



# 2023 Federal Legislative Platform

## **Purpose**

The City of Santa Rosa's Federal Legislative Platform confirms the City Council's position on current federal issues with the potential to impact the City directly or indirectly. The federal legislative platform is a guiding document that the City will continue to work with constituents, legislative consultants, and elected representatives to promote and preserve the City's interest at the Federal level.

City staff will monitor federal legislation and administrative or regulatory proposals, taking appropriate action when required in alignment with the adopted legislative platform to efficiently and appropriately address proposed legislation, administrative, or regulatory actions to advance and protect City interests, as necessary. Also, Staff will collaborate with our local and regional partners when appropriate, such as the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Transportation Authority, Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

## **Council Priorities**

The City Council adopted priority areas in 2022 that guided the legislative priorities and initiatives:

- **Deliver Housing for All**
- **Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts**
- **Ensure a Healthy and Safe Community for All**
- **Promote Economic and Community Vibrancy**
- **Build and Maintain Sustainable Infrastructure**

## **Legislative Overview**

In 2022, we worked closely with MMO Partners on priority funding areas and legislation in Washington, D.C. We also participated in national associations on advocacy matters, such as the National League of Cities, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. We anticipate further activity with these associations in 2023. Regarding legislation and regulatory matters, we worked with MMO Partners to voice our position on pressing matters such as emergency management and public safety, affordable housing, water conservation and drought relief.

The City will be able to make critical transportation and environmental investments in our community with the passage of multiple historic bills in 2021 and 2022, including the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, *Inflation Reduction Act*, and *American Rescue Plan*.

Santa Rosa has made significant progress on the recovery from the 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires; however, there is still policy work surrounding the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) and disaster relief efforts. Santa Rosa has been a national leader in reforming FEMA and broader emergency management and communication policies to assist other communities when a disaster occurs. To that end, the City participated in a wildfire roundtable with U.S. Senator Alex Padilla and other local stakeholders, that became the basis for his legislation, the FIRE Act. The City strongly supported the FIRE Act, and the legislation became law in December 2022.

The following policy statements align with Council priorities and seeks to advance the City's federal interests by leveraging local funding, protecting critical federal programs, including Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act, oppose unfunded mandates and support policies that grant administrative control of programs, projects, and use of tax revenues to local governments. The City supports the passage of legislation that provides local governments with additional flexibility to meet community disasters, including any public health emergency, response and recovery needs, and opposes policies and mandates that have adverse impacts on revenues and services.

### **Legislative Strategy and Actions**

The Communications and Intergovernmental Office proactively coordinated with City executives, management and staff, the Mayor and City Council to develop the list of items and subsequent actions listed below to ensure the City's interests are protected.

## **Wildfire Prevention, Hazard Mitigation, Resiliency and Recovery**

### **Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:**

- To provide sufficient federal funding and federal agency resources to support natural disaster mitigation, rebuilding and recovery efforts, including:
  - Funding for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program.
  - Funding for the Community Wildfire Defense Grants (CWDG), which was authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. CWDG can be used to implement projects and initiatives on the City's Community Wildfire Protection and WUI 2.0 Plans.
  - Construction of a permanent Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
  - City and regional vegetation management initiatives, including at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino, and other initiatives that will bolster City's response to the effects of climate change and extreme weather.
- To permanently authorize the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and allow the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide direct funding to local governments.
- To advocate for continued funding and improvement of the Integrated Public Alert Warning System.
- To establish and fund improved U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's mechanism for emergency response and resiliency to disasters on Corps property.
- To support policies that forgive any outstanding liabilities or tax implications that impact fire survivors. Additionally, ensure nonprofits and businesses impacted by wildfires or other natural disasters can recover more efficiently without burdensome regulations or liabilities placed upon them.

- To support federal policy changes that allow federal funds to be used to make critical infrastructure improvements at public facilities, like parks, so that they can provide sheltering needs during extreme weather events.

#### Monitor and Evaluate:

- The implementation of the FIRE Act that updates the Stafford Act to ensure FEMA's recovery and mitigation programs address the unique nature of wildfires and their impacts on urban areas, such as pre-deployment of assets during times of highest risk, red flag warnings, improving relocation assistance for public infrastructure affected by fires, increasing federal cost share for repetitive disasters and examining ways to expedite FEMA's assistance process.

## Surface Transportation

#### Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To advocate for funding for the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which invests in surface transportation priorities that: promote equitable access to transportation, address the adverse impact of climate change, and invest in resiliency projects such as evacuation routes and vegetative management along roadways; supports bicycle and pedestrian facilities; supports Vision Zero programs and project implementation; addresses the significant backlog of deferred pavement rehabilitation, and invests in public transit programs such as fleet electrification, Bus and Bus Facilities, Low-No Emissions, Zero-Emission Vehicles, and passenger rail service.
- To promote active transportation, complete street implementation, healthy foods, youth programming and maximizing the usage of green space in urban/suburban and rural settings for personal enjoyment.
- To advocate for policies that enable technological innovations to improve mobility, including connected and automated vehicles (CV/AV) and shared bicycle systems.
- To increase funding for infrastructure, such as the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation.
- To advocate for funding for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.
- To advocate for legislation and federal funding for programs like Safe Routes to School that encourage students to walk and bike to school safely.

#### Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To advocate against the U.S. Department of Labor's proposal to restrict funding to California based on the enactment of the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act.

## Water and Energy Resiliency

#### Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That invest in water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure programs such as the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and the Water Resources Development Act; recycled water projects, water conservation projects, water supply planning and resiliency, stormwater, groundwater, watershed protection and improvement, local and regional flood protection, and Sonoma Water projects.

- Advocate expanding funding eligibility to include projects in disadvantaged (equity priority communities) and/or low-income subsections of communities.
- That provide funding and resources for drought relief, response, support, and community outreach and education, including, but not limited to, programs and grant opportunities provided by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- To advocate funding for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Public Assistant Grants for water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure projects and programs.
- To support the inclusion of Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFAS) in the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and/or other legislation that provides for thoughtful and practical approaches to assessing and mitigating the associated risks to public health and the environment.
- To revise EPA's process for evaluating and regulating new drinking water contaminants under the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- To advocate for federal programs, such as the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), that provide funding to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills and those experiencing financial hardship.
- To advocate for legislation to exempt utility rebates provided to homeowners and other property owners who conserve water or improve stormwater or wastewater management from federal taxation.
- To advocate for funding and support to continue the operation of the diversion facilities at the Potter Valley Project to protect water supply resiliency and fisheries.
- To increase funding for federal efforts to enhance flood protection in flood-prone communities.
- That provides increased funding for infrastructure, such as within the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, to protect power and communication grids.

#### Monitor and Evaluate:

- Monitor the development of legislation that regulates contaminants such as, but not limited to, Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFAS).

### **Climate Change and Sustainability**

#### Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To support the City of Santa Rosa's long-standing commitment to implementing environmental programs and proactive work towards improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- To fund sources for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including, but not limited to, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program and programs established in the Inflation Reduction Act that assist with renewable energy generation, improved energy efficiency, recycling and composting, and reduction in energy and water use, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.
- To advocate for funding to convert the City's municipal vehicle fleet to a zero-emission fleet, including charging infrastructure and implement the conversion.

#### Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That threaten or attempt to preempt the City's environmental and climate change policies, goals and regulations.

## **Housing, Homelessness and Economic Development**

### **Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:**

- To increase funding and federal incentives to address affordable housing and homelessness, including support for Continuum of Care, Emergency Food and Shelter, CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, Universal Vouchers, permanent supportive housing, down payment assistance and other federal programs and legislation that invest in helping our most vulnerable residents, such as the Housing for All Act of 2022 (S. 3788).
- To extend and expand federal Housing Credits for affordable housing developments, such as the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2021 (H.R. 2573, 2021).
- To preserve the tax exemption on municipal bonds for infrastructure and development, including Private Activity Bonds (PABs), eliminate the \$10,000 cap on the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction, restore the tax exemption for advance refunding bonds, extend the alternative fuels tax credit, and extend business development tax credits like Opportunity Zones.
- To reauthorize and continue overall appropriations funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) within the Commerce Department. To advocate for the ability of the EDA to assist communities recovering from a disaster, including the dedication of a fund with annual appropriations for immediate responses to economic crises associated with declared disasters or states of emergency. In cases where a major disaster or emergency has been declared under the Stafford Act, EDA should be required to increase the federal share to 100 percent of the project cost, waiving all match requirements for any funding appropriated for disaster or emergency response.
- To increase funding for EDA for both broadband access and adoption.
- To request that EDA consider current and future impacts of climate change when selecting Public Works projects, creating a separate fund within the Public Works program dedicated to projects mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- To reconstitute the EDA's economic distress formula and consider reducing local match requirements permanently, especially when a local jurisdiction has had multiple significant disasters declared.
- Advocate for increased funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program, which supports investments in parks and other outdoor recreation services within the City's urban core for underserved areas.
- To advocate for legislation and federal funding to help working families secure quality and affordable childcare including funding for new childcare facilities and increase funding for childcare workers.
- To strengthen policies to support landlords seeking reimbursement or compensation for utility payments from their renters in a Housing and Urban Development voucher program.
- To advocate for policies and legislation that reduce child poverty, including extension of child tax credit, which was expanded under the American Rescue Plan Act.

- To increase awareness and promote increased funding to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service programs and Community Food Systems to promote use of local foods in the National Lunch programs for children.

#### Monitor and Evaluate:

- Implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act, including working with local businesses and stakeholders to ensure the Act is fully funded and implemented in a timely manner.

## **Public Safety**

#### Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To advocate for federal funding and legislation that supports public safety and emergency response operations, including increasing funding for firefighter equipment and training, community engagement and education, firefighter and police hiring, and police and fire station construction.
- To recommend funding opportunities be created for public safety to include diversity in police and fire hiring, recruiting and education practices.
- To advocate funding for community violence and gun violence prevention programs and initiatives, including policies related to ghost guns, investments in mentorship and violence interrupters.
- To seek funding for public safety infrastructure, including a regional community safety training center, regional communications infrastructure such as new radio tower sites, regional crime lab, support for 9-11 call centers and required technology and equipment, including gunshot detection software, use of body-worn cameras and fleet electrification.
- To advocate for funding that will help local governments with improving community policing and rebuilding community trust through the hiring of mental health officers, officer and staff training and mental health first responders for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction; support for mental health programs for staff, and support programs like the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.

## **Public Health**

#### Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To receive direct and flexible funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic or a national health emergency, including funding for public transportation systems, affordable housing, homelessness prevention, rental and utility (including water and wastewater) assistance programs. Advocate for assistance to communities to help with emergency response operations, vaccine distribution and testing.
- To protect the City's funding allocations under the American Rescue Plan Act. Oppose efforts to diminish local control and flexibility related to American Rescue Plan Act.
- To advocate for flexible funding sources for local business assistance programs in response to a national health emergency, such as the Paycheck Protection Program and Restaurant Revitalization Fund.