

PROGRAM FOR ACTION

*Positions of the
League of Women
Voters Minneapolis*

2009

Program for Action
(Formerly Goals for Good Government)

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Table of Contents

Program for Action.....	7
Mission.....	7
Principles.....	7
City Government: Structure	9
Studies.....	9
Positions.....	9
Background.....	10
City Government: Civil Service.....	14
Studies.....	14
Positions.....	14
Background.....	14
City Government: Citizen Participation	16
Studies.....	16
Positions.....	16
Background.....	17
City Government: Finance/Budget/Property Tax	18
Studies.....	18
Positions.....	18
Finance.....	18
Budget.....	18
Revenue Sources.....	19
Background.....	19
Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal: Housing	21
Studies.....	21
Positions.....	21
Background.....	22
Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal: Planning and Urban Renewal.....	27
Studies.....	27
Positions.....	27
Background.....	28
Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Police	30
Studies.....	30
Positions.....	30
Background.....	31
Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Courts.....	32
Studies.....	32
Positions.....	32
Background.....	33
Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Handguns.....	35
Studies.....	35

Positions.....	35
Background.....	35
Education.....	36
Studies.....	36
Positions.....	37
School Board.....	37
General Support.....	37
Curriculum and Program.....	37
Student Evaluation.....	38
Desegregation/Integration.....	38
Special Services.....	38
Teachers.....	39
Budget.....	39
Citizen Participation.....	39
Discipline.....	40
Four-Year-Olds.....	40
Kindergarten.....	40
Background.....	41
Social Policy.....	46
Social Policy: Equal Opportunity.....	46
Studies.....	46
Positions.....	46
Background.....	46
Social Policy: Welfare/Income Assistance.....	49
Studies.....	49
Positions.....	49
Background.....	49
Social Policy: Family Violence/Prevention of Violence.....	50
Studies.....	50
Positions.....	50
Background.....	51
Social Policy: Childcare/Early Childhood Education.....	53
Studies.....	53
Positions.....	53
Background.....	54
Social Policy: Child Support.....	55
Studies.....	55
Positions.....	55
Background.....	55
Social Policy: Adolescent Health.....	56
Studies.....	56
Positions.....	56
Background.....	57

Social Policy: Health.....	58
Studies.....	58
Positions.....	58
Background.....	58
Social Policy: Indian Affairs.....	59
Studies.....	59
Positions.....	59
Background.....	59
Livability.....	61
Positions.....	61
Background.....	61
Libraries.....	63
Studies.....	63
Positions.....	63
Background.....	64
Parks.....	65
Studies.....	65
Positions.....	65
Background.....	66

Program for Action

The Positions of the League of Women Voters Minneapolis

The positions in this document were reached by consensus of LWVMpls members after study and discussion of the topic.

(See also League of Women Voters, League of Women Voters Minnesota and Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues positions at www.lwv.org, www.lwvmn.org, and www.lwvmn.org/CMAL)

Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Principles

- The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.
- The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.
- The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

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City Government: Structure

Studies

- **Minneapolis is Your Business: ABC's of City Government**, LWVMpls, 1955, Committee Chair: Elsbeth Parker, (No longer available)
- **Minneapolis is Your Business! A Handbook on City Government**, LWVMpls, 1964, Editor: Mrs. Norman Stewart, (No longer available)
- **In League with the Charter**, LWVMpls, 1965
- **Minneapolis is Your Business! Supplement**, LWVMpls, 1968, (No longer available)
- **Minneapolis: A Handbook on City Government**, LWVMpls, 1971, (No longer available)
- **New Trends in City Government**, LWVMpls, 1971, Committee Chair: Mrs. Walter Stack, (No longer available)
- **Minneapolis: A Handbook on City Government**, LWVMpls, 1972
- **Minneapolis: A Guide to Local Government**, LWVMpls, 1977
- **Minneapolis Government Structure: Help or Hindrance?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chair: Marion Hall
- **A Guide to Local Government**, LWVMpls, 1985, Chair: Carolyn Hendrixson
- **Views from the Inside: The Structure and Functioning of Minneapolis City Government**, LWVMpls, 1989, Committee Chairs: Mary Lou Loud, Deborah Struzyk
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act**, LWVMpls, 2005, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec
- **Minneapolis Government: a Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards**, LWVMpls, 2006, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec

Positions

Updated 2009

Support of responsive and efficient structures and procedures of Minneapolis government

LWVMpls will use the following criteria to determine whether to support or oppose charter amendments as they are proposed (1965):

Does the amendment:

1. Fill a need? Are the functions being handled efficiently and responsibly at the present time?
2. Provide sufficient flexibility in scope and authority to adjust to future growth and development patterns?
3. Simplify the governmental structure rather than complicate it?
4. Define clearly the lines of authority and responsibility so that the voter understands the governmental procedures?
5. Lead to separation of administrative and legislative functions?
6. Assist in coordinating all the City's services so that they may be planned together?
7. Provide sufficient checks and balances to permit considered thought and public opinion to play their roles in determining public policy?

LWVMpls supports:

1. Electing the Mayor at large to serve as the politically responsible citywide leader for a four-year term. (2005)
2. The current Mayor-Council form of government with possible changes to increase effectiveness, accountability and focus. (2005)
3. Four-year terms for Council Members, the Mayor, Park Commissioners, and School Board members. (1970)
4. Electing the City Council by ward to non-staggered terms, at the same time as the mayoral term and limited to twelve years in office (1989; revised 2005 to allow but not require a smaller council by eliminating the reference to 13-member).
5. A full-time City Council as primary, policy making body with an emphasis on future-oriented planning; limited responsibility for constituent services; and no direct role in assigning the work of City staff. (2005)
6. Structures, which provide City staff with direct accountability to one authority, the Mayor, City Coordinator, City Manager or City Administrator. (2009)
7. Placing a time limit on the appointment powers of the Mayor and City Council. (1973)
8. Planning by the City Council to address the changing needs of the City. (1989)
9. City Charter provision for an Executive Committee composed of the Mayor, City Council President and three additional members chosen by the Council. The committee should be bipartisan unless the Mayor and the entire Council are of the same political party. (1989)
10. Establishment of a Finance Department with a finance director to assume the functions of assessing, budgeting, purchasing and accounting. (2004) (See also Finance Section)
11. Long-range planning for capital improvements. (See also Finance Section).
12. Sufficient power for the City Planning Commission so that it can carry out its planning responsibilities.
13. Consolidation of economic development activities in Minneapolis (See also Finance Section).
14. Abolishing the Board of Estimate and Taxation and designating the Mayor and City Council to perform the duties currently performed by the Board. (2006)

Background

Since its founding in 1919, the League of Women Voters Minneapolis (LWVMpls) has been interested in the structure of City government. While the citizenry may also be interested in that structure, they have voted against a home rule charter at every opportunity. The one they adopted in 1920 was simply a codification of all State laws applying to the City.

In 1921 LWVMpls went on record approving a complete change in City government. In 1923 it endorsed a City Manager plan and in 1925 reaffirmed its belief in the principle of home rule. The League worked for adoption of City-Manager type charters in 1926 and 1936 without success. It worked for a strong-mayor type

charter in 1948, 1960 and 1963, but those attempts also failed. After the last defeat, LWVMpls and others interested in charter reform conceded that a complete new charter was politically impossible and that piecemeal charter revision was a more realistic goal.

In December 1965, after studying *In League with the Charter*, LWVMpls adopted a set of criteria for determining whether to support or oppose charter amendments as they are proposed.

On the basis of these criteria and our positions, LWVMpls in 1969 and 1970 supported establishing four-year terms for Council Members and other elected City officials, electing some Council Members at-large, finding additional sources of revenue and establishing a municipal reference library.

As a result of the 1971 study *New Trends in City Government* LWVMpls reaffirmed its support for four-year terms and for at-large Council Members, and added positions in support of establishing a politically responsible leader for City government and changing City elections from spring to fall. The latter position was dropped after the change was accomplished in 1973.

In 1973 LWVMpls supported placing a time limit on the appointment powers of the Mayor and City Council so that each would have to make appointments within a specified time after a vacancy occurred, or another person or body would make the appointments.

In January 1974 LWVMpls did a short study of the office of the City Coordinator, which again pointed out the need for a politically responsible leader for the City. In the fall LWVMpls supported four charter amendments calling for placing planning and budgeting functions under the Mayor; strengthening the Mayor's veto power; merging the offices of the Comptroller and the Treasurer; and abolishing the liquor patrol limits, areas where alcoholic beverages could not be sold. The first was narrowly defeated, and the others passed.

In 1976, LWVMpls cooperated with other organizations in supporting a charter amendment that placed planning and budgeting functions under the Mayor. The amendment passed and went into effect in January 1978.

In the spring of 1980 LWVMpls produced *Minneapolis Government Structure: Help or Hindrance?* as an attempt to clarify and update previous positions and to analyze the effects of the 1978 charter change. The League reaffirmed its support for four-year terms for Council Members, the Mayor, Park Commissioners, School Board Members, members of the Board of Estimate and Taxation, and the Comptroller/Treasurer. It also confirmed its support for a politically responsible leader elected Citywide and specified that this person should be the Mayor.

It dropped its support for at-large Council Members; and, because members strongly supported the independence of School, Park and Library Boards, it dropped support of consolidation of taxing power under the Council.

As a result of the study the League urged consolidation of economic development activities just at the time when the Legislature granted authority to the City to change the existing system and City officials were studying various alternatives. (See also Housing Section)

In 1983 and 1984 LWVMpls testified in support of charter changes, which included the City Coordinator in the City Charter, established the Mayor as the presiding officer of the City Council without a vote, and created an Executive Council of the City Council.

In May 1989, LWVMpls published *View from the Inside: The Structure and Functioning of Minneapolis City Government*. Based on this study, LWVMpls reaffirmed its support for electing the Mayor as the politically responsible City-wide leader to a four-year term; electing the City Council by ward to non-staggered terms and limiting their terms to twelve years in office; the existence of a bipartisan Executive Committee; and long-range planning by the City Council. Members showed a clear consensus that both the Mayor and City Council members should be elected at the same time, but no clear consensus was shown for four-year terms for City Council members.

The 2004 study of City financing highlighted the complex structure of Minneapolis government. A study committee began work in 2004 to take a new look at the current system and ask whether it was able to serve residents well into the future. (See also Finance Section)

In June 2005 and 2006 after member study of the committee reports, *Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act*, (2005) and *Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act II, Independent Boards* (2006), LWVMpls supported keeping the current structure in Minneapolis with some changes to improve the system. This has resulted in the following changes to its City government positions. (See also the Parks and Libraries Sections)

- Members eliminated references to a 13 member City Council to allow for a smaller Council.
- The role of the Council should be primarily policy making and planning, limiting responsibility for constituent services.
- City staff should have direct accountability to one authority, not to the Council.
- There was strong support for eliminating the Board of Estimate and Taxation, with the levy to be set instead by the Mayor and City Council.

The publication was presented to the public and LWVMpls provided an article that was published in the Star Tribune.

Our two longstanding positions (1965) supporting an authority, independent Library Board were retained. (See merger discussion in Library Section.) There was no consensus to retain our 1974 position of an independent Park Board. This means we currently have no support for any governance option for Minneapolis parks.

In 2009 there were again proposals for Charter change. LWVMpls testified at Charter Commission hearings in favor of elimination of the Board of Estimate and Taxation. In November, voters defeated the Charter Change amendment.

At least every other year members meet with the Mayor and/or the City Council to present positions on current issues. For many years LWVMpls had a member serving on the Charter Commission.

City Government: Civil Service

Studies

The Minneapolis Civil Service System: Can We Cut the Red Tape?, LWVMpls, 1981, Committee Chair: Connie Baillie

Positions

Support of affirmative action; fairness in hiring, employment and dismissal of City employees

LWVMpls supports: (1981)

1. The following principles of employment:
 - a. Fairness in hiring in accordance with affirmative actions goals.
 - b. Equitable employment conditions and pay.
 - c. Promotion based on ability rather than patronage.
 - d. Fairness in discipline and dismissal.
 - e. Efficiency in delivery of services.
2. The following structure of the civil service system:
 - a. The Civil Service Commission should be responsible for policy-making and appeals only.
 - b. The Personnel Department should be authorized to administer all personnel operations for the City of Minneapolis.
 - c. The Personnel Department should delegate details of personnel management functions to management (department heads, the City Coordinator and appointed assistants in departments) as appropriate.
 - d. The Personnel Department should report to the Civil Service Commission.
3. Selection of a Personnel Director insulated from political pressures.
4. The establishment of a requirement that all employees receive written performance appraisals prepared according to consistent standards of evaluation.
5. The establishment of a requirement that all personnel in supervisory positions receive supervisory training.
6. A Civil Service Commission Affirmative Action Policy and authorization of the Personnel Department to implement the policy.
7. An up-to-date classification plan with an accompanying pay plan.
8. Certification of more than one appointee for a position and modification of the Veterans Preference Law.

Background

Throughout 1977-78 LWVMpls, testified in favor of the "Rule of Three" to certify applicants for employment in Minneapolis government. The "Rule of Three" requires that the top three candidates must be considered for each vacancy. In 1978 the Legislature passed a bill making the "Rule of Three" law for hiring employees in

Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Civil Service Commission determined implementation procedures.

In May 1981, the League published *The Minneapolis Civil Service System* and adopted positions supporting a fair system and a more professional role for department heads in employee review.

City Government: Citizen Participation

Studies

- **Citizen Power: Citizenship Education for Minneapolis Residents**, LWVMpls, 1968, Committee Chair: Bess Mlnarik
- **Citizen Participation in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1976, Committee Chair: Laura Kadwell
- **The Action Behind the Numbers: Understanding the Minneapolis City Budget**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Margaret Bloyer
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program Monitoring Report: The Policy Board and Implementation Process**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Susan Reinhart, Mary Lou Hill
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program Action Plan Project Committee Report**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Lyn Lewis, Pat Werner

Positions

Support of opportunities for all citizens to participate in effective ways in the decisions of local government

LWVMpls supports:

1. Encouraging a desirable balance between neighborhood and citywide interests.
2. Maintaining a variety of ways for citizens to participate (e.g., neighborhood groups, and advisory committees).
3. Opening all citizen participation mechanisms so that they are accessible to all citizens.
4. Encouraging more participation through improving communications to citizens and opening the process of appointments to various committees and task forces.
5. Appointing more single-issue or ad hoc groups to advise bodies such as the City Council.
6. Community Councils: LWVMpls neither favors nor opposes the establishment of Community Councils. However, should Community Councils be created or evolve out of present mechanisms, the League would work for the following characteristics:
 - a. Councils created in all communities throughout the City rather than only where the interest exists.
 - b. Councils which have both elected and appointed members.
 - c. Measures to encourage high turnout at Community Council elections.
 - d. Measures to ensure that local businesses and institutions are represented on Community Councils.
 - e. Councils which have purely advisory power.
 - f. Councils which have the power to review and react to all government plans affecting the area at an early stage of planning.
 - g. Adequate staff paid for by the City. Whenever possible, LWVMpls favors using existing City staff for this purpose

(See also: Parks Section and City Government Finance)

Background

LWVMpls study *Citizen Participation in Minneapolis* (1976) was a response to changing attitudes toward citizen involvement in government. The Minneapolis City Council had set up an elaborate mechanism for citizen participation, which included a large City-Wide Citizens Advisory Committee (CWCAC) whose responsibility it was to advise the Council on the disbursement of Community Development Block Grant Funds. Its creation led people to explore further the idea of creating "Community Councils" for Minneapolis. For the League, the concept of community councils raised questions about a most fundamental issue of democratic government: the relationship between elected representatives and ongoing participation of citizens in government. On the basis of these positions the League testified in 1978 at public hearings about provisions in a proposed Unified Citizen Participation Plan consolidating the Planning District Councils and the Capital Long-Range Improvements Committee (CLIC).

After studying the budget process in *The Action Behind the Numbers: Understanding the Minneapolis City Budget* (1978), LWVMpls adopted the positions on citizen involvement in the budget process. (the Finance and Livability Sections.)

In 1994 LWVMpls studied the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) implementation process and action plan. From 1998 to 2009 LWVMpls has monitored NRP and has sponsored workshops and forums on the topic.

City Government: Finance/Budget/Property Tax

Updated June 2004

Studies

- **Tax Exempt Property**, LWVMpls, 1924, (No longer available)
- **Minneapolis and Taxes**, LWVMpls, 1960, (No longer available)
- **A Department of Finance for Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1964, (No longer available)
- **In League with the Charter**, LWVMpls, 1965
- **Revenue Sharing**, LWVMpls, 1974, Committee Chair: Betty Shaw
- **The Action Behind the Numbers: Understanding the Minneapolis City Budget**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Margaret Bloyer
- **Minneapolis, City in Transition: Property Tax**, LWVMpls, 1979, Coordinator: Judy McGuire; Committee Chair: Terri Anderson
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act**, LWVMpls, 2005, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec
- **Minneapolis Government: a Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards**, LWVMpls, 2006, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec

Positions

Finance

Support of sound fiscal policy and new sources of revenue

LWVMpls supports:

1. The established City Finance Department with a finance director assuming the functions of assessing, budgeting, purchasing and accounting.
2. Long-range planning for capital improvements.
3. Consolidated economic development activities in Minneapolis.

Budget

Support of improved budgetary procedures for Minneapolis city government, which incorporate a multi-year view, cooperation between the Mayor and City Council, and citizen access to budget documents and to the decision process

LWVMpls supports:

1. A single budget document to be used by all City officials and agencies making budget decisions. The document and an understandable summary

- should be readily available to citizens on-line, at public libraries, and as a paper copy at no more than a nominal charge. This should include:
- a. An outline of the plan for action for the coming fiscal year.
 - b. Both operating and capital budgets.
 - c. Clear and accurate summary statements of resources, anticipated revenues and expenditures, including statements pertaining to revenues and expenditures already committed.
 - d. Similar narrative and statistical cost and performance information about each program so that programs may be compared, monitored and evaluated.
2. When considering the City budget, public officials will use the services to be provided as the basis for decisions.
 3. Involving citizens more fully in the budget process by:
 - a. Making budget information available to the public before decisions are made.
 - b. Holding budget hearings at the time and place scheduled, providing adequate public notice, and providing an adequate number of agenda and other documents. (2002)

Revenue Sources

Support of policies to strengthen the City's tax base

LWVMpls supports:

1. Efforts to increase the City's tax base by encouraging commercial and industrial development. (1979)
2. Use of tax increment financing limited to projects:
 - a. With a low probability of development without tax increment financing. (1979; revised 2002)
 - b. With a short period of certification. (1979)
3. A public inventory of the City's tax-exempt property, for the purposes of:
 - a. Allowing public scrutiny. (1979)
 - b. Informing these property owners of the cost of City services to their property and encouraging them to contribute to the City to defray those costs. (1979)
 - c. Reviewing current use of the property with a view toward returning some of it to the tax rolls. (1979; revised 2002)

Background

LWVMpls has studied the financing of City government from the standpoint of both sources of revenue and expenditures. Interest in finance began early, with the study *Tax Exempt Property* appearing in 1924. LWVMpls studied City budget procedure in 1935 and became an early advocate of centralized financial control. The 1948 proposed strong-mayor charter amendment would have given the mayor administrative power over the budget.

In 1954 LWVMpls supported the formation of the Capital Long-Range Improvements Committee (CLIC) to provide long-range planning for scheduling and financing public improvements.

In 1956 LWVMpls worked for Charter changes to improve the City's financial structure and procedures. The 1960 study *Minneapolis and Taxes* detailed the sources of City revenue and showed how the money was used. This was followed by another LWVMpls study in 1962 that included sources of revenue for Hennepin County and the assessment system. Resulting positions included support of an improved tax structure, new sources of revenue and a sound fiscal policy for Minneapolis, and support of measures to improve the tax assessment system.

In 1964 LWVMpls studied *A Department of Finance for Minneapolis*. The resulting consensus favored a finance department under the Mayor, which made LWVMpls unable to support a 1965 charter amendment consolidating finances under the Council. After the study *In League with the Charter* LWVMpls concluded that consolidating finances was a more crucial goal than a strong-mayor system of government, and changed its position to support consolidation of all tax levies and establishment of a Department of Finance under the Council. However, at the next election the finance amendment once more failed to pass. In 1980 LWVMpls dropped its position supporting consolidation of taxing powers.

In connection with the LWVMN publication *Financing Government in Minnesota* LWVMpls members studied Minneapolis fiscal problems again in 1966, concluding with a summary of recent financial developments in the City in 1967.

In May 1974, LWVMpls members studied general *Revenue Sharing* to find out what impact this new method of dispensing federal money would have on City and County budgets and budgetary processes.

In 1978, LWVMpls studied the City's budgetary process in *The Action Behind the Numbers: Understanding the Minneapolis City Budget*.

In 1978 the League testified in support of keeping the Financial Management Information System in the Coordinator's office rather than transferring it to the Comptroller/Treasurer's office.

Minneapolis City in Transition: Property Tax was published in 1979. This led to positions regarding the tax base, tax increment financing, and tax-exempt property.

The issue of financing City government arose in 2002 and culminated in a study, presented as a series of VOTER articles. A new consensus was reached that expanded previous positions to:

- Open the budget process to allow for more citizen participation.
- Limit tax increment financing to projects with an otherwise low probability for development.
- Call for a public inventory of tax-exempt property.

Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal: Housing

Studies

- **Housing Rehabilitation in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1975, Committee Chair: Margee Bracken
- **Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority**, LWVMpls, 1976, Committee Chair: Rosemary Booth
- **Cities/Urban Crisis in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Peggy Lathrop
- **Minneapolis, City in Transition: Housing**, LWVMpls, 1979, Coordinator: Judy McGuire; Committee Chairs: Peggy Lucas, Margee Bracken
- **The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chairs: Polly Keppel, Kay Kessel, Mary Ojeda
- **Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal**, LWVMpls, 1981, (No longer available)
- **Affordable Housing: Does Zoning Make a Difference?**, LWVMpls, 1982, Committee Chairs: Mary Holmlund, Patricia Kovel-Jarboe
- **Effect of Budget Cuts, Part One: Housing**, LWVMpls, 1983, Committee Chair: Helen Rozycki
- **Home Sweet Home Until 7 a.m.: Emergency Housing in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1984, Committee Chairs: Helen Rozycki, Mary Youle
- **Update: Minneapolis Public Housing**, LWVMpls, 1986, Committee Chair: Laura Weinberger
- **Low Cost Housing in Minneapolis: An Update**, LWVMpls, 1990, Committee Chair: Helen Rozycki
- **Vacant and Boarded Buildings: Problem or Opportunity?**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Mary Lou Loud, Martha Geiger

Positions

Updated 2008

Support of governmental responsibility for emergency housing

Support of policies that provide for a variety of housing that meets the needs of a diverse population

LWVMpls supports:

1. Improved building codes with effective administration, including adoption of the model uniform code and provision for the homeowner to do his/her own improvements subject to inspection.
2. Urban renewal and affordable public housing. (2008)
3. Continued emphasis on neighborhoods and communities within the city.
4. Acceptable tools for maintaining and rehabilitating residential areas.

5. A requirement that units affordable at 30-80% of metropolitan median income be included in residential or commercial-residential city-assisted development. (1973) (Updated 2008)
6. City Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) (formerly Minneapolis Community Development Agency, MCDA, and prior to that Housing and Redevelopment Authority) programs which continue to serve low, moderate and middle-income families. (1976)
7. Further development by the City and its agencies of policies to provide incentives and assistance to the private sector to meet the City's housing needs. (1976)
8. Efforts by Minneapolis to provide affordable apartments and home-ownership opportunities. (1979; updated 2008)
9. The development and preservation of residential units, which would provide a variety of housing opportunities for people in different stages of life. (1979)
10. Dispersal of subsidized housing throughout the City.
11. Establishment of a housing information office in Minneapolis. (1980)
12. Action by the City which would permit conversions of single-family houses to include small rental units in areas currently zoned R1. (1982)
13. As a public policy some type of housing should be a guaranteed right to everyone in our society. (1984)
14. All neighborhoods in Minneapolis should be expected to take an equitable share of community-based residential facilities (group homes, emergency shelters, etc.). (1984)
15. All communities in the Metropolitan area should be expected to take an equitable share of community-based residential facilities. (1984)
16. The use of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in order to preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing in Minneapolis. (2002)
17. The following solutions for housing people who are homeless: (1979; updated 2008)
 - a. The use of vacant units in public high-rises.
 - b. Development of non-treatment residential facilities for persons who are chemically dependent or living with mental illness.
 - c. Development of publicly subsidized supportive housing programs.

Background

Since the 1940s, LWVMpls has had some item on its local agenda dealing with planning, zoning, redevelopment or public housing, starting with a study of urban renewal and low-cost housing in 1947. LWVMpls worked for establishment of the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA) and supported requests for appropriations and Redevelopment Plan #1 (1950). In 1956 LWVMpls supported a more clearly defined and enforceable code to set minimum housing standards in Minneapolis and in 1960 supported low-cost housing for the elderly.

In the summer of 1974, LWVMpls moved its savings account to Midwest Federal Savings and Loan in support of the "Save the Cities" campaign, which had as its goal making mortgage money available for inner-city property. Later in the year LWVMpls supported the Truth-in-Housing Ordinance and supported the continued development

of the Cedar Riverside district but asked for more low-income housing for the project and more citizen participation in its planning.

At that time LWVMpls had representatives on the City's Urban Homesteading and the Local Loan and Grant Steering Committees, both of which involved local efforts to rehabilitate city housing. These and other programs were explained in the 1975 LWVMpls study, *Housing Rehabilitation in Minneapolis*.

As one of its positions under this item, LWVMpls supported abolition of the liquor patrol limits, areas where alcoholic beverages could not be sold. This charter change was passed in 1974, after many previous efforts had failed, and LWVMpls dropped the position in 1975.

Extensive study of the Minneapolis Housing Redevelopment Agency (MHRA) produced positions on the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) now known as the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) and tax increment financing in the fall of 1976.

In 1977, the Housing Committee focused its lobbying efforts on the establishment of a shelter for battered women and on additional housing opportunities for large families.

In 1979 the League studied *Minneapolis, City in Transition*. Part Three of this study dealt with housing and considered housing policy as it relates to the population of the City. At that time the City was attempting to stabilize its population, attract middle- and upper-income families and address displacement. After studying these issues, LWVMpls reached consensus on positions on the percentage of homeowners, the types of residential units being constructed, the housing needs of current residents and a balanced population in the City resulted.

Another result of the 1979 housing study was that LWVMpls produced brochures for realtors, highlighting the features of each city neighborhood. The League also began its annual housing tours, showcasing housing opportunities in Minneapolis.

The 1980 study *The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?* dealt in part with the housing problems facing low- and moderate-income families with children. The position supporting a housing information office. The LWVMpls Housing Committee monitored the City's progress in providing additional housing for families in following years.

Members at the 1981 LWVMpls City Convention voted to delete our position emphasis on townhouses and condominiums because of concern that too many Minneapolis apartments were being converted to condominiums.

Locally, the problems of an inadequate supply of affordable housing together with the substandard quality found in some of the available units, led to two studies carried out by LWVMpls. Following the 1982 LWVMpls study *Affordable Housing: Does Zoning Make A Difference*, the League adopted a position which would permit conversions of single-family houses to include small rental units in areas not currently zoned for them. In addition to providing more affordable housing, these accessory housing conversions could allow elderly homeowners, including aging single women, to maintain a long-time residence and receive enough additional income to ease the burden of increasing costs.

In 1983, in the first of three mini-studies concerning the effects of budget cuts in Minneapolis, LWVMpls examined two seemingly distinct issues: housing and citizen participation. By 1983, some housing programs had been eliminated and funding for others was drastically reduced. Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds allocated to housing development in Minneapolis fell significantly and the low-income housing waiting lists were closed at 2500 eligible households.

Concern grew about the methods used to select housing and development proposals as well as about the reduced funding. In 1982, a new process began in which the City Council developed policies and goals but left selection of individual proposals up to the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA). An MCDA task force completed a report later that year. This new system, among other recommendations, provided for involvement of citizens at an early stage of development planning and provided for simultaneous review of projects by the appropriate bodies.

In 1984, the increasing number of homeless persons in Minneapolis led to a LWVMpls study on the need for emergency housing, the types of housing and other services required, and the responses being made by private and public agencies. Positions on housing, shelters, and residential facilities were adopted as a result of this study. In 1985, LWVMpls joined with the Emergency Needs Low Income Housing committee and met individually with City Council members to discuss the need for a City role in providing emergency shelter.

Because of perceived problems in the operation of public housing units in Minneapolis identified by the report of the Mayor's Task Force on Public Housing in October 1984, LWVMpls carried out an update on the state of public housing in Minneapolis. The League's update concluded that though Public Housing Management had come through a difficult time, through internal restructuring, goal setting, and hard work, the Public Housing Division of MCDA had greatly improved its functioning. The LWVMpls with other citizen groups continued to follow the progress of public housing in Minneapolis.

A comprehensive update on low-cost housing in 1990 found that Federal policies, cessation of construction of low-income housing and tax policies creating a disincentive for private developers, along with reduction in subsidies, had exacerbated the problem of increased need of emergency housing. In addition, local downtown development, the aging of inner city housing stock, and the failure of income (including welfare assistance) to keep pace with the increased market rate rents contributed to homelessness.

In 1990 LWVMpls lobbied the City Council to oppose a rental property licensing ordinance penalizing tenants through eviction for landlord non-compliance. The League also urged the City Council to support the establishment of a Single Room Occupancy building made available temporarily by University of St. Thomas.

In 1991 LWVMpls monitored the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategies (CHAS) to be submitted to HUD and with other organizations suggested that the Neighborhood Revitalization Program take steps to assure that the city-wide needs for low cost housing be balanced with the plans of individual neighborhoods.

Also in 1991, LWVMpls lobbied the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Minneapolis City Council in support of a proposed statute requiring governmental agencies or private agencies receiving government funds for housing projects displacing ten or more low-income housing units, to replace those units. It also required the City to report annually on the supply of and demand for low-income housing.

In 1995, LWVMpls was a co-sponsor of a housing rally at the state capitol.

In July of the same year LWVMpls members began to monitor the Holman Consent Decree to settle a lawsuit over discrimination in public housing.

In 1997, LWVMpls hosted a general meeting on redevelopment along the riverfront. This same year the League supported scattered-site public housing.

In June 1998, LWVMpls sent letters to members of the Community Development Committee of the City Council urging their support of an affordable housing policy, a three million dollar commitment to an affordable Housing Trust Fund and an Affordable Housing Task Force to meet the severe affordable housing crisis. The LWVMpls Housing Committee testified at a public hearing in support of this proposal and members were urged to contact their City Council members in support of this proposal. The ordinance was passed with some modifications.

Also in 1998, LWVMpls wrote to the City's Community Development Committee and to the Mayor requesting that the City commit the full recommended three million dollars to the Trust Fund.

In September 1998, LWVMpls sent a letter to the Community Development Committee opposing a proposed Rehab Support Fund that was limited to those improvements, which would add value to property like remodeled kitchens or added rooms.

In 1998 and 1999, members monitoring the Holman Consent Decree met with the Legal Aid Society to discuss developments in the implementation of the Holman Decree.

In 1996, LWVMpls coordinated with the City of Minneapolis on a housing tour, which highlighted the Minneapolis Mile along the Mississippi. From May 1999 through May 2002, LWVMpls partnered with the Minneapolis City Council and the Minneapolis Department of Public Affairs by providing volunteers and volunteer training for the annual Minneapolis/St. Paul Housing Tour. In April 2002 and June 2004, the Housing Committee sponsored tours of affordable housing sites, including a homeless shelter and transitional housing.

In September of 2000, Unit 1 sponsored a guided tour of several homeless shelters in, near or south of downtown.

In 2001, Housing Committee members made phone calls to State legislators urging no reduction of grants for participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

In 2002, LWVMpls participated in the "Homes for All Convention" as a member of the sponsoring collaborative, Housing Minnesota. LWVMpls endorsed MICAH (the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) and Family and Children's Service campaign for an Affordable Housing Trust Fund with the proviso that continued LWVMpls support would depend on the source of the funding. (LWV had no position on dedicated funds until 2003.) During the Legislative Session the LWVMpls Housing Committee organized an action alert to legislators urging no more cuts to affordable housing.

In 2002 LWVMpls members reached concurrence on a position supporting an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. This position was used in letters to City Council and in testimony for one million dollars in the Housing Trust Fund to remain committed to housing for the most needy residents rather than be allotted for home ownership.

In 2007 and 2008, LWVMpls encouraged members to volunteer for Project Homeless Connect, an event to assist homeless persons to connect with needed services. LWVMpls coordinated a metro-wide forum on homelessness with panels of service providers and recipients in 2008. Following this, League collaborated with the Coalition to End Homelessness and to promote our positions at all levels of government. That same year through consensus LWVMpls members deleted a previous position that required shelter residents to accept "strings", such as treatment programs.

Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal: Planning and Urban Renewal

Studies

- **Minneapolis Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance**, LWVMpls, 1965, (No longer available)
- **Community Improvement Program**, LWVMpls, 1965
- **Planning Goals for Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1966
- **Development Districts in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1973, Committee Chair: Sally Sawyer
- **Cities/Urban Crisis in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Peggy Lathrop
- **Housing, Planning and Urban Renewal**, LWVMpls, 1981, (No longer available)
- **Affordable Housing: Does Zoning Make a Difference?**, LWVMpls, 1982, Committee Chairs: Mary Holmlund, Patricia Kovel-Jarboe
- **Vacant and Boarded Buildings: Problem or Opportunity?**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Mary Lou Loud, Martha Geiger

Positions

Updated 2008

Support of effective administration and coordination of planning functions; support of long-range planning goals and programs

LWVMpls supports:

1. Improved efficiency and coordination of planning agencies. (1963)
2. Long-range planning goals with effective citizen participation. (1966)
3. Improved zoning laws and administration.
4. Efforts to strengthen the central business district and attract desirable business and industry.
5. The use of tax increment financing as a tool for financing redevelopment projects. (1973)
6. Limitations on the power of the City to utilize development. (1973)
7. Granting the power of eminent domain to the City for acquiring land. (1973)
8. Systematic and thorough outside evaluation of the City Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) policies, procedures, and programs. (1976)
9. Continued efforts to explore the relationships among City agencies dealing with development and renewal (CPED and the City Planning Department) to coordinate their efforts and to eliminate duplication wherever possible. (1976)
10. Examination of tax increment financing to determine its effects on the local tax base and to develop an overall policy for its use. (1976)

11. Consideration, early in the planning process, for the housing needs of current residents, when planning for the redevelopment of city neighborhoods. (1979)
12. Efforts by the City to provide an environment which would encourage a balanced population. (1979)
13. More federal responsibility for financing emergency shelters, more County responsibility for direct operation of the shelters and more social services provided by the County including advocacy, counseling and treatment. (1984)

Background

Since the 1940s, LWVMpls has had some item on its local agenda dealing with planning, zoning, redevelopment or public housing, starting with a study of urban renewal and low-cost housing in 1947. LWVMpls worked for establishment of the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA) and supported requests for appropriations and Redevelopment Plan #1 (1950). In 1956 LWVMpls supported a more clearly defined and enforceable code to set minimum housing standards in Minneapolis and in 1960 supported low-cost housing for the elderly.

After studying the Minneapolis zoning ordinance in 1962, LWVMpls supported a new ordinance, which passed. LWVMpls studied efficiency in planning in 1963, and in 1964 supported several urban renewal projects: Harrison, Grant, Seward, and St. Anthony West. In 1965, an update was done on urban renewal, planning and zoning. LWVMpls adopted a broad consensus on planning goals after a study in 1966, which focused on the *Community Improvement Program*. The League then reviewed Model City and Pilot City programs in 1968. Action included supporting limits for billboards along Minneapolis freeways (1967), expanding the area for the Used Housing Program (1968) and a comprehensive review of the 1963 Zoning Ordinance (1969).

After brief studies of planning and zoning in 1970, LWVMpls supported a model uniform code and a Homeowner Do-It-Yourself Ordinance, both of which were adopted by the City Council. Also in 1970 LWVMpls supported 1) establishing an architectural review board, and 2) requiring special land use permits for gas stations and fast food outlets with criteria for their planning.

In 1971, LWVMpls Planning Committee took part in the five-year review of the City's zoning ordinance by letter and testimony, recommending stronger adherence to the Comprehensive Municipal Plan, a closer look at two-and-a-half story walkups, a stricter sign ordinance and better procedures for terminating non-conforming uses. It also examined building codes as they affected housing supply, finding that such codes seemed to be obstructive, preventing the use of new materials and manufactured housing. The Committee lobbied at the Legislature for the State Mandatory Uniform Building Code, which passed.

LWVMpls studied Development Districts in the fall of 1973, resulting in positions on low income housing units and the use of tax increment financing, development districts, and the power of eminent domain. LWVMpls testified before the City Council

and various legislative committees urging effective citizen participation in government in general and in development districts in particular.

In 1982, LWVMpls published a study that examined the relationship between two sets of circumstances—housing supply and current zoning in Minneapolis. Following this study LWVMpls adopted a position which would permit conversions of single-family houses to include small rental units in areas currently zoned R1. In addition to providing more affordable housing, these accessory housing conversions could allow elderly homeowners, including aging single women, to maintain a long-time residence and receive enough additional income to ease the burden of increasing costs.

As the City was preparing its policy in reviewing petitions for the purpose of creating accessory housing units in Minneapolis, LWVMpls urged the City Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to give equal consideration to creating one-bedroom units, as well as multiple units.

In April 2000, LWVMpls Housing Committee observers attended meetings of the Northside Redevelopment committee, the Shelter Advisory Board, and the City County Task Force on Homeless Families. The Committee sent letters to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council urging support for a new shelter. After a public hearing, the City Council supported the shelter unanimously. Love Power Church offered space for the shelter.

At the May 2008 city convention, LWVMpls members approved Housing Committee recommendations to drop all positions referring to Development Districts or Planning Districts.

Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Police

Studies

- **The Police and the Community**, LWVMpls, 1971, Committee Chair: Mrs. Earl F. Colburn, Jr.
- **The Police and the Community: A Second Look**, LWVMpls, 1976, Committee Chair: Joanna Buzek
- **Family Violence: How the Systems Respond**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chairs: Joan Higinbotham, Joanna Buzek
- **Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts**, LWVMpls, 1990, Chairs: Catherine Shreves, Kathy Davis Graves
- **Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts, Policy Report Update**, LWVMpls, 1995, Chairs: Catherine Shreves, Kathy Davis Graves; Author: Kathy Kolb

Positions

Support of fair and adequate law enforcement for all people and support of measures to ensure equal justice for all persons regardless of race and socio-economic status

LWVMpls supports:

1. An effective police department with sufficient staffing to provide law enforcement and other services, and which is responsive to the needs of the community. (1976)
2. The principle of a specific term of office for the Chief of Police in order to provide more stability and continuity to the administration. (1976)
3. Maintaining the use of professional criteria in the process of selecting the Chief of Police. (1976)
4. Commitment to an ongoing process to recruit well-qualified personnel, particularly minorities and women. (1976)
5. Salaries high enough and career opportunities sufficient to attract and retain competent personnel at all levels of the Department, including patrol work. (1976)
6. Training programs and administrative policies that provide every officer with a clear understanding of the police role as it relates to the community. (1976)
7. Keeping records on police performance including all citizen complaints and their disposition in order to develop more effective training programs. These records should also be used in the review of the Department's personnel policies. (1976)
8. External review of policies and procedures which guarantee citizen input. (1976)
9. Fair complaint procedures that are accessible, easy to use, and well publicized to encourage citizen participation and trust. (1976)
10. Specific training in crisis intervention for police officers. (1978)

Background

Justice and Law Enforcement positions of LWVMpls focus on the police, the courts (both municipal and juvenile), and handgun control.

LWVMpls began to study the justice system in 1970. An initial examination of police-community relations was contained in the publication, *The Police and the Community (1971)*. *The Police and the Community: A Second Look (1976)* studied current recruitment, training and complaint procedures. LWVMpls has acted by meeting with Precinct Advisory Committees, the Charter Commission and City Government to implement League positions. In 1978-91, members observed the Mayor's Task Force on Police-Community Relations. In 1979 League members testified before the Charter Commission in support of a Charter change creating a specific term for the Chief of Police. LWVMpls urged the Mayor and members of the Council to support a Charter amendment establishing a three-year term.

In October 1992, LWVMpls sponsored a public forum on the proposed City Charter Amendment that would establish a Community Service Bureau within the Police Department, run by either a police officer or civilian. LWVMpls, after the forum, supported this amendment.

In February 1993, LWVMpls sponsored a public forum in cooperation with Minneapolis Community College and the YWCA on the Minneapolis Civilian Police Review Authority (CPRA). Established by the City Council in 1990, the CPRA aimed to strengthen public confidence in the police department and to assure that the highest standards of professionalism are observed in the handling and disposition of allegations of abuse of authority.

In 1997, units discussed the topic "Community Policing". The briefing for discussion leaders was held at a precinct building in North Minneapolis.

Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Courts

Studies

- **Hennepin County Municipal Court**, LWVMpls, 1971, Committee Chair: Mrs. John Fraser Hart
- **Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County I: Structures and Procedures in Juvenile Court**, LWVMpls, 1972, Committee Chair: Ann Jaede
- **Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County II: Diversionary and Alternative Community Youth Resources-Nonresidential**, LWVMpls, 1973, Committee Chair: Judy Boebert
- **Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County-Revised, LWVMpls, 1974.** A combined and condensed version of *Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County I and II*

Positions

Updated 2009

Support of legal assistance and services for children in the justice system

LWVMpls supports:

1. Evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Hennepin County, including an expansion of legal assistance for all children, mandatory training in development and problems of adolescents for all persons working with youth in the juvenile justice system, expanded use of personnel having lifestyles and outlook similar to families served.
2. Flexibility in scheduling and decentralized court facilities for greater responsiveness to families served.
3. Maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes, and institutionalization for juvenile status offenses.
4. The availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality* community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. LWVMpls supports exploring the feasibility of community-based corrections for adult offenders as well.

**Including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents*

5. The consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for both juveniles and adults.
6. Continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
7. Diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels, but particularly by Court Services Intake, the Court, and the Police.

8. Constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, particularly due process of law; protection from invasion of privacy; and protection from unwarranted removal from their families unless truly voluntary and truly beneficial.
9. With regard to all records, the right of all affected persons (adult, parent and/or juvenile).
 - a. To know what record exists
 - b. To see that record unless detrimental to a party's welfare
 - c. To correct that record if inaccurate
 - d. To safeguard against unwarranted disclosure
10. The sealing and/or destruction of no-longer-useful juvenile records. Juvenile Court Records** should be handled according to the Rules of Procedure in Minnesota Probate-Juvenile Courts. It is the recording agency's responsibility to tell a person of these rights.

***Defined by law and procedures to include all documents filed with the Juvenile Court and all documents relating to the apprehension, detention, adjudication or disposition of the subject of a Juvenile Court case. This specifically includes records of the Court, Court Services, welfare and law enforcement agencies. This explicitly excludes records relating to traffic offenses, cases of persons contributing to delinquency of or neglect of a child, and adoption records.*

Background

The local justice item has been closely linked with state justice studies. Local Leagues have provided observers to various levels of the Minnesota court system and LWVMN concurred with a Minneapolis position on juvenile corrections. Because of the organization of the courts, much of the action in the justice portfolio has been carried out at the county level.

LWVMpls observed Municipal, District and the Minnesota Supreme Courts from 1971-76, compiling information for state and local Leagues. During this time the League published *Hennepin County Municipal Court (1971)*, *Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County, Vol. I (1972)*, and *Vol. II (1973)*. Lobbying for the creation of detoxification centers and improved salaries for judges followed. The Legislature adopted both changes. The Minneapolis Police Department used the juvenile justice studies as a resource in teaching "Crime and Justice" in the public schools. In 1975, the LWVMN concurred with positions derived from the juvenile justice study. LWVMpls also testified before the Hennepin County Grand Jury on the certification of juveniles to adult court.

In 1977-78, LWVMpls participated in an Urban Coalition Task Force studying minority sentencing and making recommendations to the bench. Also in 1978, LWVMpls Justice Committee prepared the Criminal Justice section of the Hennepin County revised handbook and assisted the LWVMN Criminal Justice Committee in updating the state judiciary publication.

In October 2003, LWVMpls recruited Hennepin County judges to participate in three public forums on the role of judges. These were held in inner city neighborhoods,

including Somali immigrant housing. The informal gatherings allowed for dialog between the judges and community members.

In September 2008, LWVMpls co-sponsored a public forum with WATCH (an organization which monitors the justice system) and the Hennepin County Bar Association. The panel presented information on the current selection process of judges in Minnesota and options for improvement of the system, including recommendations from a state commission.

In February 2009, LWVMpls voted to drop positions referring to Municipal Courts, which are no longer in place. Those cases are now heard in state district (county) courts.

Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement: Handguns

Studies

Family Violence: A Focus on Handguns, LWVMpls, 1983, Committee Chairs:
Connie Cameron, Wendy Rudman

Positions

Support of stricter control on handguns

LWVMpls supports: (1983)

1. Stricter penalties for gun-related crimes.
2. Required minimum education in the use of firearms for gun users.
3. Requiring a permit to buy a handgun.
4. Requiring registration of handguns in a way that makes the data retrievable by local, state and federal officials.
5. Requiring gun owners to carry liability insurance.
6. Confiscation of handguns not properly registered with particular attention to equal enforcement of the law and due process.
7. Educational programs promoting firearm safety.
8. Restrictions on possession, sales and transfer, transportation, and carrying of handguns.
9. The adoption of more stringent local restrictions on handguns.

LWVMpls opposes: Making current restrictions less stringent.

Background

In February 1983, LWVMpls members discussed the local study, *Family Violence: A Focus on Handguns* and developed positions on the possession of handguns. In response to a bill introduced in the 1984 legislative session to weaken the handgun restrictions in Minneapolis and St. Paul, LWVMpls attempted to have Leagues throughout the state concur with the Minneapolis position. The Board of the LWVMN did not feel the concurrence was sufficient to adopt as a LWVMN position. However, in 1990, LWVMN studied and came to consensus to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. A law passed in 1985 prohibited a local municipality from enacting stricter handgun control measures than that of the state. This weakened the Minneapolis controls.

(See Social Policy Sections on Family Violence, Prevention of Violence and Equal Opportunity)

Education

Studies

- **The Minneapolis Public Schools**, LWVMpls, 1967, Committee Chair: Mrs. Walter O. Stack
- **Public Law 89-10 Elementary and Secondary Education**, LWVMpls, 1967, (No longer available)
- **A Study of Educational Alternatives**, LWVMpls, 1974, Committee Chair: Mary Supel
- **A Study of Special Education Programs and Facilities in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1974, Committee Chair: Paula Goldberg
- **Administrative Decentralization of the Minneapolis Public School System**, LWVMpls, 1975, Committee Chair: Meredith Poland
- **Issues in Special Education**, LWVMpls, 1975, Committee Chair: Paula Goldberg
- **A Study of Special Education Programs in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1975, Committee Chair: Paula Goldberg
- **Minneapolis School Board**, LWVMpls, 1977, Committee Chair: Ruth Werntz
- **Minneapolis, City in Transition: Education**, LWVMpls, 1979, Coordinator: Judy McGuire; Committee Chairs: Ruth Werntz, Virginia Craig
- **The Effect of Budget Cuts, Part Three: Schools**, LWVMpls, 1983, Committee Chairs: Jean Greener, Gerry Sell
- **A Progress Report -- The Five-Year Plan of the Minneapolis Public Schools: Benchmark Testing/Intervention, Discipline, Desegregation/Integration**, LWVMpls, 1985, Committee Chairs: Barbara Flanigan, Gerry Sell
- **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1986, Committee Chairs: Pamela Berendt, Kay Kessel
- **Should the Minneapolis Public Schools—Serve Four-Year Olds?—Offer Full Day Kindergarten?**, LWVMpls, 1987, Committee Chairs: Barbara Flanigan, Karen Ringsrud
- **Valuing Children: The First Step, Early Childhood Care and Education in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1993, Chairs: Kathy Kolb, Peggy Pluimer
- **From Childhood to Adulthood: Putting Adolescents on a Healthy Lifetime Path**, LWVMpls and LWVStPaul, 1996, Chairs: Kathy Davis Graves, Kathy Kolb
- **The Middle School Achievement Project: a portrait of our Minneapolis public middle schools and recommendations for improvements**, LWVMpls, 1998, Chairs: Peggy Pluimer, Catherine Shreves
- **The Middle School Achievement Project: a continued look at our Minneapolis public middle schools and recommendations for improvements**, LWVMpls, 2000, Chairs: Peggy Pluimer, Susan Gray

Positions

Updated 2003

Support of adequate financing, effective organization, responsive planning and continued improvement for the Minneapolis Public Schools with the goal of quality, integrated education for all

School Board

LWVMpls supports:

1. An independent elected School Board. (1980)
2. A four-year term for School Board members. (1980)
3. Citizen participation in Board decisions. (1975)
4. Board responsibility for policy-making of a broad nature rather than on administrative details. (1975)

General Support

In deciding whether to support or oppose future programs of the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), LWVMpls supports the following criteria: (1970)

1. Promotion of the goal of quality integrated education for all students.
2. Flexibility, responsiveness, representation and efficiency within the school system.
3. More and better research and evaluation with publication of the results.
4. Adequate planning of programs involving transportation of students, including communication among school staff, parents, students and community.
5. Attention to the needs of the individual learner, to prepare her/him for life in our diverse, complex and interdependent nation and world.
6. Emphasis upon mastery of basic, marketable skills and understanding of students' and others individual self-worth.

Curriculum and Program

LWVMpls supports:

1. The continuance of existing educational alternative choices in the Minneapolis Public Schools.
2. Adequate funding for small class size in grades K-3. (2003)
3. Measures which would retain quality programs at the secondary level.
4. The Minneapolis Public Schools Human Relations Guidelines in principle. (1970)
5. Early identification of children with special needs.
6. The comprehensive high school geared to the needs of the individual student.
7. Programs geared to the child's health and welfare.

8. Strong curriculum, including a citywide program for the gifted and talented, remedial reading programs, foreign language programs, and vocational education.
9. Strengthening basic skills learning by setting competency standards using standardized tests and individual student evaluation and providing remedial measures as needed.

Student Evaluation

LWVMpls supports:

1. The use of appropriate tests to measure mastery of skills. We also support retaining students who have not mastered the skills required at their grade level, and providing effective remediation programs for low-achieving students. (1985)
2. Awarding a certificate of completion to those students who have passed the required courses and earned the necessary credits for graduation but who have failed, despite repeated attempts, to pass the required tests. (1985)
3. Evaluation of testing and intervention programs on an ongoing basis. (1985)

Desegregation/Integration

LWVMpls supports:

1. Busing as one method of achieving racial balance in the schools. (1979)
2. Ongoing examination of the neighborhood school concept in the light of *de facto* segregation, fluidity of population, more effective use of school buildings, and new trends in education.
3. Ongoing examination of the techniques of desegregation to determine if other techniques would better serve the needs of the community.
4. Ongoing recruiting efforts by the district to employ minority teachers for the Minneapolis Public Schools. (1985)
5. Building a shared understanding of racial, cultural and economic differences among students and staff. (1985)

Special Services

LWVMpls supports:

1. A comprehensive medical screening program for 3-5 year olds, including efforts to detect defects in vision, hearing and language development, abnormalities in physical development and abnormalities in neurological and psycho-motor development.
2. Adequate preschool services for children with special needs.
3. Adequate special education services for secondary students.
4. Special Learning and Behavior Problems (SLBP) services for all students requiring them.
5. Mainstreaming, within these guidelines:
 - a. Mainstreaming should occur only when it best serves the needs of the student.
 - b. When mainstreaming occurs, adequate support services should be provided for both students and staff. Class size should be limited.

- There should be adequate planning, evaluation and monitoring of progress.
- c. The MPS should continue to meet the special needs of children who cannot be well served by mainstreaming.
 6. A citizen advisory board for special education. The board should include parents, students, a representative from each disability group and other well-informed citizens. (1974)
 7. Requiring the MPS to assemble complete information describing the special education programs offered in Minneapolis and to assume responsibility for informing parents and the community about these programs and about the placement and appeal procedures.
 8. Requiring the MPS to inform parents in writing and in *understandable language* of their right to participate when the student support team first meets to discuss their child, and in all subsequent meetings, including those of the Special Education Referral and Coordinating Committee (SERCC).
 9. The guarantee of due process rights in special education placement. A listing of those rights should be included with the written notification of the right to participate. Included are the rights to: prior written notification concerning any proposed change in educational program, an impartial hearing, call witnesses, legal counsel, present evidence, examine all evidence, hear all witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, appeal, and a record of the hearing.

Teachers

LWVMpls supports:

1. Retaining staff and programs, if a choice must be made between: (1979)
 - a. Keeping elementary school buildings open or
 - b. Retaining staff and programs.
2. Retaining minority staff members.
3. Adequate staffing ratio. (1961)
4. Equitable personnel policies and procedures. (1961)
5. Requiring at least one course in special education for certification of all elementary and secondary teachers.
6. Requiring in-service training in special education for all classroom teachers and school personnel.
7. Measures and funding to improve evaluation of teachers and principals. This systematic evaluation should involve professional peers, parents, principals and students.

Budget

LWVMpls supports: A budget that is accurate, clear, comprehensive, consistent, and easily available to the public.

Citizen Participation

LWVMpls supports:

1. The concept that it is the responsibility of the MPS to: (1974)
 - a. Present information relevant to the school policy-making process to all members of the school community
 - b. Provide the opportunity for members of the school community to express concerns about school policy and take these concerns into consideration when making policy.
 - c. Provide for community representation within the school policy-making process.
2. Citizen participation which includes: open School Board meetings, public hearings on the budget, facilities reports, citizen opportunity to speak at School Board meetings, and opportunities to call or write School Board members.

Discipline

LWVMpls supports:

1. The concept of an explicit, citywide discipline policy listing unacceptable behavior and prescribing exact penalties. LWVMpls believes that application of the discipline policy should reflect the different age, developmental stages and special needs of students. (1985)
2. Programs to build positive behavior and self-control in addition to emphasizing negative consequences for misbehavior. (1985)
3. Use of "behavior rooms" and in-school suspension as a sanction for discipline infractions. (1985)
4. No corporal punishment in the MPS. (1985)

Four-Year-Olds

LWVMpls supports: (1987)

1. Programs of high quality to serve at-risk four-year-olds.
2. Actions to encourage public and private organizations to assign high priority to high-risk preschoolers.
3. Public school and other community programs for at-risk four-year-olds if public or private funding is available.
4. The following safeguards if the public schools expand programs for four-year-olds:
 - a. Parents should be substantially involved as partners in the education of their children.
 - b. Class size should be small, not to exceed 20, and the maximum staff/student ratio should be 1:10.
 - c. Administrators dealing with four-year-olds should have special training.
 - d. Curriculum must be appropriate for four-year-olds with an emphasis on child-initiated activities.

Kindergarten

LWVMpls supports: (1987)

1. Full day kindergarten programs for all children in the MPS assuming adequate state funding.

2. Serving at-risk four-year-olds rather than all five-year-olds in full-day kindergarten, if the MPS must choose between programs for at-risk four-year olds and full-day kindergarten.
3. Targeting at-risk children for full-day kindergarten if the MPS receives limited monies for full-day kindergarten.

(For **Education** positions relating to early childhood, violence prevention, Indian affairs and adolescent health see Social Policy.)

Background

In the continuing evolution of its position on education, LWVMpls is and has been well served by the state and national Leagues of Women Voters. LWVUS positions focusing on equal access to high quality education fit the needs of a city with a significant minority population and a slow-growing tax base. LWVMN's strong support for equitable funding of education works to the City's advantage and augments LWVMpls' call for adequate financing for the Minneapolis Public School (MPS).

The long list of support positions has accumulated over many years of sustained League interest in and study of the MPS. In 1926 LWVMpls became concerned about school employment policies and began its work to end discrimination against married women teachers. In 1938-39 LWVMpls worked for better community understanding of public school problems and studied the schools' special services in 1941. In 1947 it supported a proposed one-percent tax on earned income for financing schools.

LWVMpls studied and supported passage of the Independent School District Law in 1959. A two-year study of the schools followed which included curriculum, salary schedules and testing. The ensuing consensus resulted in League support for annual budgets, a five-year building program, equitable personnel policies, adequate staffing ratios, and amendments to the 1959 law.

In 1969, LWVMpls opposed a recommended school building plan, but supported the proposed educational program and asked for a broadly based citizens committee to review the school system's educational objectives.

LWVMpls gave strong support to the schools' Human Relations Guidelines, following a study in 1970. Also in 1970, LWVMpls adopted the criteria to be used in supporting or opposing future school programs.

The 1974 study, *Educational Alternatives*, resulted in three positions on citizen participation.

The positions on special education came as a result of two studies, *Special Education Programs in Minneapolis* in 1974 and *Issues in Special Education* in 1975. The district responded to the 1974 LWVMpls recommendations and carried out some of them, such as providing informational booklets to all parents and forming a Citizen Advisory Board for Special Education and a Citizen Committee on the Budget Process (1975).

In 1975 LWVMpls also published and studied *Administrative Decentralization of the Minneapolis Public School System*. The study was for informational purposes only, with no consensus.

A 1975 study, *Minneapolis School Board*, resulted in a consensus that the present avenues open for citizen participation are adequate and that School Board duties should center on policy-making rather than administration. At that time, members did not reach consensus on the length of term of office for School Board members or their election on a citywide vs. a district basis. However, after the 1980 study, *Minneapolis Government Structure: Help or Hindrance?*, members recommended four-year terms for School Board members. They also affirmed support for an independent School Board.

The 1979 study, *Minneapolis: City in Transition*, included a section devoted to education. That study yielded eight new positions which dealt with support for alternative educational choices, busing (reiterating a national position), competency standards, teacher evaluation, reduced class size in grades one and two, retention of minority staff, grade reorganization at the secondary level, and emphasis on staff and programs rather than buildings.

In October 1981 LWVMpls members reviewed a draft of Part I of the 5-Year Plan for the MPS in order to be informed on the process and substance of the planning process. Members gave feedback (no consensus) on earlier community involvement.

In May 1983, LWVMpls published and studied *The Effect of Budget Cuts. Part 3: Schools*, which dealt with the effects of State and Federal Budget cuts on the MPS. Consensus was not taken.

The 1983 LWVMpls City Convention adopted a two-year item of observation and study of the MPS Five-Year Plan. As an update to members, the education committee prepared brief reports on subsidizing students, volunteer programs, desegregation and compliance, alternative educational programs and junior high school curriculum. Consensus was not taken but members discussed the material in the November 1983 unit meetings and gave direction for further study and action.

The 1985 study, *A Progress Report—The Five-Year Plan of the Minneapolis Public Schools: Benchmark Testing/Intervention, Discipline, Desegregation/Integration* resulted in ten new positions. These included support of an emphasis on student mastery of basic skills and benchmark tests provided there is effective remediation and evaluation. This study also urged the Board to award a certificate of completion to certain students who have passed the required courses and earned necessary credits for graduation but are unable to pass the ninth grade benchmark tests.

League members reviewed the new citywide discipline code as well as certain programs designed to foster positive behavior among MPS students in the 1985 study. Regarding discipline, LWVMpls supported the concept of an explicit citywide discipline policy but urged redrafting to reflect the different age and developmental stages of students and to define offenses more clearly. However, the three-day mandatory suspensions for students in grades K-6 for fighting and verbal aggression and disrespect to staff were strongly opposed.

LWVMpls supported programs that build positive behavior and self-control, the use of additional behavior rooms and in-school suspension. In addition, LWVMpls urged discontinuance of the use of corporal punishment in the MPS. The Board of Education voted to abolish the use of corporal punishment in the fall of 1986.

With respect to desegregation/integration, LWVMpls urged a re-examination of the techniques of desegregation that might better serve the community, especially the North-Edison trimester exchange. The district was also urged to stress an ongoing recruiting effort for minority teachers and continued building of a shared understanding of racial, cultural and economic differences among students and staffs.

In 1985-86 several members of LWVMpls Education Committee were appointed to MPS planning committees for the 1987-92 Five-Year Plan. In addition, the Education Committee continued to monitor implementation of the original Five-Year Plan and testified when necessary based on the April 1985 consensus positions. An update on the five-year planning process for 1987-92 was included in the April 1985 VOTER.

Also in the 1985-86 program year, LWVMpls convened a community committee on school board elections at the request of the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education.

In 1985-86 members of LWVMpls Education Committee researched the teenage pregnancy study, documenting the need for services for teenage students and student mothers. This eventually led to support for more Mother and Infant Continuing Education (MICE) programs and health clinics in the Minneapolis high schools.

The April 1987 study *Should the Minneapolis Public Schools—Serve Four-Year Olds?—Offer Full Day Kindergarten?*, resulted in eight new positions. Members supported both public school services for four-year-olds and full-day kindergarten, with the priority to go to services for at-risk four-year-olds.

Education Committee members have served on a variety of committees, councils, consortiums, task forces and initiatives in order to lobby LWVMpls positions and principles regarding the care and education of children. In 1989, members of the Education Committee requested and received permission from the LWVMN to lobby at the State Legislature in support of LWVMpls position on reduced class size and the LWVMN position on desegregation. Education Committee members were also active members of the 1989-91 CMAL Metropolitan Desegregation study and the LWVMN study of the financing of education in Minnesota.

The Education Committee presented a City Focus forum on metropolitan desegregation in Spring 1992. The Committee also participated in the Minnesota 2000 Initiative sponsored by Governor Carlson in 1992/93 and in conjunction was trained to convene community meetings.

In 1996, LWVMpls presented a forum on school vouchers. In Fall 1996 the LWVMpls Board supported the Better Schools referendum, an excess levy referendum to reduce class size.

In 1998, LWVMpls published *The Middle School Achievement Project: a portrait of our Minneapolis public middle schools and recommendations for improvements* following a shadowing of students and staff. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation funded this project. LWVMpls met with MSP Superintendent and middle school administrators about the report results and to distribute the report. Education Committee members served on four of the five district task forces working for middle school reform (family and community involvement, small scale learning environments, standards and staff development and behavior). LWVMpls sponsored a nationally recognized speaker to address parents and the community on how to raise academically successful children.

Representatives from LWVMpls met with a state senator to discuss the 1998 middle school report, as well as full funding for middle schools hard hit by compensatory education changes. Members also met with state legislators to promote funding for early intervention and reading grants.

In October 2000, Education Committee members worked hard for the passage of the excess property tax referendum, which passed by a large margin. The second middle school report, *The Middle School Achievement Project: a continued look at our Minneapolis public middle schools and recommendations for improvements* was released. The report was widely disseminated to the public and highlighted in the media. Subsequently Education Committee members participated in the external review committee for three MPS facilities.

During the 2001 legislative session many LWVMpls members lobbied the legislature and the governor to increase funding for public schools.

During the 2002 -2003 program year, Unit 1 reviewed the studies that are the basis for LWVMpls education positions, discussed their relevance to current conditions and made recommendations. The following changes were approved at the 2003 City Convention:

- Curriculum and Program: The position on "Increased funding to reduce class size in grades 1 and 2" was updated to "Adequate funding for small class size in K-3."
- Desegregation/Integration: Members voted to drop the position of support for "Annual review of school boundaries with frequent revision." because they felt frequent revision was not necessary.
- Budget: Members voted to drop "Elimination of the referendum procedure in raising the school mill rate" because LWVMpls has been supporting the referendum process. The position "An improved public relations program within the school budget" was dropped.
- Four-Year-Olds: The position "Programs for four-year-olds should be located in K-3 or early childhood centers (rather than K-6 buildings) whenever possible" was dropped because there are now more K-8 buildings. The position "The expansion of Head Start in Minneapolis and other community programs for high-risk four year olds" was dropped.

During the 2003-2004 program year the Education Committee was active in educating LWVMpls members and the public about the No Child Left Behind legislation. There were four VOTER articles, a community forum in February and member discussion.

In March 2004 LWVMpls sent a letter to the MPS Interim Superintendent and members of the School Board to inform them that LWVMpls supports "retaining staff and programs, if a choice must be made between a) keeping elementary buildings open or b) retaining staff and programs."

In September 2004, LWVMpls sponsored a meeting: *The Economic Value of Early Childhood Education*. Art Rolnick of the Federal Reserve discussed his research in this area.

In 2004, charter schools were a topic for member discussion. In November 2005, LWVMpls sponsored a public forum *Education: A Good Cents Investment*.

In April 2007, LWVMpls sponsored the public forum *Teacher Placement: Who Decides*.

LWVMpls members have had an opportunity to discuss issues with members of the Minneapolis School Board during breakfast meetings held in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2007.

Social Policy

Revised 2009

LWVMpls Social Policy positions cover a range of issues: Equal Opportunity, Welfare/Income Assistance, Violence (Family Violence and Prevention of Violence), Children's Issues (Child Care, Child Support, and Adolescent Health), Health Issues and Indian Affairs.

Social Policy: Equal Opportunity

Studies

- **Discrimination in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1964
- **What's Happening in Minneapolis?**, LWVMpls, 1965
- **Minneapolis Works for Equal Opportunity**, LWVMpls, 1966, (No longer available)
- **The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chairs: Polly Keppel, Kay Kessel, Mary Ojeda
- **Affirmative Action: An Update**, LWVMpls, 1982, Committee Chair: Mary Ojeda
- **Justice in the Workplace: Pay Equity**, LWVMpls, 1984, Committee Chair: Carolyn Hendrixson
- **Reflections on Race**, LWVMpls, 1991, Committee Chairs: Carol Green, Holly Trittipio

Positions

Support of policies and procedures to ensure equality of opportunity in Minneapolis (This includes support of equal opportunity in housing, education, public accommodations, public services, employment and support of efforts to eliminate racism in our community)

LWVMpls supports:

1. Adequate financing and staffing of the Civil Rights Commission to enforce the law.
2. Those changes in the City civil rights law that would lead to more effective administration of the law.
3. The concept of "equal pay for work of equal value" based on bias-free job evaluation.
4. Job-sharing with pro-rated benefits. (1980)
5. Efforts to eliminate racism. These efforts can be actions by individuals or groups both public and private. (1991)

Background

Beginning in the mid-forties LWVMpls supported equal opportunity in employment. The League worked for the establishment of a Fair Employment Practices Commission, beginning in 1947 until it was included in a larger agency in 1967.

Publication of *Discrimination in Minneapolis* (1964) and *Minneapolis Works for Equal Opportunity* (1966) led to League support for a broadly based local enforcement agency to work for equal opportunity in education, housing, public accommodations and public services. LWVMpls lobbied for such an agency in 1967 and participated in the Minneapolis Ad Hoc Committee on Civil and Human Rights, which prepared and publicized the ordinance. LWVMpls urged increased representation of non-white persons on the Minneapolis Human Relations Commission.

After an update in 1970, LWVMpls supported certain changes in the Civil Rights Ordinance including the establishment of an effective compliance program and inclusion of "equal opportunity on the basis of sex" in the ordinance.

In coalition with other groups, LWVMpls supported the establishment of an Affirmative Action Program for the City of Minneapolis in 1971. In 1980 Minneapolis proposed a revised Affirmative Action Program. League members monitored the progress of revision. LWVMpls supported job-sharing and the flextime concepts, which culminated in lobbying and passage of a Job-Sharing Bill by the Minnesota Legislature in 1980. In 1980 LWVMpls published *The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?* which focused more attention on women's disadvantaged economic condition. In 1980 the Leagues in Hennepin County were encouraged to seek concurrence on the single working mother study to enable action at the county level.

Monitoring of committees and organizations has included the Minneapolis Human Rights Commission and the Council for the Economic Status of Women.

At City Convention in June 1990, members adopted racial intolerance as the study topic for the ensuing year. The study committee invited many community members to aid them in setting the focus for the topic. Briefing and unit meetings were designed to aid LWVMpls members in becoming more aware of their racial attitudes and how those attitudes developed. INTER-RACE provided training for LWVMpls discussion leaders and "World of Difference" provided outside speakers for unit meetings. As a second component LWVMpls published *Reflections on Race*, a collection of personal writings from community people of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. It also contained cultural information on many of the racial/ethnic groups in the Twin Cities area, a list of organizations, and what they were doing to combat racism, and a list of discussion questions to aid readers in examining their own racial attitudes and how they developed. This publication was utilized by a wide variety of public and private agencies for personnel training.

As a follow-up to the Racial Intolerance Program, LWVMpls and Minneapolis Community College brought Dr. William Julius Wilson, a noted authority on race and poverty from the University of Chicago, to speak at a City Focus Forum in the spring of 1992. His topic was *Poverty, Joblessness, and Family Structure in the Inner City: A Comparative Perspective*.

In 1997, LWVMpls partnered with the Central City Neighborhood Partnership and the People of Phillips to present a public forum on classism and its effects on livability in the City of Minneapolis.

During 1999 LWVMpls sponsored Community Circle Dialogues on race, class, housing and segregation. This was part of the Housing Equity Project. Fall 1999 saw LWVMpls partnered with community leaders in an Affirmative Action Summit. James Meredith was the keynote speaker.

In November 2000, members of Unit 48 sponsored a public forum: The Examination of the Racial Disparity Phenomenon in Minnesota. The speakers were from the Council on Crime and Justice, which did a five-year study, *Racial Disparity Initiative*.

In April 2002, the discussion topic for unit members was Racial Profiling.

In 2009, LWVMpls dropped an outdated position on the Civil Rights ordinance.

(See also Social Policy: Indian Affairs)

Social Policy: Welfare/Income Assistance

Studies

- **Food Programs for the Elderly**, LWVMpls, 1973, Committee Chair: Mary Alyce Pearson
- **From Township Relief to General Assistance**, LWVMpls, 1974, Committee Chair: Lynne M. Benz
- **In-Home Supportive Services: A Choice for the Elderly**, LWVMpls, 1975
- **More About Welfare**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Kay Kessel
- **The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chairs: Polly Keppel, Kay Kessel, Mary Ojeda
- **Social Policy: An Update**, LWVMpls, 1982, Committee Chair: Kay Kessel

Positions

LWVMpls uses LWWUS and LWVMN positions when taking action on these issues.

LWWUS position: Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Background

During 1971-72 LWVMpls Welfare Committee testified against cessation of supplementary income grants to welfare recipients by Hennepin County. LWVMpls sought to educate the public about the myths of welfare. LWVMpls presented a statement to the Ways and Means Committee of the City Council supporting establishment of a county or state-supervised system of general relief and requested adoption of a budget incorporating increased allowance standards for welfare recipients. By 1973, Hennepin County took responsibility for general relief from the City, a move supported by LWVMpls. A workshop on welfare, sponsored by LWVMpls in 1973, provided information about the County Welfare Department and gave differing perceptions of the success of that system.

In 1978-79 LWVMpls prepared an update on public welfare. During this period LWVMpls attended legislative hearings on the federal welfare proposal and presented League positions.

A number of updates of information regarding various welfare issues, food stamps, and women's issues have been printed in the VOTER.

In 1980, the study *The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?* was published. It focused on various welfare policies as they related to women with children.

Social Policy: Family Violence/Prevention of Violence

Studies

- **Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County I: Structures and Procedures in Juvenile Court**, LWVMpls, 1972, Committee Chair: Ann Jaede
- **Juvenile Justice in Hennepin County II: Diversionary and Alternative Community Youth Resources-Nonresidential**, LWVMpls, 1973, Committee Chair: Judy Boebert
- **Protecting Minnesota's Children**, LWVMN, 1976, Coordinator: Polly Keppel
- **Family Violence: How the Systems Respond**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chairs: Joan Higinbotham, Joanna Buzek
- **Family Violence: A Focus on Handguns**, LWVMpls, 1983, Committee Chairs: Connie Cameron, Wendy Rudman
- **Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts**, LWVMpls, 1990, Committee Chairs: Kathy Davis Graves, Catherine Shreves
- **Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts, A Policy Report Update**, LWVMpls, 1995, Committee Chairs: Kathy Davis Graves, Catherine Shreves; Author: Kathy Kolb

Positions

Support of improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support of improved services for the victims and violence prevention programs in our community

LWVMpls also uses LWVMN positions when taking action on these issues.

LWVMpls supports:

1. Strong child abuse laws with prime concern for the protection and welfare of the child. (1972,1973)
2. Including sex offenses under child abuse laws. (1972, 1973)
3. Extending immunity to all-persons reporting suspected child abuse in good faith. (1972, 1973)
4. A local and state central reporting agency for all child abuse cases. (1972, 1973)
5. Using a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse. (1978)
6. Providing sufficient advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence. (1978)
7. Establishing sufficient shelters for battered women. (1978)
8. Specific training in crisis intervention for police officers. (1978)
9. A complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services. (1978)
10. Providing immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence. (1978)
11. A coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1978)
12. Educational programs to prevent violent behavior, that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of

- emotions, non-violent conflict resolution, and respect for others. This would include support for: (1990)
- a. Government-sponsored parenting and early childhood classes.
 - b. Local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula.
 - c. Use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula.
 - d. Training for childcare providers.
13. A requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training. (1990)
 14. The use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; e.g., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality. (1990)
 15. Efforts by state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence. (1990)
 16. Allocation of public monies in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior. (1990)
 17. The following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: (1990)
 - a. Religious community
 - b. Business community
 - c. Legal community
 - d. Medical community
 - e. Media
 - f. Civic and recreation community
 18. Efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence. (1990)
 19. Efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually violent pornography. (1990)

(See also Handgun positions under Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement)

Background

Family violence positions are based in part on the studies of Juvenile Justice, which were completed in 1972-73. They were expanded in 1978 with the publication of LWVMpls study, *Family Violence: How the Systems Respond*. In preparing for this publication, LWVMpls observed the legislative sub-committee on child abuse, the county board's sub-committee on child abuse and the Metro Area Consortium on Battered Women, and interviewed more than 50 professionals in law enforcement, health care and social services.

Also in 1978, LWVMpls organized a general meeting for the Hennepin County Leagues of Women Voters and an open meeting for the community on family violence. In addition, League members provided workshops and other assistance to

Leagues throughout Minnesota, resulting in LWVMN's concurrence with many of the LWVMpls positions on family violence.

In 1978-79 League members served on the Mayor's Task Force on Family Violence. In 1983 LWVMpls members discussed the local study, *Family Violence: A Focus on Handguns*, and developed positions on stricter control of handguns. (See also Handgun positions under Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement)

At City Convention in June 1989, members were urged to support a study of violence. The City had been besieged by acts of violence and community concern was high. The attorney general of the state of Minnesota had urged civic groups to study this issue and specifically named the League of Women Voters. The resulting study, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts*, was published in April 1990. Sixty-eight professionals from the fields of education, social services, mental health, public health, criminal justice, media, business, religion, and community services were interviewed for the study.

The majority of the professionals interviewed believed that violence is a learned behavior, and that primary prevention efforts can facilitate change by offering people alternative approaches to conflict. LWVMpls members agreed on eight positions. However, no consensus was reached on the issues of:

1. Whether the government should in some way regulate the violence shown on television, in the music industry, or in video computer games.
2. Whether some level of government should regulate the production of sexually violent pornography.

In June 1991, LWVMpls asked members of LWVMN to study the issue of violence prevention in an effort to reach consensus on the eight positions. During the fall of 1991, local Leagues around the state studied the LWVMpls report, and in January 1991 concurred with all eight positions. During the 1992 Minnesota legislative session, LWVMpls members lobbied on behalf of the LWVMN for several pieces of legislation, of which the following were passed:

1. \$1.5 million was allocated from the general fund for a grant program that encourages school districts to implement an anti-violence curriculum and provide training for school district staff in violence prevention and anti-sexual harassment behavior.
2. Legislation that requires all post-secondary private and public schools to develop plans for training programs for faculty, staff and students regarding the extent and causes of violence, and to develop appropriate campus policies to address violence and sexual harassment.
3. \$250,000 was allocated to encourage the establishment of community violence prevention councils by cities, counties and school boards.

At City Convention in June 1992, based on current research and best practices, LWVMpls voted to drop the 1978 position supporting mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.

1995 saw the release of *Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Focus on Primary Prevention Efforts, A Policy Report Update*. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* lauded this update.

Social Policy: Childcare/Early Childhood Education

Revised 2009

Studies

- **Daycare: The Needs and the Programs**, LWVMpls, 1971, Committee Chair: Margee Bracken
- **The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chairs: Polly Keppel, Kay Kessel, Mary Ojeda
- **Valuing Children: The First Step, Early Childhood Care and Education in Minneapolis, LWVMpls**, 1993, Committee Chairs: Kathy Kolb, Peggy Pluimer.

Positions

Support of quality childcare concerned with the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the child

Support of assuring sufficient funding from the federal, state, and county sources for child care programs

Support of public policies and programs that value and support young children, families, and those who work with children and families

LWVMpls supports:

1. Childcare fees determined on a sliding scale according to parents' income when government funds are involved.
2. State and federal standards that promote quality child care but allow for flexibility of programs.
3. Continuing education and/or training for the staffs of child care centers.
4. Meaningful parent participation in childcare facilities.
5. Expanding the Minneapolis Public Schools' school-age childcare program (formerly "Minneapolis Kids").
6. Public policies that value and support young children and families in the City of Minneapolis.
7. In a time of limited resources, giving priority to serving lower income children when funding early childhood care and education programs and services.
8. Access to a continuum of quality services and programs for young children and families.
9. Applicants seeking funding for or agencies funding early childhood care and education programs and services be required to provide the following:
 - a. Documentation of anticipated impact on existing programs and services.
 - b. Evidence of planned collaboration/coordination with relevant programs and services.
 - c. A plan for the evaluation of the program or service.

10. A position of Early Childhood Care and Education Coordinator established and funded by the City of Minneapolis.
11. Policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of early childhood care and education professionals and provide adequate wages and benefits to individuals working in the field.
12. Efforts to educate the public on the critical importance of quality early childhood care and education.

Background

LWVMpls first studied issues relating to young children in the 1971 study, *Daycare: The Needs and Programs*. It was followed by *The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?* in 1980. By 1992, early childhood settings typically incorporated components of childcare and education, and it was felt that this change in direction warranted further study. In addition, there were many local initiatives to encourage collaborations between agencies offering varied services for young children. At the June 1992 LWVMpls City Convention, members voted to study the opportunities for and the coordination of public and private early childhood care and education programs for all families in the City of Minneapolis. The study, *Valuing Children: The First Step: Early Childhood Care and Education in Minneapolis*, was published in May 1993.

As stated in the Executive Summary of the study, many proposals and initiatives affecting early childhood programs were in progress, and the situation continues to change. LWVMpls members were active on numerous committees, boards, and task forces at city, metropolitan and state levels. These included Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association (Board member), Child Care Works (Executive Director), Congregations Concerned for Children (Executive Director), Success by 6 Partnership group (for United Way), the Minneapolis Interagency Early Intervention Committee (Minneapolis Public School representative), and Strong Beginnings (a program of the Minneapolis Public Schools).

In the fall of 1993, LWVMpls lobbied the Hennepin County Commissioners successfully on behalf of the Leagues in Hennepin County, with their consent, for additional funds to the Sliding Fee Program.

LWVMpls continued to be active in a variety of ways on childcare issues. LWVMpls has worked through the Children's Lobby and the Citizens Advisory Committees advocating for adequate funding for childcare. LWVMpls distributed studies to Minneapolis businesses and corporations calling attention to the child care issues affecting their employees and provided speakers and assistance to Hennepin County Leagues in their concurrence in the positions from the single working mother study. LWVMpls also provided speakers to the community addressing the issues in the single working mother study.

Social Policy: Child Support

Studies

- **The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chairs: Polly Keppel, Kay Kessel, Mary Ojeda
- **Update: Child Support**, LWVMpls, 1981, Committee Chair: Polly Keppel

Positions

Support for administration and enforcement of child support payments

LWVMpls supports:

1. Keeping records of court-ordered child support and alimony payments to provide a means of assessing the degree of non-custodial parents' responsibility for their children. (1980)
2. Stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. (1980)

Background

The 1980 study, *The Single Working Mother: Can She Make It?*, drew LWVMpls attention to the economic dislocation and dual role responsibilities (parent/breadwinner) of the single mother. Two new positions resulted from that study. An update on child support was completed for February 1981 unit meetings. This information was distributed countywide. Action included informational lobbying at the legislature. A LWVMpls member served on the Hennepin County Attorney's task force on Child Support Enforcement.

Social Policy: Adolescent Health

Revised 2009

Studies

- **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in Minneapolis: A Community Concern**, LWVMpls, 1986, Committee Chairs: Pamela Berendt, Kay Kessel
- **From Childhood to Adulthood: Putting Adolescents on a Healthy Lifetime Path**, LWVMpls and LWVStPaul, 1996, Committee Chairs: Kathy Davis Graves, Kathy Kolb

Positions

Support of coordinated and accessible health, education and social services for teens, including services for pregnant teens

Support of teen pregnancy prevention efforts in the public schools

LWVMpls supports:

1. The collection of data on dropouts for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
2. Increased prevention efforts in the Minneapolis Public Schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy prevention programs can include:
 - a. Sex education for both elementary and secondary students.
 - b. Development of decision-making skills.
 - c. Support groups.
 - d. Outreach for high-risk students.
 - e. Training for staff awareness.
3. A prevention curriculum, which includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents, be used in the Minneapolis Public Schools.
4. Strong staff training programs for Minneapolis school staff.
5. Hennepin County provide funding for childcare programs in or near each of the Minneapolis Public School high schools for use by school-age mothers.
6. The Minneapolis Health Department and Hennepin County Medical Center provide full-time mini-clinics in every high school.
7. Health care providers work together to publicize the necessity of prenatal care and the locations where free and low-cost health services can be obtained.
8. An organization such as the Mayor's Youth Coordinating Council, the United Way or another appropriate agency to develop an up-to-date directory of services available in Minneapolis and facilitate coordination between all programs.
9. The United Way and private foundations be encouraged to help fund the public health and education programs for pregnant teens and teenage parents in Minneapolis

10. The Mayor's office coordinating a community effort to locate adolescent mothers who have not completed high school and direct them to educational support services. (1996)
11. Policies and programs that focus on prevention for adolescents:
 - a. Mandatory health care education for students in kindergarten through grade 12.
 - b. Education and/or continuing education specific to adolescent health issues for primary care providers serving adolescent clients.
 - c. Health care services for adolescents that are holistic and coordinated. (1996)
12. Adolescent health care programs and policies that:
 - a. Respect adolescents' need for confidentiality.
 - b. Provide mental health services paid for by insurers.
 - c. Ensure that all adolescents have convenient access to health care services. (1996)
13. Adequate and reliable funding for adolescent health care. (1996)

Background

LWVMpls published the study *Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in Minneapolis: A Community Concern* in 1986. The study looked at the impact of teenage pregnancy on teen parents, the child and the community and ascertained the availability and the quality of educational, health and social services for teenage parents and their children. It was the intention of LWVMpls that agencies, foundations and policy makers use the study to coordinate and adequately fund effective programs to help Minneapolis teenagers and their children.

There was overwhelming support by the membership for the positions resulting from the study. There was a strong statement from members that prevention should be the first priority in addressing the problem of adolescent pregnancy.

In the months following the 1986 consensus LWVMpls lobbied the Minneapolis City Council and secured additional funding for school-based health clinics with matching in-kind contributions from the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The League provided speakers to the community addressing the issues raised by the study. A member of LWVMpls served on the Community Education Advisory Committee for the Mayor's Project on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting.

In 1996, LWVMpls released the study, *From Childhood to Adulthood: Putting Adolescents on a Healthy Lifetime Path*, which advocated school clinics and services for at-risk teens. It argued that there is evidence that high school mini-clinics can be effective in helping to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy as well as meet many other health needs for high school age students.

Social Policy: Health

Studies

- **In-Home Supportive Services: A Choice for the Elderly**, LWVMpls, 1975
- **Public Health: Some Local Issues**, LWVMpls, 1986, Committee Chair: Barbara Dols
- **Mental Health Monitoring Project: Hennepin County**, LWVMpls, 1991, Coordinator: Mary Sandbo
- **Mental Health Monitoring Project 1991/92, Phase II: Housing**, LWVMpls 1992, Coordinator: Jane Olmsted Papageorgiou
- **Current Public Mental Health Policy in Minnesota With An Emphasis On Hennepin County**, LWVMpls, 2007, Committee Chairs: Barbara Flanigan, Barbara Korophak

Positions

LWVMpls uses the LWVUS and LWVMN positions when taking action on these issues.

Background

In May 2007, members of Unit 48 sponsored a public meeting, "An Update on Public Health Services in Minnesota: Mental Health and Legislative Proposals Focusing on Hennepin County." This topic examined how people with serious mental illness are fitting into the community in our current public health system.

In March 2009 LWVMpls co-sponsored a public forum on unwanted synthetic chemicals in everyday consumer products and how the City of Minneapolis Sustainability Office and the Healthy Legacy Coalition are addressing them.

(See also Social Policy: Adolescent Health)

Social Policy: Indian Affairs

Studies

- **Indians in Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1968, Committee Chair: Dottie Speidel
- **American Indians and Minneapolis Public Services**, LWVMpls, 1971, Committee Chair: Mrs. Sally Martineau
- **American Indians in Minneapolis: An Update**, LWVMpls, 1984, Committee Chair: Kay Kessel

Positions

Updated 1984

Support of adequate services for American Indians living in Minneapolis

LWVMpls supports:

1. Adequate services to American Indians in Minneapolis by local public and private agencies through:
 - a. Staff training to increase employee understanding of American Indians, their background and culture.
 - b. Adequate staffing of agencies, particularly through the hiring of more American Indians.
 - c. Outreach of the agencies into the community they attempt to serve.
 - d. Consultation with American Indians about programs intended to serve them.
2. Adequately financed and staffed programs for which there is support in the American Indian community.
3. Increased federal responsibility for Indians in Minneapolis, through federal funds and programs allowing for local decision-making by American Indians.
4. The principle that local government should be responsible for all citizens, and where American Indians have special and unique problems, should assume that responsibility.

Background

In 1968, *Indians in Minneapolis* was published. It was followed by discussions with the Board of Education on the special educational needs of local Indians. *American Indians and Minneapolis Public Services* was published in 1971. Based on interviews with administrators of 24 key local public agencies, the study examined how existing agencies were meeting the needs of urban Indians. The 1984 *American Indians in Minneapolis: An Update* was a collaborative effort between LWVMpls and leaders in the Indian community. The briefing for unit discussion leaders was a public forum co-sponsored by the YWCA Resource Center and LWVMpls.

LWVMpls has assisted with elections in Indian organizations. LWVMpls has provided on-going support for programs that specifically meet the needs of Indians as well as support for affirmative action goals on behalf of Indians. LWVMpls monitored proposed federal and state legislation concerned with American Indian people—for

example, changes in the Indian Affairs Commission (1976) and support of legislation to create bilingual education programs in public schools (1975 and 1977).

Livability

Studies

- **Minneapolis, City in Transition: Population**, LWVMpls, 1979, Coordinator: Judy McGuire: Committee Chair: Ann Pugliese
- **Images of Minneapolis**, LWVMpls, 1988, Committee Chair: Margaret Bloyer
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program Monitoring Report: The Policy Board and Implementation Process**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Susan Reinhart, Mary Lou Hill
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program Action Plan Project Committee Report**, LWVMpls, 1994, Chairs: Lyn Lewis, Pat Werner

Positions

Support of public policies and action to maintain and improve the livability of Minneapolis neighborhoods

LWVMpls supports:

1. City Policies to enhance each neighborhood to attract and keep a variety of residents, particularly families with children. (1979)
2. Public policy action by the City to improve citywide livability with emphasis on:
 - a. Addressing issues of crime and public safety. (1988)
 - b. Maintaining and upgrading neighborhood appearance. (1988)
 - c. Encouraging affordable housing. (1988)
 - d. Providing quality education and vital schools. (1988)
 - e. Keeping property taxes reasonable. (1988)
 - f. Minimizing the effects of airplane and traffic noise. (1988)

Background

LWVMpls has a long history of studying issues related to the livability of the City of Minneapolis. Past studies have made an impartial and in-depth examination of particular issues, as varied as early childhood education and financing of parks. As a result of these studies, LWVMpls has positions on a wide range of issues arrived at through examination of the facts.

In 1979 the League published a four part series: *Minneapolis: City in Transition*. The topics included Population, Housing, Education, and Property Tax. This was a time of declining population in the city and family migration to the suburbs. From this series came a position supporting the City to encourage a balanced population. LWVMpls produced brochures for realtors, which highlighted the features of each city neighborhood.

In 1988, LWVMpls completed *Images of Minneapolis*, a study of how Minneapolis is perceived by current and potential residents. The study included a discussion of the role of the media in influencing perceptions and a discussion of the policy approaches to livability taken by the Mayor and the City Council. Information about perceptions

was drawn from several pieces of opinion research commissioned by the City and from interviews with Minneapolis City Council members.

From 1998 to 2009 LWVMpls has monitored The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) and has sponsored workshops and forums on the topic. (See also City Government: Citizen Participation)

In 2000 LWVMpls joined a coalition, Smart Growth in Minneapolis, to monitor the subject of Sustainable Communities.

Unit topics in 2006 included: The Livability of an Aging Minneapolis and Lead in the Drinking Water. For the second subject, two units joined forces to hold their meeting in a public location to which the community was invited.

Libraries

Studies

- **Minneapolis Public Library**, LWVMpls, 1965, (No longer available)
- **Financing the Minneapolis Public Library System**, LWVMpls, 1978, Committee Chair: Carol Pidcock
- **Minneapolis Government Structure--Help or Hindrance?**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chair: Marion Hall
- **Update on the Status of the Central Minneapolis Public Library Building**, LWVMpls, 1994, Committee Chairs: Jean Beccone, Julaine Heit
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act**, LWVMpls, 2005, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards**, LWVMpls, 2006, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec

Positions

(Updated 2007)

Support of adequate financing and sound administrative procedures for libraries and cooperation between library systems on a regional basis

LWVMpls supports:

1. Initiatives to improve the funding and governance of the Minneapolis Public Libraries (MPL) in accord with League principles of good government for Minneapolis:
 - a. Responsive and efficient government structures and procedures.
 - b. Sound fiscal policy and new sources of revenue.
 - c. Improved budgetary procedures for city government.
 - d. Policies to strengthen the city's tax base.
 - e. Opportunities for all citizens to participate in effective ways in the decisions of local government.
2. Solutions for the library system that will assure adequate support for quality library services and collections, and that incorporate the following principles:
 - a. A sound, sustainable long-term financing structure.
 - b. A governance structure that provides both transparency and clear accountability.
 - c. Proportional, equitable representation of Minneapolis and its diverse communities in the governance structure.
 - d. Preservation and strengthening of the unique collections of the MPL Central Library as a resource for the entire state.
 - e. Sound administrative procedures.
 - f. Future capital improvements balanced between the needs of the City and the remainder of the county.

3. Working with the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), as appropriate, to coordinate information and activities designed to support enhanced library services now and in the future.

Background

LWVMpls studied the library system in 1965 and again in 1974, retaining the item on the agenda ever since. The 1972 City Convention dropped a position supporting merger of the city/county library systems, but it was that issue that prompted adoption of the study item in 1974. The result was a new consensus, reaffirming existing positions and adding others.

In 1978 LWVMN did a statewide study on funding of libraries, which made it possible for the League to work for increased funding for libraries throughout the state. As an adjunct to the state study, LWVMpls Library Study Committee compiled specific information about the Minneapolis Public Library (MPL) system.

The 1980 consensus on structure of Minneapolis government reiterated LWVMpls support for an independent Library Board.

In 1994 LWVMpls updated members on issues surrounding the need for a new downtown Minneapolis library building. Results of a members' survey on libraries used and frequency of use were compiled along with member comments on a new downtown library building in the report titled *Update on the Status of the Central Minneapolis Public Library Building*.

In 1998, LWVMpls Board passed a resolution in favor of the proposed new Central Library. A letter of support was published in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. Two years later LWVMpls encouraged citizens to vote yes on the referendum to build the new library and remodel neighborhood sites. The referendum passed.

In its 2006 study, *Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards*, LWVMpls retained its 1965 position supporting an authority, independent Library Board, rather than an advisory board. Members did not reach consensus on the issue of elected vs. appointed board, or the concept of regional governance of the system.

In less than one year, due to financial pressures, a merger between the Hennepin County and Minneapolis libraries seemed likely. Members were again informed and polled to seek a concurrence that would allow LWVMpls to react to the situation that was quickly evolving. Members agreed to a revised statement in more general terms that related to accountability, transparency, preservation, representation, and balancing of City needs. The merger was approved in 2007 after LWVMpls lobbied officials regarding City representation on the new board.

In 2009 Minneapolis had three representatives on the Hennepin County Library Board. This is an appointed board that reports to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. At the time of the merger the Hennepin County Library Board was expanded from seven to eleven members, which were appointed at large, with no future guarantee of Minneapolis representation.

Parks

Studies

- **Parks and Recreation, Part I**, LWVMpls, 1969, Committee Chair: Mrs. Robert Einsweiler
- **Parks and Recreation, Part II**, LWVMpls, 1970, Committee Chair: Mrs. Robert Einsweiler
- **Parks and Recreation, Part III**, LWVMpls, 1973, Committee Chair: Barbara Flanigan
- **Minneapolis Government Structure: Help or Hindrance**, LWVMpls, 1980, Committee Chair: Marion Hall
- **Effects of Budgets Cuts, Part 2: Parks**, LWVMpls, 1983, Committee Chair: Mary Lou Hill
- **Financing Minneapolis Regional Parks**, LWVMpls, 1985, Committee Chair: Katy Sears Lindblad
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act**, LWVMpls, 2005, Chair: Joan Niemiec
- **Minneapolis Government: A Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards**, LWVMpls, 2006, Committee Chair: Joan Niemiec

Positions

Updated 2006

Support of adequate financing, sound administrative and planning procedures for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation System, and procedures to increase board responsiveness to the public.

LWVMpls supports:

1. Adequate financing to improve recreation facilities and programming, parkway maintenance, land acquisition and reforestation. (1970)
2. The concept that no park lands should be taken for other purposes unless all feasible alternatives have been exhausted. (1970)
3. Adequate planning procedures so all community recreation opportunities are considered when planning new parks. (1970)
4. Joint school/park planning. (1970)
5. Compensatory measures (transportation, equipment, and paid coaches) to improve recreation in inner city parks. (1973)
6. Greater efforts to hire minority recreation staff including liberalizing civil service requirements. (1973)
7. Recreation programs for groups not adequately served. (1973)
8. The principle of charging fees if care is taken to ensure that no citizen is deprived of use of park facilities through lack of income. (1973)
9. Four-year terms for park commissioners. (1980)
10. The adoption of procedural changes by the Park Board to increase its responsiveness to the public.
 - a. Define duties of park commissioners more clearly. (1980)

- b. Define and publicize procedures for citizen participation in decisions affecting the park and recreational system. (1980)
 - c. Provide publicity for neighborhood meetings when park changes are being suggested. (1980)
 - d. Improve communication with citizens and organizations. (1980)
 - e. Provide for citizen participation at Board meetings. (1980)
 - f. Change methods of funding and planning park projects to allow time for more citizen participation before plans are implemented. (1980)
 - g. Establish committees, including citizens, to carry out the above-mentioned suggestions and improve relationships with the public. (1980)
11. Development of regional parks in the first-tier suburbs. (1985)
 12. Encouraging the use of outlying regional parks through publicity, transportation and specialized programs and facilities. (1985)
 13. The present composition of the Park Board (nine commissioners: six from districts and three at-large; no relationship with the Mayor's office) (2006)

LWVMpls opposes: a long-term goal of a regional park system with a single governance power. (2006)

Background

LWVMpls interest in parks goes back to 1937 when the League supported a millage increase for park purposes. New positions were adopted following a series of studies beginning in 1969 with *Parks and Recreation, Part I*. Part II followed the next year, and Part III in 1973. Positions were adopted in 1974 after a short study prompted by the City Council's proposals for changes in Park Board structure.

In 1970, LWVMpls supported the Park Board in its efforts to preserve Minnehaha Park from freeway encroachment. In 1971-2, members cooperated in a project to combat pollution in city lakes. In 1972-3, LWVMpls supported a millage increase for tree reforestation.

Following the 1974 consensus, members of LWVMpls Parks Committee met with members of the Park Board to discuss LWVMpls continuing concerns about citizen participation. LWVMpls appeared before the Charter and Legislative Committee of the City Council in support of maintaining an independently elected Park Board; before the Charter Commission in support of reducing the terms of park commissioners to four years; and before the Park Board to recommend action on the League's proposals for procedural changes.

In 1975 two charter amendments pertaining to parks were passed: one provided for a four-year term for park commissioners, and the other required that all Park Board actions except those related to its own organization be submitted to the Mayor for approval.

Also in 1975, LWVMpls sponsored the Green Survival Program, a series of training sessions to inform members and the public about Dutch Elm disease and how to detect diseased trees. The Park Board staff provided films and other information.

In 1980, as part of the study, *Minneapolis Government Structure: Help or Hindrance?*, the members of LWVMpls reaffirmed their support of an independent Park Board.

In 1985, LWVMpls studied the financing of Minneapolis regional parks. As a result of the study, members adopted positions supporting the development and promotion of outlying regional parks.

In 1995, members discussed *Financing Minneapolis Parks*.

In 1999, LWVMpls co-sponsored, with the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods, a Parks Roundtable forum on citizen participation. A main feature was discussion of resident input for park system renovations.

In 2006, LWVMpls undertook a study *Minneapolis Government: a Balancing Act II, The Independent Boards*. This included a review of governance of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and two other independent boards. After discussion, LWVMpls members no longer supported the long-held positions supporting the features of an independent, elected Park Board. Members were unable to come to consensus on appointed vs. elected board, authority vs. advisory board and whether parks should be administered as a City department or by a County park division. There was agreement rejecting the goal of governance at the regional level.

In 2009 there were proposals to change the City Charter that would eliminate the independent, elected Park Board. LWVMpls no longer has positions pro or con.