



89th Legislative Session

Texas Legislature Basics

- Texas Legislature:
 - Texas Senate: 31 members, led by the Lt. Governor (President of the Senate)
 - Texas House: 150 members, led by the Speaker of the House
- Legislative Session:
 - Odd-numbered years
 - January through May (140 days)
- Special Sessions:
 - Only the Governor has the ability to call a special session
 - Specials are called 30 days at a time
 - Legislature cannot adjourn until the body passes the items set by the Governor

Setting the Stage for the 89th

- Last Session Recap
- Forecast for this Session
 - Speaker's Race
 - Governor's Emergency Items
 - Budget Surplus

Session Goals & Expectations

- Build relationships with new and existing local delegation members
- Promote the City's Legislative Program in Austin
 - Build relationships with legislators across the state
 - Coordinate efforts with our partner organizations
- Engage City Council and staff in the legislative process
 - Weekly updates by email
 - Coordination with Council and staff to provide written and oral testimony



Proposed State Legislative Program

Purpose

- Signals policy areas that are most important to the City of Denton
- Allows staff to act quickly to priority issues
- Helps build connections with our delegation and sets Denton apart

Process

- Engaged department directors and assistant directors to provide industry and department specific priorities.
- In depth reviews with staff and state consultants to ensure alignment with our strategic plan.
- Final result:
 - One-page (front and back)
 - Mid-level, bullet point priorities

Proposed Program: Community Focus

The City of Denton values strong partnerships with key community organizations—including Denton ISD, Denton County, Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), North Central Texas College (NCTC), Texas Woman’s University (TWU), and the University of North Texas (UNT). To advance legislation that addresses shared priorities and enhances the well-being of the entire Denton area, the City supports the following initiatives:

- Expand access to affordable mental health care through legislation and funding.
- Support legislation and funding for community-based services for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Protect the autonomy of local officials to make decisions in the best interest of their communities.
- Increase the Texas Education Agency’s basic allotment and fully fund public schools statewide.
- Support legislation that enhances the City’s vibrant community and economy including economic development agreements tourism, public safety, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability.

Proposed Program: City Services

- Support legislation that designates essential city employees, like solid waste workers and animal control officers, as first responders.
- Support legislation requiring the sale of only healthy animals in retail pet stores.
- Support legislation and funding for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Local Parks Grant Program.
- Oppose legislation that limits franchise fee authority for solid waste services.
- Oppose legislation that restricts libraries' authority to make decisions regarding materials, implements a state-issued rating system for purchases, or prohibits libraries from hosting community events.

Proposed Program: Land Use & Development

- Support legislation that protects and clarifies a city's roles in requests for removal from the extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ).
- Support legislation that preserves a city's authority to establish lot sizes, parking requirements, density, and accessory dwelling unit (ADU) requirements within city limits.
- Oppose legislation that restricts the City's authority over development issues, including annexation, eminent domain, zoning, regulatory takings, building codes, tree preservation, short-term rentals, and manufactured housing.
- Oppose legislation that diminishes the City's authority to manage and control its rights-of-way, including limitations on requiring dedications or studies as part of plat submissions.

Proposed Program: Municipal Court

- Support legislation that amends extended-term protective orders to include offenses against pregnant individuals and those involving strangulation.
- Support legislation that creates a funding mechanism for court-appointed attorneys in Class C misdemeanor cases.
- Support legislation that expands virtual or remote access for defendants in municipal court.
- Oppose legislation that eliminates the option of issuing warrants for Class C misdemeanors.

Proposed Program: Taxation & Financial Strategies

- Support legislation allowing municipalities to issue debt and protecting debt issuances.
- Support increasing the competitive bidding threshold to reflect rising costs and inflation.
- Oppose legislation limiting the City's ability to issue Certificates of Obligation (COs) and levy necessary fees.

Proposed Program: Transportation & Aviation

- Support legislation that invests in the State's multimodal transportation systems and increases funding for growing urban areas.
- Support legislation that provides cities with greater flexibility to fund local transportation projects.
- Support legislation that invests in the State's aviation program capital improvement.

Proposed Program: Utilities

- Support legislation that increases state grant funding to the Texas Water Development Board, in alignment with the priorities outlined in the State Water Plan.
- Support legislation that promotes Direct Potable Reuse (DPR), and other water conservation initiatives.
- Support legislation that clearly defines technology resources capable of meeting the goals of the Dispatchable Reliability Reserve Service.
- Support legislation that classifies electric power generation units as critical infrastructure, giving them the same priority protections as entities with priority access to natural gas during emergencies.
- Oppose any legislation that restricts large load interconnections to the distribution systems of Municipal-Owned Utilities (MOUs).
- Oppose legislation that creates unfunded mandates on Municipal-Owned Utilities.

Next Steps

- Provide direction on the proposed program
- Final Program will be on the November 19 Consent Agenda

