

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021
10:00 AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>Co-Chair, District 8</i> Commissioner Justin Rodriguez, <i>Co-Chair, Bexar County Commissioner's Court, Precinct 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i> Commissioner Trish DeBerry, <i>Bexar County Commissioner's Court, Precinct 3</i>
Staff Present:	Alex Lopez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Rod Sanchez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Camila Kunau, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Sherya Shah, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Karen Falks, <i>Deputy Chief, SAPD</i> ; Tamika Monterville, <i>Director, Transportation</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Sally Basurto, <i>Assistant Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Verónica Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department</i> ; Jeffrey Dean, <i>SAFD, Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator</i> ; Christine Wright, <i>State Relations Manager, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Assistant Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Melissa Shannon, <i>Director, Governmental Affairs, Bexar County</i> ; Curt Seidlits, <i>CEO, Focused Advocacy</i> ; Snapper Carr, <i>Partner, Focused Advocacy</i> ; Manuel Leal, <i>Government Relations Manager, Bexar County</i> ; Lauren Lipin, <i>Attorney, Government & Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> ; Baltazar R. ("Walter") Serna, Jr. <i>Attorney, Serna & Serna, San Antonio</i> ; Henry Bonilla, <i>The Normandy Group</i> ; Ron Eritano, <i>The Normandy Group</i> ; Letty Mederos, <i>Senior Managing Director, Clark Hill, PC</i>

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Pelaez called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2021 meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion prevailed unanimously by those present.

2. Federal Infrastructure Opportunities:

- **Appropriations**
- **Surface Transportation**
- **American Jobs Plan**

Sally Basurto reported that the House Appropriations launched its FY 2022 Community Project Funding (CPF), previously known as earmarks, and now that the ban on the earmark moratorium was lifted, members could submit 10 requests for funding for State or local government projects and certain nonprofits, noting that private sectors were ineligible. She noted indicated that the process was highly competitive and projects had to demonstrate community support, must qualify under specific program accounts, and must be completed within a one-year timeline. She presented a list of City recommended projects:

- Emergency Kits for Vulnerable Populations: \$300,000
- Mental Health Unit Expansion: \$750,000 - \$1,000,000
- Equity Based home Expansion & Rental Preservation Program: \$1 million - \$2 million

Ms. Basurto presented a list of Community Partners' Projects and noted that Mayor Nirenberg provided letters of support for the following Projects.:

- Brooks City Base - Louis Bauer Road Reconstruction: \$5.8 million & \$3.7 million
- SARA - Westside Creeks: \$2.3 million
- SAWS - Mitchell Lake Study & Construction; Generators: Pending
- Texas Biomed - MRI Equipment: \$1.5 million
- UTSA Cyber Security Initiatives: \$2 million

Ms. Basurto reported that requests would be considered for the FY2022 Surface Transportation Reauthorization (STR) Legislation which was a five-year reauthorization Bill that was extended last year by Congress. She added that members must submit 20 requests and include a ranking of their top five projects. She noted that additional rounds of funding opportunities were anticipated. She presented a list of the City's recommended STR Projects, as follows:

- Presa [SE Military to W. Boyer St.]: Street, bicycle, and pedestrian enhancements - \$10 million
- Zarzamora/Frio City Rd. Railroad Overpass: Four lane grade separation - \$23 million
- Broadway [IH35 to Burr Rd.]: Travel lane reduction, roadway rehabilitation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities - \$14 million

Ms. Basurto provided an update on the \$2.25 trillion and broad-based American Jobs Plan and stated that it was enacted to help create jobs, rebuild critical infrastructure across the county, and was the first of a two-part package. She added that highlights of the Plan included improvements to roads, bridges, airports, utility systems, broadband, and to build and retro fit homes and commercial buildings. She added that the second package was entitled The American Family Plan and would include healthcare, childcare and other related areas, and would be released in the next few weeks. She noted that House Leadership indicated that they wanted the Bill to be passed in Summer/Fall 2021.

Ms. Basurto reported that the FY2021 RAISE Grant was a competitive \$1 billion grant program for surface transportation infrastructure projects with a significant local or regional impact. She added that the maximum grant award was \$25 million, no more than \$100 million could be

awarded to a single State, and up to \$30 million would be awarded to Planning Grants, including at least \$10 million to areas of persistent poverty. She described the program as highly competitive and indicated that the Government and Public Affairs and Transportation Departments were coordinating efforts to meet the July 12, 2021 application deadline.

Commissioner Rodriguez exited the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Viagran requested that focus be placed on establishing water and utility infrastructure systems that were needed in the area south of Loop 410 when infrastructure funding became available under the American Jobs Plan.

Commissioner DeBerry asked how progress would be tracked as the City, the County, and Community Partners vied for the highly competitive funding programs. Walter Serna stated that he met daily with Ms. Basurto and Melissa Shannon to coordinate efforts between the City, the County, SAWS, and the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) to track progress on the earmark funding project submittals. He noted that it would be incumbent upon the respective Lobbyist Teams for the City, the County, and SARA to collaborate, track progress on grant submittals, to push them through to the Appropriations level, and work with Congressional Members. Melissa Shannon noted that proposed projects for the County still needed to be aligned and presented to the Commissioners for approval and she had requested that the Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments compile their list of requested projects.

Commissioner Rodriguez re-entered the meeting at this time. He requested that Mr. Serna coordinate meetings with key Congressional leaders on earmark funding projects. Mr. Serna stated that he would and noted that the County would submit one more earmark funding request regarding Blanco Road at the end of the week.

Councilmember Perry noted that Harry Wurzbach Road was a major access point for Fort Sam Houston and was once included on the proposed projects list and now was not. He asked if there was any way it could be reinserted into the proposed projects listing as it was a high dollar project that had been in the works for years. Jeff Coyle confirmed that the interchange segment of Harry Wurzbach Road was part of the project, but not the road.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia referenced the Emergency Kits for Vulnerable Populations that was a City recommended Project. She requested that City Staff assigned to the drafting and distribution of the Emergency Kit Guides contact her and Councilmember Perry to consult on the bilingual component and addressing individuals with special needs. She requested a list of other projects submitted by Community Partners. Jeffrey Dean reported that Emergency Brochures were distributed through the Ready South Texas Program for many years and was included on an online version Application that provided a large amount of data which could be downloaded to a smartphone or tablet. He agreed that emergency information needed to be consolidated and that collaboration with CPS Energy and SAWS would allow for direct messaging to residents during an emergency. He stated that the goal was to provide all emergency brochures for all types of events within the Emergency Kits so that individuals would only have to seek out one source for insight to prepare, respond, or shelter in place for heat waves, flooding events, winter storms, tornados, and other emergent occurrences. Ms. Basurto stated that a recent roundtable of local

intergovernmental partners was held and Congressional Staff were invited to join in a discussion of Community Partner Program grants and to share information, but no broader list of projects was available.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked of the amount of earmark funds requested by SAWS for generators. Ms. Basurto reported that the SAWs had ascertained that it had approximately \$100 million worth of infrastructure needs. Walter Serna stated that SAWS had identified that approximately \$62 million for generators was needed and was hoping to receive Congress approval of at least \$20 million, but even if \$1 million was received, any amount would be helpful.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how the City was collaborating with other entities to support their Community Partner Projects. Ms. Basurto reported that staff met with various community partners at regular intergovernmental roundtables and had invited Congressional staff to attend a recent roundtable where the parties shared information and reviewed funding guidelines collectively. She stated that she was aware of some higher educational institutions that would be submitting requests, but were perhaps not ready to share further information with City staff just yet, nor had they asked for letters of support from the Mayor.

Chairman Pelaez stated that UTSA was in search of earmarks funding for their cyber project at Port San Antonio. He requested that City staff reach out to local partners and ask of their funding requests so that the City could offer to lend support.

Chairman Pelaez called for all the Committee Members to start letter writing and phone call campaigns to solicit support for the requested Projects.

3. 87th Legislative Session Update

Curt Seidlits reported that over 350 Bills related to the winter storm events had been filed in the Legislative reaction to ensure that energy failures did not occur again and the Bills were categorized to address grid reliability, customer interface, ERCOT governance, Public Utilities Commission (PUC) governance, and for financial stability. He added that a main concern for the Legislature was the lines of communication from ERCOT to the utilities companies and the utility companies to the customers. He noted that House Bill (HB) 10 through HB 17 addressed customer communications and critical care facilities on power feeders.

Mr. Seidlits stated that five of the independent members of the PUC lived out of state and observed that traditionally, the Legislature sought members from out of state in order to be truly independent, but that current Bills were filed that called for the reconstitution of ERCOT Board by appointments through the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or the House Speaker.

Mr. Seidlits reported that many co-ops and retail electric providers paid exorbitant prices for a sustained period of time for electricity. He noted that a securitization process was in place to lessen the impact to customers over a longer period of time, such as 30-year loans with a lower interest rate.

Mr. Seidlits referenced HB 2021 which would appoint a 10-member group of Legislators, including the Governor, to determine how the \$45 billion in Federal funding would be appropriated to local governments and how it would be allocated. He voiced concern that if the group was formalized, it would take away from the Legislative process at the appropriations level.

Commissioner DeBerry requested status on redistricting and primaries being postponed. Snapper Carr explained that the 87th Legislative Session was a districting session which occurred once in a decade; however, delays caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the delivery of block data needed to draw boundary maps. He noted that a special session would be held to address Congressional redistricting and the duties of the Federal and State governments to provide the necessary data and map drawings, respectively.

Councilmember Perry reminded the Committee and attendees that the Committee on Emergency Preparedness (CPE) was conducting an assessment of the winter storm events and was in the process of gathering facts and data surrounding the timeline of events. He added that the CPE's findings were transparent and available to the public on its webpage and live meetings were broadcast every Friday at 10:00 am.

Jeff Coyle provided an update on dozens of Bills that were filed regarding transgender student participation in sports and which drew much attention due to a statement released by the NCAA Board of Governors on April 12, 2021. He added that the statement read: 'The Board firmly and unequivocally supported the opportunity for transgender student athletes to compete in college sports and their commitment was grounded in their values of inclusion and fair competition.' He highlighted that the statement declared the NCAA would not hold championships in any States that did not allow their athletes to participate. He clarified that student participation in sports was not part of the City's Prioritized Legislative Agenda, nor was it a City government function, but he noted the potential intersection was the City's hosting of future NCAA events, to include the 2022 NCAA March Madness and the 2025 NCAA Final Four.

Mr. Coyle reported that Senate Bill (SB) 29 was significant as it was a low Bill number signaled that it was prioritized by the Lieutenant Governor. He indicated that SB 29 did not affect college sports, but addressed interscholastic sports at the high school level for public schools and charter schools and stated that students could not participate in a sport in a category different from the gender at their biological birth. He noted that SB 29 was headed to the Senate Floor. He further reported that House Bill (HB) 1458 specifically addressed colleges and prohibited institutions of higher learning from allowing people to participate in sports and categories different from their gender at birth. He noted that HB 1458 has not been heard at the Committee level. He added that community partners in the tourist industry, local business associations, and major employers were reviewing these Bills to understand their potential impact on the community.

Councilmember Pelaez requested that City Staff continue to monitor the Bills and provide information on the status of similar bills in other States.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

***Councilmember Manny Pelaez,
Co-Chairman***

***County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez,
Co-Chairman***

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk