

# MEMORANDUM

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**TO: Regional Policy and Municipal Infrastructure Committee**

**FROM: Jennifer Wichmann, Director of Management Resources  
Nora Coronado, Project Coordinator**

**SUBJECT: 2014 State Legislative Consultant Contract Evaluation**

**DATE: January 12, 2016**

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The City has contracted with HillCo Partners since FY 2007 for representation at the state level. In August 2010, after a request for qualifications was issued, a new contract was signed for a term ending September 30, 2012, with a two-year renewal option. Upon expiration of the initial term, the City renewed the contract and extended it until September 30, 2014.

In May 2014, the City issued another request for qualifications. Based on evaluation results, the City Council selected and approved a new contract with HillCo. The initial term for this contract is for two years, from October 2014 through September 2016, with a two-year renewal option. The City will pay \$7,500 per month while the Legislature is in Session or a Special Session which is related to the City and its interests, and \$6,500 per month for the remainder of the months. These are the same rates as with the previous contract.

The State Legislature meets for five months every other year and while in session, City staff works closely with HillCo and the Texas Municipal League to ensure the City's interests are protected and its initiatives are advanced. When the Legislature is not in session, interim committees work to study key issues and develop recommendations for legislative changes in the upcoming Legislative Session. Additionally, the time between sessions is used by state agencies to create rules related to the legislation which has been passed by the Legislature.

In 2015, HillCo assisted the City in advancing the City Council's legislative agenda in Austin. Throughout the Session, City intergovernmental staff met with HillCo lobbyists on a weekly basis and they assisted City staff who went to Austin to testify on a variety of bills. An evaluation of the work assisted by HillCo is contained within this document. Appendix A highlights actions taken and results for various legislative issues. Appendix B includes a brief preview of anticipated issues for the coming year.

**Appendix A**  
**State Lobbyist Report Card**

<b>Legislative Issue</b>	<b>Actions Taken/Results</b>
Revenue and appraisal caps	Three major bills sought to enact either a revenue or appraisal cap on local government and appraisal districts. All were defeated.
Urban gas well drilling	The City was assisted by HillCo in working actively on a compromise bill related to urban gas well drilling. The final language was amendable to both the industry and the public safety and planning experts from the City who were involved in the effort.
Transportation funding	The City worked with HillCo to support a Constitutional amendment to provide additional funding from the auto sales tax to the state highway fund.
Major Events Trust Fund/ Events Trust Fund	The Event Trust Funds continued to be under significant scrutiny. HillCo assisted the City with connecting to the Governor's Office which will now implement the Funds and in monitoring other bills which made minor changes to the statutes.
Public Safety Initiatives	HillCo assisted the City in passing three major initiatives which are related to public safety. Two of them had been on the Council's legislative agenda for multiple sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignition interlocks for first-time drunk drivers</li> <li>• Outlawing current and future versions of synthetic marijuana and cocaine</li> <li>• Anti-doxing bills which prohibit intimidation of law enforcement and their families by threatening to post their personal information online.</li> </ul>
UTA Revenue Bonds	The City worked with HillCo to support legislation which allotted tuition revenue bonds to UT-Arlington for research facility construction.
Viridian Municipal Management District	HillCo assisted the City in altering the make-up of the Viridian Municipal Management District to better reflect the interests of the various stakeholders in that project.
Tourism Public Improvement District	HillCo assisted the City in establishing a Tourism Public Improvement District to increase resources available to promote the convention, event and tourism business in Arlington.
Anti-high-speed rail bills and appropriations riders	A variety of efforts were made to pass legislation or appropriation riders which would effectively kill high speed rail development in Texas. HillCo helped the City work successfully to oppose these measures.

## 2015 Legislative Review

During the 2015 legislative session, the City of Arlington and HillCo remained engaged on issues set out in the City's 2015 Legislative agenda relating to Transportation, Finance, Major Events Trust and Events Trust Fund, Travel and Tourism, Public Safety, Water Funding, and Funding for Community Services. Efforts were successful to passage of legislation specific to Arlington such as the Tourism Public Improvement District and the Viridian Municipal Management District.

City of Arlington staff, working with HillCo Partners, identified legislation during the committee process to provide testimony, written comment, or registration of support or opposition. The efforts continued as legislation made its way to the House or Senate floor process to establish the City's support or opposition and to assure nothing was amended to legislation that would require a shift of such a position.

Efforts to defeat revenue and or appraisal caps were a major effort during the 2015 session and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

The urban drilling discussion was not only significant this session, but HB40 received transformational input and crafting by the City of Arlington as it related to public safety.

The City of Arlington continues its commitment to "Enhance Regional Mobility." Major efforts were successful during the 2015 session initiated to oppose legislation and appropriations language (Rider 48) that would inhibit the development of the high-speed rail project connecting Dallas to Fort Worth. The City of Arlington also supported the legislation and resolution, SJR5, which provided for a successful Constitutional amendment that will now dedicate a portion of the revenue from auto sales to the state highway fund.

The City of Arlington's support for the continued role of the Trust Funds was critical as opposition and scrutiny continues to increase toward such programs. Legislation during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature transferred the administration of the Trust Funds to the Governor's office from the Comptroller's office. The transition was uneventful; however, a State Auditor's report illustrated various issues in the administration of the Funds.

Additionally, the continued effort of the City of Arlington to promote travel and tourism led to the successful passage of SB837 that would allow for the establishment of a Tourism Public Improvement District. This type of legislation has also received a new, heightened level of scrutiny adding to the difficulty in passage. We were successful on that as well as opposing the unsuccessful effort to bring limitations to the TIRZ program.

With regard to Public Safety, the City of Arlington and HillCo worked diligently on the "doxing" legislation established as a legislative priority this session. Senate Bill 923 passed. Additionally, continued supported efforts addressing drunk driving were also successful; HB2246 was passed requiring the ordering of ignition interlock devices for

certain first-time DWI offenders. City of Arlington again supported legislation addressing synthetic marijuana. The legislation was successful this session.

Water Planning continues to be a focus and priority for the City of Arlington. The efforts of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative session and passage of a Constitutional amendment established the State Water Implementation Fund (SWIFT) that brought \$2 billion in revolving loans from the state's rainy day fund to help water projects across Texas.

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature also appropriated funding for libraries and parks as it related to the City's commitment to Community Services. The Legislature also awarded \$10 million in GR to the TDHCA to administer the Homeless Housing and Services Program eligible to Arlington.

The City of Arlington also supported a major pre-K initiative as an issue in keeping with our "Support Quality Education" efforts. Also supported was the successful passage of Tuition Revenue Bonds that will benefit UT-Arlington.

## **Appendix B**

### **Preview for 2016**

2016 will be a year spent preparing for the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. Already, HillCo has assisted the City in brokering a connection between the Railroad Commission and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality related to the implementation of House Bill 40, the urban drilling bill. HillCo has also assisted us in connecting with the Chairman of the influential House Energy Resources Committee. HillCo will also work with the City to anticipate issues which will become legislation during the next session such as bond election transparency. These issues and more will be part of the draft legislative agenda which will be brought to the City Council in the fall of 2016.