

Memorandum



DATE October 8, 2021

CITY OF DALLAS

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Federal and State Lobbyist Contract Renewals**

On Wednesday, October 13, 2021 the City Council will consider renewing contracts with the City's federal and state lobbyists. These include:

1. Ralph Garboushian (CapitalEdge) – federal - \$160,000
2. Paul Schlesinger and Hector Alcalde (Alcalde and Fay) – federal - \$85,000
3. Randy Cain, Kwame Walker, and Lorena Campos (Individual Contractors) – state - \$201,000

Below is additional information on each of these individuals and the services provided to the City of Dallas.

1. **Ralph Garboushian** serves as the City's primary federal lobbyist on all City-related issues. Mr. Garboushian has extensive contacts with federal legislative offices, as well as key contacts in the federal Administration, which has been beneficial to the City in advancing its federal legislative goals.

Mr. Garboushian engages in the following activities:

- Maintaining regular contact with the City's congressional delegation
- Providing guidance on City advocacy efforts, including drafting letters and talking points for City officials, and generally making sure the City's voice is heard in Washington
- Providing the City with a weekly Washington Report while Congress is in session including a comprehensive list of all grant and regulatory items of potential interest to the City
- Providing the City with regular updates on current issues, including detailed summaries of major legislation and regulatory actions
- Working with national public interest groups such as the United States Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, with which the City has a strong working relationship
- Staffing City officials when they visit Washington, including preparing background and talking points, helping draft testimony, and handling all logistical items

- Helping City staff draft comments on regulatory issues of interest to the City
- Ensuring that the City is aware of all federal grant opportunities and working to secure grant and other funding

In addition to the City of Dallas, Mr. Garboushian also represents the cities of Austin, Denton and Arlington in Texas, collectively known as the Texas Legislative Cities Coalition. These cities collaborate with Dallas on areas of mutual concern.

Mr. Garboushian also works to defeat detrimental legislation and/or federal policy, most notably efforts to erode the City's home-rule authority, with particular emphasis on managing rights of way, unfunded mandates, and fiscal policy. Mr. Garboushian also works to protect and ensure robust funding for core local government programs such as CDBG, HOME, homeless, and criminal justice/homeland security.

Mr. Garboushian's recent successes include:

- Spearheading Texas city efforts to secure direct and flexible fiscal assistance to cities in the American Rescue Plan Act, including a direct allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of \$355 million to the City,
- Securing tens of millions in additional direct funding to the City from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan Act, including \$90.8 million for emergency rental assistance, \$21.3 million for emergency homeless assistance, and flexible funding for Love Field and Executive Airport,
- Working with the City to lead efforts and prepare comments to secure the broadest possible use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds allowed by law,
- After passage of ARPA and previous relief bills, providing the City with information, including detailed summaries of Treasury guidance documents, other agency guidance documents, and other detailed information,
- Working with the City's delegation, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and allied organizations to secure an increase in the local funding share of Surface Transportation Block Grant (renamed Surface Transportation Program) and Transportation Alternatives Program in the House-passed surface transportation reauthorization bill,
- House Energy and Commerce Committee approval of legislation, sponsored by Representative Veasey, to reauthorize the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (\$12-\$14 million per year to the City if authorized and funded) and inclusion of the authorization in the infrastructure package the House passed last year and inclusion of authorization and funding in the pending infrastructure package,
- Continued progress on Hensley Field, including visits from White House and Navy officials.

2. **Paul Schlesinger and Hector Alcalde** serve as the City's federal lobbyists on infrastructure. They have specific expertise in water, flood control and transportation, and have extensive contacts with Congress and the Administration, including the US Army Corps and the US Department of Transportation.

Specifically, they help with:

- Securing funding for water, flood control and transportation infrastructure
- Advancing the City's interests as it relates to federal policy impacting infrastructure in Dallas, including water resources and transportation authorization legislation and federal rulemaking

Examples of their recent successes include:

- Assisted in securing over \$100 million in federal funding for the Trinity bridges
- Helped secure federal authorizations for the Dallas Floodway and the Dallas Floodway Extension, including language to allow Army Corps participation in components of the Dallas Floodway project which are not generally available for federal assistance
- Helped secure \$480 million to fulfill the objectives of the Dallas Floodway, Dallas Floodway Extension, and Lewisville Dam safety improvement construction projects
- Worked to secure congressional directives that might better enable the City to obtain Army Corps funding for local projects

3. **Randy Cain, Kwame Walker and Lorena Campos** have been the City's eyes and ears at the Capitol in Austin for several sessions. Every session they continue to preserve the City's ability to keep our local rulemaking intact by amending and negotiating legislation as it moves throughout the process. Their ability to have contacts on both sides of the aisle has been extremely beneficial to the City over time. And as they continue to advocate on the City's behalf, staff is recommending that we renew their contracts at the new amount in preparation for additional special sessions and an abnormal interim session.

As a collective group of individual contractors, they engage the legislature to advance the City's priorities through the following activities:

- Maintain regular contact with the City's State delegation, leadership offices, and State agencies to help facilitate access to those offices throughout the interim and Legislative sessions.
- Provide guidance on City advocacy efforts during interim and Legislative sessions that have secured over \$189 million dollars in state direct funding for the City of Dallas since 1995.

- Ensure that the City is aware of state grant opportunities and working to secure additional funding on behalf of the City while monitoring over 25 grants totaling over \$49 million annually.
- Advocacy for projects that continue to improve the City such as the Convention Center Hotel (HB 262 – 78th), UNT-Dallas School of Law, Texas Task Force-2 (SB 1 – 81st), Fair Park legislation (SB 2181 – 87th), Homeless Initiatives funding (SB 1 – 81st), Urban Land Bank program (HB 2801 – 78th), Film Incentive legislation (HB 873 - 81st), and TIF financing (SB 771 – 79th).
- Collaboration with statewide public interest groups such as the Texas Municipal League, Big City Mayors, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments, all of which we have a strong working relationship.
- Staffing City officials during agency or leadership meetings, preparing testimony, and handling logistics in and around the City of Austin.

Funding for these contracts is included in the FY 2021-22 City Council adopted budget.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



Tennell Atkins
Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Legislative Affairs

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billieae Johnson, City Secretary
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
Directors and Assistant Directors