

LWV OF BOULDER COUNTY PROGRAM POSITIONS

2019-2020

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GOVERNMENT

Boulder County Government Structure

(Adopted 1988; updated 2000 with Longmont LWV concurrence; updated 2019).

The League supports the present form of Boulder County government.

The League supports increasing the number of commissioners from three to five. Until Boulder County has the option to elect commissioners using a method which promotes proportional representation, the League supports three commissioners elected from districts and two elected at large.

In principle, the League supports county home rule as an option. In evaluating any proposed home rule charter, we support the following criteria:

1. The county clerk and sheriff should be elected. Other county officials should be appointed.
2. A home rule charter should set some professional qualifications for appointed officials.
3. There should be no tax limitation written into a home rule charter

Criminal Justice

(Adopted 1974)

The League agrees with a philosophy of rehabilitation for public offenders. Alternative correction programs should be available to those whose eligibility has been considered individually according to established criteria.

The League will work to promote public understanding and support for the philosophy of alternatives to incarceration.

Elected Municipal Offices

(Adopted 2000, reformatted 2004, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

A residency requirement of 6 to 18 months for elected municipal office is reasonable. If a minimum age is specified it should be no greater than 21 years and no less than the minimum voting age.

We support:

1. a nomination process which requires from 10 to 25 qualified electors to sign a petition on behalf of the nominee. The petition may be kept in city offices or circulated, with a greater number of signatures required if the petition is circulated. The nominations should be completed not less than 30 days before any voting starts so citizens have time to learn about the candidates.
2. a system of staggered terms in which at each election, voters have the opportunity to elect at least half of those who will sit on the municipal governing body.
3. rules regarding the financing of municipal election campaigns and the disclosure of significant sources of campaign funds;
4. the availability of the referendum, the initiative, the recall, and public hearings, in order to provide citizens the means to express their concerns;
5. restrictions on communication among elected officials outside of open public meetings;
6. reasonable compensation for elected officials.

Environmental Planning

(Adopted 1958–1986, concurrence 1991 to extend positions to Boulder Valley, amended 1998, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

Growth Management

(Adopted February 1974, amended 1998, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

Support of strong control of quality and quantity of growth in comprehensive plans of the Boulder County area, implemented by sound planning and management. Some tools to help manage growth are urban growth boundaries, intergovernmental agreements, and revenue sharing. All future growth and development should be judged both on its environmental impact and its effect on the social balance of the region.

Support of adequate study and consideration of the environmental impact of any proposed transportation systems, housing, employment and service installations. Attention should be given to the character and individuality of each community and for environmental and agricultural preservation

To promote a better balance in the region, support of only that growth which enhances opportunities for people of all ages, races and economic levels to live and work in the Boulder County area. In support of balanced development region-wide, work force housing should be encouraged near public transit and/or jobs.

Governmental Structure

(Adopted 1958, amended 1966, 1974, 1978, 2004)

Cooperation between all governmental bodies (such as school board, county commission, city councils and planning commissions) is essential for good planning. We encourage intergovernmental consultation, cooperation and sharing of information on decisions. Planning Boards should be consulted before any official municipal policy is developed which affects the long-range growth. Examples of such policies are: extension of city services to fringe areas, annexation policy, regulation of public utilities (including water and transportation), land use, street locations, location of public improvements.

The importance of planning should be recognized by adequate funding for qualified staff.

Principles of Good Planning

(Adopted 1958, amended 1966, 1974, 1991, 1998, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

Planning and decision-making should be guided by the best interests of the region, rather than that of an individual or group. To develop public understanding, use the resources of the area and gain public support of good planning, all advisory groups should be as representative as possible. Maximum consideration should be given to aesthetic development.

Planning decisions should be made with full realization of their long-range implications, recognizing that land use, housing and transportation are interrelated and policies affecting them may have regional impacts. There should be requirements for adequate public facilities concurrent with new development. Future needs should be considered in locating public facilities, in developing the circulation plan, in providing parking and in zoning, etc. Plans should be made for land acquisition, for parks and recreation, streets and public buildings well in advance of actual development.

To help manage traffic congestion and encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation, the following are supported:

1. Mixed-use development;
 2. Concentration of development along urban transit corridors and at multi-modal transportation centers;
 3. Locating development within municipal boundaries, where urban services and facilities are available;
 4. Designing and locating streets, walkways and parking to facilitate alternate mode travel.
- Boulder County should be encouraged to develop according to accepted comprehensive plans. If there are to be exceptions to the plans, proponents should demonstrate changed conditions or faults or weaknesses in the plans.

Annexation policies should be clear and equitable and should consider preservation of open areas.

Fiscal Structure of Boulder County Municipalities

(Adopted 1960, concurrence 1993 to extend position to the Boulder Valley, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

Promote efficient fiscal administration and adequate, equitable financing of municipal programs, current and long range.

Long Range Programs: Funds should be budgeted annually for a capital improvements program. Economy and efficiency for the future as well as the present should be an important part of long-range programs. Distribution of costs of public improvements should be carefully considered in light of distribution of benefits.

Administrative Procedures: Municipal finances should be administered according to sound fiscal procedures using qualified personnel. The provisions of the municipalities' charters and codes on finance should be followed; they should be revised when necessary for good fiscal administration. The municipalities should inform the public clearly and regularly of municipal fiscal plans and activities. A thorough audit of the municipalities' finances should be made yearly.

Revenue: All sources of revenue should be evaluated to insure a tax system that is equitable, diversified, flexible and economical to administer.

Impact Fees

(Adopted and amended 1994 with the LWV of Longmont in concurrence)

The League believes that residential and commercial growth should pay their fair share of capital construction costs with a minimal effect on affordable housing. The rational nexus test should be used when deciding if new impact fees should be imposed.

The following are the components of the rational nexus test: establishment of legal authority for the fee; determination that the development creates an additional need for capital facilities; establishment of the proportionate share attributable to each new development; and ensuring that the new development benefits from the expenditure of the fee.

The League believes that impact fees are appropriate for water taps, sewer taps, storm drainage, parks and trees, public transportation, and public buildings including schools.

Voting Procedures in Boulder County

(Adopted April 1996, amended 1997, 2002 with Longmont League concurrence)

Voting procedures in Boulder County should provide for accuracy, reliability, security and privacy. Methods should be voter friendly and should encourage voter participation.

Voting Methods

(Adopted 2017)

The League supports authorizing and implementing alternatives to plurality voting that allow people to express their preferences more effectively. The League supports gaining on-the-ground experience with alternative voting methods in order to ascertain whether a voting method results in outcomes that match voters' preferences as recorded on their ballots.

The League supports voting methods that improve the election experience, that encourage honest voting rather than tactical voting, and that consider ease of implementation.

Some voting methods are intended for single-winner elections, others for multi-winner elections. It is important that the intended use of a voting method match its actual application. Multi-winner voting methods promote proportional representation which fosters diversity of our elected officials.

Election officials should conduct post-election analysis to evaluate the voters' usage of the voting method and the election's reflection of voters' stated preferences. There should be sufficient data transparency--for example, access to ballot records in anonymous form--for an independent analysis to be conducted by other interested groups.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Open Space Programs

(Adopted April 1970 as County Parks and Open Space Acquisition, amended 1986, amended 2003 to include Boulder Valley municipal Open Space programs, amended 2008 to encompass Boulder County)

The League supports the acquisition and resource management of Open Space lands. Open Space serves a variety of purposes, among them growth management, protection of the natural environment and agriculture, passive recreation, and aesthetic enjoyment.

Acquisition may be accomplished using methods such as direct purchase, conservation easements, transfer of development rights and exchanges of property. Funds may be obtained through sales taxes, general fund appropriations, foundation support and/or donations, or by other innovative or creative means.

Open Space lands may be sold or disposed of, but provision should be made to allow a public vote on any sale, trade or other disposal. Unique areas, such as wildlife habitats and urban buffers, should be retained. Revenues from disposal should be used only for Open Space acquisition, resource management and related programs.

It may be necessary to restrict public access to some Open Space lands, for example, to preserve unique areas, wildlife habitats and agricultural lands.

Solid Waste Management

(Adopted 1987, amended 1995, Longmont LWV concurred 2007)

The League supports immediate efforts to promote and manage waste reduction in Boulder County, to site solid waste related facilities within the County, and to set long-term goals and standards for a comprehensive, solid waste management policy. The League also supports regional cooperation in solid waste management. The policies should include waste diversion through source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and household hazardous waste management, as well as waste disposal. Governance should allow flexibility for public and

private participation in solid waste management. The public sector is responsible for setting standards for health and safety. Funding should be stable, diversified, flexible and fiscally responsible. Citizen education should foster a positive attitude towards responsible waste management. Source reduction education on solid and household hazardous wastes should have a high priority.

Transportation

(Adopted 1981 as “Alternative Transportation”; revised 2004)

The needs of pedestrians and those who use alternatives to the automobile should be included in any comprehensive transportation system.

Provision must be made for safe and convenient facilities, sufficient maintenance to insure safe use and funding adequate to cover these costs.

In the distribution of public funds allocated to transportation, greater emphasis must be placed on alternatives to the automobile. The League supports incentives to encourage the use of these alternatives.

A comprehensive transportation system should give priority to commuter activities of high and frequent use.

Water

(Added 2011 based on state position)

Support of measures that promote the wise and balanced use of water in Colorado.

Promote measures to reduce the adverse effects of industrial processes on water quality.

SOCIAL POLICY

Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley Schools

(Adopted August 1969, revised 1975, 1977, 1982, 1985, 1990, 2003, amended 2008 to include St. Vrain Valley district schools, revised 2012)

The League supports an education program characterized by adequate coordination and financing, long-range planning and open channels of communication.

School Finance: K-12 funding in Colorado is a state/local partnership. School districts should manage their funds responsibly and transparently, allowing for periodic citizen input both through district-sponsored public forums and elections. A complete annual audit of the budget and any bond or foundation monies should be available for citizen inspection. The budget should reflect district goals and priorities. Taxpayer monies for education should be used to support only public education. Each district should strive to achieve funding equity among its schools.

District employees should be paid at least a living wage rate. Districts should strive to include quality of work as a basis for compensation decisions. Administrative salaries should be appropriate for district-level responsibilities.

Program: The League's first priority for the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley schools is providing students with basic tools for learning, including reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking proficiency.

Curriculum should include:

1. Language arts
2. Mathematics
3. Biological and physical sciences
4. Social sciences including government
5. Technology skills
6. Second languages
7. Visual and performing arts, music, physical education, health education and life skills.

The following elements are necessary:

1. Well-qualified paraprofessionals, teachers, and principals, carefully evaluated at regular intervals
2. Class size appropriate to the learning situation
3. High-quality teaching materials
4. Local flexibility for schools and districts to identify and meet student needs.
5. Effective feedback to teachers, students and parents regarding educational progress.

The League supports coordination of the education program within the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts, including: clearly stated subject matter; guidelines for each grade level; and coordination among elementary, middle and high school levels. District- or school-wide reforms of curriculum, materials or teaching practices should be introduced when there is solid evidence that the new will be better than the status quo or when a promising approach is being publicly piloted. Efforts should be made to allocate resources to sustain the changes over the long term.

The League encourages early identification of students with particular needs. The League supports interventions which provide all students adequate opportunities to reach their full potential as contributing members of society. Special education, bilingual, English language learning and gifted and talented programs; along with vocational and interdisciplinary courses and flexible scheduling are among suitable methods to meet these objectives.

A guidance and counseling program should be implemented by the district at all levels, including elementary, to meet the needs of children, their teachers and parents. All middle level and senior high students should have career awareness and counseling services for continuing education and meaningful employment. The League supports a comprehensive teen parenting program to allow teen parents to graduate from high school and receive career training.

Sites and Facilities: The League supports efficient use of district facilities and long-range planning for school construction and land acquisition. In determining the efficient use of facilities, more than financial concerns should be considered. We encourage the use of community resources where appropriate including social service and recreational facilities, and other academic institutions such as the University of Colorado and Front Range Community College.

Public Schools of Choice: We support informed parental choice allowing open enrollment among the options available in the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts. These include neighborhood, focus, and charter schools. We support a diverse student population at each school with equity for all students. Charter school contracts with the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts should require the schools to reimburse the district for district resources used.

Communication: The League encourages effective communication within the school system, with the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado legislature and the public. We encourage meaningful opportunities for public participation.

Housing in Boulder County

(Adopted February 2010; replaced Housing [in Boulder Valley] and Housing [in Longmont] positions last amended 1998)

The League supports:

1. the availability of a variety of housing for purchase or for rent in price ranges suitable for all income levels;
2. regular tracking of housing costs and employment income data to determine the need for permanently affordable housing efforts;
3. the provision of subsidized housing for low income people through a variety of governmental and non-governmental programs;
4. adequate financial support for the county and municipal housing authorities (including housing offices and necessary staffs to implement policies) and encouragement for strong cooperation among them;
5. zoning, development fees, and processes which foster timely and economical supply of needed permanently affordable housing;
6. building and zoning codes that allow manufactured housing;
7. incentives for the construction of low and moderate income housing and energy efficient homes;
8. a goal of subsidizing at least 10 percent of the housing stock within Boulder County with emphasis on providing affordable housing to those whose incomes are 0-80 percent of HUD's (Housing and Urban Development) Area Median Income;
9. the provision of affordable housing through such methods as increases in density, land banking, land trusts, foundations or donations, dedicated general budget funds, new taxes, public-private partnerships, or any other innovative or creative means to provide affordable work force housing;
10. the use of social impact statements to determine the effect of other policies on affordable housing.

Health Care in Boulder County

(Adopted 1988, revised 2011, rewritten after consensus in 2013)

Health care is a human right. The LeagueLWVBC supports universal access to and delivery of comprehensive and affordable health care. Comprehensive health care includes, but is not

limited to, the basic level of care specified in the national position (includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care [including prenatal and reproductive health], acute care, long-term care and mental health care) as well as dental, vision, hearing, specialist, and home-care services. Efficiency and quality of care will be improved when health care is coordinated between health care professionals, the patient, and the family.

The League supports a system where a single entity dispenses funds to health care providers with resources allocated as stated in the national position. (The League believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources. Limited resources should be allocated based on the following criteria considered together: the urgency of the medical condition, the life expectancy of the patient, the expected outcome of the treatment, the cost of the procedure, the duration of care, the quality of life of the patient after treatment, and the wishes of the patient and the family.)

Minimum/Living Wages

Adopted 2014

The LWVBC believes that just as Colorado can set a minimum wage above the federal minimum wage, so local jurisdictions should be able to exceed the state minimums. We oppose legislation that prohibits such local action.

We believe that alleviating poverty is the shared responsibility of government, employers, individuals, and non-profit assistance organizations. All sectors should be involved in setting an adequate minimum wage or living wage.

The living wage is the minimum required to avoid poverty without government assistance and subsidies. The living wage (gross income) should cover the costs of food, clothing, housing, energy, transportation, health care, K–12 education, child care, taxes (income, Social Security), and supplemental expenses for work and school.

In determining a living wage, a jurisdiction should consider the local cost of living, the national Consumer Price Index, and other reliable and measurable data.

When a jurisdiction makes changes to wage laws, it should ensure that data regarding the effects of those changes are collected and distributed.
