



STAFF REPORT

CITY OF SOLANA BEACH

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
FROM: Alyssa Muto, City Manager
MEETING DATE: March 26, 2025
ORIGINATING DEPT: City Manager's Office
SUBJECT: **Council Consideration of Approving a Legislative Policy for 2025-2026**

BACKGROUND:

The primary objective of a Legislative Policy is for the City Council to establish and formalize the City's legislative priorities and focus areas for the City Council at the beginning of each legislative session. A focused legislative platform allows for responsive and direct action by the City Manager to address critical issues on behalf of the City. During any given legislative period, bills with potentially significant impacts on the City are introduced and oftentimes revised many times that require close monitoring for timely reporting to the City Council.

The FY 2024/25 Council Work Plan includes a Legislative Platform and Lobbying Priority Item with a goal to, among other things, "Develop policy on priority topic areas to support/advocate". The proposed Legislative Policy does just that, while identifying roles and responsibilities of Council and Staff, setting the authorization process, and establishing the legislative platform.

This item is before City Council to consider adopting Resolution 2025-026 (Attachment 1) approving a Legislative Policy for 2025-2026 (Attachment 2) that would authorize the City Manager to prepare letters that address the City's concerns on specified topics for signature by the Mayor on behalf of the City and the City Council.

DISCUSSION:

The Legislative Policy conveys to legislators, policymakers, and the public the Council priorities for policy, projects, and budget for the next year. The proposed Legislative Policy would provide Council direction on potential legislation, thereby allowing the City Manager and Staff to quickly respond to issues that could directly impact the City. The Legislative Policy will also be used to inform both the proposed Work Plan and the proposed budget brought forward annually to the City Council for review, amendment and approval.

The proposed Legislative Policy focuses on these five recommended areas legislative policy.

- Affordable Housing and Livable Communities
- Transportation and Mobility

CITY COUNCIL ACTION: _____ _____

- Environmental Sustainability and Energy
- Youth, Senior and Community Well-Being
- General Governance and Fiscal Responsibility

These areas are overarching to cover a number of sub-topical priorities that align with the City's values and long-term goals. By establishing these key areas of focus, the City seeks to enhance public safety, promote sustainable community growth, support the well-being of residents and ensure efficient, accountable governance.

Staff recommends that the proposed Legislative Policy be established so that Staff will be authorized to prepare position letters for the Mayor's signature. If it is unclear whether a piece of legislation aligns with the Legislative Priorities, the City Manager will work with the Mayor and City Attorney, to determine applicability and/or consistency prior to issuing any letter of support or opposition. Issues not clearly aligned with any item on the City's Legislative Priorities List may be brought to the full City Council for direction.

Any letters generated under these procedures will be distributed to the entire Council at the same time they are sent on behalf of the City and will be reported out at the next Council meeting by the City Manager and included as an attachment to the agenda. At the end of each legislative session, Staff will provide a report to the Council summarizing the City's legislative activities.

CEQA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:

Not a project under CEQA

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the Legislative Policy. The City currently has contracts in place with two lobbying firms, Emanuels Jones and Associates (EJA) for state legislation, and Warwick Group Consultants for federal legislation and funding assistance.

WORK PLAN:


The development of a policy on priority topic areas to support/advocate is listed under the FY 2024/25 Actions of the Legislative Platform and Lobbying Priority Item in the "Community Character" (Land Use & Planning) section in the FY 2024/25 Work Plan.

OPTIONS:

- Approve Staff recommendation
- Deny Staff recommendation
- Provide alternative direction to Staff

CITY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution 2025-026 approving the Legislative Policy.


Alyssa Muto, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2025-026
2. Legislative Policy

RESOLUTION 2025-026

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLANA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A LEGISLATIVE POLICY FOR 2025-2026

WHEREAS, the primary purpose of a Legislative Policy is to establish and formalize the City's legislative priorities and focus areas for the City Council at the beginning of each legislative session; and

WHEREAS, a focused legislative platform allows for responsive and direct action by the City Manager to address critical issues on behalf of the City; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2024/25 Council Work Plan includes a Legislative Platform and Lobbying Priority Item with a goal to, among other things, "Develop policy on priority topic areas to support/advocate"; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Policy conveys to legislators, policymakers, and the public, the City Council priorities for policy, projects, and budget for the next year; and

WHEREAS, the City will actively pursue legislation and funding opportunities that advance local priorities such as affordable housing and livable communities, transportation solutions, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of youth, seniors, and the broader community.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Solana Beach, California, does resolve as follows:

1. That the foregoing recitations are true and correct.
2. That the City Council approves the Legislative Policy for 2025-2026.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 26th day of March 2025, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council of the City of Solana Beach, California by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers –
NOES: Councilmembers –
ABSENT: Councilmembers –
ABSTAIN: Councilmembers –

LESA HEEBNER, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ATTEST:

JOHANNA N. CANLAS, City Attorney

ANGELA IVEY, City Clerk

City of Solana Beach



Legislative Policy

2025-2026

City of Solana Beach Legislative Policy

Introduction: The City of Solana Beach is a vibrant coastal community committed to preserving its unique character while addressing the evolving needs of its residents. This Legislative Policy serves as a guiding framework for the City Council's advocacy efforts on key priorities that enhance the quality of life for all residents. Through this policy, the City will actively pursue legislation and funding opportunities that advance local priorities such as affordable housing and livable communities, transportation solutions, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of youth, seniors, and the broader community. By taking thoughtful and strategic legislative action, we will ensure that Solana Beach continues to be a great place to live—a community that is safe, welcoming, and full of opportunity for all its residents.

City Manager and Staff Roles

The City Manager and City staff will play an integral role in the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of this Legislative Policy. Their responsibilities will ensure that the policy is reflective of current community priorities as directed by the Council, aligned with the City's Work Plan and budget, and updated as needed. The City Manager, working closely with staff, will be the key liaison between the City Council and the City's state and federal lobbyists, advocating for the City's interests and ensuring that resources and opportunities are being considered and pursued for the City of Solana Beach. By tracking legislative developments, advocating for the City's interests, identifying funding opportunities, and maintaining communication with the City Council, Solana Beach's legislative priorities can be advanced, and the City's goals are effectively realized at the state and federal levels.

Role and Responsibilities:

- The City Manager will oversee the execution of the City's legislative agenda, ensuring that key priorities are addressed in an effective and timely manner.
- The City Manager and staff will review and track legislation based on emerging local, state, and federal issues, and their alignment with the City's strategic goals.
- City staff, with assistance from the City's contracted State and Federal lobbyists, and organizations with whom the City has membership, will maintain an ongoing review of proposed legislation, providing updates to the City Council on key developments that may impact Solana Beach's goals in areas such as housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, community well-being, and general municipal governance and budgeting.

- The City Manager will coordinate and lead efforts to advocate for the City's legislative interests, including coordinating with other local governments, participating in regional and state advocacy groups, drafting letters to legislators, and engaging City lobbyists on relevant bills or policies when necessary.
- Staff will assist in drafting letters, resolutions, or reports that convey the City's stance on specific legislative issues and will facilitate any necessary coordination with other local governments or stakeholders.
- The City Manager and staff will ensure that City departments are aligned with the legislative policy, integrating relevant priorities into their departmental planning, budgeting and operations.
- The City Manager will direct staff to actively seek out and apply for available state and federal grants or funding opportunities that align with the City's legislative policy and Work Plan.
- The City Manager will work with the City lobbyists to provide regular reports to the City Council regarding the status of key legislative issues, policy changes, and any updates related to the City's legislative agenda.

Letters of Support or Opposition

To enable timely and effective advocacy on proposed legislation, the City Council authorizes the City Manager, or a designated staff member, to work directly with the Mayor for signature and submittal of letters of support or opposition on behalf of the City for legislation that directly impacts the City's legislative priorities. This process ensures that the City's positions are communicated promptly and consistently while adhering to the City Council's approved legislative policy.

Implementation of the Authorization Process:

- Letters of support or opposition may be issued for state or federal legislation that:
 - Directly impacts the City's legislative priorities, including but not limited to housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, public safety, and community well-being.
 - Aligns with the City's adopted positions or policies, including those related to economic development, public safety, public health, and fiscal responsibility.
 - Conflicts with or negatively affect the City's interests or values, such as laws that impose unfunded mandates or undermine local control.

- The City Manager, or a designated staff member, will have the authority to review proposed state or federal legislation and determine whether a letter of support or opposition should be signed by the Mayor on behalf of the City. This determination will be based on whether the proposed legislation aligns with the City Council's legislative priorities.
- If it is unclear whether a piece of legislation aligns with this Legislative Policy, the City Manager will work with the Mayor and City Attorney, to determine applicability and/or consistency prior to issuing any letter of support or opposition. Items not addressed in the City's Legislative Platform may be brought to the City Council for direction.
- Departments may not take positions on proposed legislation or policies without the City Manager's review and approval consistent with the adopted Legislative Policy.
- The City Manager will ensure that letters are professionally written, concise, and reflect the City's official stance on the legislation.
- Upon submitting any letter of support or opposition, the City Manager will provide, via email, a signed copy to the City Council with a summary of the proposed legislation.
- As part of the City Council meeting, the City Manager will report out on any letters submitted, including the position taken and the outcome of the legislation when appropriate. A copy of the letter(s) submitted will be included as part of the agenda.

Legislative Platform Overview:

Following review of all submitted legislation for the 2024-2025 California Legislative Session, and with consideration of the City of Solana Beach 2025 Work Plan, there are five recommended areas for legislative policy. These areas are overarching to cover a number of sub-topical priorities that align with the City's values and long-term goals. By establishing these key areas of focus, the City of Solana Beach seeks to enhance public safety, promote sustainable community growth, support the well-being of residents, and ensure efficient, accountable governance.

The six policy areas outlined in this platform reflect Solana Beach's commitment to being proactive in its legislative advocacy, addressing immediate concerns, and planning for the future. The City will continue to advocate for legislation that strengthens local governance, secures resources for essential services, and fosters collaborative solutions with regional and state partners. Additionally, the City remains dedicated to advancing policies that protect the health, safety, and quality of life of its residents, while promoting a fiscally responsible and effective municipal operation.

The following areas represent the core focus of Solana Beach's legislative priorities for the upcoming session:

1. Affordable Housing and Livable Communities

The City of Solana Beach is committed to addressing the critical need for affordable housing while maintaining its character as a coastal, residential community. The City will advocate for policies and funding that support affordable housing development, access to housing opportunities, and housing for vulnerable populations, such as seniors and low-income families.

Overall Goal:

Support housing that is consistent with City regulations, and inclusive of affordable housing for families and workforce, maintenance of naturally occurring affordable options, and for senior independent and assisted living options.

Policy Actions:

- Work with regional stakeholders to ensure the City's housing needs are met in a way that reflects its coastal and residential character.
- Support the preservation and rehabilitation of existing affordable housing to ensure long-term affordability and prevent displacement.

- Advocate for policies that encourage the development of mixed-income housing and affordable housing units, particularly for seniors, workforce housing, and individuals with special needs.
 - Pursue local, state and federal funding for City-initiated affordable housing projects that align with the City’s vision of sustainable, low-impact development.
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2. Transportation and Mobility

The City of Solana Beach is committed to creating a comprehensive transportation network that supports safe, efficient, and sustainable mobility options. This includes reducing congestion, promoting alternative transportation, and ensuring access for all residents to community resources.

Overall Goal:

Support mobility options that expand access to schools, office and commercial areas, parks and beaches, and to existing transit, that balances the use of the public right-of-way for all users.

Policy Actions:

- Promote safe and equitable transportation for youth, individuals with disabilities, and seniors to ensure mobility access for all.
 - Support policies that promote the use of public transit services, such as rail and bus connections to regional jobs and events, to promote sustainability and reduce traffic congestion.
 - Pursue funding for the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and encourage the adoption of clean energy vehicles.
 - Collaborate with partners and North County Transit District to improve neighborhood mobility options for trips within the City of Solana Beach.
 - Advocate for local, state and federal funding for transportation infrastructure improvements, including road maintenance, public transit, and multimodal options such as citywide circulators, biking and walking paths.
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3. Environmental Sustainability and Energy

Solana Beach prioritizes the preservation and enhancement of its natural areas, including its beaches, adjacent lagoons, bluffs and hillsides. In 2024, the City updated its Climate Action Plan, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability by aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and identifying resiliency methods to mitigate the effects of climate change on our neighborhoods, coastal areas, and the broader region. Collaborating with regional boards and local stakeholder groups, the City has advanced efforts to provide more transparency and options for resilient energy and utility solutions, benefiting both residents and businesses within the City.

Overall Goal:

Support sustainable and resiliency solutions to further the City's Climate Action Plan and prioritize public transparency and accessibility of information related to energy and utility costs, trends and alternatives.

Policy Actions:

- Continue the implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan, advocating for policies and programs that help meet the City's long-term environmental goals.
 - Support policies that promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, water conservation, and waste reduction.
 - Support policies that incentivize the adoption of sustainable practices in both public and private sectors, including incentives for solar energy installations and green building certifications.
 - Promote increased public transparency and participation in issues related to energy and utility operations, including independently owned energy utilities, water resources, and wastewater operations, rates, and program advancements.
 - Pursue grants and resources to enhance coastal protection, including flood resilience measures, sea-level rise mitigation, and shoreline preservation.
 - Advocate for state and federal funding for climate action projects, including renewable energy development, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and the transition to a green economy.
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4. Youth, Senior, and Community Well-being

The City of Solana Beach is committed to fostering a community that supports the health and well-being of all residents. This includes providing services and opportunities for youth, seniors, and all members of the community to engage, thrive, and contribute to the social fabric of the City. By supporting legislation that limits youth access to new and harmful drugs, the City aims to reduce substance abuse, promote public health, and protect future generations. In addition, the City is committed to enacting policies and implementing programs that will help seniors “age in place”, knowing that most desire to stay in the community as they age. The City is also committed to continuing implementing programs and policies to further our “Welcoming Community” status that emphasizes kindness, inclusion and community engagement. The City will continue to advocate for policies that prioritize prevention, education, and collaboration with community stakeholders, recognizing that a strong, unified approach is key to combating this growing issue.

Overall Goal:

Support policies that prioritize healthy communities and protect youth and senior residents through programs, resources, and safe business practices.

Policy Actions:

- Promote the development of community spaces that encourage social engagement, recreation, and cultural activities for all ages.
- Advocate for the protection of vulnerable populations, including seniors, through programs aimed at preventing isolation and ensuring access to care and support services.
- Partner with the Solana Beach and San Dieguito school districts to support legislation that responds to the emergence of dangerous new drugs that threaten the safety of youth, including synthetic drugs, e-cigarettes, vaping products; education programs; and enforcement measures to prevent youth access to controlled substances.
- Support initiatives that address homelessness prevention, including regional programs for transitional housing programs and supportive services for those in need.
- Advocate for local, state and federal funding for youth programs, senior services, and mental health resources that promote social connection, physical activity, multi-generational programming and community resilience.

5. General Governance and Fiscal Responsibility

The City of Solana Beach strives for effective governance that encourages the community's long-term sustainability and growth, while being fiscally responsible and transparent. The City emphasizes the prudent management of public funds, the welfare of its staff, and the efficiency, adaptability, and responsiveness of its city operations to meet residents' needs. The City recognizes that a well-supported, motivated, and skilled workforce is critical to delivering high-quality public services and achieving the City's goals.

Overall Goal:

Promote a policy framework that ensures the City of Solana Beach upholds responsible governance, fosters a well-supported and skilled workforce, and prioritizes fiscal sustainability through transparent budgeting, effective resource allocation, and strategic staff development initiatives.

Policy Actions:

- Maintain a balanced approach to budgeting that prioritizes the City's legislative goals while responsibly managing taxpayer funds.
 - Promote policies that strengthen local governance and encourage regional collaboration on key issues such as public safety, economic development, and environmental protection.
 - Support policies that focus on transparency, accountability, and efficiency in delivering all services.
 - Promote policies that embrace technology and innovative solutions to improve employee performance, public engagement, and streamline internal communication.
 - Support legislation that prioritizes workforce stability, mental health and wellness programs, and succession planning to ensure a resilient and effective workforce to retain institutional knowledge while adapting to changing community needs.
 - Pursue alternative funding opportunities, including grants, to support infrastructure improvement projects, public safety programs, and community development initiatives.
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Conclusion:

The City of Solana Beach remains committed to shaping a vibrant, sustainable, and thriving community by advocating for policies that align with our core values and address the needs of our residents and businesses. Through this legislative policy framework, we have outlined clear priorities that focus on strengthening public safety, planning for housing and community development, supporting environmental solutions, and fostering a responsible and transparent local government. As we move forward into the 2025-2026 California Legislative Session, the City will continue to work collaboratively with state and federal legislators, as well as regional partners, to ensure that Solana Beach's needs are represented and that resources are directed toward initiatives that benefit our community. Recognizing the critical importance of funding to achieve these objectives, the City of Solana Beach will actively pursue local, state and federal grants, alternative funding sources, and partnerships to support key infrastructure projects, youth and senior programs, and community development initiatives. By securing additional resources, we will ensure that the City's legislative priorities are not only realized but also sustainable in the long term.

In tandem with these efforts, the City will bring forward a 2025 Work Plan and the upcoming two-year budget for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 to provide a clear framework for prioritizing resources, aligning policy objectives with available funding, and ensuring that our goals are effectively met. The work plan will reflect the priorities outlined in this legislative policy, with a focus on actionable projects and programs. The two-year budget will guide the City in maintaining fiscal responsibility, while also supporting the implementation of key initiatives to strengthen the community and enhance public services as outlined in an annual work plan.

Through a combination of proactive legislative efforts, thoughtful resource allocation, and the unwavering dedication of City staff, Solana Beach will continue to thrive as a safe, distinctive, and well-governed city. This legislative policy serves as a guiding framework for the City's continued success and growth, ensuring a prosperous and secure future for all who call Solana Beach home.