



# 2017 Legislative Agenda

## Background

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The Tigard Chamber Government & Public Policy (GAPP) Subcommittee supports the Tigard Chamber of Commerce Mission of providing opportunities for consistent and sustainable long-term business growth by promoting public policy, rules and laws that support a healthy business and employment climate. We advocate with government on behalf of business, leveraging the voice of our members.

### We are guided by the following objectives:

- **Preserve** the competitive enterprise system of business by creating a better understanding and appreciation of the importance of a strong economy, promoting intelligent business and public opinion regarding local, state, and national legislative and political affairs.
- **Prevent** policies which are detrimental to business, creating a greater appreciation of the value of competitive business.
- **Promote** healthy communities by: promoting economic programs designed to strengthen and expand the income potential of all classes of business, and opportunities for employment.

### Other Guidelines Include:

- The use of taxes should be fair and equitable in providing services and programs that benefit the economic growth and the health and welfare of citizens.
- Reasonable regulations are necessary to a growing economy, unreasonable ones stifle growth and opportunity.
- Governmental policy needs to promote economic opportunity.
- As a general rule, overall government expenditures should not grow at rates greater than populations and inflation, or rates exceeding growth in income.
- Government must look for more efficient ways to provide services to maintain quality government within cost restraints.
- Making efforts to educate and inform public officials and media about the impact potential decisions could have on the area economy.

# 2017 Legislative Priorities - State

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## Employer Issues

Small business pays the largest price when the state mandates pay and benefits. These mandates take away Oregon's competitive advantage across the nation and stifles business growth and expansion, negatively impacting our local economy. Key areas of focus in this area are:

**Control Minimum Wage Growth-** Currently Oregon's minimum wage is tied to the CPI and increased to \$9.25 in 2015. Oregon's minimum wage is ranked 2nd highest in the nation. A \$15/hour minimum wage increase would impede job creation and growth, cost us at least 60,000 jobs and could have the unintended effect of reducing overall benefit packages as businesses are required to increase wages in all segments of their workforce. Small business will not have the ability to absorb these increases. Increased costs of goods and services will impact seniors and those on a fixed income. Increases in minimum wage will impact both education and non-profit sectors with an increase in cost, resulting in reduced services.

**Control/Oppose Addition of Employer Paid Benefits or Mandates.** Mandating additional employee benefits will require small businesses to manage growth differently and may result in the decrease of other benefits offered. Employers should be allowed the freedom to offer the benefits their employees value most. Mandated benefits remove the opportunity for small businesses to personalize their benefits offerings for their own workforce. Areas of focus could include paid sick leave, paid family leave, predictive workplace scheduling and more.

## Tax Issues/Reforms

In keeping with these two guidelines from above

- The use of taxes should be fair and equitable in providing services and programs that benefit the economic growth and the health and welfare of citizens.
- As a general rule, overall government expenditures should not grow at rates greater than populations and inflation, or rates exceeding growth in income.

### **Support a balanced budget through the use of spending reforms (PERS, Medicaid, Personnel Costs) –**

The current proposed State budget has a \$1.8B shortfall. Reforms need to be made in spending to help balance the budget. State expenditures are now growing faster than revenues. State revenue has grown 40% since 2009. In that same time, PERS costs have grown 140% and Medicaid costs have grown 134%. Slowing the unsustainable growth in state government costs is a major initiative of the business community

### **Support Expanding eligibility for the 2013 'small business tax cut'/oppose elimination of the tax cut.**

The 'small business tax cut' was passed by the 2013 Legislature in the PERS "Grand Bargain." The tax cut is a lower rate (starting at 7% instead of 9%) on the income of pass-through businesses (S Corps, LLCs, partnerships) with at least one employee. Eligibility for the tax cut should be expanded to sole proprietors and other 'mom and pop' family businesses. Governor Brown has proposed to eliminate the 'small business tax cut' in her 2017 budget. We believe the new tax structure for small business should be expanded, not eliminated.

### **Oppose Taxes not supported by the business community.**

There will be enormous pressure on the business community to support additional taxes to help bridge the 2017-19 state budget deficit. Above all else, we believe that Oregon business should be unified in which tax proposals it will support and which it will oppose.

## **Transportation**

**We support a comprehensive transportation funding package** (with real low carbon fuel standard cost containment). A comprehensive transportation funding package is the highest pro-growth priority of the unified business community in 2017. It is a staple of the Oregon Business Plan. However, many of our key business association partners believe that an increase in the gas tax should be contingent on full repeal of the low carbon fuel standard or real cost containment in the standard. Without it, the low carbon fuel standard will begin to exact a heavy cost on motorists and eliminate the ability to raise gas taxes for future transportation project funding.

The importance of securing adequate funding from the State and Federal Legislature to continue to improve, expand and enhance our transportation system in and around Tigard and Southwest Metro cannot be overstated. Transportation infrastructure is the lifeblood of commerce as it moves goods, services and people to and from employment, from suppliers to manufactures to retailers to consumers to students to education and more. All impact our economy and economic growth.

Tigard and the SW Corridor needs reliable, efficient, safe transportation infrastructure that can handle our current population/usage, our forecasted growth and maintains our Oregon quality of life. Multiple modes need to be considered, planned for and integrated. Change is inevitable, we need to manage the change for healthy, thriving communities and robust economic growth.

The projects listed below are considered high priorities for the Tigard Business community and will need significant financial support from the state and possible federal levels.

- SW Corridor Light Rail Project
- North Main Street Improvement
- SW Hall Boulevard – Burnham Street to Durham Road.
- Bridge and Trail improvements

## **Workforce Housing - Support Increased availability and affordability of workforce housing.**

The lack of affordable housing options for local employees is a top-tier concern for local business communities across the state. Not only is there a shortage of local affordable housing, there is a shortage of local market-rate housing as well. We will support measures to increase housing supply. This has a direct economic impact to our state and our business community

## **Increased resources for mental health programs and homelessness prevention**

Local communities and downtowns across the state are feeling the effects of the proliferation of homelessness, much of which stems from lack of available treatment options for people suffering from mental health issues. For the first time, local business communities across the state are coming together to help find solutions.

# 2017 Legislative Priorities - Local

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**Transportation** – Support projects and initiatives that improve overall transportation infrastructure within Tigards’ areas of commerce including the Tigard Triangle, Pacific Highway and Downtown Tigard including but not limited to:

- SW Corridor Light Rail Project
- Bridge and Trail improvements
- North Main Street Improvement
- SW Hall Boulevard – Burnham Street to Durham Road
- Tigard Street Trail – Pathways to Employment
- Improved parking access in the Downtown core

**Economic Development** – Support projects/organizations that stimulate revitalization and economic/business growth within the Urban Renewal District, Industrial/Mixed use zones and the Tigard Triangle as the opportunity arises including but not limited to:

- Saxony Project Redevelopment
- Strolling Streets
- Ash/Burnham Development
- Enterprise Zones
- Hunziker Industrial Core
- Tigard Triangle Urban Renewal District
- Downtown Tigard Urban Renewal District extension

**Environment/Sustainability** – Support environmental clean-up projects within business/commercial districts that enable redevelopment as they arise. Support parks and green spaces initiatives as they contribute to business/employee quality of life. Including but not limited to:

- Downtown Tigard Brownfield clean up initiatives
- Tigard Street Trail activation and projects

**Education** – We need a technically educated workforce exiting our education system both through secondary education and trade schools. We will support initiatives that work towards this end.

See [http://www.tigard-or.gov/city\\_hall/CityCouncil/state\\_legislative\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.tigard-or.gov/city_hall/CityCouncil/state_legislative_agenda.pdf) for background

See [http://www.tigard-or.gov/business/economic\\_development.php](http://www.tigard-or.gov/business/economic_development.php) for background

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