

RESOLUTION NO. 10-22-24-5

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
AMARILLO ADOPTING STATE AND FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2026.

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 resources and authority necessary to carry out its responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, state and federal 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 AMARILLO, TEXAS, THAT:

SECTION 1. That City Council members will meet with area state and federal representatives and senators to discuss the City's legislative priorities 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 Amarillo shall proactively seek the filing and passage of any legislation identified as being sought in Exhibit A.

SECTION 3. The City Council and City staff may work with Texas Municipal League (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 Amarillo in Exhibit A.

SECTION 4. The City Manager and his staff shall:

(a) Take all necessary actions to inform Amarillo residents of the City's legislative priorities; and

(b) Encourage residents to make every effort to be aware of the local, state and federal 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 Federal or 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 governments 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 federal and 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 information in Exhibit A, as it may be amended from time to time.

SECTION 7. That it believes the federal and state legislative bodies 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 Legislative Priorities for 2025-2026 as shown on Exhibit A, attached to and incorporated into this resolution by reference.

SECTION 9. This resolution shall be effective on and after its adoption.

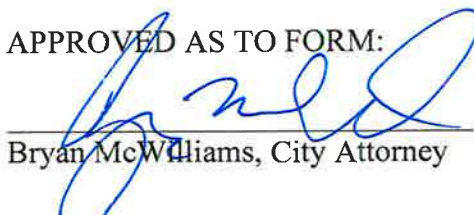
INTRODUCED AND PASSED by the City Council of the City of Amarillo, Texas
this 22nd day of October 2024.



Cole Stanley, Mayor

ATTEST:


Stephanie Coggins, City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Bryan McWilliams, City Attorney

EXHIBIT A

CITY OF AMARILLO LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

COLE STANLEY, MAYOR

JOSH CRAFT, COUNCILMEMBER PLACE 1

DON TIPPS, COUNCILMEMBER PLACE 2

TOM SCHERLEN, COUNCILMEMBER PLACE 3

LES SIMPSON, COUNCILMEMBER PLACE 4

CITY MANAGER

GRAYSON PATH

Strategic City Pillars: The City Council of the City of Amarillo established six Council Pillars were established as the key components of Council's vision for the future of Amarillo. Decisions regarding the City of Amarillo's positions on legislative matters will be evaluated with Council Pillars in mind when formulating positions.

1. Business Friendly Community
2. Communication
3. Fiscal Responsibility
4. Infrastructure
5. Public Safety
6. Technology and Innovation

General Approach to Legislative Priorities:

The City of Amarillo supports:

1. Legislation that enhances the City's ability to solve problems and improve the quality of life for its citizens.
2. Legislative initiatives from partners in the community that will enhance the educational, cultural and infrastructure resources in our region.

The City of Amarillo opposes:

1. Legislation that increases the City's costs.
2. Legislation that reduces the City's authority and local control.
3. Legislation that imposes unfunded mandates on cities, requiring additional local expenditure without providing corresponding funding from state or federal sources.

This document reflects the City of Amarillo's current legislative priorities as approved by City Council.

STATE OF TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
POSITION STATEMENTS

TRANSPORTATION

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that increases funding for transportation infrastructure through the Texas Department of Transportation, with a focus on expanding and maintaining critical roadways, specifically including legislation that:

- a. increases funding to complete the building of Loop 335; and
- b. supports future expansion of Interstate 27 to the north and south.

PRO-FAMILY POLICY

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that strengthens resources provided to new mothers and new families that live in the City of Amarillo:

- a. Rehabilitates the foster care system to better promote child welfare and encourages adoption;
- b. Reduces barriers to private adoption by reducing the cost and minimizing the amount of burdensome regulations; and
- c. Lessen the time commitment and paperwork surrounding both private and public adoption

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that addresses disparities in maternal health services as well as health services for newborns.

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that increases funding for programs focused on family, newborn, and new mother welfare in Amarillo, as well as educates citizens on available resources for services in these areas.

PROPERTY TAX, DEBT, AND SALES TAX

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation that restricts local control of government, specifically including legislation that:

- a. would have a disproportionately negative effect on the most prudent and responsible taxing entities that have a very low property tax rate, like the City of Amarillo; or
- b. would unnecessarily restrict the City's ability to issue debt or impose undue burdens on debt issuance referendums; or
- c. would impose revenue caps including a lowered voter-approval tax rate or mandatory property tax rate ratification elections.

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation related to Sales Tax Sourcing that would have a detrimental impact to the City's annual budget.

The City of Amarillo will support reforms to the property appraisal process that ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency, protecting homeowners and businesses from arbitrary increases.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation aimed at reducing property tax burdens on residents, particularly for homeowners and low-income individuals, while ensuring cities retain sufficient revenue to provide essential services.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that maintains or expands options for municipalities to adopt a local homestead exemption, giving local governments flexibility to reduce property tax burdens for homeowners.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that would revise the sales tax allocation for newly annexed territory in areas being served by a county assistance district but is now being protected by city funded public safety services at an increased cost to the municipality. The City of Amarillo currently receives 1.5 out of 2 cents in sales taxes from Randall County and 0 out of 2 cents in Potter County due to current state law establishing combined area designations.

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation that erodes municipal authority over development matters, including but not limited to annexation, eminent domain, zoning, regulatory takings, building codes, and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

The City of Amarillo opposes legislation that imposes climate change-related energy code policies that fail to consider industry-wide return on investment metrics. These policies must balance environmental protection with the economic realities facing builders, preventing cost-prohibitive regulations that stifle development.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The City of Amarillo requests support for legislation to address the Amarillo Hospital District's ability to assess and collect an ad valorem tax on all taxable property in the District for the provision of State-required indigent care without requiring an automatic election for exceeding the 3.5% property tax increase provision required by Senate Bill 2 (2019). The District is currently funded by proceeds from selling their public hospital. The corpus of the funds used since 1996 will be exhausted during FY 2035-36. Therefore, it is necessary for AHD's ability to assess and collect a property tax to be reinstated to continue provision of public health and State-mandated indigent care programs.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that ensures true informed consent in medical treatments, requiring clear disclosure of risks, alternative remedies, and the funding sources behind medical advice or treatments.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that ensures strict regulatory controls and thorough testing of food products, especially those containing experimental ingredients such as mRNA and lab-grown meat. This includes protecting consumers from potential health risks associated with

untested or under-regulated food production methods.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that provides for strict oversight of stratospheric and atmospheric sprayed particles, including transparency of chemical compositions and potential environmental contamination. This oversight is essential to protect public health and natural resources.

EXPANSION OF BROADBAND INTERNET

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that would address the digital divide disparity by expanding internet coverage or aiding in elimination of financial barriers for all citizens to gain access to broadband internet.

RIGHT-OF-WAY AND SMALL CELL TOWERS

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that:

- a. preserves municipal control of municipal rights of way;
- b. requires service providers to pay market rate (or close to market rate) for the use of municipal infrastructure and rights of way; and
- c. provides for local authority over small cell nodes, including both existing and future installations.

OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that would provide clarifications to open meetings laws and public information laws to enhance communication between elected officials and their constituents, specifically including legislation that:

- a. would provide for the continued use of technology and other tools that provides for transparent, convenient, and secure virtual public meetings and encourage the general public to participate, provide feedback, and engage with State and local governments remotely; and
- b. would reduce the financial burden on local governments required by responding to Open Records Requests.

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation that would attempt to make the current open meetings and public information laws more restrictive or ambiguous.

VIRTUAL COURT

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that would continue or expand Municipal Court's ability to offer virtual court hearings. Virtual court allows defendants the option to resolve eligible cases remotely from their homes or offices through a video conference with a judge.

DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that provides for or enhances local control during disaster or other emergency declarations to allow cities to better manage such situations. The City of Amarillo will also support any legislation that ensures funding of public safety, emergency management, public communications, public health, and other operations at the levels necessary to respond to disasters or emergencies.

The City of Amarillo opposes any legislation that grants medical or disaster-related authority to entities outside of state or local governments, supporting the maintenance of local sovereignty in crisis management and public health.

The City of Amarillo opposes any global pandemic agreements that could undermine national or local sovereignty, advocating for pandemic response measures to remain within the control of state and local authorities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Amarillo will support legislation reauthorizing or expanding Chapter 311 Tax Increment Financing, Chapter 312 Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act and other local economic development tools used for capital investment and job creation.

The City of Amarillo will support legislation providing for the expansion of Palo Duro State Park, which would provide for a greater tourism and economic development impact for the entire Texas Panhandle such as developing a second entrance to the park, hiring more park personnel, and allowing more accessible land for park visitors.

The City of Amarillo will support the Route 66 Centennial Commission to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Route 66 in 2026, including the City or our local partners seeking funding opportunities in support of this historic anniversary.

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation that would restrict a city's ability to compete for projects that provide jobs and economic benefit to the community and region.

MENTAL HEALTH

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that improves funding for mental health, specifically that provides for:

- a. increased access to mental health services, ensuring that care is affordable, accessible, and patient-centered. This includes increasing funding for community-based care; and mental health crisis intervention and funds resources for persons who are suffering from mental illness either temporarily or chronically, with the goal of diversion from the criminal justice system; and
- b. funding to support training for law enforcement, mental health caseworkers to aid in crisis response, alternatives to hospitalization, and alternatives to incarceration.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The City of Amarillo supports judicial discretion in denying bail for individuals deemed major threats to public safety, with a focus on maintaining community safety while upholding justice.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that provides funding for advanced cancer screenings for firefighters, recognizing the increased health risks associated with their profession.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that enhances border security measures to protect public safety without imposing financial burdens on local municipalities. This includes ensuring that all security mandates are fully funded by state or federal authorities.

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that enhances school security, provided that all necessary funding is included to prevent shifting costs to local governments or schools.

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that greatly limits or prohibits the sale of land in the Texas Panhandle or the rest of the state to foreign entities such as the Chinese Government, the Chinese Communist Party, or Chinese nationals affiliated with these two entities that could threaten national security or local control over resources.

The City of Amarillo supports state legislation that prohibits sexually explicit acts in public facilities where minors may be present, ensuring the protection of children in all public environments.

PANHANDLING

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that protects and expands the City's ability to improve public safety measures of residents and solicitors in City and State rights of way, allowing law enforcement to redirect solicitors to panhandle in safer locations.

AMARILLO CIVIC CENTER COMPLEX

The City of Amarillo will actively support legislation to finance renovation, revitalization and/or expansion opportunities for municipal civic centers such as the Amarillo Civic Center Complex (ACCC). This would specifically include an expansion of Sec. 351.003 Tax Rates of the Tax Code related to Municipal Hotel Occupancy Taxes. The City of Amarillo would like to see the tax rate raised from seven to nine percent either in general or for the additional two percent to be specifically allocated for construction, expansion, maintenance, or operation of convention center facilities

ELECTIONS AND BALLOT LANGUAGE

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that broadens the naming conventions required for propositions on election ballots (i.e., allow alternating from numbers to letters every other election in order to avoid confusion for voters who may think it is the same item from a prior election they may have voted in).

MERIT-BASED HIRING PRACTICES

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that promotes merit-based hiring practices in private businesses, opposing mandates related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that could undermine the hiring of qualified candidates based solely on their skills and qualifications.

PUBLIC ADVERTISING

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that would enable the use of electronic notice for all required public notices.

WATER RESOURCES

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that protects and expands the City's ability to purchase water, provide water to its residents and customers, use water within the City limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Areas, and collaborate with local and regional entities on projects and initiatives that seek to enhance the City's water resources.

NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The City of Amarillo supports legislation that promotes the construction of nuclear power plants and investments in strengthening Texas' power grid, ensuring a reliable energy supply that meets the growing needs of residents and industries.

TRADITIONAL GENDER POLICIES

The City of Amarillo supports state policies that recognize biological sex at birth as the determining factor for gender in all legal, educational, and public settings.

LEGISLATIVE COMMUNICATION

The City of Amarillo will oppose legislation that limits the abilities of cities in rural Texas who are geographically distanced from the Capital to communicate with legislators and advocate on behalf of their rural communities.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
POSITION STATEMENTS**

CROSS BAR RANCH – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The City of Amarillo will support legislation increasing or providing additional funding for the development of 12,000 acres of federally owned land north of Amarillo for public access. Current priorities include funds for an access road to the site and for developing the interior road network to support visitor access within the property.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that continues to invest in the areas of defense and energy as it relates to agency initiatives or increased funding to support the Pantex Plant, Bell, or other companies that work in these industry sectors in the Amarillo area.

TRANSPORTATION

The City of Amarillo will support:

- a. the implementation of any bills which provide vital transportation funding, while protecting the environment and advancing the economic development goals of our community, for better connectivity and to better keep pace with the City's priority infrastructure needs for air, highway, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and rail transportation. In addition to actively monitoring federal program guidance and funding opportunities, this will also include working with respective state agencies such as TXDOT or the Texas Water Development Board that also receive direct funding through their direct funding sources;
- b. the priorities of Amarillo International Airport including: seeking federal funding through Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) program and other bills to help address various airport infrastructure needs;
- c. legislative efforts that will positively impact Amarillo City Transit by engaging directly with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) National and Regional Offices to explore other potential federal funding opportunities through bills with emphasis on funding that would support our city becoming a Designated Recipient due to our urbanized area crossing the 200,000 population threshold;
- d. federal legislative efforts to enhance rail safety and rail efficiency.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The City of Amarillo will support:

- a. federal emergency management efforts to enable the city to pursue federal funding through various federal programs at FEMA, HUD, the Economic Development Administration, etc., pertaining to hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness;
- b. federal funding solutions established for both current and future flood resiliency, to create

a community resilient to regional and localized flooding events, and to improve overall storm water quality. This will include continuing to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) about potential federal streams of funding related to watershed protection around the City.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The City of Amarillo will support:

- a. federal grant programs that advance police and fire public safety programs and overall emergency management operations for assistance with equipment, training and personnel. This includes exploring federal grant solicitations through the U.S. Department of Justice;
- b. federal funding efforts to enhance power grid infrastructure, resiliency, and reliability.

TECHNOLOGY

The City of Amarillo will support:

- a. legislative efforts to secure federal broadband deployment funds;
- b. legislative efforts to secure federal funding for cybersecurity needs for state and local governments.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that:

- a. continues or increases funding for Community Development Block Grants and HOME Partnership funds;
- b. continues or increases incentives, including tax credits, for development of historic buildings;
- c. continues or increases incentives for redevelopment of city neighborhoods in need of revitalization;
- d. continues or increases funding for park related projects; and
- e. continues or increases funding to demolish blighted structures.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Amarillo will support legislation that aims to create a Texas based rare earth metals exchange that will allow for more economic growth in Texas and for further decoupling from China for the United States. The creation of this exchange is vital to the national defense and security of the United States as well as to the economic future of the City of Amarillo.

For more information, please contact:

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