

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 18, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Upcoming Agenda Item #46, October 23, 2019 – Federal Legislative Consultant Contract**

On October 23, 2019 the Dallas City Council will consider an agenda item authorizing a professional services contract with CapitalEdge Strategies, LLC to provide federal legislative services to the City. CapitalEdge Strategies, LLC, led by Ralph Garboushian, operates a Washington, D.C. office, which monitors and influences federal action affecting the City of Dallas, working with the Texas Congressional delegation and the Executive Branch to advance the City's interests and priorities.

Under the contract, the firm is in communication with City staff regularly by telephone, through visits to Dallas, written reports, bulletins and memoranda. Briefings on federal issues are presented to Council members during meetings of the National League of Cities, as well as at any other time requested by the City. Information necessary to understanding the effect and impact of federal legislation and regulations is provided regularly to City Councilmembers and staff. Additionally, timely information about government grant programs, frequently based on personal contact with federal program managers, is also sent directly to the appropriate City staff to facilitate City fund development opportunities.

Recently, the firm has worked on a variety of federal issues important to the City of Dallas, including funding for core local government programs, reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs, flood protection, and protecting local authority. Some of the firm's recent specific activities include:

- Working with the House Appropriations Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to secure a 21 percent increase (\$22.2 million) to \$126.6 million in FY 2018 in Surface Transportation Block Grant funding for the Metroplex and a subsequent 5.7 percent (\$7.3 million) increase in FY 2019 to \$133.9 million;
- Increasing funding for several core local government grant programs, including Community Development Block Grants, HOME, public safety grants, and the Urban Area Security Initiative;
- Turning back the Administration's proposal to eliminate the Transit Capital Investment Grants Program and securing an increase in funding for the program;
- Keeping pressure on the Federal Transit Administration to move the DART Blue and Red Line Platform Extension Project on schedule, resulting in FTA awarding the project \$60 million;

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- Keeping pressure on the Federal Railroad Administration to move the Texas Central high-speed rail project moving through the environmental and safety review process;
- Stopping Senate legislation (S 3157) that would have preempted local authority to regulate public rights-of-way;
- Securing 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 if authorized and funded); and
- Securing appointment of Mayor Johnson to a U.S. Conference of Mayors leadership position as Vice Chair for Transit, which will put him front and center on reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs.

In the year ahead, the firm will continue to work on challenges and pursue opportunities for the City. Specifically, they will continue to work to protect core local government grant programs within the federal budget. In addition, the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress has begun work on the reauthorization of federal highway and transit programs, which expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2020, and the firm will continue to work hard to maintain and increase sub-allocation of federal highway funds to the metroplex, maintain and grow the Transportation Alternatives Program, and preserve a robust federal transit program.

If you have any questions regarding the consideration of this contract, please contact me or Brett Wilkinson, Managing Director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Government Affairs, at (214) 670-5797.



Kimberly Bizer Tolbert  
Chief of Staff

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim)  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager  
Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager

Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief Resilience Officer  
Michael Mendoza, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
Laila Alequresh, Chief Innovation Officer  
Liz Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion  
Directors and Assistant Directors