



City of Palo Alto

(ID # 11720)

Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 12/8/2020

Summary Title: 2021 Legislative Guidelines and Lobbyist Presentations

Title: Update From the City's State and Federal Legislative Advocates, and Discussion and Recommendation on the 2021 Legislative Guidelines

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Policy & Services Committee (a) receive a legislative update from the City's state and federal advocates, and (b) subject to the Committee's discussion and revisions, recommend that City Council approve the 2021 Federal and State Legislative Guidelines.

Background

As part of the City's legislative program, staff and the City's contracted federal and state advocates work to identify and analyze potentially impactful legislation and communicate the City's public advocacy positions to legislators. The program is guided by the Advocacy Process Manual, last approved by City Council on January 13, 2020 ([CMR #10772](#)). In addition to the Manual, the City maintains a City Council-approved set of legislative guidelines that provide additional City Council policy direction to staff and the City's state and federal legislative advocates.

The guidelines were last discussed at the Policy & Services Committee on November 12, 2019 ([CMR #10640](#)) and approved by the City Council on January 13, 2020 (at the same meeting City Council approved the Manual and the legislative guidelines for the Utilities Department). For 2021, the Utilities Advisory Committee approved the 2021 Utilities legislative guidelines on November 4, 2020. The 2021 Utilities guidelines remain unchanged from 2020. The City Council will receive the Utilities legislative guidelines in January 2021 when this Policy & Services Committee Legislative Guidelines item comes to City Council for approval.

Discussion

State and Federal advocates

Niccolo De Luca, the City's Sacramento-based advocate with Townsend Public Affairs, and Steve

Palmer, the City's Washington, D.C.-based advocate with Van Scoyoc Associates, will make brief presentations and respond to questions from the Committee regarding legislation.

Legislative program

To expand on the above, the Legislative Guidelines enhance and add content to the City Council's overarching priorities; they do not supplant them. The guidelines provide direction to staff and the City's legislative advocates on issues that are both (a) important to the City Council, and (b) fairly likely to become a legislative issue in 2021. The guidelines are *not* rank ordered and are intentionally reasonably broad rather than specifically narrow to allow for a flexible and quick response.

Further, the guidelines are *not* proactive instructions; they act as a means by which staff and advocates can respond to federal and state government action, without returning to the City Council each time a bill is introduced or amended. The draft 2021 guidelines are a compilation of the current, approved guidelines, City Council's 2020 priorities, and policy issues staff and the City's legislative advocates believe may appear in 2021.

Suggested changes to the 2021 legislative guidelines

Staff suggests changes to the guidelines as demonstrated through redlines in Attachment A, with a clean version in Attachment B. These suggestions include:

- Clarifying the meaning of the guidelines by offering a brief explanation at the top of the document
- Phrasing items in a manner that allows the reader to understand what items the City supports
- Adding items likely to appear next year, such as public safety reform and COVID-19 economic relief
- Further refining City Council's intent. For example, one of the November 2020 ballot measures related to funding for the Palo Alto Unified School District. As schools were not mentioned in the 2020 guidelines, staff was unable to recommend that City Council support the ballot measure when the item was deliberated by City Council in September 2020. The draft 2021 guidelines add "other local governments and organizations" to the guideline regarding supporting the work of regional partners. This added language allows staff to recommend support of PAUSD, and other like-minded organizations, in the future.
- Reflecting the City Council's direction to add police reform to the list of Legislative Guidelines (per City Council action on November 16, 2020)

Resource Impact

There is no resource impact associated with adopting legislative guidelines and hearing from our state and federal advocates.

Environmental Review

This report is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act; an

environmental review is not required.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: 2021 draft guidelines-redlined
- Attachment B: 2021 draft guidelines-clean

The City of Palo Alto's 2021~~0~~ Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

These Guidelines reflect and activate~~enhance and add to~~ the City Council's priorities; they do not supplant them. They work to guide staff and our legislative advocates on issues that are important to the Council, and fairly likely to become a legislative issue. These Guidelines are not rank ordered and are meant to allow for a flexible and quick response by staff and advocates, without the need to return to Council to seek guidance. The Guidelines work in conjunction with the City Council approved Advocacy Process Manual.

The below **Foundational Principles** represent the ideals that form the core of the City's policy agenda. The legislative guidelines all rise from and strengthen our four foundational principles:

1. Protect local revenue sources and prevent unfunded mandates
 2. Protect, seek, and increase funding for programs, projects, and services
 3. Protect and increase local government discretion. Oppose items that preempt or reduce the authority or ability of local government to determine how to effectively operate local programs, services, activities, and governance.
 4. Protect the health and safety of the community
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The ~~below~~ **Legislative Guidelines** create the framework for organizing the City's policy interests, while guiding staff and contracted lobbyists in their advocacy efforts on behalf of the City. The items below provide direction for the City's efforts when addressing reasonable government actions.

Transportation

The City supports government action that:

- Deters single occupancy drivers and alleviates local traffic congestion
- Supports local and regional public transportation
- Regulates technology that diverts traffic into residential neighborhoods
- Provides funding for rail grade separations, rail efficiency improvements, and other means of reducing the local impacts of regional transportation systems

Environmental

The City supports government action that:

- Reduces GHG emissions
- Reduces airplane noise, health impacts, and /or airplane emissions
- Promotes residential and vehicle electrification programs

The City of Palo Alto's 2021~~0~~ Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

- Promotes the use of renewable resources, water conservation, and the flexible use of existing resources
- Supports a statewide ban on polystyrene containers and packaging materials
- Provides opportunities for staff to work with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority and other regional stakeholders in efforts to improve the creek's watershed and floodplain
- Supports efforts to protect local communities from sea level rise and other impacts of climate change

Financial

The City supports government action that:

- Supports the long-term stability of CalPERS and the ability of local governments to mitigate and manage with flexibility its pension obligations
- Protects the funding levels of City services
- ~~As needed, seek to protect the funding of ambulance, paramedic, and other emergency services~~
- Provides for COVID-19 related expenses and revenue losses
- Supports the continued deductibility of tax-exempt municipal bonds and the restoration of Advance Refunding of Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

Public Employment

The City supports government action that:

- Preserves local government's ability to manage its own employment issues, including, but not limited to hiring, evaluating, disciplining, and/or terminating and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with employees' representatives

Technology

The City supports government action that:

- Supports reasonable regulatory efforts surrounding policies regarding cybersecurity, drones, shared mobility services, returning to Obama-era net neutrality regulations, and smart city initiatives

Housing

The City supports government action that:

The City of Palo Alto's 2021~~0~~ Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

- ~~Supports reasonable housing and land use policies that recognize local autonomy to maintain the local public process, and preserve local government's ability to determine land use policies and development standards~~
- ~~Provides funding for (a) affordable housing and (b) infrastructure (such as parks, utilities, roads, and transit) required to support the increased housing production~~
- ~~Fosters~~ reasonable ratios between jobs and housing
- ~~; opposing attempts to remove from localities the ability to determine their own land use policies or stymie the local political process~~
- Supports the development and implementation of efficient and environmentally sustainable land use and building practices

Health

- ~~Encouraging reasonable action to prevent minors from purchasing or using tobacco and/or vaping products, and reducing or eliminating the negative health and environmental impacts of such products~~

Police

The City supports government action that:

- Supports efforts which seek to modify policing services, including but not limited to alternative public safety models and funding to address community mental health issues, expansion of requirements regarding police data, and rules regarding prior employment information transparency.

Other

The City supports government action that:

- Updates, implements, and refines processes, services, and programs affecting the City. This includes, but is not limited to, public safety reform efforts and streamlining reporting mandates
- Protects individual privacy and allows the City to safeguard customer information
- Provides for the and the equal treatment of all individuals
- Allows the City to support the collaborative work of regional partners, trade associations, other local governments and organizations, and Joint Powers Authorities

The City of Palo Alto's 2021 Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

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The City of Palo Alto's 2021 Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

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