



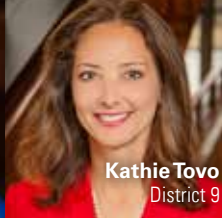
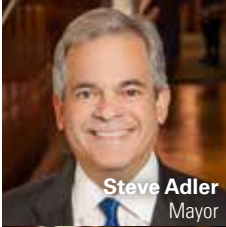
CITY OF AUSTIN | 2021

STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
87TH LEGISLATURE

Condensed Version

For Full Version: [austintexas.gov/department/intergovernmental-relations-office](https://www.austintexas.gov/department/intergovernmental-relations-office)

MAYOR & COUNCIL



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COUNCIL/MANAGER

10 Geographic Council Districts/Mayor at-large



POPULATION:
1,006,727
(as of APR 2020)

105 people moving to Austin daily

200+ MILES OF TRAILS



FASTEST GROWING
large city

in the U.S (2020)



LOWEST

UNEMPLOYMENT
rate for a major city
in Texas and
9th lowest
nationally



VISITORS:

24
million
annually

70% OF POPULATION
has a library card



JOBS 1000+

2017-2020

Apple	(5,000)
TESLA	(5,000)
HomeAway	(2,000)
Charles Schwab	(1,500)
Indeed	(1,500)
Oracle	(1,000)
Facebook	(1,000)
BAE Systems	(1,000)
Amazon	(1,000)
Dell	(1,000)

#1 among **Top 50** metros in the U.S. on number of jobs (Nov. 2020)

2 Fresh water **+ 40** Public **POOLS**

13  **parks**

16,862 Acres of greenspace

Largest No Kill
animal shelter in U.S.

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

The City of Austin's 87th 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.



THE CITY OF AUSTIN

Austinites Are Resilient

While 2020 presented us with countless challenges, it also offered many opportunities to demonstrate our City at its best. For over 10 months the City of Austin has been in emergency operations mode, working with community and regional partners to monitor and slow the spread of COVID 19, distribute personal protective equipment, and provide basic necessities to Austinites. Through all the turbulence, City of Austin employees continued serving our community when they needed us most. Below are just a few statistics the City of Austin is most proud of during our recovery efforts.

Austin's Economic and Community Support Programs helped Austinites by providing:

- Food, rent, and utility assistance
- Housing and support for our most at-risk individuals
- Financial support for those who test positive or waiting for test results
- Grants to childcare centers serving vulnerable populations
- Support for our live music venues to preserve Austin's title of the Live Music Capital of the World
- Counseling services for workers managing COVID-related mental health challenges.

COVID RELIEF AND RECOVERY



THE CITY DISTRIBUTED \$270 MILLION* IN COVID RELIEF

\$98 MILLION: EMERGENCY RESPONSE | **\$40 MILLION:** MENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS | **\$101 MILLION:** ECONOMIC SUPPORT
*FEDERAL AND LOCAL FUNDS



AUSTIN WATER PROVIDED \$5 MILLION IN SAVINGS TO CUSTOMERS

CITY AND PARTNERS SUCCESSFULLY MOVED **1,387 PEOPLE INTO HOUSING AND OUT OF HOMELESSNESS**

AUSTIN ENERGY PROVIDED MORE THAN \$7.4 MILLION IN UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE



CONDUCTED ON AVERAGE **11,000 COVID-19 TESTS PER MONTH**

THE CITY OF AUSTIN ESTABLISHED

11 NEW ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAMS SUPPORTING

32

Music and art venues

72

Childcare providers

365

Non-profit organizations

904

Small businesses

1,500

Performing musicians

1,866

Creative sector workers

CITY OF AUSTIN UTILITIES HAS PROVIDED \$9.5 MILLION IN FINANCIAL HELP TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS SINCE APRIL 2020



DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN **10,000+ MEALS EACH WEEK TO AUSTIN'S HOMELESS COMMUNITY DURING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19**
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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Public Safety

The City of Austin believes in investing in effective programs and strategies to make Austin a place where the efforts of police are supported through robust, high caliber training, public safety investments to prevent crime from occurring in the first place, and more appropriate handling of mental health crises and social services.

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 would improve a jurisdiction's ability to investigate officer misconduct, enforce disciplinary actions, or prosecute officer misconduct.

Support legislation to reduce the improper or excessive use of force by police, enhance implicit - bias and de-escalation training, expand civilian oversight of police departments, and improve relations between police and those they serve.

Support legislation and funding to improve background checks and screening of incoming police cadets and active officers being considered for promotion, including measures to increase access to officer misconduct records from other jurisdictions.

Support legislation that requires the use of de-escalation techniques and other alternative techniques to use of force whenever possible.

Support legislation that eliminates the use of discretionary arrests for offenses that are only punishable by fines.

Support legislation that would increase investigations, transparency, and public reporting of:

- Improper or excessive use of force and use of deadly force;
- Officer misconduct, complaints, and resulting disciplinary consequences;
- Racial profiling data and other racial disparity and equity data; and
- Body camera footage.

Support legislation that reduces risk to lives and property from flooding and wildfires.

Support legislation that reduces gun violence in coordination with local law enforcement including legislation that would limit or prevent access to firearms by domestic abusers, regulate and prevent access to bump stocks or promote safe storage for firearm. Oppose legislation that would deregulate gun silencers/suppressors.

Support legislative efforts to continue support for sexual assault victims, including the continuation of the Texas Sexual Assault Survivors Task Force, the completion of the State Auditor's Office's audit of the investigation and processing of sexual assault cases in Texas, and the clearing of rape kit backlogs.

Support legislation and funding to allow qualified medical and mental health professionals to safely perform related duties currently restricted to law enforcement officers, including the

authority to detain and transfer an individual believed to have a mental illness and who is a substantial risk of serious harm to themselves or others.

Oppose legislation that negatively affects the City's ability to maintain public confidence, trust, and support in the fairness and integrity of the Austin Police Department.

Oppose legislation that restricts the City's flexibility to effectively mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters, including flooding, wildfires, and public health disasters.

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, promote tourism, and provide 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.

Support legislation and funding that provides high-risk workers with public health and safety protections, support, and education related to COVID-19.

Support legislation that promotes reliable and affordable access to the internet and related technologies.

Support legislation and funding that provides Austin students and residents with career pathway opportunities, including work relief programs, job training, and apprenticeship programs.

Support legislation and funding to strengthen the resiliency of the creative and hospitality industries, including live music & art venues, restaurants, and bars.

Health & Prosperity

The City of Austin, through Austin Public Health, provides public health education and outreach, preventative health services, disease prevention, and emergency preparedness health services to protect and optimize the community's health and well-being. Austin Public Health also works to address issues of health equity and disparities, to plan for and respond to public health emergency preparedness, outbreaks related to disease, foodborne illness, exposures to environmental hazards, and natural disasters.

The City will:

Support adequate funding for public health care programs, including Women's Preventative Health and Family Planning Services, chronic disease prevention, behavioral health and substance abuse programs, to support the uninsured and underinsured residents of Austin and all local and regional health care programs.

Support legislation and funding that creates equitable access to and availability of affordable, safe, quality child care and education for all families of children aged birth to five; affordable, safe, quality after-school programming; evidence-based home visiting programs for families with young children; and that strengthens the resiliency of the child care industry.

Support legislation and funding to improve disease and laboratory reporting and strengthen epidemiological responses to public health conditions or threats.

Support legislation and funding to ensure appropriate oversight and enforcement of infectious disease protocols and mitigation rules in long-term care (LTC) facilities and provide widespread testing and associated personal protective equipment (PPE) for residents and staff in all LTC facilities.

Support legislation and funding to dismantle systemic racism, including efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities.

Support legislation and funding to increase compensation, including Medicaid reimbursement, for home health aides, community attendants, direct support professionals, and direct care workforce in institutional settings.

Support legislation and funding to strengthen the resiliency of the child care industry and insure equitable access during a disaster, including measures to increase child care subsidies and expand subsidy funding for full-day programs needed for school-age children in the event of virtual instruction, and measures to improve

coordination at state agencies for guidance, data collection, and funding for childcare programs during a disaster response.

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.

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 and equitable 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, including policies that address the causes of the climate crisis as well as mitigation strategies.

Oppose legislation that attempts to diminish the City's ability to govern its residents' investment in municipally owned utilities or that negatively impacts the current status of Austin Energy, including rate cases approved by City Council.

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:

Support legislation that promotes equity for residents of Austin including pay, education, housing, 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 for legislation that allows cities to implement mandatory inclusionary zoning programs.

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

Support legislation and funding that aligns employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services to housing that is affordable and accessible to transit.

Support legislation that affirms civil and human rights, and ensures that those targeted on the basis of race, nationality, religion, or immigration status can turn to government without fear of recrimination.

Water & Wastewater, Environment, and Sustainability

The City of Austin endeavors to promote healthy and equitable 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, including policies that address the causes of the climate crisis as well as mitigation strategies.

The City will:

Support legislation and funding for local and regional air quality planning, research, and monitoring in areas with air quality issues across the state.

Support legislation that would increase oversight of proposed pipeline developments or otherwise provide greater protections for owners of conservation lands or easements.

Support legislation that provides grants and financing assistance for high priority and security, resilience, and sustainability related water and wastewater projects, drainage infrastructure, repair and replacement of aging infrastructure, and the improvement and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure.

Support legislation that increases the resilience of communities in the face of climate, economic, and/or social shocks and stressors.

Public Pensions

The City of Austin sponsors three pensions systems: Austin Police Retirement System, Austin Fire Fighters Relief and Retirement Fund and City of Austin Employees' Retirement System. The City works closely and collaboratively with our partners at these systems to develop long-term strategies and options for ensuring their financial health.

The City will:

Support legislation that maintains joint state and local authority over City of Austin employee retirement plans.

Oppose legislation that would negatively affect the City's public pension systems.

Voting & Elections

The City of Austin supports funding, legislative or executive action that promotes and protects voting rights and access to voting, as well as greater inclusion and civic empowerment.

The City will:

Support legislation eliminating partisan and racially discriminatory redistricting; Modernizing voter registration, including online voter registration, same-day or automatic voter registration, and providing funding and guidance for paper-verified ballots and upgraded voting machines; Designating colleges and universities as voter registration agencies and establishing polling places on campuses; Providing for no-excuse absentee voting that would allow voting-by-mail for all eligible voters, especially during a declared state of emergency; Improving standards for polling places, poll worker training, and volunteer deputy registration training and certification, including making it more inclusive; Increasing state funding for voter education and elections administration, processes, and security; Repealing punitive and restrictive identification requirements to access the ballot;

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, for increasing partnerships between local and state agencies to ensure improvements are well integrated and the regional mobility system is improved as a whole; 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 Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) or other regional partners to improve and expand the public transportation system to connect Downtown Austin to the region.

Support the City's ability to increase the share of Austin residents who work at home instead of commuting to work.

Support legislation that would allow a city to lower the prima facie speed limit from 30mph to 25mph or that would reduce the costs of lowering the prima facie speed limit.

Public Infrastructure

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.

The City will:

Support the City's ability to require proportional traffic mitigation or infrastructure improvement requirements from developments as part of the site development process.

Support legislation that provides for the continuation of a stand-alone State entity to regulate the plumbers and plumbing installations of Texas.

Oppose legislation that limits the City's ability to regulate and enforce the City's building codes, land use and zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, and registration or license requirements to the standards adopted by the City in order to address the health, safety, and public welfare of the community within the City's limits and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Tax Reform & Debt Issuance

The City of Austin believes in promoting strong partnerships between the City and 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:

Support legislation that provides local options for revenue expansion and diversification and creates a tax and revenue system that promotes equity, responsiveness, and the authority for local officials to act in the best interest of residents.

Support legislation that would require mandatory disclosure of real estate sales prices or substantially improves the real estate appraisal process, including the appeals process.

Support legislation that simplifies and accurately notifies taxpayers of the impacts of the City's adopted property tax rate.

Support legislation that would allow for a percentage - based homestead exemption subject to a cap on the maximum value exempted or a local - option flat - tax exemption to ad valorem taxes.

Support legislation that protects or enhances municipal revenues and the flexibility to use such revenues.

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

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

Support legislation and funding that ensures sustainable sources of revenue for H.B. 3 (2019), which provides Austin residents with meaningful property tax relief.

Oppose legislation that restricts the ability of the City to issue debt through either General Obligation or Certificates of Obligation bonds or that would cause confusing and onerous public notification requirements.

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.

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

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

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

