

RESOLUTION NO. 16-36

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND, TEXAS, ADOPTING A LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 85th SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE TO INCLUDE SPECIAL CALLED SESSIONS OF THE 85th LEGISLATURE AND THE INTERIM.

WHEREAS, local government is the most direct and frequent point of contact with its residents; and

WHEREAS, the process for local government is a public and participatory process whereby the actions of local governments are subject to the public scrutiny of the residents; and

WHEREAS, local government is responsible for providing basic and emergency services; and

WHEREAS, local governments are the first responders in local emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the ability of local government to provide those services is dependent on the ability to have the necessary resources and authority to carry out its responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, local government officials are elected by the residents they represent to provide a wide array of services; and

WHEREAS, state representatives and senators are charged with working in the best interest of the citizens they represent; and

WHEREAS, residents of the state of Texas expect elected government officials representing local governments to make every effort to be informed on the needs of the constituents and the local government to ensure that local governments have the necessary authorities and resources in which to fulfill the desired needs of the citizens who have elected them; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND, TEXAS:

Section 1. That City Council members will meet with area state representatives and senators to discuss the City's legislative agenda and provide both information and assistance on all matters relating to bills and other legislative matters that come before the Legislature to ensure that they have the resources to call upon in making decisions that impact the lives of their constituents.

Section 2. The City of Sugar Land shall proactively seek the filing and passage of any legislation identified as being sought in Exhibit A.

Section 3. The City Council IG Committee and the City's representative on the Texas Municipal League (TML) Resolutions Committee shall work with TML, peer cities in the State and other appropriate entities to jointly pursue the passage or defeat of legislation that is listed as "supported" or "opposed" by the City of Sugar Land in Exhibit A.

Section 4. The City Manager and his staff shall:

- a. Take all necessary actions to inform Sugar Land residents of the City's legislative agenda; and
- b. Encourage residents to make every effort to be aware of the local and state governing and legislative process and expect their elected representatives from all levels to seek a proactive and positive relationship that does not pass a burden from the State to the County or City without providing the tools and resources to undertake the added responsibility.

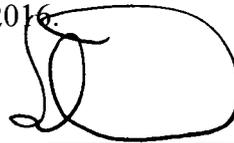
Section 5. That it believes it is incumbent of all legislators to work in consort with City and County government to ensure that the entire governing process is as effective as possible and, to that end, seek input and advice from the local level of government on issues that have a direct impact on their ability to undertake their responsibilities.

Section 6. That it expects elected representatives of state government to fully understand the implications of legislation they act upon to ensure there are no negative impacts on the community and to strongly support and take all actions necessary in furtherance of the attached legislation agenda, as it may be amended from time to time.

Section 7. That it believes the state legislative body should not exempt its members from any regulation that they impose upon any other member of a political subdivision unless it can clearly be shown that there is a clear and compelling need to do so.

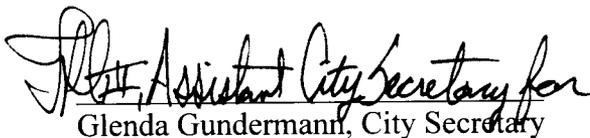
Section 8. That it adopts the 2017 Legislative Agenda as shown on Exhibit A, attached to and incorporated into this resolution by reference.

APPROVED on October 18, 2016.



Joe R. Zimmerman, Mayor

ATTEST:


Glenda Gundermann, City Secretary



Reviewed as to Form:

Attachment: Exhibit A - 2017 Legislative Agenda

EXHIBIT A

THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 85TH LEGISLATURE
Position Statements

**Denotes priority legislation*

Municipal Powers

1. *Support legislation that supports or advances the principles of local control to allow for locally elected officials to make decisions that are beneficial to the interests of City residents or that is otherwise beneficial to the City's interest.*
2. *Oppose legislation that preempts or erodes the authority of city government or is detrimental to cities.*

Municipal Revenue

1. *Oppose legislation that would detrimentally affect the City's financial position by reducing revenue streams or negatively impact potential revenue growth including legislation that:*
 - a. *Lowers the appraisal cap or otherwise creates property tax exemptions that would unfairly shift the financial tax burden to other taxpayers;*
 - b. *Restricts the ability of the City to issue debt through either General Obligation or Certificates of Obligation bonds or causes unnecessarily complex public notification requirements;*
 - c. *Imposes an unfunded mandate that would require any City expenditure unless all costs are reimbursed by the State;*
 - d. *Imposes a presumption that first responders incurred illnesses or injuries in the line of duty;*
or
 - e. *Requires the City to generate revenues for the State.*
2. *Support legislation that:*
 - a. *Protects or enhances municipal revenues such as property taxes, sales taxes, right-of-way revenues, service fees, and court fines;*
 - b. *Expands the use of public, educational, and government (PEG) fees to include operational and related costs associated with PEG channels;*
 - c. *Increases funding for arts & cultural programs*
 - d. *Simplifies the effective tax rate calculation for notice purposes only, provided the legislation would have no effect on the underlying effective tax rate and rollback tax rate calculations themselves; and*
 - e. *Accurately notifies and explains to taxpayers the actual impacts of the effective tax rate while deleting parts of the notification and adoption process that causes confusion and is inconsistent with the goal of providing a transparent budget and tax rate setting process.*

Economic Development

1. ***Seek introduction and passage*** of legislation that would qualify the City to receive a refund or rebate of various state and local taxes to finance the construction of a qualified hotel project.*
2. *Oppose legislation that would erode or restrict current municipal economic development tools including but not limited to economic development corporations [Type A (4A) and Type B (4B)], tax abatement, tax increment reinvestment zones, Chapter 380 agreements, the Texas Enterprise Fund, Skills Development Fund, the Texas Enterprise Zone Program, Research and Development tax credit program, the Events Trust Fund and the Major Events Reimbursement Program.*

3. *Support the ability of cities to eliminate one sales and use tax and to adopt another within the same ballot initiative.*
4. *Support continuation of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) for tourism marketing.*

Land-Use Regulation and Annexation

1. ***Seek introduction and passage*** of legislation creating a management district for the City-owned property in Tract 5 under the condition that the district may annex or exclude land as provided by Subchapter J, Chapter 49, Water Code.*
2. *Oppose legislation that would diminish the City's authority to regulate growth and development through land use and zoning regulations, building codes, comprehensive planning, annexation, or eminent domain, or that would erode the City's authority to assess building inspection fees for new development.*
3. *Monitor the creation or modification of special districts within the City and its ETJ, and support or oppose them as necessary.*

Right-of-Way and Utilities

1. ***Seek introduction and passage*** of legislation that authorizes electric utilities to allow cities to build and operate hike and bike trails and recreational amenities on land and easements owned and occupied by an electric utility with the limitation of liability applicable to electric utilities in Chapter 75, Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code.*
2. *Oppose legislation that would erode the City's authority to manage and control public rights-of-way and publicly owned land or limit the City's ability to receive fair market compensation for use of public rights-of-way.*
3. *Support legislation that would increase the authority of municipalities in requiring increased public notice of major pipeline activities – such as flaring – that have a direct impact on the quality of life of city residents.*
4. *Oppose legislation that would impose on cities: mandatory water conservation measures; “tap fees” or other types of state charge on municipal water systems; or any other onerous regulations as it relates to utilities provided by a city.*
5. *Oppose any legislation that would diminish or limit the City's original jurisdiction over electric and gas rates.*

Transportation

1. *Support legislation that increases state funding for transportation projects or creates local-option funding choices for transportation projects or that discontinues the diversion of transportation revenues to non-transportation purpose.*
2. *Support funding of the voter-approved Texas Rail Relocation & Improvement Fund.*

Water Resources

1. *Actively monitor, evaluate, and act, if necessary, on any legislation related to the Gulf Coast Water Authority, the Fort Bend Subsidence District, and the Brazos River Authority including governance, water planning, water fees, and Watermaster issues.*
2. *Support legislation that would protect and expand the City's ability to purchase water, provide water to its residents and customers, use water within its City and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Areas, and collaborate with local and regional entities on projects or initiatives that seek to enhance the City's water resources goals.*

3. *Support legislation that provides funding for State Water Plan projects that increase the State's water resources or further establishes long-term planning efforts for an affordable and reliable water supply for the Fort Bend and Houston areas – provided that the investments already made by the City are reflected in any proposed financing mechanisms.*

Public Safety

1. *Support the ability of local governing bodies to determine the appropriate use of technology in public safety.*
2. *Oppose any further reduction of local government oversight of the safety of home cottage food facilities.*

Purchasing

1. *Support legislation to clarify change orders for Public Works projects as it relates to previous changes to Chapters 252, 271, and 2267 of the Texas Local Government Code.*
2. *Support continuation of alternative project delivery methods that allow municipalities to select contractors based on both price and qualifications.*

Open Meetings/Open Records

1. *Support legislation reducing the financial burden on local governments required by the Open Meetings Act and Open Records Requests such as expansion of the ability to charge for costs related to reproduction of public information.*
2. *Oppose any attempt that would make the current open meetings and public information laws more restrictive and ambiguous and support clarifications that enhance communication between elected officials and their constituents.*
3. *Support uniform application of the public information and open meetings laws at every level of government including State legislative and executive branches.*

Transparency/Ethics

1. *Support legislation that improves government transparency so long as such legislation does not create legal confusion or duplicate existing disclosure requirements.*

Public Advertising

1. *Support legislation that would enable the use of electronic notice for all public notices.*

Collective Bargaining

1. *Oppose legislation that would impose expanded collective bargaining rights or expand current meet and confer laws.*

Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS)

1. *Support legislation that would protect the City's previous and future investments in the TMRS system.*

Homeowners Associations (HOAs)

1. *Support the authority and role of HOAs and to oppose limitation of functions HOAs were created to perform.*
2. *Support legislation that would enable HOAs to gain access to funding to maintain properties as neighborhoods age.*