



CITY OF AUSTIN

STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
86TH LEGISLATURE

2019

Condensed Version

For Full Version: austintexas.gov/department/intergovernmental-relations-office

MAYOR & COUNCIL



Steve Adler
Mayor



Natasha Harper-Madison
District 1



Delia Garza
District 2



Sabino "Pio" Renteria
District 3



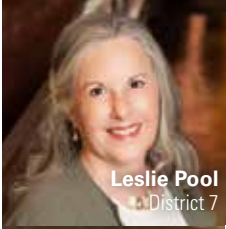
Gregorio "Greg" Casar
District 4



Ann Kitchen
District 5



Jimmy Flannigan
District 6



Leslie Pool
District 7



Paige Ellis
District 8



Kathie Tovo
District 9



Alison Alter
District 10



Spencer Cronk
City Manager



Brie L. Franco
Intergovernmental Relations Officer
512-974-2281
brie.franco@austintexas.gov



COUNCIL/MANAGER

10 Geographic Council Districts/Mayor at-large



POPULATION:
963,116
(as of JAN 2018)

105 people moving to Austin daily

70%
of population has a library card



VISITORS:
24
million annually

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME:
\$76,629
(2015)

70%
of general fund spent on Police, Fire, and EMS



REMOVED:
250 TONS
of trash from Lady Bird Lake



665,290
Patrol Incidents Responded To



4,218
Fire Incidents Dispatched



78,164
Patient Ground Transports

Largest No Kill
animal shelter in U.S.



500+
Jobs Created 2017-2018

- Apple.....(5,000)
- US Army Futures Command (500)
- General Motors(500)
- Charles Schwab.....(1,500)
- Indeed.....(1,500)
- Oracle.....(1,000)
- Facebook.....(1,000)

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

The City of Austin's 86th State Legislative Agenda reflects the City's priorities for efficient and cost-effective government services that foster Austin's prosperity, sustainability, and safety. The City of Austin supports legislation that enhances City services, reduces the cost of providing services, prioritizes a prosperous business climate, and improves the quality of life for its residents. The City of Austin opposes legislation that strips Austin residents of their right to self-governance, increases taxpayer costs for City services that residents rely on, undermines the principle of home rule, negatively affects the City's financial ability to act in the best interest of its residents, or imposes on Austin taxpayers the burden of paying for State mandates or collecting revenues for the State.

To that end, the City has adopted certain legislative priorities wherein City staff and its professional Intergovernmental Relations team is directed and authorized to protect interests critical to preserving the principle of home rule and Austin residents' right of self-governance.

In addition, the City has adopted statements of support wherein City staff and its professional Intergovernmental Relations team is directed and authorized to actively support legislation related to specific position(s) adopted by the City Council while not proactively seeking introduction of legislation.

Lastly, the City has adopted statements of opposition wherein City staff and its professional Intergovernmental Relations team is directed and authorized to actively oppose any legislation that contradicts or undermines the specific position(s) adopted by the City Council.

The City of Austin also supports the legislative initiatives of strategic community partners, such as regional government entities, Texas cities, the Texas Municipal League, educational institutions, non-profits, and private sector entities that enhance educational, cultural, and infrastructure resources in the Austin region to the extent these initiatives do not conflict with the City's agenda.






2 Fresh water + 40 Public POOLS

13  parks

16,862
Acres of greenspace



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Municipal Revenue and Financing

The City of Austin believes in promoting strong partnerships between cities and the State for the benefit of all Texans. However, unlike other states, Texas provides no general-purpose state aid to cities to help pay for streets, public safety, or other city services. The City of Austin supports policies that allow city officials to provide critical services for the protection, safety, and welfare of its residents while preserving Austin's ability to manage our growth, our budgets, and address the issues that matter most to our residents.

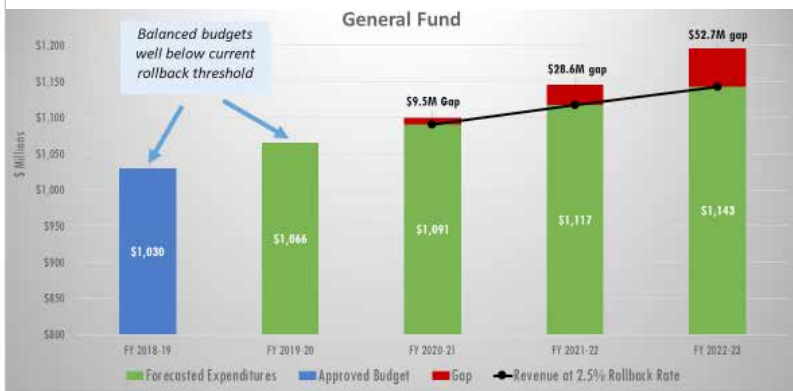
The City will:

Oppose legislation that negatively affects the City's financial ability to act in the best interest of Austin's residents or reduces the City's AAA bond rating, including but not limited to:

- Imposing a revenue cap of any type, including a rollback rate below eight percent, a mandatory tax rate ratification election, a lower rollback petition requirement, a limitation on overall city expenditures, or an exclusion of new property in the effective rate calculations; or
- Lowering the homestead appraisal cap or expanding the appraisal cap to non-homestead properties.

Lower Tax Cap: Minor Savings, Major Impacts

Had a 2.5% cap been in place for the prior five years, the City would have experienced \$93.2 million less revenue.



\$93.2 million currently funds any one of the following:



991

Police Officers

Over half of the current sworn workforce



1,104

Sworn Firefighters

Enough to staff 69 stations



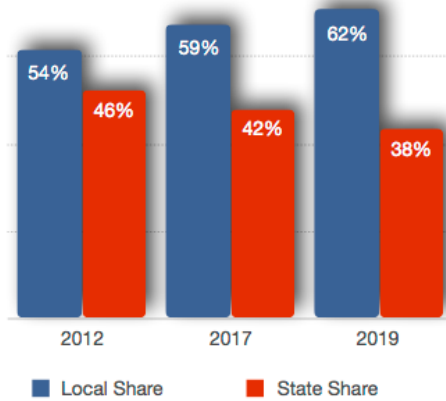
All Parks Department Services

Including aquatics, parks maintenance, recreation centers, and support staff

WHAT IS DRIVING PROPERTY TAXES

The State Over-Relies on Local Property Taxes to Fund the State's Public Education System

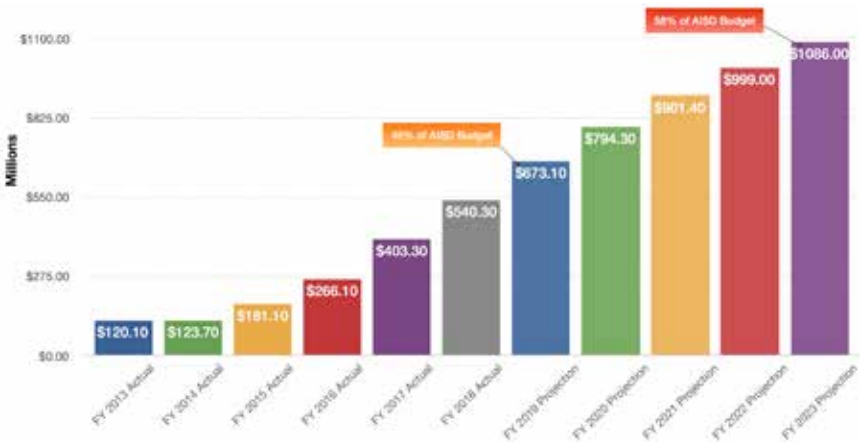
Most State funding for schools comes from local property tax collections.



Source: Legislative Budget Board, does not include federal funds or state grants outside of the Foundation School Program.

In 2019, the State will take \$23.6 million more from AISD taxpayers than the City collects.
 In 2019, the State will get \$39 million more from AISD taxpayers than AISD will keep.

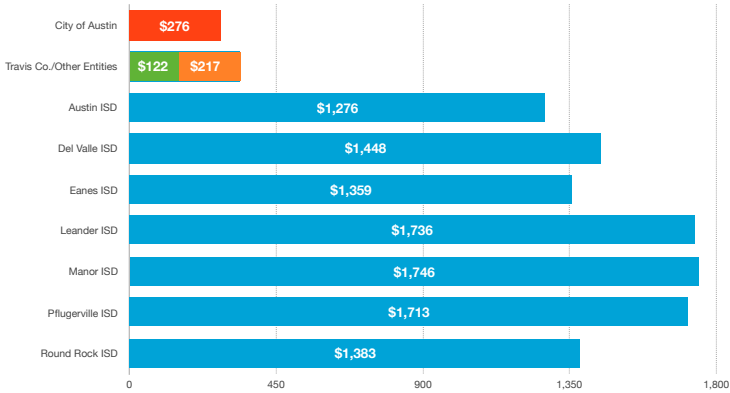
Historical and Projected AISD Recapture Payments



WHAT IS DRIVING PROPERTY TAXES

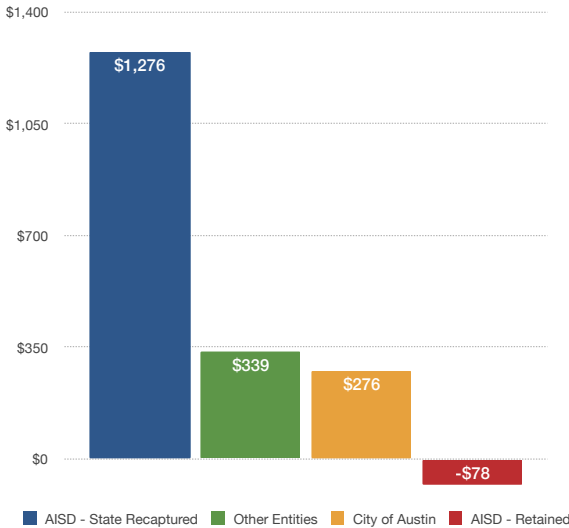
The State is the Driver of Higher Property Taxes

Over the last six years the State has increased property taxes more than eleven times the Travis County increase and nearly five times the City of Austin increase.



The typical Austin taxpayer is defined as the owner of a median -value home that does not receive the senior/disabled exemption. This typical home had an assessed value of approximately \$332,000 in FY19, before accounting for each entities' homestead exemptions.

Typical Austin Resident Property Tax Bill



Support legislation to modernize procurement methods and debt financing for the purchase of cloud computing technology assets.

Support legislation allowing the City of Austin to use, with state agencies and governmental entities, the value due the City of Austin on the ledger (property transaction log) of the Texas Facilities Commission, which value currently meets or exceeds \$1,319,208 and in addition get credit or wide use of the balance of any other state related ledger that may exist.

Municipal Resources

The City of Austin is committed to providing reliable and safe water and energy for Austin's growing population, while conserving water and energy resources for future generations.

The City will:

Support legislation that promotes healthy communities and economic prosperity through the protection and preservation of the region's air, land, and water and Austin's natural resources and open spaces.

Oppose legislation that attempts to diminish the City's ability to govern the taxpayer's investment in municipally-owned utilities or negatively impacts the current status of Austin Energy, including the rate case approved by City Council on August 29, 2016.

Public Safety and Infrastructure

The City will:

Support continued funding and support of Police, Fire, and EMS operations, and oppose legislation that restricts their

ability to effectively serve and protect the Austin community.

Support legislation that improves the City's ability to administer effective municipal court programs including efficient and equitable collections.

Support legislation that allows a sobering center to assume responsibility for intoxicated persons in lieu of placing them in a penal facility.

Support legislation that would prevent access to firearms by domestic abusers; support legislation that regulates bump stocks; oppose legislation that would deregulate silencers.

Support state funding opportunities to address drug overdose and opioid abuse response.

Protect the City's ability to manage and control public rights-of-way and publicly-owned land, to receive fair market compensation for use of public rights-of-way, and to require private companies to pay for the costs of relocating their facilities.

Oppose any legislation that would restrict the City's ability to protect the floodplain.

Mobility and Aviation

Transportation congestion consistently ranks as a major concern to Austinites. Addressing this concern requires the City of Austin and its partners to look for solutions that improve and expand transportation options to serve and connect centers and corridors, and to create human-scaled and inviting places.

The City will:

Support legislation and funding for transportation and technology projects and initiatives dedicated to improving regional mobility and to maintaining, expanding, and improving transportation infrastructure and local transportation options.

Support legislation that in accordance with federal law provides local governments and airport authorities with sufficient resources to provide for a safe and efficient aviation system and allows airports to be as self-sustaining as possible.

Support increased state funding for transportation projects or legislation that creates local-option funding options for transportation projects.

Support legislation that allows the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro), or another regional partner, to develop commuter rail service to connect Downtown Austin, East Austin, Manor, Elgin, Travis, and Bastrop counties, which proposed commuter rail is identified by Capital Metro as the 'Green Line Commuter Rail' of its 'Project Connect System Plan'.

Homelessness and Mental Health

The City of Austin believes it can reduce economic disparities by understanding and addressing root causes, leveraging public-private partnerships, and supporting children and adults toward long-term success.

The City will:

Support funding and programs that provide social services for individuals

experiencing homelessness, mental health disorders, and/or substance use disorders.

Equity & Affordability

The City of Austin strives to make the City a place where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible for all current and future Austinites.

The City will:

Protect Austin's civil rights ordinances and oppose legislation that attempts to diminish the City's ability to protect Austinite's employment, housing, public accommodation, and other civil rights that would threaten Austin's welcoming environment to businesses, conventions, and events and would tarnish Austin's status as an inclusive community for all.

Protect Austin residents' right to govern themselves and work with their City government to adopt and enforce ordinances that address the health, safety, and public welfare of the community, including but not limited to, the ability to regulate earned sick leave, payday lending, and fair chance hiring.

Support legislation that promotes equity for residents of Austin including pay-equity, education-equity, housing-equity, and health-equity.

Support legislation and funding that will bolster the City's efforts to stabilize and sustain neighborhoods, preserve and expand the supply of housing that is affordable, expand economic opportunities, meet critical social needs, and fund other critical needs in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Support legislation that prohibits predatory practices that pressure families to sell their homes.

Support legislation that would allow for a reduction, cap, or exemption to water drainage fees for persons age 65 or older or disabled.

Economic and Workforce Development

The City of Austin believes that developing new economic sectors through partnerships between the business community, city government, and institutions will help employ a diverse workforce and expand opportunities for young and old. To ensure the City's economic strength, it is critical to preserve Austin's mix of large and small businesses, local entrepreneurs, major employers, clean industries, educational institutions, and government jobs.

The City will:
Support legislation and funding that improves the City's ability to attract economic development, tourism, and provides economic opportunities for Austin's creative sector.

Support legislation and funding that improves the quality of education for successful pathways to high school graduation, college, and careers.

Quality of Life

The City of Austin is focused on maintaining Austin as a vibrant place to live, work, learn, and thrive.

The City will:
Support funding for the Texas State Park

System, the Texas Recreation & Parks Account Local Park Grant Program, and any program or funding that directly benefits parks, recreation, open space, trails, and tourism.

Support increases in state aid for public libraries.

Oppose legislation and the reduction of funding that limits the City's ability to provide knowledge and education to the Austin community through technology and books.

Support legislation that positively affects the mission and service delivery of municipal animal shelters, animal health, and any other animal related regulations to save shelter pet's lives, to work with rescue agencies and non-profits, and to model best practices for shelter pets and wildlife.

Partnerships

The City of Austin coordinates with the following local partners in support of their legislative agendas that enhance the health, safety, and vitality of the community, provided it does not conflict with the City's own legislative agenda.

- Travis County
- Austin-area Independent School Districts
- The University of Texas at Austin
- Central Health
- Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Capital Area Council of Governments
- City commissions and task forces

