

Background on proposed COA 2013 Federal Legislative Program

Overview

The basis for the proposed City of Austin 2013 Federal Legislative Program for the 113th Congress was last year's program. Due to the gridlock in Congress very little legislation was enacted by the 112th Congress. Working with our Federal Legislative consultants (Capital Edge and Holland & Knight) we made changes to sections primarily based on: 1) successes in achieving goals from the 2012 program, for example securing expansion slots at DCA, and 2) updated data, for example Onion Creek where additional homes were purchased.

Unfortunately the 2012 elections did not significantly change the makeup of the 113th Congress which presages continued stalemate and inaction on legislation. Further complicating the Federal Legislative Program outlook is the unknown impact of the Sequester, which mandates across the board automatic cuts of \$85 Billion to the remaining FY13 Federal Budget.

Initial timeline

January 28 – Discussions with Federal Legislative Consultants
 February 22 – First draft of program sent to Department Directors and key staff
 March 15 – Deadline for input/comments (final comments received April 18)
 April 17 – Present to CMO Executive Team (done April 26)
 April 25 – Present to City Council (now June 6)

All departments contacted reviewed and provided updated language and/or priorities. Below are the section by section changes from the 2012 program.

General Statement of City Legislative Focus

Added section on Citizens United based upon Council resolution adopted on January 17th, 2013. Added sections on Comprehensive Immigration Reform and Gun Control based upon Council resolutions adopted February 28th, 2013.

Onion Creek

Updated number of homes purchased by the city (299 vs. 292). Updated amount of funding from \$2M to \$5M to match the amount requested in the Administration's FY2014 Budget proposal.

Surface Transportation

Added section addressing Interstate 35.

Updated data and revised language to reflect progress on Urban Rail Transit and Intercity Passenger Rail.

Tax Exempt Bonds

New to the 2013 program. As part of the ongoing deficit reduction talks in Washington both the President and Congress have been looking to place caps on municipal bond interest. The President's proposed FY14 Budget suggests a 28% cap for all income levels. Capping the interest on municipal bonds would significantly increase financing costs for state and local governments and force them to reduce infrastructure projects.

Aviation

Deleted the section dealing with "Beyond Perimeter" slots at DCA. Southwest Airlines was awarded 2 of the 16 additional direct flight expansion slots thereby providing direct flights from Austin to Washington DC.

Housing & Community Development

Updated data showing the decreasing Federal funding for CDBG and HOME. This funding is at its lowest level since 1992. President's FY2014 Budget proposes to keep funding at \$3B but to set aside \$200M for new competitive funding which would reduce CDBG formula grants by \$200M.

Public Health

Added paragraph detailing funding amounts committed by federal, state, and local governments to manage the City's Public Health infrastructure.

Public Safety

Added Firefighter related sections: Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (AFG), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grants (SAFER), and United States Fire Administration (USFA).

Added Homeland Security related sections: Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG).

Tax Credits and Revenue

Reworked language dealing with Remote Retailers and New Markets Tax Credit Program. Deleted references to proposed 112th Congress legislation.

Telecommunications

Deleted section on Net Neutrality as legislation was passed in the 112th Congress dealing with this issue. Added section on Internet Content Privacy.

Water and Wastewater

Deleted language referencing 51st Street Elevated Tower. Updated data to reflect estimated CIP costs for FY2014 through FY2018.