

Guiding Principles for the 2020 City of San Marcos Federal Policy Program

Introduction:

The City of San Marcos recognizes the need for an active federal policy program to ensure that the interests of the City's residents and businesses are protected and enhanced. The City Council's federal outreach reflects the core values found in the City Charter's Statement of Goals and the City Council's Strategic Initiatives. As directed by the City Council, the City will participate in advancing the City's goals with the federal Congressional delegation and with federal agencies involved in the funding and regulation of assets and services provided by the City of San Marcos to the people of our community.

Guiding Principles:

Disaster Recovery Efforts

- Support disaster recovery efforts by working with members of the Congressional delegation, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials on administering already obtained disaster related assistance and vital information on how the city could pursue additional federal funding through various federal programs at FEMA, HUD, the Economic Development Administration, etc. Additionally, in case of properties that experience repeated flooding to pursue alternatives that provide permanent solutions for both families and property owners, to include but not be limited to the acquisition or trades for said property(ies).
- Support future flood mitigation strategies and regional drainage solutions by working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate large scale river overflow project potential on Upper Blanco River.
- Support federal funding solutions to develop regional partnerships to maximize solutions for both current and future flood resiliency, to create a community resilient to regional and localized flooding events, to prevent future damages from upstream and downstream development, and to improve overall storm water quality. This will include continuing to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) about potential federal streams of funding related to watershed protection along the Blanco River.

Transportation

- Support potential federal legislative action on infrastructure to provide necessary transportation funding, while protecting the environment and advancing the economic development goals of our community, for better connectivity and to better keep pace with the City's priority infrastructure needs for air, highway, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and rail transportation.
- Support the continued development of the municipal airport including: seeking federal funding through Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Supplemental funding competition to help address the steadily deteriorating condition of concrete that comprises the taxiway and ramp at the airport; utilizing our Congressional delegation to advocate for higher prioritization of airport infrastructure needs amongst U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and FAA leadership; promoting new private flight training activity at facility; maintaining adequate staffing of the control tower through federal legislation seeking to address such shortages; and protecting funding for the FAA's Federal Contract Tower (FCT) program through the Fiscal Year 2020 budget cycle.
- Support efforts for San Marcos as the new Direct Recipient for federal and state transit funding allocated to the San Marcos urbanized area. This also includes engaging directly with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) National and Regional Offices to explore other potential federal funding opportunities. Work in conjunction with third party transit trade groups such as the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) to promote greater transit funding in the upcoming Surface Transportation reauthorization bill. Identify additional non-federal streams of funding for City's transit priorities which include, but are not limited to, an Intermodal Transit Facility.
- Support transportation infrastructure through identifying and advocating for policies in the reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation, also known as the Federal Highway bill, which must be reauthorized by September 30, 2020.
- Support efforts related to the further development of efficient and economical mass transit options in the Austin – San Antonio Corridor. This includes closely monitoring federal efforts to impact transit through broader infrastructure legislation.
- Support efforts related to regional commuter rail, such as: highlighting its importance to the region and the commitment of the City to commuter rail with the Administration, the Congressional delegation, and appropriate agencies; supporting rail development policies in the surface transportation bill; and advocating for project specific federal funding.

Education and Workforce Development

- Support educational initiatives, including Pre-K through 16 education (ages 3-25), including higher education and career readiness, and out-of-school-time programs promoting youth development. This will include identifying related opportunities and challenges as Congress moves forward with the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA).
- Support adult education initiatives including facilitating partnerships with the Gary Jobs Corps and other efforts to ensure that citizens have the skills necessary for the jobs of the future. This will include working with Gary Job Corps, the national Job Corps program, and our Congressional delegation to explore ways to expand the benefits of the Job Corps program to adults beyond the current program's age parameters. This will also include identifying opportunities through the U.S. Department of Labor's national apprenticeship initiative.
- Support City's and greater community efforts to engage with U.S. Army Futures Command in Austin and seek to identify federal funding opportunities that may arise as a result.

Neighborhoods, Workforce Housing and Sustainable Development

- Support federal initiatives that promote diverse housing choices for the community's local work force. This includes identifying best practices by engaging with Congressional offices, federal agencies, national associations, third-party groups and other municipalities.
- Support continued federal funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program; support workforce housing development assisting low to moderate income residents; housing rehabilitation, veterans' housing and employment programs, and increase the availability of affordable housing.
- Support Sustainable Development through the continuation of grant programs such as CDBG, HOME, Livable Communities Act, Choice Neighborhoods, energy efficiency and water conservation initiatives, and other programs that promote innovative planning to further community development, while sustaining environmental, economic and cultural resources.
- Support federal programs seeking to address rising homelessness crises across the country. Identify related federal funds to address homelessness issues in Central Texas.

River and Environmental Protection

- Support federal action to encourage the protection and preservation of spring flows and the rivers in San Marcos; to protect the community's rare environmental resources and assets; provide new sources of funding for water infrastructure and water conservation and wastewater treatment and reuse including the WaterSMART grant program through the U.S. Department of Interior; support reasonable groundwater district rules related to the length of groundwater permits and timeframes to develop related infrastructure; protect the City's investment in water infrastructure for current and future use; and promote and develop alternative energy sources.
- Support opportunities to address wastewater reuse issues at the federal level. This includes providing support for existing targeted grant opportunities and identifying other potential funding streams or policies that impact these activities.

Economic Development

- Support Congressional action to promote economic development; identify and pursue related economic development funding opportunities through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA); provide incentives to cities to attract and retain businesses; increase funding for workforce training and programs to employ veterans; strengthen Pre-K to 16 education; and increase funding for adult education and literacy.
- Support City and broader community efforts related to the proposed San Marcos Air, Rail, and Truck (SMART) Terminal, an intermodal industrial park that will serve the needs of light industrial manufacturing, logistics/distribution, air cargo, and aviation support businesses.

Public Safety

- Support federal grant programs that advance police and fire public safety programs and overall emergency management operations for assistance with equipment, training and personnel. This includes working with the Congressional delegation to help reduce inefficiencies in federal grant program solicitation and execution at the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Support efforts of Texas Aviation Partners to Explore "no fly-zone" process improvements during emergency situations.