



The **CITY OF IRVING** welcomes the opportunity to share the needs and concerns of its residents. Irving is a dynamic city, home to six Fortune 500 Global headquarters with a daytime population of more than 300,000 people. The city has extensive live/work/play developments, an accessible transportation hub and an efficient government that has maintained AAA bond ratings from S&P Global Services and Moody's Investor Services.

Irving's 235,000 residents expect local government to provide the services that are part of their everyday lives — water, streets, police and trash pickup. The city has a reputation and ongoing commitment to providing excellent customer service, which is best accomplished by making service delivery and regulatory decisions at the local level.

The City of Irving has a longstanding history of working with the Texas Legislature and executive agencies to equip and empower cities to govern more effectively. Leaders at all levels of the city are interested and knowledgeable in the legislative issues facing Irving. Additionally, we work collaboratively with many entities with the goal of strengthening Texas and the local governments that serve Texans.

The most significant issue for the City of Irving is retaining the ability to decide what is in the best interests of its residents, businesses and visitors based on the City Council's understanding of those concerns. Irving has been a catalyst for the growth that is celebrated by state leaders, but that growth requires increased city services to maintain quality of life. The city opposes proposals that limit municipal revenue streams, regulatory authority or other restrictions on the council's ability to govern effectively.

IRVING CITY COUNCIL



Left to Right: Kyle Taylor, Mayor Pro Tem John C. Danish, Dennis Webb, Allan E. Meagher, Al Zapanta, Mayor Rick Stopfer, Phil Riddle, Wm. David Palmer, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Oscar Ward

IRVING LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Chris Hillman, City Manager
(972) 721-2586
chillman@cityofirving.org

Jon Weist, Intergovernmental/Legislative Officer
(972) 721-8027
jweist@cityofirving.org

Kuruvilla Oommen, City Attorney
(972) 721-4825
koommen@cityofirving.org



CITY OF IRVING
Legislative Priorities for the
86th Session of the Texas Legislation

825 W. Irving Blvd. | Irving, TX 75060
CityofIrving.org

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

We support meaningful reform that reduces the percentage of property taxes for public schools paid by local taxpayers. This is the single largest component of property tax bills and is created by the reduced percentage of public school costs paid for by the state of Texas. Tax reform that reduces city revenue has little impact on individual taxpayers but creates major challenges to maintaining city service levels. In the absence of a fair-minded approach to tax reform that does not harm municipal services, Irving will work to preserve all of its revenue streams — sales and property taxes, fees and fines, hotel occupancy taxes — from reduction or diversion by the Legislature.

The citizens of Texas want and deserve municipal governments that are responsible stewards of tax dollars for the continued improvement of their community. Municipal officials must work with the Legislature to create a tax and revenue system that promotes equity, responsiveness, and the authority for local officials to act in the best interest of their citizens.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Irving is proud of its commitment to excellence in service delivery and the availability of government information to the public. Legislative actions sometimes add steps that slow down a streamlined delivery system with no obvious public benefit. The city encourages legislators to allow flexibility in local government processes at all levels, from web-based information postings for legal notices to authority to coordinate right-of-way relocations, as just two examples.

The city will continue to resist the imposition of unfunded mandates, prescriptive changes in post-employment benefits, and removal of governmental immunity in lawsuits, among other potential legislative proposals that create administrative burdens or impose additional costs on Irving taxpayers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Irving welcomes opportunities to work with the private sector and residents to create a business-friendly, economically vibrant environment where people wish to live, work and play. Irving's collaborative economic development efforts are examples of how the city has contributed to economic growth in Texas. We support a climate that encourages capital investment, ensures business retention and creates jobs within the state. Irving supports legislative action to increase nonresident tourism and to make sure that Texas remains "open for business" to all. The city wants continued access to the full range of economic development tools allowed by state law, including use of special districts, tax incentives and fees associated with certain operations.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The City of Irving supports effective statewide laws governing business activity, but also recognizes that municipal governments exist so that residents may choose to govern themselves in a way that best fits their unique needs and circumstances. That is the basis of the home-rule authority in the Texas Constitution. Irving opposes preemption of its lawful regulatory roles in circumstances where legislative action does not adequately address residents' concerns. This includes a range of activity, including short-term rental rules, tree preservation ordinances, and access to city rights of way, as examples.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The provision of public infrastructure must be a cooperative effort between the state and local governments. Improving and enhancing all modes of the transportation network throughout the state and within the city is always a high priority for Irving. Similarly, an adequate and growing supply of water is critical to the future growth and long-term development of Texas and its cities. Initiatives that increase funding for transportation, water supply and wastewater solutions are encouraged by the City of Irving, as well as protection of existing revenue streams for highway projects, water development and wastewater disposal solutions.

Specifically, the city supports adequate funding and equitable rules addressing funds provided by Texas voters in approving constitutional amendments in 2014 and 2015; a privately financed, high-speed rail solution between Dallas and Houston; equitable solutions for cities using sales tax for transportation purposes to maintain economic competitiveness; statewide water planning that includes future reservoir designations; and preservation of municipal authority to acquire right-of-way for pipeline operations.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Promoting public safety is one of the most important and fundamental responsibilities of local government. This includes not only diligent police work and efficient fire safety and suppression, but also court operations that are not hampered by state mandates and revenue diversions. The city's animal control, code enforcement and traffic programs are responsive to particular community needs, which could be undermined by new statewide rules that do not reflect local considerations. Individuals with mental health concerns frequently encounter the criminal justice system, which is inadequate to address their unique needs without additional resources committed by the Legislature for mental health assessment and treatment.

As a further example of how unique cities are in Texas, Irving has addressed issues relating to earthquakes that are unusual for urban areas in North Texas. The city supports continued funding for the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas and for its seismic study and analysis program.

ELECTIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Irving maintains a robust public information program, using social media, the website and physical publications to keep residents informed. The Legislature frequently makes changes to open records and open meetings laws that create additional administrative processes without adding significant value to public knowledge. The city supports clear and concise election ballot language for all measures, and resists efforts to change election dates or processes. Specifically, the city opposes efforts to turn municipal elections into partisan elections and to consolidate all elections on one very long, confusing ballot in November.

Open meeting and open records rules should be similar for local governments, and Irving supports provisions in the Texas Open Meetings Act that afford city officials the same privilege as county commissioners by allowing them to discuss board appointments and certain contract negotiations in executive session. The city also supports statutory TPIA exemptions for commonly requested and granted exemptions to public disclosure — such as issues of privacy for juveniles, victims of sexual assault, victors of abuse and informers' privilege for communications such as code violations or animal complaints.