

**League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson
Position on Affordable Housing and Transportation**

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 2013, and updated in 2014.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson will promote policies and actions by public and private sectors which will ensure a mix of affordable and energy-efficient housing options. Such housing needs to be close to an interconnected, multi-modal regional transportation system providing access to basic goods, services, and employment. Both housing locations and transportation systems should be designed to reduce the true costs associated with housing (mortgage/rent + transportation), reduce dependence on cars, and create opportunities to use energy- and time-efficient alternative forms of transportation.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Air Quality

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1990.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson will promote mandatory inclusion of air quality considerations in the formation and implementation of government policies and plans in any affected areas — including but not limited to — health, land use and transportation. The League will promote improved air quality through coordinated, accountable and responsive government action.

The League supports:

Government policies such as:

- Coordination and cooperation among jurisdictional areas.
- Coordination between government and private industry.
- Enforcement of regulations in regard to pollution.
- Encouragement of economic development that does not add to air pollution.
- Vigorous monitoring of air quality and dissemination of the results of monitoring.

Educational policies such as:

- Providing facts about air quality.
- Informing the public about action being taken by government.
- Informing the public about steps they can take to improve air quality.

Land use policies such as:

- Incentives for locating in developed areas (infill) and disincentives for outlying development.
- Dust control, non-native plant restrictions, and promotion/use of desert-appropriate vegetation and trees.

Transportation policies such as:

- Encouragement of alternative modes of transportation.
- Discouragement of automobile use through fees, taxes and education.
- Research of methods to improve efficiency of automobile engines.

Appropriate funding for all of the above.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Charter Schools

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 2011.

Charter schools are public schools that are privately operated.

Charter schools should be held to the same high standards as all Arizona public schools.

All public schools should be permitted and encouraged to innovate. They must be allowed flexibility on class size, length of school day, teaching techniques, and special subject focus (such as science, the arts, technology).

Charter schools need more initial direction as they are started and organized to comply with legal requirements.

All public school teachers must be well qualified.

The curriculum must comply with the Arizona State Standards. Test score results and school ranking must be easily available to the public.

Academic evaluation of charter and traditional public schools needs to be equitable. However, there is still insufficient oversight of charter schools. The state staff should be adequate to monitor student achievement.

Schools that close must arrange for an orderly transfer of students and return to the State available money and property that has been given to them from the State's General Fund.

The Arizona Constitution states that all public schools must be funded for proper maintenance, improvement, and development. It is imperative that sufficient funding be provided to assure steady progress in teaching and learning. This would better prepare students with the tools to thrive in a competitive and changing world.

Open enrollment has given parents and students more options for school choice. However, the availability of public information must be more accessible to all.

A better tracking system of students is even more important due to school choice or open enrollment.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Community Planning - Affordable Housing

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1974, and updated in 2007.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports policies and actions by local and state governments which will ensure, through planning, an adequate supply of affordable housing and an equality of opportunity for access to housing designed to meet human needs.

Amplifications:

Local government should establish effective ways to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement public or private housing programs and housing-related agencies for low and moderate income persons.

The LWVGT supports planning for affordable housing as a part of the total community through the following:

- Flexible zoning, such as cluster and planned unit development ordinances, that encourages the efficient use of land and an economic mix of housing.
- Incentives to builders and developers to facilitate provision of an adequate supply of affordable housing.
- A central housing agency for people who cannot afford market rate housing and community groups to provide:
 - Information concerning existing housing such as availability, location, price, conditions, etc.
 - A referral service to agencies providing housing-related counseling, technical assistance in maintaining and rehabilitating existing housing, and technical assistance in constructing new housing.
- Exploration of methods of land banking to provide for low and moderate income housing.
- Creation of housing solutions that are sustainable; i.e., affordable to maintain over time with energy efficient materials and systems.

The LWVGT recommends development of policies at the local level to reduce the cost of housing for people who cannot afford market rate housing.

- Explore innovation in building materials, methods and design to create environmentally sustainable homes.
- Initiate review of local building code requirements and FHA amenity standards and recommend change.
- Encourage participation of and cooperation by private and public sectors of the community.

The LWVGT recognizes the need to reduce the financial burden for lower income individuals in obtaining housing and urges the local governments to:

- Seek the cooperation of private financial institutions in finding solutions to this problem.
- Coordinate with the Arizona Department of Housing and the Arizona Housing Finance Authority.

The LWVGT believes that it is the responsibility of local governments to monitor existing public housing programs where federal funds are not adequate with an emphasis on:

- Leased and scattered site housing.
- Adequate counseling and maintenance.
- Supplementing with local funds the federally funded leased housing programs where rent ceilings are unrealistic.

As the housing code is enforced, provision should be made for:

- Emergency housing tied directly to housing code enforcement activity.
- Exploring incentives and methods of assistance for landlords and homeowners who cannot comply with housing code standards because of hardship or lack of funds, by means of:
 - Low interest loans or grants.
 - Self-help and resident participation programs.
 - Rehabilitation and neighborhood improvement programs.
- An adequate supply of low cost housing throughout the community for renters and homeowners who are priced out of their home because of code enforcement improvements.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Comprehensive Planning and Zoning

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1972, and updated in 1986.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports comprehensive planning and zoning to meet the social, environmental, physical and economic needs of the people of Tucson and Pima County.

Amplification:

The LWV supports procedures and policies that implement our concern for:

Land use priorities that preserve the quality of the environment, while meeting human needs.

Preservation of diverse community heritage and distinctive southwestern characteristics.

Orderly long range population growth and distribution policies to ensure development of coordinated cost effective infrastructure with standards to protect the natural environment and resources.

Citizen participation in all phases of planning by:

Disseminating information to encourage informed public discussions of issues and alternate plans.

Improving communication between public and private sectors of the community.

Providing established mechanisms for periodic citizen and government review of plans and policies.

The LWV urges:

The adoption of a comprehensive plan that considers population growth and distribution in the Tucson metropolitan area in terms of natural resources and carrying capacity.

Adoption of policies that make rezoning dependent on availability of basic services, as well as on conformity to land use planning inclusive of environmental, sociological and geological impacts.

Intensified and directed development of the existing urban area through:

The establishment of incentives to encourage utilization of vacant land.

Housing policies that encourage economic and social integrations.

Provision for cluster housing.

Intensive zoning limited to well defined activity centers with restriction of high rise development primarily to the central business district in order to avoid high rise strip development.

Preservation of Open Space and Green Belt areas to direct and control growth, to avoid geological hazards, to protect mountains from development, to maintain desert life and vegetation, to enhance aesthetic and social values, to safeguard historic sites, to provide park and recreational areas and to control pollution.

Preservation of flood plain areas as open space through public acquisition, restrictive zoning or other measures to:

Protect health, safety and welfare of residents.

Limit flood damage.

Provide for water recharge.

Ensure provision of park and recreational areas.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Consolidated Government

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1977, and updated in 2005 and 2008.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports consolidation of city, county and town governments within Pima County into a single government for efficient and economical delivery of services.

Amplification:

1. The LWV supports a consolidated government that would:
 - a. Enhance governmental ability to address countywide or regional problems in a unified fashion.
 - b. Provide clear assignment of responsibility in order to achieve more accountability in government.
 - c. Permit variety of service delivery levels to reflect the needs of diverse areas in the county.
 - d. Better coordinate governmental activities and, thus, increase the prospects for responsive administration.
 - e. Reduce the duplication of key services such as police protection, sewage, water and health services.
 - f. Have a broad-based approach for environmental concerns such as control of air and water pollution and land use policy.
 - g. Reduce the time-lag in meeting needs, since current status necessitates legislative permission before a county can take action.

2. As an interim measure, the League supports further functional consolidation through the use of intergovernmental agreements and statutory change to promote greater governmental cooperation in the management and delivery of services.

Due to the lack of probability of a single government being accomplished, the LWVGT supports further functional consolidation as stated in the 2005 position. (2008)

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Education Finance

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1994 and 1995.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports the following four aspects of funding for public schools:

- A. More sources of funding. All state taxpayers should be responsible for financial support of public schools. There should be less reliance on the residential property tax, but increased use of the income tax, sales tax and lottery money. There should be continued use of land trust monies and increased use of private funds, impact fees on development, and local education taxes. There should be more money spent to educate students for an active working life so there would be less need for money spent on prisons. The new monies should be additional funds, not substituted from present state education funding.
- B. Continued centralized collection and distribution of funding. There should be continued centralized collection of monies for school funding and distribution of those monies to local school districts that should give the funds to local site-based managed schools. This would provide:
 - a certain basic amount of money for each student;
 - financing over and above the basic amount to ensure equal opportunity for each student;
 - equal maintenance of buildings and supplies; and
 - strong leadership and quality teaching.
- C. Basic funding for the classroom. Populations at school sites differ widely; however, basic educational needs are the same and must be met. Mandated programs should be funded by the level of government mandating the programs for the duration of the program. Money, such as that for transportation, social services and special education needs should continue to be figured apart from the base amount. Formulas and budget forms should be the same among districts and schools and should be clarified so that interested citizens, with study, can understand the formulas and forms and be able to comment on them.
- D. No public monies for private schools. Public funds should be used only for public schools and not for vouchers to private schools.

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Water Resources

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 1975, and revised in 1997.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports the long-range comprehensive management of Tucson Active Management Area's water resources in order to obtain a balanced water budget through the efficient utilization of: (1) the Central Arizona Project (CAP) water, (2) waste water (effluent), (3) groundwater, and (4) conservation practices.

Recognizing the finite limits of the water supply and the need to balance the usage with that supply, the LWVGT will encourage those responsible for distributing the supply to work with all diligence to use the CAP allotment to capacity through (1) direct delivery, (2) recharge, and (3) exchanges for groundwater with the mining industry and agriculture.

Wastewater should be used appropriately for purposes to include any, but not limited to, restoring habitat, irrigating turf, and providing recreational and environmental opportunities (e.g. wetlands) for the community. The costs to accomplish this should be equitably distributed among the beneficiaries.

It is vital to decrease reliance on groundwater aquifers to avoid irreversible subsidence and the resultant damage to infrastructure and the natural environment.

Conservation can play a very important role in reducing reliance on groundwater and reaching safe yield (the balance between withdrawal and replenishment of groundwater). Conservation can be enhanced by the restructuring of water rates for those entities that exceed their gallons per person per day (GPCD) limit. The GPCD usage should be made more equitable across the basin.

It is of major importance to continue and increase efforts to educate the public about the potability of treated surface water, the dangers of overdraft of the underground water supply and the need for conservation.