full-service city, Riverside recognizes the need for active legislative engagement and continued partnership with the delegation at the local, state, and federal levels to protect and enhance the interests of its residents and businesses.

Accordingly, based on principles of fiscal responsibility, preservation of local control, and efficient service delivery and operations, the City of Riverside City Council provides overall policy guidance by adopting a legislative platform every two years.

The Legislative Platform (Platform) is developed in consultation with the City Council, Mayor, and City departments, to highlight Riverside's legislative priorities and to codify the City's positions on legislation, regulatory proposals, and funding opportunities. The Platform describes the City's goals on various policy matters as well as specific approaches it would support or oppose to achieve those policy goals.

The Platform, developed in uniformity with the City's Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, intends to supplement the Citywide Strategic Plan while building an efficient and flexible legislative advocacy strategy. The Platform provides strategic direction to City officials, staff and the City's legislative advocates, allowing the City to effectively take positions on policy issues that affect City operations.

Proposed legislation and policy issues that warrant City action but are not addressed in the Platform, are politically controversial, or there is significant local interest in the issue, will be brought before the City Council for consideration prior to the City acting on the item.

For proposed legislation consistent with the Platform or consistent with positions the City has taken in the past, as appropriate, City staff shall prepare position letters for the Mayor's signature. In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tem may sign position letters on behalf of the City.

City Priorities

The City specific priorities, listed in alphabetical order, are focused on protecting the interests of the community and identifying resources available to enhance City programs and services.

Address California's Marketplace for Property Insurance – In 2023, State Farm, Allstate and several other insurance companies, which collectively represent 63 percent of the insurance market in the California, opted to limit new policy originations or cease to sell new home insurance policies in California all together. The reduction of insurance options in the State has a direct negative effect on consumer access to coverage and home and business property owners

continue to face the impacts from fluctuations in the insurance market. Subsequently, the drop in availability of marketplace insurance policies has put excess stress on the California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) Plan, a state-established risk pool that was created to act as a final resort providing temporary coverage as consumers pursue insurance in the traditional market. Access to insurance not only allows existing homeowners to protect what is most likely their largest and most important asset but empowers homebuyers to secure a mortgage for a home.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that expand coverage choices for all consumers, promote a robust competitive insurance marketplace, promote long-term availability of homeowners and commercial property insurance coverage even in the face of extreme weather events, maintain the solvency of the FAIR Plan to protect its policyholders, and strengthen and stabilize California's marketplace for homeowners and commercial property insurance.

Address Homelessness and Housing – There is a shortage of housing units that low-income people can afford and as the gap between income and housing costs grows, more people face homelessness. Homelessness is a persistent and multifaceted challenge in the City of Riverside. Based on the 2023 Riverside County Homeless Point-in-Time-Count, it is estimated that there are 605 unsheltered persons and 327 people in shelter within the city limits. Despite taking a Housing First approach, homelessness continues to be prevalent across the City.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that increase housing production and affordability, identify funding opportunities to address homelessness, increase shelter beds and services, and expand public awareness about homelessness and housing.

Connect Riverside to the Los Angeles 2028 Summer Olympic Games (LA28) - Riverside sits in the heart of Southern California and is the site and gateway to many unique attractions. The Olympics have traditionally attracted millions of visitors to both the host and surrounding cities, with the Paris Olympics selling a record 9.7 million tickets. LA28 has the twin objectives of 'working with what exists' and of being a 'no-car Olympics.' These ambitious objectives cannot be met without relying on regional hotel and transit capacity.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that elevate the City of Riverside's participation in and connection to LA28, facilitate commutes and recreational travel via Metrolink Riverside line, encourage Citywide Olympic-friendly policies, allow for an Olympic ambassador program with our Sister Cities pairing Riverside residents with LA28 visitors to further international relations, and promote Riverside venues as convenient locations for auxiliary Olympic events.

Expand Recreational Opportunities – The City of Riverside has 59 parks totaling 2,591.56 acres of developed parkland. There are an additional nine (9) parks that are undeveloped totaling 349.05 acres. Parks within the system include community parks, regional parks, wilderness parks, joint use and special use facilities. Across the various park types there are numerous recreational opportunities including sports fields, playgrounds, hiking trails and other recreational amenities. With a growing population of more than 315,000 residents, meeting the demand for renovating

deteriorating park infrastructure and for constructing new recreation facilities is an ongoing challenge with existing resources.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that increase park lands, expand adaptive and therapeutic recreation, and increase access and prioritize additional investments and improvements in the City's parks.

Increase Behavioral Health Infrastructure – Behavioral health, which includes mental health and substance use conditions, is an important part of the City of Riverside residents' overall health and well-being. Residents in Riverside and across the state report significant need for increased access to behavioral and mental health services. As the City is not a direct behavioral and mental health service provider, we rely on our regional partners (County, regional behavioral health center, community health workers, and more) to collaborate and implement programs needed by our residents. Cities and counties are on the frontlines of the state's behavioral health crisis and the supply of inpatient beds and behavioral and mental health services is not meeting the state's needs.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that advance CARE Court, expand behavioral and mental health services, provide funding to build/retrofit acute psychiatric care facilities, increase the number of inpatient beds, expand access to community-based treatment, reduce homelessness, incarceration, and unnecessary hospitalizations, reduce barriers to care, and improve outcomes for people with behavioral and mental health conditions.

Revitalize the Santa Ana River – The Santa Ana River flows along the City of Riverside for 11 miles. Numerous development opportunities exist along the river, however barriers such as fire risks, invasive species, illegal habitations within the river bottom, safety concerns, and a lack of amenities, make improving the river a challenge.

The City will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative policies that identify opportunities for development along the Santa Ana River and create more recreational activities while preserving natural areas.

State Legislative Principles

The State principles are driven by the City's core values of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion; furthering community trust; preserving local control over finances and decision-making; promoting innovation; and ensuring the City's long-term sustainability and resilience in the face of growing environmental, economic, and health and public safety challenges.

- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that promote diversity and address equity and inclusion to ensure effective and equitable policy implementation.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that increase transparency in local government and promote community engagement.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that enhance City services, protect local revenue sources and preserve local control and flexibility in the administration of programs and services while minimizing unfunded or restrictive changes that detract from these objectives.

- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that provide an equitable distribution of resources.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that promote collaboration between and among Riverside’s higher education and training providers to increase alignment with workforce needs.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that prioritize a prosperous business climate.

Federal Legislative Principles

The Federal principles are centered on the belief that Federal policies should enhance the ability of local elected officials to respond to the needs of their constituents. Cities rely on the Federal government to help build infrastructure, support economic development, deliver human services, and ensure public safety.

- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that provide flexible, ongoing and sustainable funding to help cities finance basic infrastructure needs such as drinking water and wastewater.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that provide expanded recreation, conservation, and educational opportunities for the local community.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that enhance municipal efforts to provide essential road, rail, air and sea transportation systems and emphasize maintenance, preservation and equitable distribution of transportation funding.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that promote economic resilience, and the advancement of a skilled workforce to meet business needs.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that develop, coordinate and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets and increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that allow the City to pursue new and established resources for a variety of housing options, such as affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and bridge housing.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that update existing federal housing programs and provide more flexible housing resources.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that provide additional funding to expand programs that provide behavioral and mental health services for the City’s homeless population.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that provide new competitive grants and formula programs of direct funding to cities.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that continue funding for the wide variety of Department of Justice grants, Department of Homeland Security grants and other security-specific grants.
- Support legislation, budget actions or administrative policies that address racial equity, enhance transparency, and increase public trust in law enforcement.

Legislative Positions and Policy Statements

The Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation and align with the Envision Riverside 2025 strategic priorities of

arts, culture and recreation, community well-being, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, high performing government, and infrastructure, mobility and connectivity.

1. Arts, Culture and Recreation

Promote diverse community experiences, enhance cultural enrichment and advance personal development opportunities that add to the quality of life of residents and visitors. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

1.1. Arts

- 1.1.1. Enhance and improve responsible stewardship of the arts in Riverside.
- 1.1.2. Aid in the historic preservation of Riverside.
- 1.1.3. Prioritize arts, culture, and heritage to encourage creativity and draw visitors to Riverside.
- 1.1.4. Develop, enhance and sustain artistic and cultural programs.
- 1.1.5. Provide greater opportunities to access meaningful experiences in the arts.
- 1.1.6. Integrate placemaking and public art as eligible elements and expenses for state and federal grant programs.

1.2. Culture

- 1.2.1. Foster international partnerships and encourage a reciprocal relationship with our Sister Cities.
- 1.2.2. Provide residents and visitors with access to City facilities that promote cultural enrichments.
- 1.2.3. Enhance funding for museums to further teach, inspire and connect our communities.
- 1.2.4. Prioritize the full funding of library systems.

1.3. Recreation

- 1.3.1. Preserve and protect the conservation of the City's natural and historic land resources.
- 1.3.2. Support development of the River District along the Santa Ana River.
- 1.3.3. Ensure equitable opportunities to access parks, lakes, forests, mountain ranges, and other natural landscapes.
- 1.3.4. Expand adaptive and therapeutic recreation programs at City parks and facilities.
- 1.3.5. Address deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects for City parks and facilities.

2. Community Well-Being

Encourage whole person health, promote equity and safety, and strengthen communities through preparedness and resiliency so individuals and communities can flourish and fulfill their potential. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

2.1. Health and Wellness

- 2.1.1. Address the social determinants of health and promote whole person care.
- 2.1.2. Address and dismantle institutional and systemic racism that include but are not limited to health equity, housing, education, access to capital, environmental restoration and criminal justice reform.
- 2.1.3. Expand and create better access to mental health and behavioral health resources.

- 2.1.4. Invest in education funding for professionals to enter the mental health and behavioral health fields.
- 2.1.5. Provide and sustain quality education and childcare for all.
- 2.1.6. Continue to fund the Lunch at the Library program ensuring youth aged 18 and under have access to free summer meals while school is out.
- 2.1.7. Boost medical reimbursement payments and ensure an equitable distribution of funding to the Inland Southern California region.
- 2.1.8. Promote the expansion of medical facilities in the Inland Southern California region.
- 2.1.9. Allow cities to establish public health departments to address the unique needs of locales more effectively.
- 2.1.10. Increase access to programs that address food insecurity.
- 2.1.11. Increase or maintain resources dedicated to infrastructure that contribute to economic development and neighborhood quality.

2.2. Public Safety

- 2.2.1. Allow flexible use of funds for regional fire prevention activities.
- 2.2.2. Enhance Urban Search and Rescue California Task Force 6.
- 2.2.3. Enhance and increase resources for local emergency/disaster preparation, management, and operations, including mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery.
- 2.2.4. Help reduce and prevent crime and gang violence.
- 2.2.5. Combat fentanyl and other synthetic drug overdose issues.
- 2.2.6. Improve pedestrian safety.
- 2.2.7. Expand laws and regulations on vandalism and graffiti to hold violators accountable.
- 2.2.8. Strengthen wellness for law enforcement employees and provide funding for recruitment and retention of police.
- 2.2.9. Provide local government with the necessary tools to effectively serve AB 109, Proposition 47 and Proposition 57 populations.
- 2.2.10. Allow local government to efficiently and effectively implement Proposition 36.

2.3. Housing & Homelessness

- 2.3.1. Create, preserve and expand affordable housing, permanent supportive housing and bridge housing while maintaining local control of land use.
- 2.3.2. Provide affordable housing, and associated operating, safety net, and services funding.
- 2.3.3. Establish and fund dedicated housing programs for cities.
- 2.3.4. Increase housing subsidizes such as low-income housing tax credits and project-based vouchers.
- 2.3.5. Aid low-income community members in achieving housing stability and pathways to homeownership.
- 2.3.6. Allow for innovative approaches to comply with the no net loss provisions of SB 330 (Statutes of 2019)
- 2.3.7. Expand programs that provide mental health services for those experiencing homelessness.
- 2.3.8. Prioritize programs that fund outreach teams to educate and enroll residents experiencing homelessness into systems of care so they can receive needed services.

- 2.3.9. Assist people experiencing homelessness with recovery-supported housing.
- 2.3.10. Assist cities with homeless encampment cleanup and related damage to the built and natural environments.

3. Economic Opportunity

Stimulate economic growth by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship and attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

3.1. Economy

- 3.1.1. Equitably distribute state funding for state mandated programs.
- 3.1.2. Leverage the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and other partners to create a clean and green tech economy.
- 3.1.3. Increase the number and capacity of local farmers and increase productive acreage.
- 3.1.4. Expand agricultural development of the greenbelt and across the City.
- 3.1.5. Incentivize businesses to invest in Riverside.
- 3.1.6. Increase economic mobility opportunities and job creation citywide to solve for the impacts of inequality and poverty.

3.2. Workforce

- 3.2.1. Strengthen vocation and life skill focused curriculum in public K-12 education.
- 3.2.2. Provide access to higher education and job skills that are critical for the 21st Century.
- 3.2.3. Create jobs in the green transportation and green technology industries.
- 3.2.4. Increase the number, rate and diversity of undergraduates in STEM disciplines.
- 3.2.5. Promote and expand mentorship and internship programs.
- 3.2.6. Provide funding for a region-wide employer engagement model that supports talent development and retention for high-growth middle skilled jobs.

4. Environmental Stewardship

Maximize sustainability initiatives that further economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social well-being while decreasing negative impacts on the environment. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

4.1. Sustainability

- 4.1.1. Ensure safe, reliable and affordable water and energy for all residents.
- 4.1.2. Expand and improve Riverside's connection to the statewide grid system.
- 4.1.3. Encourage the revitalization of environmentally impaired and older communities.
- 4.1.4. Support the implementation of a long-term water use efficiency framework that improves water quality, supply, efficiency and reliability and reduces water demands.
- 4.1.5. Protect and enhance the Santa Ana River and other open spaces.
- 4.1.6. Secure federally licensed offsite storage and disposal solutions for spent nuclear fuel.
- 4.1.7. Allow for the development of a new Urban Forest Management Plan that better addresses environmental concerns while providing a mechanism to reduce the devastation caused by California fires.

4.2. Renewable Energy

- 4.2.1. Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, expand renewable energy usage and assist with greening the City's fleets and facilities.

- 4.2.2. Increase the availability and accessibility of zero and low-emissions vehicles as well as charging infrastructure for all.
- 4.2.3. Delay penalties for local agencies and commercial operators seeking to comply with SB 1383 (Statutes of 2016) regulations.
- 4.2.4. Broaden the definitions for renewable portfolio standard (RPS) generation sources.
- 4.2.5. Develop equitable renewable identification number (RIN) credit value for renewable natural gas (RNG) produced from landfill diverted organics.
- 4.2.6. Allow for flexibility in the procurement of renewable resources.

4.3. Climate

- 4.3.1. Combat issues related to extreme heat, air quality, drought, sea level rising and flooding, building and energy, transportation, and waste.
- 4.3.2. Reduce emissions and mitigate climate impacts from consumption of goods and the disposal of solid waste.
- 4.3.3. Enhance regional planning and investments in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and zero emissions equipment.
- 4.3.4. Promote the incorporation of green streets, green infrastructure for stormwater management, parks, and streets related infrastructure for climate adaptation.
- 4.3.5. Allow cities and/or jurisdictions to incentivize or collect fees from users of the goods movement system and from parties that impact local air quality and the environment.
- 4.3.6. Provide funding support for both zero-emissions vehicles and the necessary infrastructure.

5. High Performing Government

Pursue policy, service and administration excellence and reform that ensure the financial health of the City and leverage public tax dollars for maximum local benefit. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

5.1. Local Control

- 5.1.1. Remove unwarranted, State-imposed mandates or barriers in the execution of local government programs.
- 5.1.2. Expand the City's autonomy and flexibility in dealing with the financing of public services.

5.2. Fiscal Stability

- 5.2.1. Strengthen and expand ongoing revenues for the City.
- 5.2.2. Provide sufficient financial resources from the state government to implement mandates without duplicating efforts.
- 5.2.3. Update the cost recovery mechanism for California Public Records Act requirements.
- 5.2.4. Allow the City to be a direct recipient of state funding.
- 5.2.5. Provide sufficient resources to implement the least costly and most efficient regulations.
- 5.2.6. Streamline the process for State reimbursement of State imposed mandates.
- 5.2.7. Streamline and simplify application processes for federal, state and regional competitive funding programs.
- 5.2.8. Restore advance refunding of tax-exempt municipal bonds to maintain a low-cost and efficient way for cities to finance critical infrastructure.

6. Infrastructure, Mobility, Connectivity

Mitigate the negative impacts of goods movement on the Inland Southern California region, enhance multi-modal transportation, and create roadways and related infrastructure that provide for a more resilient and safer tomorrow. Riverside supports legislation, policies and resources that:

6.1. Infrastructure

- 6.1.1. Encourage infrastructure development that protects the air, water, and lands of the City.
- 6.1.2. Fund airport capital investments and increase the level of FAA non-primary entitlements for reliever airports.
- 6.1.3. Approve the use of a camera for air traffic control supporting aircraft use of runway 16-34 at Riverside Municipal Airport.
- 6.1.4. Provide funding to maintain our roads, sidewalks, and bridges, including active transportation enhancements.
- 6.1.5. Advance the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project (RTRP) and increase energy efficiency.
- 6.1.6. Provide funding for water and wastewater service providers and biosolids producers to address PFAS and other contaminants of emerging concern.
- 6.1.7. Grant additional funding to complete the Santa Ana River “Left Levee” project.

6.2. Mobility

- 6.2.1. Alleviate commuter congestion to promote economic development and enhance citizens’ quality of life.
- 6.2.2. Promote the expansion of public transportation services and transit-oriented development with the objective of reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- 6.2.3. Eliminate conflicts between SB 743 (Statutes of 2013) and AB 2097 (Statutes of 2022) related to criteria for analyzing transportation impacts.
- 6.2.4. Provide an exemption waiving Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis for new developments within agencies which have adopted Housing Elements and active transportation master plans.
- 6.2.5. Boost the City’s connectivity to the existing regional transit system and any proposed new regional rail services.
- 6.2.6. Allow flexibility in the implementation of and compliance with AB 98 (Statutes of 2024) regulations on adding truck routes to the City’s circulation element.
- 6.2.7. Allow greater flexibility and expand the use of SB 1 (Statutes of 2017) funds.
- 6.2.8. Seek additional transportation funding sources to supplement declining gas tax revenues.
- 6.2.9. Allow local agencies more flexibility in the establishment of enforceable speed zones.
- 6.2.10. Accelerate programs to deploy automated enforcement technologies of sever speed violations.
- 6.2.11. Expand State resources for infrastructure and streamline regulations to support the deployment of connected and autonomous vehicles.

6.3. Connectivity

- 6.3.1. Address the digital divide by providing quality and affordable access to the internet.

- 6.3.2. Encourage private sector investments to develop state-of-the-art broadband capabilities for businesses and residents.
- 6.3.3. Provide financial incentives that create a more equitable provision of broadband internet to communities that lack access.
- 6.3.4. Include broadband as a Lifeline Program to assist low-income families with obtaining internet service.

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