

2026 Legislative Platform

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

The 2026 Legislative Platform provides a framework for the City of San Marcos' Legislative Program and is the foundation of a focused advocacy strategy. Adopted annually, the legislative platform serves as a reference guide for City Council members, City officials and staff in considering and evaluating legislative proposals introduced at both the state and federal levels. While City legislative interests touch a broad range of policy areas, maintaining a focused legislative platform allows for responsive and directed action each year to address critical issues on behalf of the City of San Marcos.

Legislative Program

The primary objective of the Legislative Platform is for the City Council to adopt official city positions on clearly stated legislative issues at the start of the legislative session. By doing this, the legislative approval process is streamlined by receiving clear direction at the beginning of the legislative session from the City Council on pertinent legislative issues.

The platform is developed and maintained using the goals and objectives of the City Council, a review of legislative priorities from the League of California Cities, input from City staff, research of current law and pending legislation, as well as discussions with the city's legislative advocates.

Federal and state legislative proposals and policies consistent with the Legislative Platform may be supported by the city. Those policies or proposals inconsistent with this agenda may be opposed by the city.

For proposed legislation, either consistent with the city's Legislative Platform, Legislative Guidelines or consistent with legislative positions the city has taken in the past, city staff shall be authorized to prepare position letters for the Mayor's signature. Items not addressed in the city's Legislative Priorities may require further Council direction. Legislative priorities may only address issues directly relevant to or impacting the provision of municipal services. Generally, the city will not address matters that are not pertinent to the city's local government services such as social or international issues.

City departments are encouraged to monitor and be knowledgeable of any legislative issues related to their areas. However, any requests for the city to take positions on a legislative or regulatory matter must be directed to the City Manager's Office. City departments may not take positions on legislative or regulatory issues without the City Manager's Office review and approval.

STATE PRIORITIES

The City of San Marcos strongly promotes local control and home rule for cities and will support or oppose legislation, regulations and proposed constitutional amendments based on whether they advance maximum local control by city governments over city revenues, land use, community development and other municipal activities.

Local Control

- Support full cost reimbursement to the city for all federal, state or county-mandated programs.
- Oppose any legislation or proposed regulation that preempts local authority or weakens the independence of charter cities. Each community has unique needs and characteristics that are best addressed by the local governing body.
- Oppose any new program mandates that are unfunded and/or partially funded.
- Oppose any state efforts to further weaken the city's role in regional governance.

Local Finance

- Support the protection of existing local funding sources and the authorities that provide funding to the City of San Marcos. This support may include the preservation of state-shared revenues, and the ability to collect revenue for the use of public rights-of-way or city-owned facilities.
- Support measures that would provide fiscal independence to cities.
- Oppose statewide attempts to preempt local budgetary control or remove the ability of a local government to set its own policy.
- Oppose any change in revenue allocations that would negatively affect local government, including the redistribution of any taxes, fees, or grants.
- Oppose any legislation that would make local agencies more dependent on the state for financial stability and policy direction.

Community Services

- Support measures that provide assistance for community park facilities, open space, and recreation programs.
- Support legislation that grants additional immunity to local agencies for recreational activities in community parks and recreation areas.

Labor Relations and Pensions

- Support efforts to enact workers' compensation and pension reform that lowers employers' costs while still protecting workers. Support legislation that limits the ability of employees to receive workers' compensation benefits for occupational injuries/illnesses that result from stress, disciplinary action or performance evaluations or consultations.
- Oppose legislation or regulations that would unreasonably increase employer medical costs for workers' compensation or that increases workers' compensation benefits without providing for concurrent cost controls.
- Oppose any measure that would grant employee benefits that should be decided at the local bargaining table.
- Oppose any legislation that would reduce local authority to resolve public employee disputes or impose regulations of an outside agency (such as PERB).
- Support proposals that will help the state and cities with their unfunded pension liabilities, ensuring that cities can continue to offer meaningful benefits to employees while still providing the levels of service residents expect.

Land Use/Planning and Economic Development

- Support legislation that strengthens the concept of local control for local decision making on land use and zoning matters.
- Support legislation that preserves the municipal authority over the public right-of-way including fair and reasonable compensation for the use of the right-of-way.
- Support legislation that expands community and economic development tools and funding options for cities and their businesses.
- Support legislation that provides funding for habitat management planning, maintenance, administration and local control.
- Oppose legislation that would limit or restrict local land use decision-making authority, including the imposition of one-size-fits-all, land-use, parking, building and development guidelines.

Public Safety

- Support measures that move forward the goals established by the local San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and assist in the reduction of child pornography, child predators and sex offenders, and human sex trafficking.
- Support policies that will assist local law enforcement with the comprehensive and collaborative management of sex offenders, including tools for tracking the location of sex offenders within local jurisdictions, so long as state-mandated programs provide for full reimbursement to all local agencies.
- Support policies that provide funding and local assistance for gang intervention and prevention programs.
- Support measures that limit the ability of minors to engage in alcohol consumption and other substances like marijuana, synthetic marijuana, and spice. Support policies that hold

social hosts responsible for underage drinking and marijuana use and create additional penalties for repeat driving under the influence offenders, so long as related state-mandated programs or services provide for full reimbursement to all local agencies.

- Support efforts to reduce and eliminate drugged driving and drunk driving on state and local roads.
- Support efforts to maintain sufficient Public Safety Realignment funding and establish an equitable county allocation formula for local governments to adequately manage the shifting of inmates from state prisons to local jails.
- Support legislation that addresses public safety concerns arising from reduced sentencing laws and initiatives.
- Protect local authority and funding in the implementation of the Adult Use of Marijuana Act.
- Support legislation that provides funding support for disaster preparedness, including: earthquake preparedness, fire prevention and response, Homeland Security, hazardous material response, and other local disaster relief activities.
- Support legislation that clarifies the use of unmanned aerial devices during emergencies (like wildfires) and provides local agencies protection if those devices are damaged in the course of responding to an emergency.
- Oppose any efforts that take away the ability of local agencies to choose their emergency response providers, increase EMS costs, or increase EMS reporting requirements. Support innovative efforts and pilot programs that enable emergency providers to control costs.

Housing and Redevelopment

- Support legislation that creates workable mechanisms to finance local government infrastructure and fills the revenue gap resulting from the dissolution of redevelopment in 2012.
- Support legislation that extends the time available to redevelopment oversight boards to complete their work.
- Support legislation that works to solve the state and region's problems with homelessness if it also protects a city's ability to preserve public safety and livability.

State Grants

- Actively seek grants for various infrastructure and community projects, especially those related to the Creek Specific Plan.
- Actively seek grants and apply them to City Council priorities such as public safety, adoption of technology, and other critical community needs.
- Support legislation that provides incentives or grant opportunities for community improvements at the local level.

Sustainability

- Support legislation that retains and/or provides local flexibility in determining how best to meet state sustainability and energy efficiency standards.

- Support legislation to increase availability and promote the adoption of energy efficient technologies and the use of alternative/renewable energy sources, so long as related state-mandates and programs fully reimburse local agencies.
- Support legislation that will increase the number and amount of available grants and other funding mechanisms for sustainability and energy efficiency programs at the local level.
- Support the incremental revision of stormwater regulation and stormwater permitting in a manner that retains local flexibility to determine how best to meet the State's water quality objectives.
- Oppose one-size-fits-all stormwater permitting mandates and guidelines.
- Support legislation that improves and streamlines the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provides funding to assist local agencies in implementing CEQA.

Telecommunication

- Support legislation that returns local government input into the state telecommunication franchising process.
- Support legislation expanding local jurisdictions' use of Public, Educational and Government (PEG) fee funds to include operational needs.
- Oppose legislation that negatively affects the city's authority to manage and control public rights-of-way and receive compensation for their use.
- Oppose legislation that diminishes or eliminates the collection of local franchise fees or diverts its collection by the state government.

Transportation

- Support dedicated and ongoing measures to finance local and regional transportation programs and improvements, including alternative modes of transportation and transportation demand management systems.
- Support continuous appropriations of new monies directly to cities for the preservation, maintenance, rehabilitation, and development of local streets and road systems.
- Support programs that will reduce traffic congestion throughout the City of San Marcos.
- Support programs that would provide common sense solutions for SR-78/I-15 freeway interchange and for traffic congestion on regional arterial highways.
- Oppose transportation proposals that would adversely affect the quality of life in North San Diego County by causing traffic congestion, air pollution, or other problems.

FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Local Control

- Oppose any legislation or proposed regulation that preempts local authority. Each community has unique needs and characteristics that are best dealt with by the local governing body.

- Oppose any new program mandates that are unfunded and/or partially funded.

Health Care

- Support reforms to the Affordable Care Act that would remove onerous paperwork requirements for local agencies.
- Support changes to the Affordable Care Act that would allow employee benefits to be decided at the local bargaining table.

CDBG

- Support legislation that would consolidate and streamline the administration and reporting requirements of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Advocate for greater flexibility of local appropriation and use of funds.
- Support the preservation of funding for the CDBG program and increasing the funds available under the program.
- Oppose additional restrictions on local agencies receiving CDBG funding, including requirements that dictate cities' housing and zoning decisions.

Federal Grant Requests

- Actively seek grants for various infrastructure projects and affordable housing.
- Support direct access to federal funds for developing or improving local infrastructure rather than having funds distributed through the State or SANDAG.
- Support funding to address local traffic and increase mobility.
- Support full funding for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) programs and retain the local cost share waiver for both programs.
- Support full funding of disaster preparedness, prevention, recovery, and response that maximizes the flexibility in the use of funds to assist areas of need (i.e. personnel, training, equipment, etc.).

Public Safety

- Support continued federal investment in resources critical to enabling local law enforcement to adequately provide public safety services.
- Support legislation that aims to reduce the risk of, and respond to, wildfires on or near national forests, military installations, and other federal property.
- Support legislation that clarifies the use of unmanned aerial devices during emergencies (like wildfires) and provides local agencies protection if those devices are damaged while responding to an emergency.

Sustainability, Environment, and Energy Efficiency

- Support funding for additional block grant programs, specifically those for use in community revitalization and sustainable community development.

- Support federal resources that will afford greater ability to adopt energy efficient technologies and implement conservation strategies – through grants and other funding mechanisms.
- Oppose efforts that place local streams, creeks, wetlands, and other municipal waterways or ditches under federal regulation, and support reforms to the Waters of the United States rule that would remove excessive federal mandates on local waterways.

Telecommunication

- Support clarification of the Federal Communications Commission's definition of allowable uses for PEG funds to include operational costs.
- Support legislation that retains local control over the location of wireless antennas.
- Oppose legislation or regulations that would negatively impact the City's authority to manage and control public rights-of-way and receive compensation for that use.
- Oppose legislation that diminishes or eliminates the collection of local franchise fees or diverts its collection by the federal government.

Transportation

- Support programs that would provide common sense solutions for SR-78/I-15 freeway interchange and for traffic congestion on regional transit routes.
- Support a long-term transportation authorization bill that provides dedicated and continuous appropriations of new monies directly to cities to help them plan for the preservation, maintenance, rehabilitation and development of local infrastructure.
- Oppose transportation proposals that would adversely affect the quality of life in North San Diego County by causing traffic congestion, air pollution or other problems.