

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Pro Tem John Hamon, City of Paso Robles
CC: Ty Lewis, City Manager
From: Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.
Ben Goldeen, Federal Advocacy Manager
Christopher Townsend, President
Date: February 17, 2023
Subject: Synopsis of City of Paso Robles Washington, DC Advocacy Trip

Office of Sen. Dianne Feinstein

Sean Mullin, Legislative Assistant – Science and Technology

Freda Pachter, Legislative Assistant – Transportation

Notes

- City leadership met with staff to Senator Dianne Feinstein handling space, science and technology, and transportation, providing an overview of the Golden Spike project and its importance to the City's space port project.
- Freda with Sen. Feinstein asked about the spaceport application process and the City provided her an overview of the process and where the City currently stands in the application process.
- Sean spoke to the pending Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization. With the current authorization expiring on September 30, 2023 Congress is taking steps to approve a reauthorization. Sen. Feinstein's office is accepting input from interested stakeholders. Sean suggested possible changes to the Space Transportation infrastructure Matching (STIM) Grants Program administered by FAA.
- On the Golden Spike project Freda shared the importance of matching funds to demonstrate support for the project in the eyes of the US Department of Transportation.

- Freda suggested the City evaluate the upcoming INFRA Grant opportunity through the US Department of Transportation for funding for the Golden Spike Project. INFRA is a grant program aimed at supporting goods movement. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is expected later in the spring of 2023.
- Sen. Feinstein's staff offered the Senator's support on the City's efforts on both the Golden Spike and Spaceport.

Office of Rep. Jimmy Panetta

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta

Pete Spiro, Chief of Staff

Seamus McKeon, Legislative Assistant – Transportation

Notes

- City leaders provided an overview of the status of both the spaceport and Golden Spike project to Rep. Panetta and his staff.
- Rep. Panetta asked about the reasoning behind CalTrans' hesitation to fund and support the overcrossing project.
- Rep. Panetta said he wanted to make sure that the State of California was on board with the project.
 - Rep. Panetta is going to take into consideration ways to advance the project and asked for some time to confer with allies on the issue, including State Sen. Laird and Rep. Carbajal.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Hamon asked for Rep. Panetta to help the City push CalTrans toward a resolution.
- Rep. Panetta encouraged the City to apply for grants through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
 - Rather than a small community project funding request (earmark) Rep. Panetta wants to support the city by going big with grants through the US Department of Transportation.
 - There was also discussion of pursuing an appropriations programmatic request to fund the Golden Spike project. This will require some additional follow up with Pete Spiro, the Congressman's Chief of Staff.
- The Congressman will be in Paso Robles during the congressional recess and his scheduler will contact the City to arrange an event.

- Congressman Panetta is excited to now represent the City of Paso Robles.

Office of Rep. Salud Carbajal

The Honorable Salud Carbajal

Johanna Montiel, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Director

Notes

- Rep. Salud Carbajal was glad to welcome the City to his office. After years of representing the City redistricting moved his district to the south, however he is still eager to help.
- Rep. Carbajal suggested making the Golden Spike a major regional priority by partnering with the regional MPOs such as SBCAG and SLOCOG, specifically recommending the City get the project on the SBCAG R-TIP.
- Rep. Carbajal will be helpful as he can to help coordinate regional support for the City's projects.

Office of Sen. Alex Padilla

Mana Azarmi, Counsel – Science and Technology

Andrew Baratta, Legislative Correspondent – Transportation

Notes:

- City leaders shared the information on the Spaceport and Golden Spike, including difficulties with CalTrans and the process for receiving FAA approval of the Spaceport project.
- Sen. Padilla's staff will share this information with the Senator to make sure he is aware of the innovative partnership occurring on the central coast.
- Sen. Padilla's staff said they would support the city's projects through letters of support for grants.
- The possibility of Sen. Padilla visiting Paso Robles to tour the site was discussed and Mana said the city should send in the request to the scheduling team and copy her so that she can elevate the request.

Overall Takeaways

The City of Paso Robles came to Washington, DC to elevate the profile of their work to construct a Spaceport on the Central Coast and provide safe transportation to it by completing the Golden Spike project. By engaging with the City's congressional delegation the project is now at the top

of mind of California's federal political leadership. Follow-up will be key to the long-term success of the trip. It will be important to keep staff to the Senators and Representatives up to date on milestones and challenges for both projects. The federal appropriations process for Fiscal Year 2024 provides an opportunity to seek funding for the project, albeit a relatively small amount. Upcoming federal transportation grant programs such as INFRA and the Bridge Improvement Program can provide substantially more funding than the Congressional appropriations process. These grants should be reviewed and the offices of the City's congressional delegation should be updated on the City's plans to pursue grant funding.