



City Councilmember Policies and Procedures Manual

Title:	City Councilmember Travel	Policy Number:	CC-01-100
Type:	Administrative	Effective Date:	
Author:		Revised Date:	

Purpose:	To provide the City Council with specific guidelines for traveling when on official City of New Braunfels business to ensure the minimization of expenses whenever possible and adherence to all applicable state and federal regulations. The City will reimburse Councilmembers for all allowable expenses associated with conducting official City business.
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Application:	<p>City Council travel will be budgeted annually during the budget process. Any changes in the adopted budget must be approved by a majority vote of the Council.</p> <p>All business travel by members of City Council shall be coordinated through the City Manager's Management Assistant (MA). The MA will complete the City Council Travel and Reimbursement form, make all reservations, and will submit all forms to the Mayor or his designee and Finance for approval. When possible, arrangements should be made four weeks in advance of the travel start date.</p> <p>All documentation required for reimbursement for travel expenses not pre-paid or advanced should be submitted to the MA no later than 45 days after the travel has taken place.</p>
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Air Travel:	<p><i>Class of Service:</i> All flights reserved will be economy or coach class (non-refundable) unless using a free upgrade or if no other flight options are available that would not interfere with the purpose of the travel.</p> <p><i>Baggage Fees:</i> The baggage limit is (1) checked bag per traveler. If additional baggage fees are assessed, the costs incurred will only be reimbursable if an acceptable justification is provided that is approved at the discretion of the Mayor or his designee.</p> <p><i>Cancellation:</i> It is the responsibility of the traveler to notify the MA if the flight arrangements must be changed or canceled. In most cases, if the travel must be changed or canceled, the funds can be used as a credit toward future travel, less a service charge imposed by the airline.</p> <p><i>Reservation Procedures:</i> When requesting flights, the MA should be notified of specific time frames in which travel arrangements should be made. The flight arrangements will be purchased using a City Procurement Card (P-Card).</p>
Lodging:	<p><i>Accommodation Selection:</i> Unless otherwise specified, the MA will reserve a standard, single occupancy rate, non-smoking room for the traveler.</p>

	<p><i>Conference/Seminar Lodging:</i> Whenever possible, accommodations will be secured at the event discounted rate at the hotel where the event is to take place. Hotel arrangements may be made to include the day before or the day after the conference only if it is impractical to arrive in time for the beginning of the conference, or depart after the conclusion of the conference, and/or to attend events associated with the conference. If no lodging is approved by the conference/seminar, reservations will be made at a hotel close to the conference/seminar that offers a rate that is equal to or less than the GSA hotel rate for the location of the conference/seminar.</p> <p><i>Cancellation:</i> It is the responsibility of the traveler to either notify the MA or cancel their own room reservation by the required deadline if they will not need the room to avoid a “no-show” charge. If the hotel reservation is not canceled because the MA is not notified, the traveler will be held personally responsible for any charges incurred. If the cancellations are made directly with the hotel, the traveler must request and retain a “cancellation number” as documentation of the transaction or be held personally responsible for any charges incurred.</p> <p><i>Overnight Accommodations Within 60 Mile Radius -</i> Any overnight lodging within a 60 mile radius of the worksite location or home of record, whichever is closer, must be pre-approved by the Mayor or designee.</p> <p><i>Reservation Procedures:</i> When booking a hotel room, the MA will secure the reservation using a P-Card. When the hotel establishment allows, the MA will complete a credit card authorization form so that all hotel charges will be charged to the P-Card at the end of the traveler’s stay. In the event the hotel will not allow this, the traveler will be required to pay for expenses incurred at the hotel and seek reimbursement from the City. The MA will notify the traveler of this prior to securing the hotel reservation.</p> <p>Receipts for all hotel expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p>
<p>Meals:</p>	<p>Reimbursable meal expenses are dependent on the time that the travel status begins and ends and are only reimbursable up to the allowable General Services Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rate for the location of the business being conducted. A link to the GSA rates is available in the reference section of the policy.</p> <p><i>If travel begins:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior to 10 AM - breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be reimbursed. • between 10 AM and 2 PM, lunch and dinner will be reimbursed. • after 4 PM, dinner will be reimbursed. <p><i>If travel concludes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior to 10 AM, breakfast will be reimbursed. • between 10 AM and 2 PM, breakfast and lunch will be reimbursed. • after 4 PM, breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be reimbursed. <p><i>Conference and hotel meals:</i> When meals are provided at conferences or are included in the registration fees, or if the hotel the traveler is lodging at offers a “continental breakfast”, reimbursement may not be requested for that meal. The cost of alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.</p> <p>Receipts for all meal expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p>

Parking:	<p><i>Hotel and Venue Parking:</i> Parking fees at a hotel or conference venue will be paid at the self-park rate unless valet parking is the only option. Validation from the business is required for such valet parking.</p> <p><i>Airport Parking Rates:</i> Airport parking for 24 hours or less will be reimbursed at the short-term parking rate. Airport parking for 25 hours or more shall be reimbursed at the long-term rate.</p> <p>Receipts for all parking expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p>
Transportation:	<p>When requesting travel arrangements, travelers should determine which mode of transportation will be the most cost-efficient.</p> <p><u>Personally-owned Vehicles (POV):</u> When using a POV for official City business, a Councilmember may be reimbursed for mileage based on the City of New Braunfels' established mileage reimbursement rate per mile. Mileage is based on worksite location, or home of record, to the conference/meeting/seminar location, whichever is the shortest distance. For reimbursement, the traveler must print and submit a Google map or MapQuest map as justification.</p> <p>A traveler may use ground transportation for personal reasons even though air travel is the least costly mode of transportation. The total allowable reimbursement of POV travel, including any applicable lodging and meals in transit between the origin and destination points, will be limited to the cost of airfare based on the round trip airfare cost incurred by other Councilmembers (if applicable), or, if not applicable, the lowest regular coach fare available for the location of travel from a standard commercial air carrier, including costs to and from the airports and end destination. The traveler is required to have a valid driver's license and current comprehensive automobile insurance, including liability.</p> <p><u>Rental Vehicles:</u> <i>Rental vehicles</i> will be pre-authorized when the cost of a rental vehicle is less expensive than other available ground transportation.</p> <p><u>Size Limit:</u> All rentals should be for intermediate size cars or smaller, unless 3 or more people are traveling together, or if an upgrade is provided at the rental company at no cost. Luxury, premium, and specialty car rentals will not be reimbursable unless a justification is provided that is approved by the Mayor or his designee.</p> <p><u>Reservation Procedures:</u> When booking a rental vehicle, the MA will only reserve the vehicle in the Councilmember's name. The reservation will be made by the MA using a P-Card. The City's P-Card program provides insurance that covers rental cars used by Councilmembers while traveling on official City business. Therefore, optional, additional insurance should be declined.</p> <p>When traveling on official City business, the Councilmember should exercise care in the use of rental vehicles and should operate them in a safe and courteous manner. The City will not be responsible for tickets or fines incurred while operating a rental vehicle during business travel.</p>

	<p>In the event of an accident, the MA or the City's P-Card Administrator should be notified immediately.</p> <p><i>Refueling of Rental Vehicles:</i> Wherever possible, the traveler should refuel prior to returning the rental car. Gas charges at rental car establishments tend to be substantially higher than independent gas stations. A justification must be submitted with the reimbursement request when being charged for fuel by the rental car establishment and must be approved by the Mayor or his designee.</p> <p>Receipts for all rental vehicle and refueling expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p> <p><u>Other Transportation:</u> Councilmembers may claim reimbursement for expenses associated with ground transportation other than POVs and rental vehicles, such as taxi cab services, when other ground transportation is unavailable or when it is less costly than using a POV or rental vehicle.</p> <p>Receipts for all other transportation expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p>
Family / Guest Travel:	<p>In accordance with Texas Attorney General Opinion LO-90-31, travel expenses for family members or guests are not reimbursable. However, a guest may share accommodations as long as there is no additional cost to the City.</p>
Miscellaneous:	<p><i>Business-Related Expenses:</i> Expenses are reimbursable when they are necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of the trip. A justification of why such expenditures are being claimed will need to be provided for approval by the Mayor or his designee. Miscellaneous expenses may include business office expenses, special fees for package deliveries, etc.</p> <p><i>Gratuities:</i> Customary gratuities during the course of business travel such as baggage handling, tips at restaurants, taxis, and other usual services are reimbursable expenses.</p> <p><i>Telecommunications:</i> When possible, making calls from hotels that are not complimentary should be avoided. If the traveler has a cell phone, it should be used for making calls while in the continental US. Charges may be billed to the City if not covered under the traveler's service plan.</p> <p><i>Internet:</i> When internet connection is required during travel for City business and free internet is not available, charges are reimbursable with receipt or documentation.</p> <p><i>Tolls:</i> If the use of toll roads is necessary during the course of the Councilmember's travel, it will be considered a reimbursable expense. A receipt of the toll charges or a copy of a statement must be submitted for reimbursement.</p> <p>Receipts for all miscellaneous expenses must be submitted for reimbursement.</p>
Travel Advances:	<p>For meal and mileage expenses a traveler may request from the MA that a travel advance payment be made in the form of a check prior to the travel start date. These requests must be made at least 1 week prior to the start of the travel and must be approved by the Mayor or his designee. Once approved, the City of New Braunfels Finance Department will send the advance payment directly to the traveler. At the conclusion of the travel, the</p>

	<p>Councilmember is responsible for submitting receipts for all meal expenses incurred. In the event that the travel advance was more than the actual cost for meals or the trip was canceled, the traveler is responsible for reimbursing the City.</p> <p><i>Meals:</i> Meal expense advances are determined by the GSA established per diem rates for the worksite city and are dependent on the time of the travel.</p> <p><i>POV Mileage:</i> POV mileage may be advanced based on the City of New Braunfels' established mileage reimbursement rate per mile. Mileage will be based on worksite location, or home of record, to the conference/meeting/seminar location, whichever is the shortest distance. A Google or MapQuest map will be utilized to determine the mileage advance.</p>
Travel Rewards:	Councilmembers traveling for official City business may retain reward points and use them for personal purposes. However, participation in these programs may not result in any incremental cost to the City.
Forms:	<p>Mileage Reimbursement Form</p> <p>City Council Travel Advance and Reimbursement Form</p>
Resources:	<p><u>Woelk, S. (1990). [Attorney General Opinion] Re: City Council Members and Expenses of Spouses who are attending conventions: A.G. file no. LO-90-31. Texas. Attorney General's Office: Texas. Attorney General's Office.</u></p> <p>General Services Administration Per Diem Rates Look-Up <u>http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120</u></p>