

City of San Marcos Guiding Principles for the 87th Texas Legislative Session

The City of San Marcos recognizes the need for an active state legislative program to ensure the interests of the City's residents and businesses are protected and enhanced. The City Council has created a focused legislative platform, which reflects the core values found in the City Charter's statement of Goals and the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statements. As directed by the City Council, the City will participate in the 87th Texas Legislative Session (2021) process through monitoring and actively advocating for or against legislation when appropriate to support or safeguard the interests of the City.

The following "Guiding Principles" serve as direction for staff and the City's legislative advocates on key issues.

COVID-19 Relief and Stimulus Efforts

- Support any COVID 19 or post-COVID 19 related response/recovery/stimulus efforts at the state and federal level. It includes positioning the City to successfully pursue additional streams of funding that may arise throughout the course of the current crisis. This includes Congressionally-directed funding, as well as funding that is distributed by federal and state agencies.

Preemption & Local Control

- Oppose legislation that would erode municipal authority, impose unfunded mandates, or provide for state preemption of municipal authority in any way.
- Support legislation to amend Section 361.096 (a)(1) of the Texas Health and Safety Code to allow local regulation of the use of disposable packages and containers for the purposes of environmental protection, preservation of endangered species, flood prevention, and to promote the health and safety of wildlife and livestock.
- Oppose legislative action that interferes with the ability of the City to determine how best to effectively operate local programs,

services and activities or negatively impacts a municipally owned electric utility's ability to provide low cost services to its communities.

- Support legislation to make beneficial amendments to Section 3000.002 of the Texas Government Code to modify regulations regarding building products, materials or methods.
- Support legislation to make beneficial amendments to Section 212.009 and subsequent sections of the Texas Government Code to modify the approval procedure for a plan or plat.

Revenue and Finance

- Oppose legislation that would impose a revenue and/or tax cap of any type, negatively expand appraisal caps, erode the local sales tax base, impose additional state fees or costs on city services, amend current taxing authority without replacing lost revenue with a fixed revenue stream, or erode the ability of a city to issue debt.
- Support legislation that will exempt more costs from the newly imposed 3.5% revenue cap and provide a more workable timeline for the tax-setting process.
- Support legislative action that broadens the use of state cable franchise PEG (public, educational, government) funds for municipal operations.
- Support legislative action that enables local officials to access resources to provide quality police, fire, emergency management and medical services, and community efforts.
- Support legislative action to allow utilization of revenue from the Hotel Occupancy Tax to maintain our unique and beautiful river basin.
- Support funding to Texas State Library and Archives Commission to leverage statewide buying power to acquire e-books and make them available statewide through TexShare digital resource programs.

Land Use

- Oppose legislation that would erode municipal authority, including: annexation, eminent domain, zoning, regulatory takings, tree preservation, building codes, and short-term rentals.

- Support legislation to enhance cities' ability to protect historical, cultural and natural resources and property values by implementing development standards.
- Support legislative action to increase funding for workforce housing for workers who are the backbone of the City of San Marcos, strengthen and enhance veteran housing programs, and increase the availability of affordable housing for all.

Economic Development

- Support the San Marcos Air & Rail Terminal (SMART) project which will provide intermodal freight capacity and a key link to national transportation infrastructure as well as bring thousands of jobs to the area.
- Increase action to promote strategic economic development and provide incentives to attract and retain businesses.

Workforce Training

- Support legislative funding for workforce training and programs including skills development funding and customized training to employ veterans and civilians, including career transitioning and second career adults.
- Support legislative funding for programs pertaining to small business education and entrepreneurial ideas.

Water Resources & Environmental Protection

- Support legislative action to: protect the City's authority to utilize reclaimed water; encourage protection and preservation of spring flows supporting the pristine San Marcos River; protect the City's investment in water infrastructure for current and future use; sustain the goals of the Alliance Regional Water Authority (formally the Hays Caldwell Public Utility Agency); and prioritize and develop alternative energy sources.
- Support legislation to establish a formal oil and gas pipeline routing approval process in Texas to include public input and environmental considerations similar to the process managed under the Public Utility Commission.

- Support legislation requiring that prior to issuance of a new TPDES permit for small package wastewater treatment plants all regional options shall first be exhausted.

Transportation

- Support legislative action to increase, while protecting the environment, funding for better connectivity and to better keep pace with the City's priority infrastructure repair, maintenance and construction needs for air, highway, transit, pedestrian, and rail transportation, and other multi-modal transportation methods.
- Support legislative action that would allow for greater flexibility by cities to fund local transportation projects.
- Oppose state or federal legislation or rules that would erode the authority of a city to be adequately compensated for the use of its rights-of-ways.
- Support legislative action to fund infrastructure projects at the San Marcos Regional Airport, which will also include working with TXDOT Aviation and Texas Congressional members to advocate for higher prioritization of airport infrastructure needs.

Electric Utility

- Support legislative action that allows municipally owned electric utilities to better provide reliable and safe electricity at reasonable prices while supporting local communities.

Education

- Support legislative action to fully fund and strengthen P-16 education, including funding for Texas State University's five-year strategic plan and full day pre-k program.
- Support legislative action to fund youth health initiatives and Citywide Out-of-School Time programs.
- Support legislative action to increase funding for adult education and literacy.
- Support legislative funding for Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) for babies and toddlers with developmental delays.

- Support legislative action to continue to fund School Safety Action Plans and the continued emergency responder training provided by the Texas State Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) program.
- Support legislation to continue to fund and promote skilled labor and trade certification programs.

Mental Health & Homelessness:

- Support legislative action to coordinate and expand the delivery of mental health care services.
- Support legislation, incentives, and state funding sources for diversion and assistance programs.
- Support legislative action to expand social services to people experiencing homelessness.

Technology

- Support legislation relating to cybersecurity for information resources including keeping confidential and not subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act certain information related to a city's cybersecurity technology.

Designations

- Support legislative action to designate the City as the "Mermaid Capital of Texas".