

Georgia Municipal Association 2021 Top Federal Priorities



COVID Relief for All Cities

Cities are struggling to pay for critical services as a result of health and economic policy impacts beyond their control. Despite having sound financial practices in place leading up to this crisis, municipal leaders and economic experts anticipate billions in lost revenues in 2021 and 2022. Access to federal COVID relief in 2021 will help Georgia's cities prevent cuts to critical services needed to protect the public's safety and health, as we continue to weather the pandemic and economic downturn – services like water, sewer, trash collection, fire, and police. With additional federal funds cities can set up grant programs to assist residents and businesses in paying their utility bills and rent; city leaders can support campaigns to promote all eligible individuals to get their COVID vaccines.

Infrastructure Investment

GMA urges Congress to support federal funding for infrastructure investment. GMA projects Georgia cities will need nearly [\\$20 billion](#) over five years for water and sewer, transportation, public safety, and other capital programs. GMA supports a federal infrastructure package that increases funding available to local governments and includes local governments in decision making on all infrastructure improvements that impact their communities. The federal-state-local partnership is critical to the ability of cities to complete vital infrastructure improvements that create jobs and maximize taxpayer dollars.

Local governments are investing in themselves:

- In the past ten years, local residents have approved 94% of SPLOST referenda.
- \$7.11 billion in SPLOST revenues were distributed to local governments to pay for voter-approved capital projects between 2016 and 2020
- As of January 2021, 28 counties have Single County TSPLOST in place and four regions have implemented a Regional (TIA) TSPLOST. A total of 9 counties are either in a Single County TSPLOST or TIA Region.
- From 2014 to 2018, municipal debt issuances exceeded \$6.8 billion.

Local funds will not be enough – a long-term, strong local-state-federal partnership is needed to address our state's infrastructure needs.

Broadband/ Telecommunications

GMA opposes any legislation or regulation that weakens the authority of Georgia's municipalities to regulate the use of their public rights-of-way and which diminishes their authority to locally determine appropriate compensation for such use. GMA supports a balanced approach to telecommunications policy that allows new technologies to flourish while preserving traditional local regulatory authority.

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