

# CITY OF PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

## 2014 Federal Platform

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### Guiding Principles

- 1.) **Preserve and Enhance Federal Assistance to Local Governments:** Declining federal funding for important domestic discretionary programs has severely limited the ability of the City to meet the needs of our most underserved citizens. Continued reductions would do little to reduce the federal deficit, but the effects on Pasadena families would be devastating.
- 2.) **Oppose Federal Preemption of Local Authority:** Pasadena opposes federal efforts to curb the ability of local governments to address matters traditionally handled on the local level – such as the imposition of taxes and fees, enforcement of zoning and land use regulations, or the ability to ensure the safety of our residents.

### Finance

The City is concerned that the federal government has attempted to impose itself into the area of local taxation, a matter traditionally handled on the local level. Pasadena officials are better suited than the federal government to understand the needs of the community, and should have all the tools necessary to ensure the safety and health of the public while properly maintaining the public's largest investment, its infrastructure. In particular, the City:

- Strongly opposes any effort to eliminate, or cap, the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds, one of the few tools left for local governments to finance large capital projects.
- Strongly supports legislation (such as the Marketplace Fairness Act) to allow states and local governments to collect sales taxes on remote sales, such as online and catalogue purchases. California alone loses over \$4 billion annually in uncollected sales and use taxes on remote sales.
- Opposes attempts to exempt online travel companies from collecting state and local bed taxes when they re-sell hotel rooms to consumers shopping at their internet sites.
- Supports the restoration of the Build America Bonds (BABs) program created in the 2009 Recovery Act, but not as a replacement for tax-exempt municipal bonds.
- Opposes federal efforts to erode local authority by prohibiting state and local taxes and fees in areas such as wireless services and the sale of digital goods.
- Oppose mandatory participation in Social Security for local government employees covered by other retirement and/or pension systems.

## Utilities

The City of Pasadena, through its Department of Water and Power, operates its own municipal utility and as a result, is subject to federal programs and oversight in a number of areas. As a provider of electricity, the City has set ambitious goals with regard to the use of renewable energy and while federal resources to help us achieve these goals are encouraged, unfunded federal mandates in this area will likely hinder our efforts by forcing us to focus resources in ways that may not be in the best interest of our customers.

As a provider of water, the City is committed to providing safe drinking water to its customers but would oppose federal efforts to impose standards that were not based on sound scientific principles. Some specific items of importance to Pasadena Department of Water and Power include:

- A swift decision by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that perchlorate contamination in the City's Sunset Reservoir drinking water wells initiated from the current NASA/JPL Superfund site.
- Support increased federal investments in utility infrastructure projects such as recycled water, water quality treatment, stormwater management, power plant emissions retrofits, smart grid implementation, replacement of inefficient generators, and construction of transmission lines to access renewable energy generation.
- Oppose any efforts to change the cost-based rates used by federal Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs). Such changes would significantly increase costs for Pasadena, which recently entered into a 50-year contract with the Western Area PMA for hydroelectric power from the Hoover Dam.
- Oppose efforts to allow for multiple federal agencies to have regulatory authority over cyber security efforts related to the power system. The public-private partnership agreement between industry and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, and overseen by FERC, to implement mandatory cyber security standards should be preserved.
- Urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) or Congress, to clarify its Dodd Frank swap dealer rules to provide parity to municipal utilities who hedge in order keep energy prices stable for their customer-owners.
- Ensure that EPA rulemaking with regard to air quality standards, including the pending New Source Power Standards, recognize the costs of the rules on utilities and their ratepayers, as well as the time that it will take to come into compliance.
- Support federal incentives for renewable energy, such as the Clean Renewable Energy Bond (CREB) program, the Renewable Energy Production Incentive (REPI), and efforts to facilitate the expansion of hydropower offerings.

- Support modifications to FERC transmission rate incentive policies that take into account the additional costs to ratepayers.
- Support hydro power reform legislation and funding to facilitate development of new hydro projects, particularly small and in-conduit hydropower development, as well as promoting more efficient hydropower licensing and permitting.
- Support federal effort to encourage, but not mandate, increased energy and water-use efficiency as well as federal assistance to encourage or meet operational improvements within the City.
- Pasadena supports responsible and transparent requirements for hydraulic fracturing to ensure that such processes continue in a safe and environmentally responsible manner that considers public health, the water supply, and the environment. Pasadena supports and acknowledges the critical role that oil and natural gas fracking plays in the economic and reliable integration of renewable energy generation and the displacement of higher-emitting generating resources.
- Support the creation of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WFIA) program that provides assistance toward 100% of the cost of a project.

### **Public Safety**

Federal assistance for local police, fire, and homeland security initiatives has been declining for several years, and as a result, communities like Pasadena have been left to maintain public safety services largely on their own. The City believes there is a place for federal contributions to local public safety and homeland security efforts, and some Pasadena priorities in that area include:

- Equipment and technology purchases necessary to operate a fully-capable Emergency Operations Center.
- Seismic upgrades and other urgent upgrades to seven of the eight City fire stations.
- Federal programs such as SAFER (firefighter hiring), COPS (police hiring), Violence Against Women Act programs, gang intervention programs, Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, Urban Area Security Initiative, and State Homeland Security Grant Program.
- Non-traditional crime prevention activities such as federal homeless assistance and mental health initiatives, as well programs for prisoner re-integration and at-risk youth.
- Increased Medicare reimbursement rates for ambulance services.
- Increased federal reimbursement for wildfire fighting activities.

- Efforts to change current FEMA disaster assistance reimbursement formulas that penalize small communities in large population states.

### **Transportation**

With passage of the two-year federal surface transportation programs reauthorization bill (MAP-21), the City is now focused on the implementation of the new law by the Department of Transportation. Of particular note for implementation are provisions in MAP-21 that for the first time give the federal government, as opposed to states, authority over transit safety. Maintaining and improving the City's multi-modal transportation infrastructure is one of the highest priorities of Pasadena residents. Transportation projects in need of federal assistance in Pasadena that are partially or completely unfunded at this time include:

- Repair of the San Rafael Bridges that span the Arroyo Seco. They are believed to be among the most vulnerable in the state.
- Construction of a transit maintenance facility to house and repair the growing fleet of Pasadena Area Transit System buses.
- Equipment upgrades to the bus fleet such as on-board cameras and fareboxes.
- Technology for the City's Intelligent Transportation System program.
- Completion of the Foothill Extension to the Metro Gold Line Light Rail System.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Maintaining and enhancing the City's parks and recreational system is a high priority for Pasadena residents, and the City has committed significant resources to offering safe and accessible recreational opportunities. Although federal assistance in the areas of recreation, preservation, and conservation has declined sharply, the City believes there is a federal role for assisting local governments with these matters and urges Congress to restore funding for important programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). While Congress originally intended for \$900 million annually in offshore drilling revenues to be directed to the LWCF, the program receives only a small fraction of that amount each year, and LWCF state formula grants remain on the brink of elimination. Similarly, funding has been eliminated for the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program where the City believes the small federal commitment provided great benefits to a number of communities across the country.

### **Housing and Community Development**

Federal and state assistance to the City of Pasadena for the production of new affordable housing has decreased a staggering 93% over the past several years, presenting difficult challenges as the City looks for ways to serve almost 4,000 families that are on its Section 8 voucher waiting list. In addition, sharp reductions in programs such as the Community

Development Block Grant (CDBG) program have hindered the City's ability to provide services to low-income neighborhoods and families.

As the federal government looks to reduce the federal deficit, the City urges policymakers to recognize that programs such as these have already suffered debilitating cuts and further reductions will have little effect on the deficit. Further cuts, through the annual appropriations process or budget sequestration, are likely to result in the denial of Section 8 renewals, the closing of trusted community non-profit service providers, and other important pieces of the social safety net in the community.

Specific actions in this area include:

- Support increased funding for HUD programs such as Section 8 assisted housing, CDBG, Section 108 loan program, HOME, and homeless assistance.
- Oppose cuts to caps on use of HUD funds for administrative fees.
- Support programs that provide supportive services and housing services to seniors and disabled residents.
- Support and enhance tax incentives that will promote affordable housing construction, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and New Markets Tax Credit.

### **Public Health**

The City of Pasadena is currently examining ways to take a more comprehensive approach to public health, recognizing that there are a number of factors that have an impact on the health of the community. As a result, the City is looking at a multi-departmental approach to addressing public health, from youth violence programs, recreation and child care programs, connecting transportation and affordable housing improvements, and beyond. In addition, these plans extend to outside of the City boundaries and include neighboring jurisdictions.

The City seeks any federal assistance with these plans to develop a public health model that expands, enhances, and coordinates current initiatives. Specific areas of interest include:

- Support for increased funding for federal programs that target underserved populations such as the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Act, community health centers, bioterrorism response, immunizations, Maternal and Childcare Block Grant, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program.
- Increased assistance for public outreach with regard to the Affordable Care Act for the 25,000 uninsured in Pasadena.

## **Communications and Technology**

The City is working internally and with regional partners to develop information technology systems that are interoperable but also avoid duplication. The City encourages federal initiatives that encourage and reward such regional cooperation in the information technology. Additional actions include:

- Provide relief to communities that will lose public safety radio communications channels when the federal government mandates reallocation of the “T-Band” spectrum in 2021.
- Oppose legislative and regulatory efforts to curb the ability of local governments to charge telecommunication providers fair and reasonable compensation for the use and maintenance of public rights-of-way.
- Oppose any federal intrusion into local permitting and zoning laws with respect to siting of telecommunications facilities.
- Support the Community Access Preservation (CAP) Act, which would ensure funding for communities to offer accessible public, educational, and governmental (PEG) programming. Allow for the use of PEG funds for non-capital expenditures such as operations and online support.
- Support federal assistance for the Interagency Communication Interoperability System (ICIS), a regional effort to ensure communications interoperability.

## **Workforce Development**

The Foothill Workforce Investment Board provides job training and job seeking services to resident of Pasadena and neighboring communities. Services are funded primarily through federal resources from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, but the City also provides local funding to a successful summer youth employment program. During the recent economic downturn, local employment and training programs were stretched thin, so federal support in this area is particularly critical in the effort to maintain and enhance a skilled workforce. In particular, the City:

- Supports reauthorization of WIA with continued flexibility and the primacy of the one-stop system as the presumed deliverer of employment and training services, as well as strong local participation and governance in the workforce investment board process.
- Supports a long-term federal investment in summer youth employment in WIA Reauthorization that would be linked to locally-developed and supported summer jobs and internship efforts.

## **Human Services**

The City's Human Services Department sponsors a variety of programs to some of the City's neediest neighborhoods and families. It also serves as the primary liaison to the Pasadena Unified School District. Working in tandem with other city departments, some important federal actions to support include increased resources for:

- After-school and childcare programs.
- Parks, recreation, health and fitness programs.
- Gang-related initiatives and anti-bullying measures.

## **Library Services**

The City of Pasadena's Central Library and nine branch libraries provide serves to 4,000 patrons per day, sponsoring an array of activities for both adults and children. In recent years, it has been the focus of the department to enhance its information and technology services to better meet the needs of residents. Given the increasing importance of accessing the Internet for library customers without the means to do so at home, the City is supportive of any efforts to expand broadband funding. In addition, the City:

- Supports full funding for the Library and Technology Act (LSTA) programs at the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
- Supports continued IMLS funding of National Leadership grants for Library and Recruitment for Librarians for the 21st Century, and early childhood literacy programs that involve partnerships between libraries, the local school district and other community-based agencies.
- Supports of efforts that allow for increased flexibility with regard to copyright laws and electronic book offerings.

## **Immigration**

The City of Pasadena strongly believes that immigrants strengthen the community economically and culturally, and welcomes their contributions to society. With regard to federal legislation aimed at reforming federal immigration laws, the City would urge Congress and the President to reaffirm that addressing unlawful immigration in a compassionate manner is the primary responsibility of the federal government, and that sufficient resources must be committed on the federal level for this purpose.

In a resolution adopted by the City Council in October 2013, the City of Pasadena hereby supports a humane and comprehensive immigration reform proposal with the following principles: provides an attainable and affordable pathway to full citizenship for the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States; family unity as a cornerstone of our immigration system; providing due process and labor protections; allowing access to key essential services such as health care; and removing mandates on local

governments to enforce federal immigration laws, particularly when resources necessary to enforce local laws are already stretched.

### **Campaign Finance**

In September 2013, the Pasadena City Council approved a resolution that that urges Congress to propose and support, and the state legislature to ratify, a Constitutional amendment to reverse the U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* that prohibits the government from restricting political independent expenditures by corporations, associations, or labor unions.

The resolution maintains that reversal of the decision would enable the people, through their elected representatives, to regulate campaign contributions and expenditures in all elections at the federal, state and local levels and ensure that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or "rights" of human beings, specifically so that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech.

### **Postal Service Reform**

Proposals to reform operations at the United States Postal Service are of great interest to the Pasadena community. The City is well aware of the fiscal challenges that face the Postal Service, and believes that changes in its operations are necessary for it to remain a viable agency. However, it is also difficult to overestimate the importance of current postal services to both Pasadena neighborhoods and businesses. Efforts to scale back those services would clearly have negative impacts in the community, through the loss of important jobs and access to time sensitive mail delivery options. City urges Congress to consider those impacts in a thoughtful manner. Even in the digital age, there is an important role for the Postal Service, and hope that Congress will agree to meaningful solutions to the current situation there.