



City of Grand Forks
Staff Report
Committee of the Whole – October 24, 2022
City Council – November 7, 2022

APPROVED & ACCEPTED
by City Council
11/07/2022
Maureen Storstad
Maureen Storstad
City Auditor

Agenda Item: City of Grand Forks State Legislative Priorities

Submitted by: Todd Feland, City Administrator

Staff Recommended Action: Review and Approve the Attached City of Grand Forks State Legislative Priorities – Draft - Dated October 2022.

Committee Recommended Action: Motion by Weigel , second by Osowski Motion to Amend by Vein, Second by Lunski. 3-3 vote. Motion Failed. Motion carried to further discuss next City Council meeting, November 7th.

Council Action:

Motion by Sande, second by Weigel to approve with the addition of the Childrens Museum as a Quality of Life item. Motion carried unanimously.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council approves the City of Grand Forks (City) State Legislative Priorities in advance of the of the North Dakota Legislative Session as the City administration advocates on behalf of the noted policy priorities throughout the upcoming 2023 North Dakota Legislative Session. The City Legislative Committee is chaired by City Council Vice President Weber and committee membership includes City Department Heads. City Public Information Officer John Bernstrom provides administrative staff support and coordination.

Throughout the North Dakota Legislative Session, the City collaborates more broadly with the Team Grand Forks Legislative Committee, which includes the following stakeholders: City, The Chamber, Grand Forks County, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks Region EDC, and Grand Forks Airport Authority. The City throughout the North Dakota Legislative Session collaborates with the North Dakota League of Cities in advocating for common and mutually beneficial policy priorities of cities through ongoing meetings and collaborations.

After the General Election on November 8, 2022, the Legislative Committee is planning to set up a Joint City Council meeting with the Grand Forks area legislative delegation. Prior to the North Dakota Legislative Session starting in early January 2023, there will additional meetings finalizing the Team Grand Forks Legislative Committee priorities, joint meetings with the Grand Forks local governments and the Grand Forks area legislative delegation, and State of North Dakota meetings in Bismarck to include Governor Burgum’s Budget Address and North Dakota Legislative organizational meetings.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF FACT:

- The City Legislative Committee met on Monday, October 17, 2022 to review the attached

City of Grand Forks State Legislative Priorities (Dated October 2022) and through consensus agreed to move the priorities forward to the City Council for further review, consideration, and final approval.

SUPPORT MATERIALS:

- City of Grand Forks State Legislative Priorities – Draft – October 2022.

CITY OF GRAND FORKS

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Draft - October 2022

A. Infrastructure & Transportation Funding

- “Prairie Dog” Infrastructure Funding
- ND Infrastructure Revolving Loan Funding
- Ongoing transportation funding to include regional projects such as:
 - a) Demers Avenue/42nd Street Grade Separation
 - b) 47th Avenue Interchange

B. Water Projects Support

- Red River Valley Water Supply Project
- ND Municipal Water Supply Grant and Infrastructure Revolving Loan Funding

C. Public Safety

- Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN)
- Public Health Programming and Funding Initiatives
- Insurance Premium Tax

D. NDPERS/Benefits/Fiscal Solubility

- ND Public Employee Retirement System (NDPERS)
- PSAP Employees included as first responders

E. Community/Economic Development

- Tax Incentive Programs
- Career Impact Academy Capital and Operations Funding for Grand Forks and State of ND
- Highly Skilled Workforce
- Child Care Program Incentives

F. Municipal Government Matters

- The City of Grand Forks opposes any legislation that would infringement on our Home Rule Authority
- Open Records Laws

G. Team Grand Forks Priorities (Chamber-Led Group)

- To be determined

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - POSITION STATEMENTS

A. Infrastructure & Transportation Funding

- Grand Forks supports legislation for the continuation of “Prairie Dog” infrastructure funding as it serves as a critical and flexible funding mechanism for municipalities throughout the state. The Grand Forks is asking that the “City” bucket get moved back to before the Strategic Infrastructure Fund bucket as was originally prioritized.
- Grand Forks supports continued funding for the Bank of ND Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund and amendments in the program’s policy to increase the impact and effectiveness.
- Grand Forks supports funding for a grade separation at the intersection of Demers Avenue and 42nd Street. This project is the most shovel ready and Grand Forks is working in partnership with the NDDOT, BNSF, and UND to finalize the environmental review, final design concept, and funding strategy. This project is a number one infrastructure priority for BNSF in the State of North Dakota.
- Grand Forks supports the 47th Avenue South Interchange as the best alternative to relieving the current and future traffic congestion on the 32nd Avenue South transportation corridor and provides needed and additional transportation corridor for the growing southwest area of Grand Forks. The NDDOT and Grand Forks are partnering on completing environmental document in 2023 and to move forward with the final design concept and funding strategy.

B. Water Projects Support

- Grand Forks supports the needed multi-year State of North Dakota funding strategy partnership to move forward with the estimated \$1 billion plus Red River Valley Water Supply Project.
- Grand Forks supports the continued State of North Dakota funding commitment to the ND State Water Commission Municipal Water Supply Grant Program and the Water Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund.

C. Public Safety

- Grand Forks supports a sustainable long term funding strategy for the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN). As one of the first adopters of SIRN, Grand Forks officials would be open to providing testimony in support of the continued expansion of the SIRN system.

- Grand Forks supports funding and support for a variety of Public Health related priorities including funding for a school nurse program and legislative support for expansion of the City's inpatient behavioral health capacity, implementation of the Section 1115 IMB Waiver, and expansion of non-profit outpatient behavioral services through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center model.
- Grand Forks supports the continued allocation of all Insurance Premium Tax funding that is collected and intended to support fire departments and the communities they serve within the state.

D. NDPERS/Benefits/Fiscal Solubility

- Grand Forks has supported and continues to support the NDPERS Retirement and Benefit Plan as a strategic workforce attraction and retention tool and its long-term funding solubility with managed cost impacts to employers and employees. If the state decides to end the plan, the city will support a retirement plan that meets or exceeds our current benefits to ensure workforce attraction and retention competitiveness.
- Grand Forks also supports legislation that would incorporate PSAP dispatchers into the NDPERS Public Safety Plan.

E. Economic Development

- Grand Forks supports continuing to allow local subdivisions to use proven economic development tools such as the Renaissance Program and Tax Increment Financing to attract, leverage, and maximize the benefit of private sector investments in North Dakota communities.
- Grand Forks supports the allocation of funds for capital and operations of the Career Impact Academy both here in Grand Forks and other communities in the State of North Dakota. Grand Forks will support partners to include the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation, Grand Forks School District, and private industry who will be leading this request.
- Grand Forks supports efforts to help retain and attract a highly skilled workforce including ongoing internships, innovation and entrepreneurship with programs and policies that leverage federal/state/local public resources, including both the Bank of North Dakota and the ND Department of Commerce.
- Grand Forks supports legislation that will result in the increased access and affordability of childcare in Grand Forks and the State of North Dakota.

F. Municipal Government Matters

- Grand Forks does not support any legislative action to undermine home rule and thereby undermining the local response to issues such as local budgeting.
- Open Records Laws

G. Grand Forks Regional Priorities (TBD)