

Lake County Municipal League 2007 Legislative Initiatives

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Lake County Municipal League 2007 Legislative Initiatives Summary

The mission of the Lake County Municipal League is to serve as a vehicle for member municipalities to take joint action on matters affecting the Lake County area. It is the goal of the LCML to enable member municipalities to better fulfill their mission through legislative action, information sharing and networking.

The purpose of the 2007 Legislative Initiatives is to raise awareness of the challenges Lake County municipalities face with regard to transportation, school funding reform and other policy issues. The 2007 Legislative Committee recommended dividing Legislative Initiatives into two categories: Funding and Policy.

Funding Issue: Transportation

The LCML encourages the State to develop a capital plan to fund the 2005 and 2006 consensus projects. Funding these transportation items is of vital importance to the members of the Lake County Municipal League.

Policy Issue: Education Reform

The LCML encourages the State to create a more equitable education funding formula and include accountability of local districts.

Policy Issue: Erosion of Dedicated Funds

The LCML believes there should be no further erosion of dedicated funds and these funds should be redirected for their dedicated purposes. In addition LCML also believes the State should honor past project financial commitments to municipalities.

Policy Issue: Pensions

The LCML believes there should be an independent review process for analyzing the cost to taxpayers of various local government pension and disability changes, including DROP and catastrophic injury.

Policy Issue: Motor Fuel Tax Administration

The LCML believes it is time to reduce state and local administrative costs related to the distribution and use of motor fuel taxes by municipalities.

Lake County Municipal League Funding Issues: Transportation

The Lake County Municipal League joined other groups to raise awareness and build consensus on the development and implementation of transportation goals in Lake County. With the formation of the Lake County Transportation Alliance (LCTA), municipalities in Lake County signaled that transportation was their number one priority. In conjunction with other organizations such as the Lake County Partners and LCTA, the LCML members worked to leverage local, county, state, federal, and private resources to mitigate traffic congestion. The LCML encourages the State to develop a capital plan to fund the 2005 and 2006 consensus projects. Funding these transportation items is of vital importance to the members of the Lake County Municipal League.

Add lanes projects ready for Planning Funding

IL-176 (IL Rte 21 to IL Rte 131)

US 45 (Millburn Rd to IL Rte 132)

IL 83 (IL Rte 120 to IL Rte 176)

IL 176 (US Rte 12 to Fairfield Rd)

IL 21 (Lake-Cook Rd to US 45)

IL 60 (Fairfield Rd to IL Rte 176)

Add lanes projects ready for Engineering Funding

US 45 (IL Rte 60 to IL Rte 21)

IL 60/83 (South of IL Rte 176 to EJ&E Railroad)

IL 131 (Wisconsin state line to Sunset Ave)

US 45 (Millburn Bypass)

Add lanes projects ready for Construction Funding

IL 21 (South of IL Rte 120 to IL Rte 137)

US 45 (Washington St to IL Rte 120)

IL 83 (Wisconsin state line to Petite Lake Rd)

US 45 (IL Rte 132 to Rollins Rd)

US 45 (Rollins Rd to Washington St)

Lake County Municipal League Transportation

Recap of Consensus projects for 2005

2005 Transportation Consensus Priority Projects

- US Highway 45 (IL Route 137 to IL Route 120): Add lanes project ready for construction.
Est. Cost: \$3 million construction cost
- US Highway 45 (IL Route 120 to Washington Street: Add lanes project ready for engineering/R.O.W. funding.
Est. Cost: \$2.1 million in final engineering and remaining right-of-way acquisition costs.
- US Highway 41: Add lanes/capacity project ready for planning funding.
Est. Cost: \$650,000 in planning funding.
- IL Route 120 Bypass: Add lanes/capacity project ready for planning funding.
Est. Cost: \$800,000 over two years in State Planning and Research Funding which requires a \$200,000 match of local funds. \$100,000 has been pledged as local matching funds by Lake County and 10 municipalities within one-half-mile radius of the projected centerline of the proposed project for year one.

It is the position of the Lake County Municipal League that the Route 120 Bypass be built.

In addition a vote taken at the 2006 Transportation Summit also supported building Route 53 with two caveats: funding will not be pursued at the expense of improvements to existing arterials and the Route 120 Bypass and that the extension would be supported only if additional funding becomes available.

Lake County Municipal League Policy Issue: Education Reform

An educated population is of vital importance to all municipalities. Because schools define the overall character of a municipality, the Lake County Municipal League supports the various efforts underway to examine plans to create a more equitable state education funding formula and include accountability of local districts.

Among the organizations playing a role in this issue is the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. 2007 has been earmarked as the Year for Education Reform. Central to this effort is a Mayors Caucus Task Force studying the current educational system in Illinois and making recommendations for improving it by focusing on school accountability and funding reform.

Among their recommendations are:

- The State should work with local boards of education to improve academic and fiscal accountability, management practices and cost control efforts.
- The State needs to develop an accountability system and stick with it.
- A significant portion of all new State revenues should be directed to providing greater funding assistance to under-funded school districts.
- The State should fund at least 51 percent of the education foundation level.
- All State mandates that trigger costs in excess of the foundation level should be funded by the State.

The Lake County Municipal League supports these efforts and believes school districts should be included in the discussions of the Local Government Consolidation Commission.

Lake County Municipal League Policy Issue: Erosion of Dedicated Funds

For the past few years, Illinois officials have used dollars dedicated for specific purposes to balance the state budget. This tactic has created problems in two areas:

- Erosion of Dedicated Funds
- Unfulfillment of past commitments

Erosion of Dedicated Funds

Dedicated funds were intended to be used for the specific purposes in a dedicated account. The Lake County Municipal League believes there should be no further erosion of dedicated funds and these funds should be redirected for their dedicated purposes.

Unfulfillment of past commitments

State administrators continue to delay payments of committed funds for projects completed by municipalities. The state has promised to contribute 50 percent to the cost of the various projects, and has failed to pay their share. This impacts municipalities in that they have to use other operating funds while waiting for reimbursement. LCML also believes the State should honor past project financial commitments to municipalities.

Lake County Municipal League

Policy Issue:

Pensions

It is well known that public sector pensions in Illinois are underfunded for their current liability if everyone eligible for pensions or disability benefits needed those benefits. The real cost to the taxpayers is overlooked when municipal employee disability and pension packages are determined. The LCML believes there should be an independent review process for analyzing the cost to taxpayers of various local government pension and disability changes, including DROP and catastrophic injury.

Recommendations include:

- Institute an independent review process for analyzing the cost to taxpayers of proposed local government pension changes.
- Increase taxpayer representation on local police & fire boards so taxpayer representatives are in the majority.
- Reconsider the lifetime benefits in all circumstances provisions.
- Clearly define catastrophic injury.

Lake County Municipal League Policy Issue: Motor Fuel Tax Administration

In order to receive Motor Fuel Tax monies, municipalities are required to follow cumbersome and outdated administrative processes. In the day and age when municipalities have the expertise to handle contracting, finance and clerical functions without supervision, it seems redundant and unnecessary for IDOT to require the level of review and tracking from the past.

The Lake County Municipal League believes it is time to reduce state and local administrative costs related to the distribution and use of motor fuel taxes by municipalities.

LCML advocates the repeal those sections of state law, including but not limited to, Sections 605 ILCS 5/7-203 and 602 ILCS 5/7-203 to eliminate the existing costly, wasteful, and outdated motor fuel tax administrative paperwork.

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