

OVERVIEW of the GMA LEGISLATIVE POLICY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND:

The GMA Board of Directors revamped the association's policy development process in 2003 and created a permanent body called the Legislative Policy Council (LPC). The council's work program begins each spring after the conclusion of the legislative session and is chaired by the incoming GMA First Vice-President. Members of the Council include the officers of GMA, the chairs of the six standing GMA policy committees as well as district and at-large representation. Terms are for one year.

PURPOSE:

The Legislative Policy Council is the focal point for the Association's legislative policy effort, combining the efforts and input of GMA's six standing policy committees with its district outreach effort as well as input from outside affiliated groups. The council is charged to annually prepare a proposed Legislative Platform for consideration by GMA's six policy committees at the Annual Convention in Savannah. Following the policy committee meetings at convention, the council will make any further refinements to the Legislative Platform deemed necessary before presenting it to the membership for approval at the annual business meeting.

EXPECTATIONS:

Legislative Policy Council members are expected to actively participate in the work of the council through various meetings throughout the year as well by assisting GMA's Governmental Relations team during the session with grassroots contacts. The council will meet four times during the year: once in the spring prior to the annual convention; a meeting at the annual convention; a two-day meeting in the fall at the same location as the GMA Board meeting; and a meeting during Mayors' Day in Atlanta. In addition, members will participate in a weekly conference call during the legislative session with GMA's Governmental Relations and Outreach staff to hear updates on the session, to provide guidance on key issues and to help enlist others in GMA's grassroots lobbying efforts. See the attached master schedule for an overview of meetings throughout the year.

MEMBERSHIP:

Each July, the GMA President will appoint members to serve on the Legislative Policy Council. Generally, the council will include the following members:

- GMA's officers will serve as ex-officio members
- GMA's First Vice President will chair the council;
- City officials, elected or appointed, from each of GMA's twelve districts;
- The chairs of GMA's six standing policy committee; and
- Several at-large members

Each spring, the GMA President makes appointments of new policy committee chairs - typically three terms expire each year – and these chairs would assume their chairmanships at the spring meeting of the LPC.

SCHEDULE:

- During April and May, "listening sessions" will be held in multiple locations in each of GMA's twelve districts. The primary purpose of these meetings will be to give city officials an opportunity to identify issues and concerns they believe need to be addressed in GMA's Legislative Platform.
- In addition to listening sessions, a discussion forum will be established on the GMA website to provide city officials with an alternative mechanism for providing feedback.
- The staff will also meet during the spring and summer with affiliate groups (e.g., Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG), Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Georgia Recreation and Park Association, the Georgia Downtown Association, etc.) and advisory bodies such as the Georgia Cities Foundation, Public Information Officers Advisory Group and the City Managers Advisory Group to identify other legislative issues and concerns.
- In late May, the Legislative Policy Council will meet to discuss the recently completed legislative session, to consider the issues identified at the spring listening sessions and to hear any additional input or information from outreach staff and/or other groups or organizations before it reviews, refines and approves the Legislative Platform for recommendation to the six standing policy committees at the Annual Convention.
- Following approval by the Legislative Policy Council, the proposed Legislative Platform will be mailed to the membership and the members of the six standing policy committees for their review prior to the annual convention. The mailing will

include a policy amendment form for use by any city official desiring to propose an amendment.

- The six standing policy committees will meet at the annual convention to review, amend if necessary and approve their respective policy chapters.
- Following the policy committee meetings, the Legislative Policy Council will review and adopt the proposed Legislative Platform for recommendation to the membership.
- The proposed Legislative Platform, as amended (if necessary) by the Legislative Policy Council, will be presented to the membership for adoption at the annual business session during the convention. The incoming First Vice President will present the recommendations to the membership, clearly showing the existing policies, items that have been deleted or amended and new policies recommended.
- Following the annual convention, the GMA President will appoint ad hoc work groups, committees or task forces, as necessary, to work out the details of the Association's legislative initiatives. These task forces and work groups will meet during the summer to prepare recommendations for the Council and Board to consider at their fall meetings.
- The Legislative Policy Council will meet in late September or early October to consider the recommendations and reports of the various task forces or work groups and to finalize GMA's legislative strategy for the upcoming session. Any changes to existing policies adopted by the Council will be presented to the GMA Board for approval.
- The Association's outreach efforts from early October to the end of the year will be focused on promoting the Association's adopted Legislative Platform. In each of GMA's twelve districts, district-wide and smaller sub-district meetings will be held to facilitate dialogue between city officials, legislators and GMA staff on the Association's priorities.
- The six standing GMA policy committees will be briefed during Mayors' Day on the status of GMA's Legislative Platform well as other legislation of interest to city officials, and will recommend any policy position changes that need to be considered by the Legislative Policy Council. In addition, the Board will be briefed by GMA's Governmental Relations staff on the results of the first few weeks of the Legislative Session and if necessary, be asked to take positions on an issue or issues not previously discussed or anticipated by the Legislative Policy Council.

- The Legislative Policy Council will meet during Mayors' Day to consider any recommendations made by the standing policy committees as well as to hear a status report on the session.
- Throughout the legislative session, the Legislative Policy Council will meet via a weekly conference call every Monday morning beginning at 8:30 am to hear legislative reports and updates from GMA Governmental Relations and policy staff and to provide staff guidance to staff on the issues of the day. No conference call will be held during Mayors' Day.
- Throughout the legislative session, staff will update the GMA membership on the status of the session.
 - First, every Friday during the session, a weekly Legislative Alert will be emailed or faxed to member cities and officials.
 - Second, a copy of the weekly alert will also be made available on the GMA web site at www.gmanet.com.
 - For those city officials that have signed up for a service known as "Session Notes", staff will provide a twice weekly email highlighting the status of several bills and meetings anticipated the following day. This email report is sent out on Monday and Wednesday afternoons each week of the session.
 - A legislative tracking system, updated daily throughout the session, will be available on GMA's web site to help city officials stay informed about bills the GMA Governmental Relations staff is tracking.
- An end of the year, a final Legislative Summary will prepared by the GMA Governmental Relations staff for use by Legislative Policy Council and GMA Board. The summary will also be made available to the membership via the GMA web site.