

City of Baytown  
**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**  
89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session

The following represents the legislative objectives and priorities for the City of Baytown during the 89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature including the 2025 regular session, any special sessions that might be called, and any interim committees or studies that might be later assigned.

The City of Baytown is a member of and works closely with the Texas Municipal League (TML) on many legislative issues. While the membership of TML adopts its own legislative agenda, the needs of Baytown are sometimes unique from other cities.

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY**

We support the principal that government which governs closest to the people governs best. As duly elected representatives of the citizens of Baytown, we support the maintenance of municipal authority and oppose any measure which jeopardizes our ability, as a body accountable directly to our citizens, to make decisions that impact the quality of life in our community. **We specifically discourage any legislation that erodes our ability to fund core services and critical projects.**

We are also **closely tracking the implementation of a few, highly-contentious bills passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> legislature which the city opposes because they weaken local governments' ability to self-regulate**, such as HB 2127 (super preemption) and SB 2038 (release from extraterritorial jurisdiction [ETJ]). The city supports any efforts to restore cities' ability to regulate themselves.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

Baytown is divided by four major highways, one of which – State Route 146 – that runs through the middle of town and along residential neighborhoods. We seek support in **eliminating TxDOT's reliance on SR146 as a Truck Route, and shifting responsibility from TxDOT to the City of Baytown in order to independently develop the City's strategy in diverting commercial traffic to SR99 and Spur 330.**

We support legislation that distributes Federal funding in a way that provides local governments with long-term support, sends those funds directly to localities, and gives local leaders a stronger role in a streamlined decision-making process. We support legislation that provides **fiscal support for projects that benefit cities, such as the advancement of the San Jacinto River Bridge replacement initiative, Cedar Bayou Crossing, and Garth Road improvements.**

#### **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND REFORM**

As elected leaders, we support measures to ease the property tax burden for our residents. We encourage the legislature to join with us in this ongoing endeavor by pursuing a **complete reformation of the industrial and residential property appraisal system**. Absent that herculean effort, we would welcome the **expansion of the local residence homestead exemption** from 20 percent of a property's appraised value to at least 30 percent. We support the legislature's ongoing efforts to further compress school district tax rates, increase the state homestead exemption, look at reducing the limit on appraised value of homesteads and build on the 88<sup>th</sup> legislature's historic property tax relief legislation.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Texas benefits from our local governments' ability to directly participate in bringing jobs and prosperity to our communities. We therefore support the preservation of all economic development tools that allow cities and other jurisdictions the ability to incentivize investment in our communities. We specifically support legislation that **preserves the Chapters 212 and 380** (Local Government Code) **economic development agreements and the newly implemented Chapter 403 Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation (JETI) Act.**

## **QUALITY OF LIFE**

There is no higher priority to our citizens than neighborhood quality. This is why it is critical that we **strengthen and preserve a city's ability to regulate multi-family housing, abate substandard structures,** and in all other ways nurture the health, safety, and comfort of our neighborhoods.

The city is also committed to fairly and appropriately regulating land use and is **monitoring the implementation of several bills passed during the 88th legislature pertaining to land development and zoning ordinances,** such as SB929 (revoking the right to use property for a use that was allowed before the adoption of or change to a zoning regulation or boundary) and HB14 (third-party review of property development to speed up the process).

The city will also be closely monitoring in opposition to the anticipated re-filing of legislation that would prohibit municipalities from regulating the size, dimension, set back, or other component of lot density on a particular tract of land (SB 2037).

## **UTILITIES**

We support all measures to **preserve municipal authority regarding electric and gas utility rates,** as well as the ability to seek and obtain **reimbursement of expenses associated with rate case expenses.** Further, the City invites support of our endeavor to **collect impact fees from all those customers it serves,** especially the Baytown Area Water Authority (BAWA).

## **ELECTIONS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The City is interested in supporting legislation that would allow for public agencies, local municipalities in particular, to **post their required public notices on the internet,** rather than solely in a printed newspaper.