

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Each year, the City of Martinsville adopts, by resolution, a Legislative Agenda. The purpose of this agenda is to provide our state and federal legislators with a clear and accessible reference that outlines the City's positions on issues at both the state and national level that may affect our community.

The 2026 Legislative Agenda highlights a focused set of priorities that will guide the City's advocacy during the upcoming legislative session. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of every issue important to Martinsville. As the session advances, additional matters may arise that are not included in this document; their absence does not preclude the City from taking a position on them.

ISSUE OF PRIORITY

Dedicated 1% Sales Tax for School Funding

The City of Martinsville formally expresses its support for legislation that would grant the locality the authority to impose a one-cent sales tax, contingent upon approval by the voters through a duly held referendum, with all revenues generated to be dedicated solely and exclusively to the construction, renovation, and long-term capital improvement needs of Martinsville's public school facilities.

Significant Investments in Education

Virginia School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP)

The City of Martinsville supports increased state funding for the School Construction Assistance Program and the Literary Fund Loan Program to help localities address critical school facility repairs and modernization.

Teacher Recruitment & Retention

The City of Martinsville supports additional state initiatives to recruit and retain teachers, including expanded loan forgiveness programs, housing assistance, and competitive compensation supported through state funding.

Increased, Dedicated Funding for School SROs

The City of Martinsville joins Henry County, the Town of Ridgeway, and our State Delegates in supporting increased and dedicated state funding for School Resource Officers (SROs).

Expand Career and Technical Education for Workforce-Ready Graduates

The City of Martinsville joins Henry County in its support of increased state investment in Career and Technical Education programs at both the high school and postsecondary levels.

Increase Funding for Student Learning and Flexible Accountability

City and regional school divisions want to improve student learning outcomes but often face limits from rigid state testing requirements. Standardized tests don't always reflect real student growth or classroom learning.

ISSUE OF PRIORITY

Increasing Affordable Housing Stock & Strengthening Local Code Enforcement

Investment in Code Enforcement

The City of Martinsville supports amending state law to explicitly authorize local code enforcement officers to issue civil citations for violations of local ordinances, and to establish a standardized process across localities for assessing and collecting civil penalties. This established authority would allow localities to quickly address blight, property maintenance, and nuisance issues more efficiently while reducing burden on local and state law enforcement and courts.

Authorizing Transfer of Surplus VDOT Properties to Localities for Public Benefit and Economic Revitalization

The City of Martinsville supports amending state law to allow the Virginia Department of Transportation to convey surplus or residue property to the locality in which it is located, at nominal or no cost, when such conveyance serves a public purpose consistent with the locality's comprehensive plan or public benefit, including but not limited to economic redevelopment, housing, recreation or community space.

Receivership Authority

The City of Martinsville supports expanded authority for localities to appoint receivers to take control of blighted or abandoned properties when owners fail to act.

Demolition & Repair

The City of Martinsville supports the creation and expansion of state grant programs that provide funding to localities for the demolition or rehabilitation of unsafe buildings.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Expanded State of Good Repair Funding

The City of Martinsville supports the allocation of additional funds to the State of Good Repair program, which has proven critical for infrastructure upgrades, including ADA compliance improvements and road maintenance.

Advocacy for Expanding Transportation Funding Beyond Major Virginia Cities

Current formulas favor congested, densely populated areas, disadvantaging smaller localities like Martinsville. Projects such as roadway safety, bridge maintenance, multimodal access, and economic connectivity often score lower despite local need. Adjusting the SMART SCALE scoring to emphasize regional equity, safety, and infrastructure sustainability would allow fairer competition and support statewide growth.

Support for the Full Allocation of State Aid to Localities with Police Departments, "599" Funds

These funds, established under Code of Virginia § 9.1-165, provide critical financial support for police departments to maintain staffing, equipment, training, and public safety programs. The City of Martinsville urges the General Assembly to ensure full distribution of §599 state funds to support local law enforcement. These funds are essential to keep our officers equipped, trained, and able to protect families, neighborhoods, and the community we call home.