

The City of Palo Alto's 2023 Federal and State Legislative Guidelines

These Guidelines reflect and activate the City Council's priorities; they do not supplant them. They work to guide staff and the City's legislative advocates on issues that are important to the City Council, and likely to become a legislative issue. These Guidelines are not rank-ordered and are meant to allow for a flexible and quick response by staff and advocates, without the need to return to the City Council to seek guidance. The Guidelines work in conjunction with the City Council-approved Advocacy Process Manual and the City Council action to do "Strategic Weighing in on Issues of Interest" (June 22, 2021 [CMR 12344](#); [Minutes](#)).

The below **Foundational Principles** represent the ideals that form the core of the City's policy agenda. The Legislative Guidelines all rise from and strengthen four foundational principles:

1. Protect local revenue sources and prevent unfunded mandates.
 2. Protect, seek, and increase funding for programs, projects, and services; pursue grants.
 3. Protect and increase local government discretion. Oppose items that preempt or reduce the authority or ability of local government to determine how to effectively operate local programs, services, activities, and governance.
 4. Protect the health and safety of the community.
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The **Legislative Guidelines** create the framework for organizing the City's policy interests, while guiding staff and contracted lobbyists in their advocacy efforts on behalf of the City. The items below provide direction for the City's efforts when addressing reasonable government actions.

Transportation

The City supports government action that:

- Deters single occupancy drivers and alleviates local traffic congestion
- Supports local and regional public transportation
- Regulates technology that diverts traffic into residential neighborhoods
- Provides funding for rail grade separations, rail efficiency improvements, and other means of reducing the local impacts of regional transportation systems

Climate and Environment

The City supports government action that:

- Reduces GHG emissions
- Reduces airplane noise, health impacts, and/or airplane emissions
- Promotes residential and vehicle electrification programs

- Promotes the use of renewable resources, water conservation, and the flexible use of existing resources
- Supports a statewide ban on polystyrene containers and packaging materials
- Provides opportunities for staff to work with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority and other regional stakeholders in efforts to improve the creek's watershed and floodplain
- Supports efforts to protect local communities from sea level rise and other impacts of climate change
- Supports proper disposal of recyclables once removed from Palo Alto
- Strengthen and modernize the State and Local electric grids

Financial

The City supports government action that:

- Supports the long-term stability of CalPERS and the ability of local governments to mitigate and manage with flexibility its pension obligations
- Protects the funding sources and levels of City services
- Provides for COVID-19 related expenses and revenue losses
- Supports the continued deductibility of tax-exempt municipal bonds and the restoration of Advance Refunding of Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

Public Employment

The City supports government action that:

- Preserves local government's ability to manage its own employment issues, including, but not limited to hiring, evaluating, disciplining, and/or terminating and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with employees' representatives

Technology

The City supports government action that:

- Supports reasonable regulatory efforts surrounding policies regarding cybersecurity, drones, shared mobility services, returning to Obama-era net neutrality regulations, and smart city initiatives

Housing

The City supports government action that:

- Supports reasonable housing policies that recognize local autonomy to maintain the local public process and preserve local government's ability to determine land use policies and development standards

- Provides funding for (a) affordable housing, (b) homelessness, and (c) infrastructure (such as parks, utilities, roads, and transit) required to support the increased housing production
- Fosters reasonable ratios between jobs and housing
- Supports the development and implementation of efficient and environmentally sustainable land use and building practices

Police

The City supports government action that:

- Supports efforts which seek to modify policing services, including but not limited to alternative public safety models and funding to address community mental health issues, expansion of requirements regarding police data and rules regarding prior employment information transparency, and expansion of data and communications including radio encryption.

Other

The City supports government action that:

- Updates, implements, and refines processes, services, and programs affecting the City. This includes, but is not limited to, public safety reform efforts and streamlining reporting mandates
- Protects individual privacy and allows the City to safeguard customer information
- Provides for the equal treatment of all individuals
- Allows the City to support the collaborative work of regional partners, trade associations, other local governments and organizations, and Joint Powers Authorities