

2015 State Legislative Agenda





As a general policy, the City of Arlington seeks to preserve its current authority to govern the city, its citizens, and its property.

-  **Transportation**
-  **Finance**
-  **Major Event Trust & Event Trust Fund**
-  **Travel & Tourism**
-  **Public Safety**
-  **Water Planning**
-  **Funding for Community Services**
-  **Support Quality Education**
-  **Arlington Bills**



The City will support legislation that:

- Maintains municipal authority
- Eliminates or reduces the impact of unfunded mandates
- Preserves local control over municipal revenue streams
- Improves public safety



The City will oppose legislation that:

- Limits the abilities of cities to issue debt
- Creates revenue caps for local governments
- Limits economic development tools for local governments
- Restricts right-of-way rental fees
- Reduces authority of cities to regulate urban gas well drilling
- Amends the regulatory takings statute
- Mandates water conservation measures

The City will form strategic partnerships with cities, political subdivisions, and private sector entities that share common goals with the City of Arlington. Additionally, the City will work in coordination with organizations such as the Texas Municipal League when its adopted positions are in line with the legislative objectives and goals of the City. The formation of strategic partnerships and coordinated efforts is intended to provide the City with a stronger presence in the legislative process.

(Back row left to right) Robert Shepard, District 6, At-Large; Jimmy Bennett, District 7, At-Large; Robert Rivera, District 3; Robert N. Cluck, Mayor; Kathryn Wilemon, District 4; Michael Glaspie, District 8, At-Large; Charlie Parker, District 1. (Front row left to right) Lana Wolff, District 5; Sheri Capehart, District 2.



Transportation



“Enhancing Regional Mobility” is a priority of the Arlington City Council. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Arlington’s transportation connections within and beyond our borders is critical because of our central location within the region and important to growing our economy. Arlington recognizes the importance of providing adequate roadway as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Arlington seeks to enhance those areas of our existing infrastructure which are not adequate to accommodate the current residents, forecasted population and employment growth, and increasing numbers of visitors. Improvements to mobility in Arlington and the region will reduce congestion, improve air quality, provide more travel choices and increase the safety of travelers.



The City is committed to finding transportation solutions to facilitate movement to, from and through Arlington and the surrounding area. The City supports increased funding, funding options, and authorization of the collection of municipal sales and use taxes for street maintenance for an indefinite term. In addition, the City continues to support voluntary transfer of state highways to cities who choose to take ownership of them. The City encourages TxDOT officials to continue to develop written best practices for cities that decide to take over control of certain state highways as well as study possible local-option funding sources that will assist cities in maintaining state highways in their city.

The City also supports efforts to provide and expand a seamless regional transit system that includes high speed

rail. The proposed building of the Houston-to-Dallas connection anticipated to open to the public by 2021 will provide an alternative way to get across the state with less time and pollution than driving. As important will be to build a complementary line from Fort Worth to Arlington to Dallas. This segment will offer the opportunity to better link the region, providing residents and visitors alike the ability to get to their destinations much easier and faster. The City supports and encourages the work of the High Speed Rail Commission in assisting the statewide Texas Transportation Commission study these corridors and how they could be funded and how state laws affect the project.



Arlington Council Member Kathryn Wilemon Mayor Pro Tem at an announcement on High Speed Rail between Houston and Dallas. Also shown, from left: Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, Houston Mayor Annise Parker and Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Tennell Atkins.

*Photo by:
James Nielsen,
Houston Chronicle*



Finance



The City publishes the Popular Annual Financial Report, also known as the PAFR, which is a citizen friendly financial report that uses narrative and art to explain the information found in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, or CAFR, to people without a finance background. Both are published at the same time each year. The PAFR is an optional document that is becoming more popular among governments because of its usefulness in communicating a city's progress to its citizens. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has recognized Arlington's Popular Annual Financial Report for its outstanding achievement for five years in a row. Additionally, Arlington's finance department has been a recipient of the Texas Comptroller's Leadership Circle Gold Award, which recognizes exceptional local governments for their financial transparency to citizens.

The City places a high priority on an open and transparent government. The Arlington City Council actively seeks, solicits and utilizes input from Arlington citizens in its decision-making processes. The City produces both a video describing the proposed budget and a webpage allowing residents to view the foundational information that supports the City's budget. For capital bond projects, a Citizens' Bond Committee assesses the short-term capital needs of the community, and provides a recommended list of projects and anticipated capital investment necessary to the City Council. The committee reviews a great amount of data and resident feedback. The City Council appreciates the traditional Texas model of local control over local government, believing that voters are able to elect local officials who share their values and priorities.



As a part of Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS), the City is able to provide a retirement package in which the needs of retired employees are balanced with the needs of taxpayers. Because of its participation in TMRS, the City does not participate in the Social Security system. Due to careful planning by the City Council and changes enacted by the 82nd Legislature, Arlington's retirement system is over 84% funded. The City believes the current TMRS system is operating to the satisfaction of taxpayers, local elected officials, retirees, city management and employees. We encourage the maintenance of the local control provided by this system that allows individual city councils to make determinations about benefit levels that suit the communities they serve.

The City's budget, as well as other financial reporting documents, is available at www.arlington-tx.gov/budget/

Major Event Trust & Event Trust Fund



Hosting events with national and worldwide acclaim benefits the communities in which they are held as well as the region and state. The exposure these events bring can boost both tourism and economic development prospects.

The Event Trust Fund is a unique economic development tool that provides assistance to the local governments with event-related expenses to enable them to compete in bidding and hosting premier, large-scale events. By utilizing the local and State portion of the additional sales tax earned by these events to support event logistics, Texas brings new dollars to businesses that serve those attending the events.

The City's event expenses are predominantly related to public safety. Involved in these major events are police and fire/rescue personnel, along with associated emergency medical teams. Other significant costs are related to event planning and operations, inspection and permitting services, and traffic management. While it may yield neither a gain nor loss for state and local tax dollars – the dollars collected in sales tax almost equaling the amount spent to put on the event – the real impact occurs in event spending with the local businesses that support the event and the people who attend it. The City supports maintenance of this economic development program.

Travel & Tourism



Travel and tourism play an important role in the Arlington economy. Because of this, Arlington supports the continued maintenance of the uniform school start date for the state. This standardization generates millions of additional dollars in economic activity, including additional proceeds for Texas businesses, jobs for Texas citizens and tax revenues for State and local governments.

The City also supports continued funding of the Governor's Division of Economic Development and Tourism. One twelfth of State hotel occupancy tax revenue is dedicated for state tourism promotion. This investment allows the Governor's Office to advertise and promote Texas as a travel destination which helps all Texas travel and tourism destinations.

Public Safety



Drinking and Driving

Texas leads the nation in alcohol-related traffic fatalities. Arlington seeks to find additional tools to offer to law enforcement organizations to fight this deadly trend. While the United States Supreme Court has held that sobriety checkpoints are legal, they are not permissible in Texas. Sobriety checkpoints

are currently allowed in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Texas has the highest total number of alcohol related fatalities in the nation and the highest number of fatalities in alcohol-related driving crashes with alcohol blood levels twice the legal limit. An

overview provided by the Texas Transportation Institute in 2008 found that sobriety checkpoints reduce drunk-driving crashes by 20% and drunk-driving fatalities by

up to 26%. The City of Arlington currently utilizes Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) tools to provide objective crash and fatality information allowing us to effectively place our resources to ensure driver safety. This tool can be expanded to determine fact-based locations for sobriety checkpoints while also mitigating potential civil rights concerns with sobriety checkpoints.

Ignition Interlock Devices

Texas currently permits the inclusion of the installation of an ignition interlock device as a part of a sentence for driving under the influence of alcohol. The devices are mounted on the dashboard and require a clean breath sample to start the car and periodically throughout the trip. Approximately 10 states include the devices at some point in the sentences for one or repeated DUI convictions. In particular, Kansas, which requires installation after the first conviction, saw a reduction in DUI fatalities of over 50% in the first year that the law was in effect. The City supports required ignition installation for first offenders and other similar tools to help reduce drunk-driving fatalities in Texas.



Teen sentenced to 10 years probation, rehab in 4 deaths
Posted Friday, Dec. 13, 2013 196 comments

ARTICLE PHOTOS (1) COMMENTS

BY MITCH MITCHELL
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FORT WORTH — A Keller teenager who pleaded guilty to driving drunk and causing collisions that killed four people in June was sentenced Tuesday to 10 years probation.



Arlington man convicted of killing family in drunken driving crash
Posted Saturday, Apr. 05, 2014 1 comments

ARLINGTON — Three Arlington firefighters were released from the



ARLINGTON
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Suspected drunken driver crashes into Arlington firetruck, injures three firefighters
Posted Saturday, Apr. 05, 2014 1 comments

ARTICLE PHOTOS (1) COMMENTS

BY TAYLOR PRATER
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ARLINGTON — Three Arlington firefighters were released from the

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)

The Arlington Police Department has approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fly two small battery-operated, remotely-controlled helicopters which it purchased with federal grant funds after two years of planning and training. This additional tool is one of many public safety options available to police officers in the ongoing effort to keep Arlington residents and visitors safe.

sUAS can be used for a variety of public safety applications such as finding missing persons, clearing major traffic crashes more quickly, assessing damages and losses from natural disasters like floods and tornadoes, and taking forensic photographs of complex crime scenes. The remotely-piloted helicopters are not to be used in car pursuits, to issue traffic citations, to carry weapons, or for routine patrols and surveillance.

Maintaining an individual's right to privacy and protecting the civil liberties of all persons are of paramount importance to the Arlington Police Department. The department is bound by federal law and the laws of the State of Texas that direct the use of air craft of all types and sizes. Case law that applies to manned-aircraft used in many urban police departments across the country is the same case law that applies to these small unmanned systems. Both statutory law and case law dictate when search warrants must be obtained and provides limits on the use of technology by law enforcement to investigate suspected criminal activity in our community.

Arlington recognizes the value of remote-control (RC) aircraft for community recreation and the importance of RC hobbyists to the local economy. As new technologies draw an increasing number of hobbyists of all ages, there is a growing concern for public safety. Arlington has experienced instances in which individuals are flying hobby aircraft over sports stadiums in the city or other safety sensitive locations. The City supports legislation to educate and provide guidance to the RC hobbyists on the safe use of small unmanned aircraft systems in public spaces.

Synthetic Drugs

During the 82nd Legislative Session, lawmakers drafted and passed legislation to make illegal the then formulations of synthetic marijuana (K-2) and cocaine (bath salts). Since that time, makers of these illegal drug-mimicking compounds have changed their formulas, leading to problems prosecuting cases. The City supports legislation that allows a State agency, with appropriate statutory guidelines, to expand the list of prohibited substances.

DNA/Digital Media Evidence

Under SB 1611, signed into law in May 2013, prosecutors are required to turn over evidence to defendants accused of crimes and to keep a record of the evidence they disclose. The new law, also called the Michael Morton Act, is designed to prevent wrongful convictions by requiring district attorneys to be more transparent in criminal cases. For law enforcement, compliance with this new law is driving up evidence costs. The City supports legislation that would assist cities with the costs for equipment and processing of digital media evidence.

Obstruction or Retaliation Offense Amendment

In recent years, the public safety community has experienced retaliatory practices by some members of the public that involve publication of personal information, including home addresses. In some cases, this information is taken from websites that have been breached, or "hacked." Leaked personal information on police officers can jeopardize their safety and that of their families from dangerous criminals who seek retribution.

The City supports amending the offense of obstruction or retaliation to make it an offense for a person to post on a publicly accessible website or social media platform the residence address or telephone number of an individual the actor knew was a public servant or member of a public servant's family or household.

Water Planning



Arlington has worked with its water supplier, the Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD) to ensure that it has adequate water supply through 2060. The Council takes action when requested by TRWD to restrict the use of water by its residents as needed to ensure an adequate supply. The City supports the continued designation of unique reservoir sites as established in the Texas Water Development Board's Statewide Water Plan and enacted by S.B. 3 (80th Texas Legislature). While the City supports the State Water Plan, it opposes legislation that seeks to implement a state tax, fee or surcharge on residential or commercial water utility bills because of the inequities it creates among the State's water users. Additionally, the City believes that any revenue generated to fund the State Water Plan should be spent in the region in which it was collected.

In 2013, Texas voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 6 which provides funding for water projects. The proposition was one component of a larger legislative package designed to provide water project funding. Another part of that package, House Bill 4, created the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT). The passage of Proposition 6 funded the SWIFT with \$2 billion from the state's "Rainy Day Fund" for the sole purpose of providing low-cost financial assistance for projects in the state water plan. This funding will help to meet the state's water needs. The City supports providing additional state funding to fully fund the State Water Plan.

H.B. 4 requires that the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) adopt rules for the use of SWIFT funds. The City appreciates the numerous opportunities for public comment and dialogue on the funding prioritization criteria as well as the definitions for conservation and water re-use projects.

Funding for Community Services



Local libraries

The City's Library Department periodically receives funding through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission which is available to fund online homework help, college assistance and workforce development. In an effort to continue offering these opportunities, the City supports funding for shared digital content (including Texshare, K-12 databases and other e-content). This funding is vital to our ability to implement programs that serve the educational attainment, literacy, and workforce development needs of our community. Furthermore, this funding will assist in meeting requirements for Texas to continue to receive federal funding.

Local parks

Arlington's local parks system has benefited from over \$5 million in state grant funds within the last 16 years. This funding is critical for our local parks used by our residents

for exercise and recreation. Local parks enhance the quality of life for our residents as well as contribute to the City's ability to attract new residents and businesses. The City supports full funding to the Texas Recreation and Parks Accounts and Large County and Municipality Recreation and Parks Account (both are known as the "Local Park Grant Program").

Homeless housing and services

For the past five years, the City of Arlington, along with other large Texas cities, received additional funding from the State to provide services for our community's homeless population including outreach services to the chronically homeless, case management services and tenant-based rental assistance. The City strongly supports a continuation of this funding stream to help the State combat its homelessness problem.

Support Quality Education



The Arlington City Council has set a priority for Fiscal Year 2015 to support quality education. As a part of this effort, it is collaborating to support the legislative interests of the educational institutions which operate in Arlington: Arlington, Kennedale, HEB and Mansfield ISDs; Tarrant County College; and UT-Arlington. Additionally, the City is seeking ways in which it can support learning experiences outside of the classroom through resources like libraries. The City supports local control, the preservation of HB 5 provisions and relief from unfunded mandates for Texas public schools.

Arlington is proud of its higher educational opportunities, the Southeast Campus of Tarrant County College and UT-Arlington. The success of these institutions brings direct economic and cultural benefits to the Arlington community, the Metroplex and the State. Because of this, the City supports funding for community and technical college instruction, the Skills Development Fund, the Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund, the

Research University Development Fund and the Texas Research Incentive Program. In addition, the City supports UT-A's request for tuition revenue bonds, which can be repaid by revenue stream generated from student tuition. The university is seeking bonds to expand two research facilities on campus.





Tourism Public Improvement District

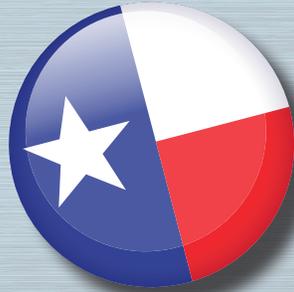
Texas state law allows for the creation of Public Improvement Districts (PIDs). Recent modifications to the law allowed the establishment of a special PID for tourism-related purposes within the City of Dallas. The Dallas Tourism PID legislation authorized Dallas area hoteliers to petition to create a PID that is funded by a self-assessment by all Dallas hotels with 100 or more rooms. The PID funds that are generated cover eligible expenses such as incentives to promote increased convention and group hotel activity, marketing and promotion, and other initiatives that have a direct impact on tourism and hotel activity within the area. The Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District has been in existence now for two years and has exceeded all of its performance goals. There are a number of additional Texas cities that are anticipated to seek authority from the Texas Legislature in the upcoming legislative session to allow this type of special public improvement district within their city upon petition of their area hoteliers. In order to advance Arlington's effort to be a top destination for conventions and tourism, the City is seeking to amend current state law to allow Arlington to also be eligible to create such a district upon petition of a majority of the area hoteliers.

Viridian Municipal Management District (MMD)

The Viridian Municipal Management District (MMD) was created in 2007 by the 80th Texas Legislature as a conservation and reclamation district that has the purpose to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, arts and entertainment, economic development, safety, and public welfare in the District. The District is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of five directors, which has control over and management supervision of all affairs of the District. To be able to serve on the board, directors must own land within the District. Currently, directors are elected by eligible resident voters of the District to serve staggered four-year terms.

The developer and district are seeking to introduce legislation to amend the provision in the law pertaining to the Board of Directors. The goal is to provide for the appointment of the board by Arlington's Mayor and the City Council. The developer and district are seeking the amendment in order to conform the governance process to that of general law municipal management districts and maintain the vision and goals of the Viridian development. The City supports this effort.

City of Arlington
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