By Amy Sylvestri

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The City Council met with their federal liaison Monday night to discuss how San Leandro can best get federal funds for local projects.

San Leandro hires a consultant to appeal to the federal government on its behalf. Lobbyist Len Simon is based in Washington D.C. and works for San Leandro and other several other cities.

Simon said that the Lit San Leandro broadband loop project designed to lure tech businesses is an excellent first step in getting San Leandro to stand out from the rest of the nation.

“There is a lot of support out there for what we want to do in San Leandro,” said Simon. “There

is a lot of support for entreprenurialship."

The city was recently awarded $2.1 million in federal funding to further the Lit San Leandro project, which Simon says is a good start.

Simon went on to say that he also lobbies for cities including Salt Lake City , Louisville, and Madison, Wisconsin and said they are all looking to emulate the fiber-optic loop.

"The message that I'm getting is how impressed they are," said Simon. "San Leandro is increasingly exciting to talk about."

One main focus for San Leandro is the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant.

The city's current COPS funding pays for five officers though this year. The city hopes to renew that grant, but that money is still tied up in the federal budgeting process and they don't know if

it will come through.

Simon told the City Council that, because of President Obama's new gun-control initiative, funding for 1,000 more police officers nationwide is on the table and San Leandro could lobby for a chunk of the money.

Police Chief Sandra Spagnoli said she hopes to get up to eight more campus cops in addition to the two they already have, so each officer would be responsible for two of the city's 20 schools.

Mayor Stephen Cassidy was in Washington D.C. last week and met with the Department of Justice to discuss the COPS funding and reported that they were "interested in San Leandro."

Cassidy said Simon's role as lobbyist for the city is crucial at this time.

"The doors you are able to open for us are significant," said Cassidy. "It makes San Leandro a player."