

League of Women Voters Oakland Area

LOCAL PROGRAM POSITIONS

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& Modified May 15, 1996 (Ordered by Major Classification)
& Modified May 2, 1998
& Modified May 8, 1999
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& Modified May 17, 2014 to add LWV Detroit Metro Area positions
LWVOA Local Program 2015.doc

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to take action on its positions.

Cooperation among governmental units (schools, parks & recreation, library, township and city government, community services, etc.) is implied in the statement of LWV Principles in "*IN LEAGUE.*" This statement applies to all positions.

**** GOVERNMENT ****

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1984 Rochester Area position merged in 2011 with Oakland Area position

Summary:

We support a city charter that grants broad legal powers to the city permitting it to plan, finance and execute programs suited to the special needs, interests and desires of the citizens.

Detail:

We support:

- A. Charters that are flexible, with areas of responsibility clearly delineated, but with no inclusion of specific procedures.
- B. A distinct separation between policy making and administration, thus allowing for checks and balances.
- C. A council-manager form of government.
- D. A council with an odd number of five to eleven members.
- E. Elected officials selected on a nonpartisan rather than a partisan basis.
- F. Council or commission members could be elected "at large" or by a combination of "district" and "at large"
- G. A government whose administrators are appointed and trained for their vocation.
- H. Adequate notice and information to the public to promote meaningful participation, including notice and information when modifications are made in the budget.
- I. An elected body which explains its procedures clearly and unequivocally to the citizens.
- J. Competitive salaries for public employees and officials whose jobs and responsibilities are similar to those in the private sector; salaries of elected and appointed officials determined by the council rather than by the charter.
- K. Consideration by local officials of local expertise and public concerns when awarding contracts. "Conflict of Interest" and "Responsible Bidder" clauses in the Charter should be strictly honored.
- L. Appointment of a citizens' advisory committee on charter review every four years, for a four-year term, with the purpose of recommending possible amendments to the charter.
- M. Adequate, equitable and flexible financial programs which meet the needs of the community.

- 1) Local funds primarily from property taxes, supplemented by user fees. Funds for general operating expenses should come primarily from local taxes, supplemented with state and federal revenues. Local income tax is supported because it is more progressive.
 - 2) Realistic millage rate; that is, a rate which enables a city to perform its necessary functions adequately.
 - 3) Specific budgetary control in the charter.
 - 4) Less dependence on state and federal funds, because of their lack of reliability.
 - 5) Provision for long-term fiscal planning identifiable by a separate plan.
 - 6) Provision for forums that permit public input on the issues concerning budget allocation, services, budget categories, and salaries, with the exclusion of contract negotiations between the local unit and its employees.
 - 7) Development of alternatives for financing governmental services within the local unit's millage limits before special assessments are proposed. The local unit has a responsibility to justify any special assessment and to educate the voters as to its necessity.
- N. Provision for initiative, referendum, and recall in charter.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP AND WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

Summary:

We support measures to provide Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield Township with a city form of government.

Detail:

We are opposed to charter township for Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield Township.

CHANGING THE FORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT Adopted by Rochester Area 1979, Oakland Area 2011

Summary:

The form of Local Government could be changed when the existing form does not meet the needs of the people and cannot provide those services required by the residents. A proliferation of new municipalities should be avoided.

Detail:

- A. Annexation is an appropriate measure only after an affirmative vote of those electors of the governmental units concerned. Any of the following conditions may be a basis for the consideration of annexation:
- 1) To avoid duplication of necessary services.
 - 2) To provide a more efficient and effective government.
 - 3) To avoid area isolation due to geographical factors.
- B. Consolidation is an appropriate measure when it is mutually beneficial to governmental units concerned. Any of the following conditions may be a basis for the consideration of consolidation:
- 1) To avoid duplication in the provision of necessary services;
 - 2) To promote efficiency and effectiveness;
 - 3) When residents of the affected areas would receive economic and social benefits.

COUNTY HOME RULE
Merged with Rochester Area 2003

Summary:

We support Home Rule for Oakland County Government. In the absence of County Home Rule, we support County Reorganization with the same criteria as our Home Rule Standard.

Detail:

Support of County Home Rule with following standard:

A. Charter Commission

1. Election of Commissioners on a nonpartisan basis.
2. Small (between 11 and 35 members) commission elected in a combination district and at-large election. If smaller in size, an at-large election is preferable.
3. Candidates for office of Commissioner must be at least 21 years of age and qualified electors of the district they represent.
4. The work of the commission should be completed within a special length of time.
5. Adequate compensation for the commission should be provided.

B. Charter Provisions

1. Legislative Body: the county legislative body should be responsible to the electorate. It should be small, preferably numbering between 7 and 15, elected at-large in the nonpartisan election. Policymaking should rest with the Board of Commissioners.
2. Administrative Head: the legislative body should hire a competent administrative head, who would preferably be appointed but may be elected, and who should be accountable to the legislative body for administering the affairs of Oakland County Government. The administrator should have the responsibility of preparing the budget and formulating long-range planning for the county; s/he should hold no other public office during tenure. The power to dismiss the appointed administrative head should rest in the legislative body.
3. Administration: Oakland County Administration should be substantially integrated rather than a collection of loosely connected, independent boards, commissions and offices. Departments should be established wherever possible. In cases involving services integrated with state or federal government, boards or commissions might better serve, providing those boards or commissions are subject to consultation with and reviewed by the Board of Commissioners.
4. Officials: the offices of Clerk-Register of Deeds, Treasurer, Drain Commissioner, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff should be filled by appointment rather than election. The County Board of Commissioners should create objective criteria for appointed administrators who are not under the merit system.
5. Policy Making: Policy making for county agencies should rest with the Board of Commissioners. Exceptions could be those which are funded by the state.

C. County Reorganization

1. Oakland County should have the power to restructure itself under the conditions outlined above.
2. It should work toward cooperative, voluntary solutions to problems among local units of government within the county. It should initiate efforts to aid cities, villages and townships in providing maximum services at minimum costs.
3. Voter approval is desirable but not a necessary condition of an acceptable reorganization plan.
4. No additional power should accrue to Oakland County under its present structure.

D. Definitions:

County Home Rule - When a county changes its governmental structure by the home rule process, a charter commission is elected. The charter commission writes a charter for county government, which is submitted to the voters for their approval. The charter must be written within the limits of state law.

Reorganization - Takes place when the structure of county government is changed by state legislation. This may or may not require the approval of voters and the county legislative body (Board of Commissioners).

**** Natural Resources ****

LAND USE PLANNING

Summary:

We support land use planning that reflects concern for the physical and social environment. Further, we support coordinated regional and local planning which includes citizen involvement.

Detail:

We support:

- A. A master plan which is adequate, current and ensures orderly growth, that achieves the development of sound planning concepts, and includes the following:
 1. Growth policy which establishes priorities.
 2. Periodic review of the master plan, with input from the community. To ensure that the master plan is adequate, it should be evaluated in terms of changing growth and transportation patterns, current economic and social factors, development in neighboring and surrounding communities, and changes in zoning.
 3. Provisions for open spaces, parks and other recreational lands in local neighborhoods as well as for general use.
 4. Requirements for sign control, noise abatement, traffic control, landscaping for screening of less attractive activities.
 5. Environmental planning which provides for land conservation, noise, and flood control and programs for air pollution and solid waste disposal. We support regional, rather than purely local, planning and cooperation in these areas.
 6. Good transportation planning to ensure ready accessibility to various community activities.
 7. Use of environmental, social, and economic statements with specific criteria for the type of developments requiring such statements and for the data to be included in such statements.
 8. Coordination with regional planning to assure the best possible use of local land and intergovernmental cooperation between school, local government, etc. as is necessary.
- B. Efforts by local governments to provide for citizen participation in the earliest planning and regulation stages and throughout the planning process.
- C. Planning should reflect concern for the physical environment (noise, water, air, wetlands, and safety). Local planning should reflect concern for the social environment, including availability of housing in a broad cost range, protection and preservation of historic areas and/or buildings (adequate and appropriate criteria should be used for historic designations), a balanced transportation system which gives attention to non-motorized as well as motorized modes of transportation, with as little disruption as possible to existing neighborhoods.
- D. Governments' involvement of citizens by means of open meetings, extensive publicity prior to meetings, and public access to minutes taken at meetings. Neighboring property owners should be given adequate notice of rezoning and development plans.
- E. Efforts by the local governments to regulate development so as to ensure adequate open space and quality of life for its citizens.

- F. Identification of critical lands for future conservation and/or preservation including land suitable and necessary for agricultural or horticultural use; sensitive or unique environmental areas such as wetland, wildlife habitats, flood plains or natural wooded areas; historical sites, structures or areas.
- G. Acquisition of land for public use to ensure adequate recreation and open space.
- H. Realistic population projections and land use developments that do not encourage over-development of community resources.
- I. A sufficient amount of non-residential zoning to provide an adequate tax base and ample employment opportunities for citizens in the community.
- J. Design of commercial areas so they are compatible with surrounding development. The health, safety and welfare of the local citizens should be promoted through use of buffers such as berms, landscaping or green belts.
- K. Strong local conservation measures, such as ordinances, zoning restrictions and development plan review process to protect surface water quality in Oakland County. Support of such development plan review guidelines as listed in SEMCOG publication "Water Quality Guidelines for Development Plan Reviews: A handbook for Local Officials in Southeast Michigan" on page xi. Additional conservation measures should include:
 - 1. Ongoing public education of all citizens in the matter of surface water and the role of the local governments in distributing such information.
 - 2. A central information clearing house concept on the county level to clarify, define responsibilities and monitor all the agencies that deal in any aspect of surface water management in Oakland County.
- L. Planning Boards which represent a geographic and socio-economic cross-section of the community, including people with training in areas pertinent to land use and people without such training. The board should have access to adequate expertise. In a case of conflict of interest (monetary), the affected board member should disqualify him/herself from that particular issue.

ZONING STANDARDS

Adopted by: Rochester Area 1976, Oakland Area 2007

Summary:

We support a Comprehensive Master Plan for communities with a sound zoning ordinance to enforce it and administrative and enforcement procedures that are continuous and equitable.

Detail:

- I. We support a Comprehensive Master Plan that sets forth goals of the total community, including plans for growth and maintaining or improving quality of life.
 - Standard 1. Goals in planning and zoning should reflect the needs of the total community.
 - Standard 2. The division of the community into use districts should reflect the goals of the total community in planning and zoning.
 - Standard 3. Local planning should be coordinated with regional planning. Adjacent communities should be considered and consulted.
- II. We support a sound zoning ordinance that enforces the Comprehensive Master Plan as set forth in LWV standards.
 - Standard 4. The zoning ordinance, while reflecting local conditions, should be simple, complete and available.

- Standard 5. A zoning ordinance should be comprehensive.
- Standard 6. Zoning should control population density.
- Standard 7. Nonconforming uses should be controlled by:
 - a. zoning thoroughly and comprehensively to hold such uses to a minimum;
 - b. continuous, impartial and efficient enforcement to eliminate abuses and to keep problems within reasonable limits;
 - c. strict regulation of improvements and prohibition of reinstatement of such uses when they have been discontinued, abandoned, damaged or destroyed;
 - d. judicious use of the amortization principle to phase out nonconforming uses and/or buildings or a variance should be granted to continue as is;
 - e. judicious use of the condemnation power of eminent domain.
- Standard 8. Since spot and strip zoning are incompatible with good zoning, these practices should be kept to a minimum.
- Standard 9. In order to obtain adequate parking and loading facilities, the zoning ordinance should recognize the variation of requirements for each use or use district and plan them accordingly.
- Standard 10. The zoning ordinance should conform to the community's Master Plan and should be adjusted to conform with the changes in that plan.
- Standard 11. Since planning is a continuous process, a qualified professional planner should be consulted on proposed zoning changes until a community planning agency becomes financially feasible.
- Standard 12. Since zoning is a continuous process, it should be reviewed periodically and revised if necessary to meet changing conditions.
- Standard 13. Amendments to the ordinance should be compatible with the purpose and goals of the zoning ordinance.
- Standard 14. Applicants for amendments or exceptions to the zoning ordinance should be aided by instructions which are clear and decisions which are given within a reasonable length of time.
- Standard 15. Every community should have a planning commission or board, a zoning board and a zoning board of appeals which are separate from the elected governing body and representative of the total community.

III. We support administrative and enforcement procedures that are continuous and equitable in order to promote conformity to the principles of sound zoning.

- Standard 16. Rulings of the zoning board of appeals should conform to the intent of the ordinance.
- Standard 17. The zoning enforcement officer (usually the building inspector) should be qualified for the job. Also, that officer should function strictly as an administrative and not a policy making official.
- Standard 18. The following records of the administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance should be kept by all the boards in an adequate manner and for whatever length of time seems necessary and reasonable:
 - a. site layout or plot plan, drawn to scale showing:
 - 1. the location, shape, area, and dimensions of the lot;
 - 2. the location, dimensions, heights, and bulk, of the structure;
 - 3. the intended use;
 - 4. the proposed number of sleeping rooms, dwelling units, occupants, employees, customers, and other users;
 - 5. the yard, open area, and parking space dimensions;
 - 6. any other information deemed necessary by the building inspector to determine and provide for the enforcement of this ordinance.
 - b. zoning board of appeals and zoning board records should show:

1. that it considered the evidence received;
 2. the facts upon which it based its decision.
- c. certificates of occupancy.
- Standard 19. The following standards for granting variances should be observed:
- a. if in complying with the provisions of the ordinance the property owner can secure no reasonable return from or make no reasonable use of the property;
 - b. if the hardship results from the application of the ordinance to the property, (and not from some other cause);
 - c. if the hardship is suffered merely by the property directly, and not by others;
 - d. if the hardship is not the result of the owner's own actions.
- Standard 20. The Board of Appeals has no right to grant exceptions in any cases which are not specifically authorized by the terms of the ordinance.
- Standard 21. In administering and enforcing local zoning ordinances, state law and state requirements must be observed.
- Standard 22. Advertising of proposed zoning changes or exceptions should be done in such a way that the location of the property describe can be readily grasped by the reader.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Summary:

We support government agencies as responsible for solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling.

Detail:

We support:

- A. Local agency efforts to educate the public about solid waste problems.
- B. Promotion of anti-litter activities.

Note: Voluntary responsibility does not have the force of law and might be an on/off situation.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT/RIVER BASINS

Detroit Metropolitan Area ILO position
adopted by LWVOA 1n 2014

Support treatment of a river basin in its entirety. Work for adequate studies, consideration of all the needs of the river basins, coordination of actions of governmental agencies, protection of the flood plains from misuse and filling, evaluation of the need for improvements, and elimination of water pollution.

Recognizing that watershed boundaries rarely coincide with governmental boundaries, the LWVDMA believes that wastewater management, whether undertaken by one government or a combination of governments, should be planned, coordinated, and reviewed on a regional basis.

1. WASTEWATER TREATMENT

A. GOALS OF A WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. Consideration of long range social, environmental and economic costs and benefits as well as immediate effects.
2. Improve water quality.
3. Concern for Lake Erie.
4. Preservation of natural drainage systems including lakes, rivers, floodplains and wetlands.
5. Health protection and resources recovery.

B. TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS and recognizing that local conditions vary, methods of wastewater management will vary, but could include:

1. Pollution control as close to source as possible.
2. Retention/detention, screening and/or filtering of storm water runoff.
3. Separation of storm and sanitary sewers.
4. Industrial pollution control.
5. Preventive measures such as street sweeping, catch-basin cleaning.
6. Limiting the use of deicing materials, fertilizers, etc.

C. LWVDMA SUPPORTS MEASURES THAT:

1. Encourage saving and planting of vegetation.
2. Protect wetlands and flood plains.
3. Require on-site detention in areas of new development.
4. Encourages open space preservation.

D. THESE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

1. Enactment and enforcement of local ordinances and resolutions.
2. Requiring local governments to prepare an EIS when projects significantly affect water quality.
3. Participation of local governments in watershed councils.
4. Discouraging the establishment of mosquito abatement districts because of adverse effects on water quality.
5. Encouraging tax policies as an incentive to preserve drainage systems.
6. Having factual information provided to citizens so that there is an opportunity for a meaningful public input at all stages of the decision-making process.
7. Local officials should:
 - a. Take water quality into consideration when making land use decisions.
 - b. Consider the secondary consequences- economic, social and environmental when planning sewer development.

E. WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

1. The degree of water treatment should depend on local conditions, most importantly on the condition of receiving waters.
2. Secondary treatment is a minimum goal and advanced treatment should be sought.
3. Should be built with the potential for advanced treatment.
4. When siting treatment plants, the following should be considered:
 - a. The water quantity and quality of the natural river system.
 - b. The efficiency of operation.
 - c. Surface water flow in natural areas.
 - d. Cost effectiveness including transportation of sewage, ability to handle emergencies, social concerns and vulnerability to disaster.
5. Should be required to use methods to detect and treat severe types of polluted influents.
6. We favor modular construction and monitoring to prevent breakdowns of the systems and to protect receiving waters.

F. Recognizing that the treatment of water is costly, both financially and in terms of energy consumption, we favor a public education program in water conservation.

11. MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE LEAGUE GOALS IN THE ROUGE RIVER BASIN

- A. Coordinated long range planning by state, county and local authorities for the entire River Rouge Basin in both flood control and pollution abatement, with special attention to environmental factors.
- B. Establishment of a basin policy for river basin management at the state level.
- C. Legislation that will protect and encourage proper treatment of the River Rouge and its flood plain and sufficient funds and machinery to enforce such legislation.
- D. Management and development according to a basic policy and appropriate to the particular environmental needs of the River Rouge area.
- E. Machinery that provides for research of alternative flood control and pollution abatement measures and an adequate framework to analyze alternative measures and make intelligent decisions.
- F. Procedures to provide ample information and opportunity for citizen participation in planning and policy decisions which will affect the future of the River Rouge Basin area.
- G. Termination of future plans for channelization of any portion of the River Rouge Basin area because channelization:
 - 1. Causes soil erosion as a result of cutting back of river banks and accompanying removal of plant growth.
 - 2. Destroys plant and animal water life from sedimentation from soil erosion.
 - 3. Causes more flooding in adjacent river and floodplain areas due to quicker runoff.
 - 4. Induces pollution because the natural pollutant removal through plant root systems has been eliminated.
 - 5. Destroys nesting and spawning areas of aquatic and small animal life.
 - 6. Depletes ground water due to quick runoff.
 - 7. Does not in any way upgrade the water quality of the river.
 - 8. Is a very expensive process for the dubious benefits derived.

SEWAGE and DRAINAGE

Summary:

We support protection of watershed basins and flood plains.

Detail:

- A. Protection of watershed basins and flood plains by:
 - 1. Their identification to the public.
 - 2. The control of land use and zoning.
 - 3. The prohibition of construction detrimental to their maintenance.
- B. Encourage the orderly development of sewer lines based on comprehensive study. Consideration for the rights and circumstances of individual homeowners should be maintained.

NOISE POLLUTION and ABATEMENT

Summary:

We support the concept of noise as a form of pollution and the necessity of a noise abatement program.

Detail:

- A. Revision of present state and local ordinances on traffic noise to specify decibel levels.
- B. Responsibility of local government to:
 1. Adopt and enforce noise pollution ordinances written in decibel levels.
 2. Put pressure on state government to set standards on noise.
 3. Enforce the laws on all sources of noise equally including those sources owned by the municipality.
- C. Responsibility of state government to set noise levels, but not to preempt the right of local governments to set lower maximum levels.
- D. Responsibility of federal government to:
 1. Set standards of noise for manufacturers.
 2. Provide research on the various sources of noise.
 3. Provide information and assistance to cities and municipalities in setting up noise ordinances.
- E. Health education programs on the effects of noise.

****Social Policy****

EDUCATION

1978 Rochester Area position merged in 2007 with Oakland Area position

Summary:

We support an adequately and fairly financed public education system that provides each child equal access and equal opportunity to develop his/her potential as a contributing member of a democratic society.

Detail:

Educational opportunities should be provided for all children and youth. This should include continuing efforts

- to discover the needs of all students, students with special needs, and non-traditional students.
- to provide properly certified and well-prepared staff and faculty in all areas.
- to provide adequate and safe classroom facilities and school environment with appropriate class sizes for maximum learning and full day sessions.
- to provide for safe transportation when necessary.

Provisions for a quality public education school system:

- A. Children's special services such as school health program, speech correction, visiting teachers, libraries, counseling programs, art and music programs, extra-curricular school activities, and physical education.
- B. An adequate and equitable salary system to attract and keep good teachers and administrators. Professional growth classes should be required. Teacher preparation institutions should be encouraged to promote high standards for students entering the teaching profession. Teachers and staff should be encouraged to use research-supported instruction and other practices in the classroom.
- C. Advisory involvement of administration, teachers, and citizens in Board of Education policy decisions, as provided by

state law, as well as community involvement in the evaluation and recommendation process. The use of citizens' advisory groups is encouraged.

- D. Flexibility of school programs, considering available resources. Teachers and administrators, and also students, should have responsibility in initiating, planning, and assessing curriculum.
- E. "Alternative education programs" aimed at the general student population and available by choice to all.
 - 1. Allocation of planning and implementation funds for well-conceived programs for which there is a demonstrated need such as programs for at-risk students.
 - 2. Alternative programs which operate at or near the same pupil costs as other programs in the district.
 - 3. Initiation, development, and evaluation of programs by teachers, administrators, parents, students, and/or the community should be encouraged.
 - 4. Admission to alternative programs by informed parent choice with teacher and student input. At the elementary school level, the system should be tailored to preserve neighborhood schools.
 - 5. Provision of minimum transportation to make the alternative program a true choice.
 - 6. Built-in evaluation system for each alternative program which is appropriate to the objectives of the program as well as to district-wide criteria.
- F. Textbooks available to students that include contemporary issues and problems and results of recent research studies. The selection of textbooks is the responsibility of professional educators. When necessary, input should be solicited from voluntary advisory committees of citizens who have knowledge and expertise within a specialized area such as literature, science, and government.
- G. Exploration of increased use of Oakland Intermediate facilities and continued efforts of cooperation in special education programs in the interest of efficiency and economy.
- H. Cooperative efforts between individual school districts and other units of government that best serve the financial and educational needs of the community. Various methods of financing local schools should be considered such as state and federal aid and millage. The best use of public monies should be a primary consideration in such cooperative efforts. Formal liaisons between school boards and other units of government which facilitate exchange of information and promote cooperative efforts of mutual benefit should be encouraged.
- I. Solicitation of recommendations regarding local financing by the school board from the administrative staff, instructional staff, support staff, students and citizens, while recognizing that the local school board is responsible for final budget decisions. Participation may also include anyone affected by the financial decisions or anyone having pertinent expertise.
 - Basic Considerations for local school budgeting when confronted by reduction of funding:
 - 1. Continuing the existing quality of educational programs.
 - 2. Making needed improvements in the quality of academic instructional programs.
 - 3. Using para-professionals and volunteers in appropriate situations.
- J. Before and after school care for children of the school district such as Latch Key Programs.
 - 1. Providing pre-school programs for children between three and five years of age.
 - 2. The establishment of nursery care programs under the age of three. School districts have the obligation to utilize their facilities to their fullest and to make their excess space available free of charge for these additional services.
 - 3. The financial responsibility for these programs, other than the facility and utilities furnished by the school district, should rest with the parents of the children utilizing the programs. A reasonable fee should be charged. The faculty and staff of such programs should be properly accredited by the state.

- K. All available space in the school environment used as efficiently as possible for after school programs, weekend programs, and programs during the summer months.
- L. Promoting community education in the following roles: as a vehicle for citizen input, to facilitate interaction among community groups, and to coordinate services and programs of community agencies.
 - 1. Reliance on user fees, in-kind services, grants and taxes for financing community education. User fees should be the primary source of program funding, especially recreational programs. Funding is primarily a local responsibility, but it is appropriate for federal funds to support planning, such as pilot projects and professional-training program, and state funds to support local administrative costs as well as planning.
 - 2. Administration of community education under the auspices of the local school board.
 - 3. Community education should be evaluated continually in terms of need, costs, and effectiveness through a formal evaluation process by participants at all levels and the community at large.

SEX EDUCATION

LWV Rochester Area - Adopted 1988

LWV Oakland Area – Adopted through Concurrence 2003

Support the provision of sex education by the community in addition to that provided by the family through parents such as, by specially trained teachers, clinics, health care providers and religious organization.

- I. Support inclusion of the following subject areas:
 - a. Anatomy;
 - b. Knowledge of correct terminology;
 - c. Human sexuality;
 - d. Knowledge of maturation stages:
 - 1. physical;
 - 2. emotional;
 - e. Sexually transmitted diseases;
 - f. Family planning;
 - g. Problem solving and responsible decision making;
 - h. Communication skills;
 - i. Dealing with peer pressure;
 - j. Responsibility for self and others;
 - k. Adult education.
- II. Support the use of the following school and community sources:
 - a. School classrooms;
 - b. School buildings, e.g., counselor's office, bulletin boards;
 - c. Health clinic;
 - d. Religious education classes;
 - e. Doctor's office;
 - f. Educational TV programs;
 - g. Factual written material;
 - h. Public service announcements;
 - i. Public health departments.
- III. Support the use of the following methods:
 - a. Films;
 - b. Pamphlets;
 - c. Sensitively supervised role playing;
 - d. Class discussion;

- e. Appropriate timing for subject matter;
 - f. Trained professionals;
 - g. Factual written material;
 - h. Audio-visual aids.
- IV. Support the coordination of school sex education programs including:
- a. Sequential development;
 - b. Program uniformity;
 - c. Repetition;
 - d. Development appropriateness:
 - 1. psychological need;
 - 2. physical need;
 - e. Appropriate delivery system for children with special needs:
 - 1. special education students;
 - 2. students with language barriers.
- V. Support a coordination of sex education throughout the community.
- VI. Support the development and use of tools to evaluate the effectiveness of sex education provided by the community.

PARKS and RECREATION

1972 Rochester Area position updated in 1975 & 1980
merged in 2007 with Oakland Area position

Summary:

We support acquisition of park land through the coordination of local, county, state and federal funding and the provision for a comprehensive and adequate recreation program.

Detail:

- A. Acquisition of park land should:
- 1. Provide for open space and "natural" areas which preserve the ecological integrity of the community while providing needed undeveloped park areas.
 - 2. Allow full consideration of all demographic factors, funding sources, minority needs and transportation problems necessary to achieve a program which provides the most adequate level of recreation services to the community.
 - 3. Coordinate with other community groups for providing adequate and flexible facilities for community recreational programs.
- B. A comprehensive and adequate recreation program would require:
- 1. The government to provide leadership, sound financing and administration.
 - 2. The broadest possible use of community groups to provide opportunities for both sexes and all ages.
 - 3. The exploration of all means of financing (i.e. term leasing, budgeted appropriations, cooperative private agreement, direct taxation such as a dedicated millage, and nominal user fees).
 - 4. Cooperation between the public and private sectors to ensure a reasonable and adequate balance between recreation services and recreation facilities.
 - 5. The development of existing facilities to the best possible advantage and the reduction of unnecessary duplication of services.
 - 6. Increasing public awareness of available recreation opportunities.
- C. To accomplish these goals, there should be:
- 1. Establishment of a citizen's group to act as a liaison between providers and the community.

2. A professional parks and recreation plan as part of a complete municipal or area master plan with a professional director to run the department or authority.
3. A complementary plan by area school districts for community education services.
4. Development of a community recreation center.
5. Development of adequately equipped neighborhood parks.
6. Site design-planning for equipment for tots through teens.
7. Signs for park identification.
8. Adequate playground equipment.
 - a. Shelters in major parks only.
 - b. Benches in all parks.
 - c. Landscape to provide shade in play areas.
 - d. Separate tot areas in large parks by signs and/or fencing.
9. Community swimming pool desirable.

HOUSING

Summary:

We support fair and adequate housing for all.

Detail:

We support the LWV DMA (LWV Detroit Metropolitan Area) Housing position as follows:

- A. Equal rights for all regardless of race or sex.
- B. Action to provide equal access to housing.
- C. Promotion of equal housing opportunity and encouragement of stability of integrated neighborhoods in the Detroit Metropolitan Area through implementation of open occupancy laws and promotion of an adequate supply of housing for lower income families.

Note: All the categories of individuals listed in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Handicappers Act of the State of Michigan should be covered in this position.

GROUP HOUSING

Adopted by: Rochester Area 1984, Oakland Area 2007

Summary:

We support availability of group housing to meet the needs of developmentally disabled, physically handicapped and mentally ill residents.

Detail:

- I. Society has a responsibility to care for the developmentally disabled, physically handicapped, mentally ill, and combinations, via residential and rehabilitative services.
- II. Deinstitutionalization should be continued with the goal being normalization for patients in the least restrictive setting possible; and provisions for "graduating" patients to less restrictive settings, when appropriate, should be established.
- III. All public institutions should not be closed, but those remaining should be reorganized into smaller, varied sizes, designed to meet patients' needs.
- IV. The priority placed on deinstitutionalization should be adjusted to accommodate the needs of non-institutionalized persons who develop a need for a group home.
- V. Group homes should be in various settings, from rural to urban, offering access to activities as needed.
- VI. There should be a time limit set for resolving causes of conflict and for determining procedures for removing clients and/or operators of homes when problems cannot be resolved.
- VII. There should be an intermediary procedure established to hear and to resolve conflict between client-neighbor-operator before court proceedings are instituted.

- VIII. Group homes should be established at state or county sites, such as MORC (Macomb-Oakland Regional Center), for clients who have not been integrated into neighborhoods after a prescribed time.
- IX. Local governments should accept the number of group homes necessary to meet their needs. Local governments may act independently or through consortia and should have responsibility for oversight using state guidelines. The number of group homes in an area should be based on the 1500 feet distance apart test. Additional criteria may be considered as the need arises.
- X. All levels of government should participate in the selection. A site selection board should be composed of state, county, regional and local members who would establish policies, procedures and guidelines.
- XI. Guidelines should be administered at regional and local levels. Oversight should be at state and local levels.

LOW INCOME HOUSING

Adopted by: Rochester Area 1983, Oakland Area 2007

Summary:

We support availability of low income housing to meet community housing needs.

Detail:

- I. There should be low income housing programs supported, funded and administered with oversight at all levels of government to meet community housing needs.
- II. There should be local representation in the planning of projects and the selection of sites.
- III. There should be flexible standards of eligibility designed to assist all groups of persons who are unable to secure decent, safe and sanitary housing.
- IV. The government should provide incentives to promote the building of low cost housing through funding and subsidy incentives and through encouraging innovations in materials, construction and funding.
- V. The government should work toward the following goals in low income housing programs:
 - 1. to provide safe, decent, sanitary housing;
 - 2. to revitalize a community;
 - 3. to avoid development of ghettos;
 - 4. to assure availability of public facilities and services when selecting sites;
 - 5. to use funds in economically sound investments;
 - 6. to provide increased housing should be the primary goal of multi-purpose programs;
 - 7. to allow communities to set up sinking funds for future, long-term, low income housing, using multi-purpose funds such as community development block grants;
 - 8. to balance the program for assistance among rental, purchase and rehabilitation properties;

SENIOR CITIZENS

Summary:

We support adequate housing for senior citizens, which provides for their physical and social needs (under any available means of funding). We encourage the development of programs which help integrate senior citizens into the life of the community.

Detail:

We support:

- A. Institution of a search for funds (federal, state, local) to use for senior housing, both for construction of new housing and for the upgrading of existing homes.
 - 1. Use of incentives, such as tax credits, to enable senior citizens to upgrade their homes, along with the use of federal grants for repair to older homes.

B. An independent, autonomous senior citizen center. Alternatively, a senior center could be a facility under the sponsorship of a local school district or a consortium of local municipalities: it should operate independently, but be fiscally responsible to the source of funding.

1. Facilities, budgets, activities to be managed by a board of directors comprised of seniors elected by the senior citizen membership and representative(s) appointed by the major funding sponsor(s). The elected seniors should have a simple majority of the director positions.
2. Formal dues paying membership as a requirement to vote for board members. Membership should not be a requirement to receive services or participate in programs, activities, etc. The organization should be available to all seniors.
3. A stable source of funding to assure facilities and staff salaries. Preferably these funds would come from a local dedicated millage. If that is not possible, then contributions from municipalities and/or school districts (either direct or in-kind) can be utilized. Significant additional funding should come from contributions from community organizations, businesses, individuals, foundations, and grants.
Other sources of monies can be fund-raisers (raffles, dances, etc.), membership dues, and program fees.
 - a) Funding for the maintenance of the Senior Center should come from the City's general fund; alternative funding sources may be used for services such as social, health, legal, out-reach, employment and placement, all of which could be coordinated from the Center, regardless of the agency or level of government providing the service.
4. Location in one central facility owned by the seniors' organization with satellite locations as needed. The building could be shared with other groups. If ownership is not possible, senior centers could share space in community or civic centers or use vacant space in public schools. If space in public schools is used, the rent should be treated as an in-kind contribution from the school district.
5. In addition, a senior citizens activity center should have:
 - a) central location.
 - b) nearby transportation and shopping.
 - c) availability to an outdoor activity area.
 - d) adequate parking.
 - e) room for expansion.

TRANSPORTATION

Detroit Metropolitan Area ILO position
adopted by LWVOA in 2014

(As amended at the League of Women Voters Detroit Metropolitan Area 28th Annual Convention, June 23, 2001)

A. Supports a Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Transit System.

1. Includes all governmental units under a single transportation agency. Governmental units should not be able to opt out of this system.
2. Goals should be to:
 - a. Provide transportation services.
 - b. Revitalize the urban area.
 - c. Reduce air pollution.
3. Primary attention should be given to:
 - a. Increasing mobility throughout the area.
 - b. Helping the general population to get jobs.
 - c. Reducing the use of the private automobile.

B. Supports a Transportation Agency governed by an appointed board of 8 to 13 members.

1. Term of office should be 3-4 years, overlapping, part-time and with minimal salaries.
2. Board members should represent both population and governmental units.
3. Appointments should be by a combination of agencies to include SEMCOG and the Governor.
4. The Mayor of Detroit and the County Board of Commissioners could be included in the appointing combination of agencies.
5. If there is an elected board:
 - a. The election should be nonpartisan.
 - b. Public officials or employees should not be restricted from holding office, but each potential appointee should be carefully evaluated for possible conflict of interest.
6. Board members whether elected or appointed, should not be for an indefinite number of years.

C. Supports a minimum level of service provided to all.

1. This should include:
 - a. Urban and outlying areas.
 - b. The elderly.
 - c. The handicapped.
2. The greatest level of service should go to heavily populated areas. Job locations should be considered in establishing transportation routes.
3. There should be a mix of linehaul* and specialized bus service to outlying areas for those individuals, who are dependent on public transportation for mobility.
 - a. Curb-to-curb and door-to-door should be available such as paratransit** types of services.
 - b. Park-and-ride type services should be available to avoid single occupancy vehicles.
4. There should be selected fare reductions for the handicapped, elderly the young and students.

D. Supports funding for public transportation from a combination of federal, state and local taxes that supports modes of public transportation.

1. Vehicle-related taxes and taxes from other sources, such as general revenue and sales taxes should be included.
2. Extra local demand-responsible transportation should be funded mainly by the community served. A mix of other funding sources may be more appropriate for most types of special service or to meet the needs of certain populations.
3. There should be coordination among various types of special and linehaul* transportation services.

E. Supports statewide general purpose transportation fund.

1. Allocation from the fund should be determined by need.
2. State Department of Transportation should give equal attention to all modes of transportation.

4. The director of the Department should have experience in all modes of transportation.

* linehaul = bus lines of straight routes

** paratransit = new terminology defining other than 'linehaul'

LOCAL LIBRARY SERVICES

Adopted by Rochester Area 1980, Oakland Area 2007

Summary:

We support local library services in Oakland County.

Detail:

I. LIBRARY SERVICE

- a. The main purpose of a public library is the dissemination of information in a variety of formats and the provision of leisure-reading materials.:
 1. by collecting/circulating materials in formats of interest to patrons including audio, visual and electronic items.
 2. by keeping pace with new technology developments;
 3. by presenting programs and materials which will stimulate the interest of non-library users;
 4. by offering programs and services to answer the specific needs of groups such as the learning disabled, handicapped, exceptional and elderly;
 5. by working closely with school personnel to meet requests for individual assistance;
- b. The main purpose of a school library is to support the curriculum by:
 1. extending the hours of operation;
 2. increasing student's skills, from K-12, in library and information technology use and knowledge of library organization;
 3. initiating a program of class assignments as student library aides, carrying extra credit, furnishing assistance to librarians and extending the hours of operation;
 4. exploring the use of volunteer aides, i.e., P.T.O./P.T.A. members, retirees, library "booster" club members.

II. LIBRARY FINANCING

- a. The primary support for existing public libraries should come from the local level with additional support from county, state and federal levels. To assist communities to establish libraries, aid should be made available for initial investment from county, state, or federal levels.
- b. A municipality should support a public library by establishing a separate millage. This millage, whether established by charter provision or by vote of the electorate, should be no less than the amount required to qualify for state aid.
- c. When a municipality contracts for library service, its fair share of funding should be determined on the basis of population and in-kind services.

III. LIBRARY FACILITIES

In determining the need for future physical library facilities, the following criteria should be considered:

1. population and circulation;
2. availability of other resources in the area;
3. use of suitable available vacant buildings should be considered for expansion, regardless of political boundaries, i.e., empty stores, unused schools.

IV. LIBRARY ORGANIZATION

Within the statutory limitations affecting cities and townships, library boards which are solely responsible for library funds should be elected. Other library boards may be elected or appointed. The main objective should be to provide satisfactory library service to the community.

COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES

Adopted 1983 by LWV Rochester Area
and all seven other Oakland County Leagues in existence at that time.

Summary:

We support measures providing for accessibility to complete library services, to be financed on all governmental levels with an emphasis on state and county levels.

Detail:

Encourage measures for formal relationship and cooperation between libraries.

I. SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION OF SERVICES TO RESIDENTS

SUPPORT: Availability of library services to all Oakland County residents; to include direct borrowing, inter-loan, technological services, specialized services and delivery services.

SUPPORT: Provision of materials and services locally or regionally by local libraries, county facilities, cooperatives, libraries networking, or any combination which provides best service at least cost. Materials and services should be provided to all residents of Oakland County if funding is available. Otherwise, materials and services should be provided to residents who contribute to the support. Materials and services should be provided to residents of other counties through cooperatives or through other reciprocal arrangements.

II. SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION OF SERVICES TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

SUPPORT: Consultative, advisory and facilitating services provided to 1) all public libraries in Oakland County if funding is available; and 2) to public libraries in other counties through cooperatives or through other reciprocal arrangements. Otherwise such services should be provided to public libraries which contribute to the support.

III. FUNDING

SUPPORT: County and local taxes as the primary sources of funding most library services. This does not preclude state or federal sources of revenue. User fees may be charged for limited purposes. Contributions are supported and encouraged, but are not to be considered a primary source of funding.

SUPPORT: County funding should be distributed directly to local libraries, county library facilities, library programs operated by the county or to all public libraries participating in networking. County funding may be distributed to cooperatives formed under state law or to local governments with the stipulation that it be spent on library service. All funding should be adequate to provide quality library service.

Note: The scope of this study was limited to addressing provision of library materials and services at the local, county, and regional levels.

CABLE TELEVISION

Summary:

We support an interconnected, cost-effective cable television communications system throughout Oakland County.

Detail:

We support joint efforts (or consortium) cable systems because:

- A) Expertise - The consortium assists the individual units of government in gaining the needed knowledge to deal with a complicated subject, through the exchange of information and effective use of qualified personnel from the involved units of government.
- B) Efficiency - A consortium helps to avoid duplication of effort and monies to administer a franchise agreement.
- C) Cost Effective - We believe that the participating units of government receive a greater degree of services and higher quality of services by uniting in consortium.
- D) Cooperation among units of government - We believe that individual governments should be encouraged to cooperate in matters of mutual concern at all levels of government. Cable Television Franchising done in a cooperative manner serves as an example to units of government of the many benefits to be derived by cooperative efforts.

The only circumstances under which we would favor withdrawal from a joint effort would be if the consortium failed to represent the unit of government's interest. We urge a county wide inter-connect between all systems. This inter-connect should be paid for by the cable companies involved. We feel that an inter-connect expedites, in a more cost effective manner, communications throughout Oakland County, by serving governmental bodies, schools, universities and institutions; many of which serve areas crossing boundary lines. We also feel that an inter-connect system enriches the citizens of Oakland County through the benefits of the arts and education.

I. Cable System

In a community with multiple, overlapping governmental units, the citizens' needs can best be met by a cable system which provides for:

- A) Careful selection of site and facilities for cable community access services throughout the franchise area. Convenience and cost efficiency should be considerations when determining facility locations(s) of education, municipal, and public access channels.
- B) Interconnection with adjacent systems to insure complete public access programming for all residents.
- C) A fair and reasonable expansion of the system to all geographic areas of the community according to an agreed upon schedule of system development.
- D) A combination of data retrieval, access and interactive services which involves citizens in local problem-solving and strengthens their sense of community through the sharing of ideas and opinions.
- E) A sufficient number of access channels for equitable sharing of institutional and educational programming to insure that cable provides the diversity of information it promises.
- F) Integration of new technology into the system, such as cable for fast Internet access, provided the cost factors are reasonable.
- G) Wiring of public institutions.
- H) Availability of community and public access channels to all subscribers within the basic monthly rate.

II Citizen Involvement

To encourage and facilitate the fullest use of public access and community access channels, we support:

- A) Establishment of a citizens' regulatory commission, whose members are representative of each of the municipalities in the franchise area. The authority and duties of the commission enable it to:
 - 1) Formulate a nonprofit corporation to manage grant monies and other potential cable revenues.
 - 2) Act as a liaison between the franchiser and the cable company management to insure a harmonious relationship.
 - 3) Form rules to protect the privacy of subscribers.
 - 4) Seek out public input when developing policies which would affect cable users.
 - 5) Ensure technical standards have been met and established schedules maintained during construction.
 - 6) Ensure compliance with designated rules of the franchise and the FCC and suggest to local units of government methods of enforcement of types of penalties for noncompliance with these rules.

- B) Establishment of local citizens' cable advisory committee in each community of the franchise area. The composition of these committees should reflect their individual citizens-at-large as well as include members of their special interest groups; e.g. school boards, churches, libraries. Each committee should have responsibility to:
- 1) Promote the use of access time and set studio schedules.
 - 2) Publicize access programs.
 - 3) Seek out and encourage citizens to attend community workshops.
 - 4) Make recommendations on service expansion when there are indications of public interest.
 - 5) Survey the community periodically for citizen opinions and/or suggestions.
 - 6) Serve as a complaint board for public access users, subscribers and the general public with other cable-related problems.
 - 7) Act as an advocate of subscriber interests with regard to policy, rates, regulations, programming and services offered.

III Access and Controls

Community and public access offer individuals and organizations within the community access to the facilities of the cable system and by way of the system, access to the community itself. Therefore, use of access channels should be encouraged and facilitated.

We support:

- A) Provisions to ensure availability to citizens of public access cable services in a public location at no charge or for a minimal fee.
- B) Sufficient staff, equipment, and facilities within each community of the consortium to insure equal opportunity for public use of access time.
- C) Independent control of programming and scheduling for each community of the consortium.
- D) Program scheduling to promote equal use of time on public access channels by all segments of the community.
- E) Discreet program scheduling to maintain the community's desired standards. Censorship is not an effective means of control; subscribers should be allowed the right to determine their own viewing choices.
- F) Availability of "locking" devices from the cable company to enable subscriber control.

IV. Ordinance/Franchise Safeguards

We support:

- A) Protection of the financial and other interests of the franchiser in the event of merger, acquisition, bankruptcy or dissolution of the franchise holding company.
- B) Incorporation of safeguards in the franchise agreement such as a performance bond of sufficient amount, evidence of satisfactory insurance coverage, franchise language which complies with local ordinances.
- C) Municipal ordinances which include the right to approve a franchise sale, allow for a periodic franchise review throughout the life of the contract, assure immediate repair of the system when necessary, and include wording of the current FCC regulations.
- D) Provisions for financial penalties in event of the cable company's failure to maintain agreed upon rates, level of services, or schedule on construction.
- E) Provisions for standards of construction and operation in all phases of system installation, modification and use.