

## 2026 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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Date: November 10, 2025  
Department: GAPD  
Meeting Date: December 2, 2025  
Prepared by: Kyung Park, State Affairs  
Advisor

Presenters: Anneliese Koehler, Legislative  
Affairs Manager; Kyung Park, State Affairs  
Advisor  
Length: 45 minutes

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### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

This work session is an opportunity to discuss Metro Council's objectives for the 2026 Oregon legislative session that will begin on February 2, 2026. The current political climate and proposed legislative priorities will be discussed. This will be the final work session prior to final adoption of Council's Legislative Priorities and Principles in early January.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

The Council may wish to discuss specific legislative concepts or principles or direct staff to develop additional legislative concepts before adopting its legislative agenda prior to the start of the 2026 legislative session.

### **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Support Metro's policy goals through engagement with the Oregon State Legislature.

### **POLICY QUESTION(S)**

- Does the Council wish to confirm or change existing policy direction under which staff is currently operating with respect to issues that are likely to surface in 2026?
- Are there additional topics for which the Council would like to adopt legislative positions?

### **POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Council's Legislative Principles, Council's Legislative Priorities and issues sheet for potential 2026 Legislative Priorities are attached.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

See individual issue sheets, Council's Legislative Principles and Council's Legislative Priorities.

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

#### *2026 session*

The 2026 Legislative session is a short session lasting roughly a month. Unlike long sessions, short sessions focus on necessary budgetary tweaks, passing technical fixes and a few pieces of policy legislation. It is uncommon for large, controversial pieces of legislation or significant budget changes to occur. Many parties approach the short session with only

one or two minor bills. The session is also deliberately structured to be limited as legislators are only allowed to file a small number of bills.

### *Elections*

The 2026 election will impact the 2026 legislative session as legislators begin to seriously contemplate running again, seeking other offices, or retiring from the Legislature. There are some changes that we are aware of already. There will be additional changes in the Senate stemming from the 2023 walkout. As a result of the walkout, ten Senate Republicans were ineligible for reelection. Six senators were replaced in 2024 and the remaining four will be replaced in the 2026 election. Of the remaining four, two are considered competitive districts. In addition, one of those four, Senator Bonham, announced his resignation effective October 5. County commissioners appointed Rep. Christine Drazen to fill the vacancy. Additionally, Rep. Anessa Hartman, Rep. Ken Helm, and Rep. John Lively will not be seeking re-election in 2026. As we approach the 2026 session, we anticipate additional retirements from the Legislature.

The Governor and Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries Commissioner are also up for re-election in 2026. Those seats are both held by incumbents that staff anticipates will run again.

### *Legislature overview*

The Legislature continues to experience turnover in leadership with a newly elected Senate Minority Leader and House Minority Leader. After Senator Bonham announced his resignation, the caucus elected Senator Bruce Starr as the new Senate Minority Leader. Then House Minority Leader Christine Drazen was appointed to Senator Bonham's seat, creating a vacancy in House Republican leadership. Rep. Lucetta Elmer from McMinnville is the new House Minority Leader.

The Metro region is well represented in legislative leadership. Senate President Wagner, Senate Majority Leader Jama and House Majority Leader Bowman all reside in our region. Both co-chairs of ways and means are also from our region.

The Metro region will also have two new Representatives for the short session. Rep. Hoa Nguyen passed away this fall and is replaced by Lamar Wise. Rep. Christine Drazen moved over to the Senate and the process to replace her seat will be held on November 17.

Until September of 2025, the Democrats held an exact three-fifths super majority in both chambers. This is threshold for revenue raising votes but falls shy of the two-thirds necessary to achieve quorum. In September, Rep. Javadi switched his party affiliation from Republican to Democrat. This increases the margins in the House for Democrats.

The Oregon State Capital building is still under construction and is not slated for finish until 2027. While what portions of the building will be closed down for the 2026 session is still being determined, staff anticipates that it will be similar to prior sessions with cramped corridors, large parts of the building inaccessible and constant construction noise. This continues to make the legislative process challenging.

### *Revenue Forecast*

The September 2025 revenue forecast projected a shortfall of approximately \$888 million dollars in revenue for the current 2025-2027 fiscal year. This is due to federal tax code changes from H.R. 1. Oregon has a rolling connect policy that ties Oregon's tax code to the federal tax code. Legislators had set aside \$472 million at the end of the 2025 session, but this buffer quickly evaporated and left a deficit of \$373 million for legislators to tackle during the 2026 session. In mid-September, Governor Kotek directed all state agencies to slow all spending by holding vacant positions open longer, reducing spending on supplies and services, slowing down implementation of new programs, and reducing all out of state travel costs for conferences and trainings. In addition, all state agencies have been asked to present 5 percent budget cut scenarios.

### *Legislative session priorities*

Staff anticipates that revenue and budget conversations will dominate the 2026 short session. The cuts to federal programs and revenue shortfall will lead to difficult conversations and budget cuts across the board.

## **BACKGROUND**

Council adopts a State Legislative Agenda and State Legislative Principles annually. This is the second meeting to discuss the next iteration of Council's legislative priorities and principles. It is the final work session prior to adoption in early January.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2026 State Legislative Principles (DRAFT)
2. 2026 State Legislative Priorities (DRAFT)
3. Speculative ticketing issue sheet
4. Transportation issue sheet
5. Housing and homelessness issue sheet
6. Serial communications issue sheet
7. Food and beverage issue sheet