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# 2025

# Legislative Focus



**City of Rockport**  
**89th Legislative**  
**Session**

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# Project Summary

The City of Rockport's Legislative Team serves to advocate for, coordinate, and advance the City's legislative agenda. Its primary goal is to strengthen the City's ability to govern effectively, deliver essential municipal and community services, and ensure Rockport's interests are proactively represented in the legislative process through strong intergovernmental relationships.

## 2025 City Legislative Team

### Administrative

- Vanessa Shrauner
- Shelley Goodwin

### Police Department

- Lt. Stefanie Garcia
- CID Capt. David Gerloff

### Public Works

- Ryan Picarazzi
- Jeff Olson

### Finance Department

- Diane Pedersen

### Community Development

- Stacy Cantu
- Robert Decker

### Parks Department

- Joe Riekers

The 2025 State Legislative Team is composed of City employees who work collaboratively to advocate for the best interests of Rockport's citizens. This team will uphold the charm of Rockport and support local control and responsive government, enabling the City to plan for growth and maintain a high quality of life for its residents.

Formed to be proactive during the 89th Legislative Session, the Legislative Team is tasked with tracking assigned bills, meeting monthly to provide updates, and offering regular reports to the City Council. Additionally, the team will alert the City Council when direct engagement with the City's Senator and Representative is necessary for bills requiring additional attention.

The team will also assist with preparing for legislation that may affect the City's budget, particularly focusing on bills with September 1st effective dates, ensuring the City is prepared to adapt and respond as needed.

# HIGHLIGHTS

The City of Rockport's Legislative Team is focused on key themes to communicate with the City Council, residents, and any organization that assist with Legislature in preparation for the 89th Legislative Session. The central message emphasized the importance of preserving the long-standing tradition of empowering local governments and respecting local control. This approach allows elected officials to make decisions at the level closest to their citizens, ensuring maximum input and thoughtful planning for future growth and development.

By planning for growth, the City aims to protect property rights, honor its historic charm, and maintain the unique character of Rockport while ensuring a high quality of life for all residents. These priorities reflect the shared commitment to preserving Rockport's heritage and fostering a thriving community for future generations.

We look forward to collaborating with elected officials, residents, and other stakeholders to achieve these goals and continue serving our shared constituents effectively. Together, we will ensure Rockport remains a vibrant and prosperous community.

## Preserving Local Control

The City of Rockport supports legislation that does not hinder our ability to respond to the needs and demands of the citizens and ensures the City's ability to abide by the principle of self-government including our ability to budget effectively and ensure appropriate city services for our residents. The City opposes any legislation that would be detrimental to this authority, such as bills with unfunded mandates. Additionally, the city opposes bills impacting property taxes or appraisal caps that further limit city government's ability to provide essential services like police, bills further eroding the city's ability to debt finance large projects, and bills prohibiting advocacy efforts paid for by the city.

## Planning for Growth

The City supports legislation that allows our staff, in conjunction with citizens, to plan for future land use with fiscally responsible methods to ensure future growth is responsibly and thoughtfully managed and meets the needs of our citizens now and in the future. Legislation that is detrimental to our ability to plan for growth includes further changes to the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction and the enhanced ability of individuals to disannex from the city ETJ; and removing city authority to plan and zone in city limits and city ETJ, leading to a lack of thoughtful, effective long-term planning in water, wastewater, and city services that will ultimately be more expensive and less efficient for all citizens.

## Preserving a High Quality of Life

The City supports legislation that supports a strong, healthy, vibrant, and economically resilient community where people of all ages and interests can live, work, and play safely. Legislation that would be detrimental to the City's high quality of life would include any attempts to divert HOT tax revenue and economic development incentives, or budget cuts to the Texas Commission on the Arts. The City would also oppose legislation that makes changes to the local authority the City has to require parkland dedication by developers to ensure green spaces in neighborhoods.

# FUTURE GROWTH STRATEGY

The City supports legislation that allows our staff, in conjunction with citizens, to plan for future land use with fiscally responsible methods to ensure future growth is responsibly and thoughtfully managed and meets the needs of our citizens now and in the future. As the Legislature embarks upon the 89th Legislative Session, the City of Rockport asks our legislators to consider these specific issues and the most pressing concerns to our residents and customers.

## Finance

- The City supports transparency related to property taxes and financial information.
- The City opposes revenue, tax, or appraisal caps of any type which limit the City's ability to deliver public safety, enhanced infrastructure and other critical services.
- The City supports maintaining the current tax structure to ensure the City's ability to raise sufficient funds to pay for critical municipal public services.
- The City supports current provisions for debt financing to issue debt to pay for infrastructure and equipment and broadening the use of the Interest and Sinking {I&S) tax rate for capital leases.

## Planning

- The City supports maintaining local authority regulating lot sizes to ensure effective future planning and delivery of essential services.
- If legislation on lot sizes is proposed or adopted, the bill should address the consequences to infrastructure and planning, such as the cost of water and wastewater, stormwater management and the functional issues this would create related to parking and transportation needs, as well as potential environmental concerns.
- The City supports the continued use of infrastructure and financial planning tools to assist with the effective management of growth, including zoning and ETJ authority.
- The City supports consistency of regulation in the city and ETJ to ensure that both developers and homeowners alike will know what their home and neighborhoods will look like as they're built out and that future annexations into the city are completed in a fiscally responsible manner for current and future residents.
- The City supports development that preserves the character of our community, with thoughtful and diligent long range community planning providing for numerous opportunities for public comment and input.



## **Police**

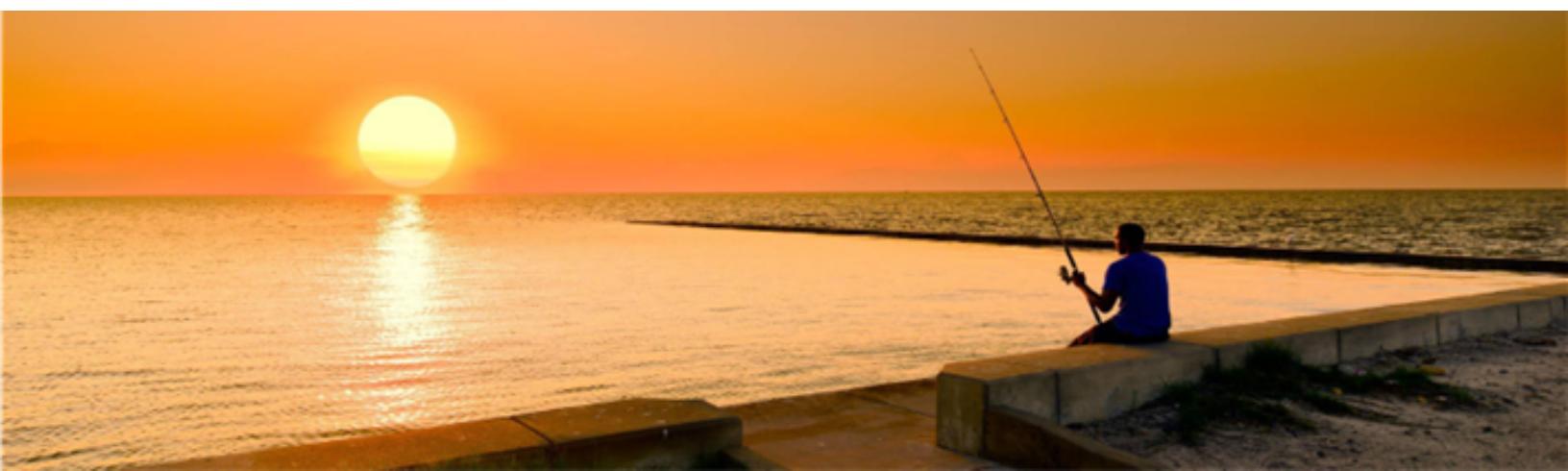
- The city supports legislation that identifies other individuals, in addition to commissioned police officers, to assign emergency detention orders.
- The City supports additional financial resources from the state for local governments to create multi-disciplinary mental health teams to alleviate strain on local government taxpayers to serve individuals in need.
- The City supports state resources to attack the root issues of homelessness (poverty, drug addiction, mental health) at the local level.

## **Transportation**

- The City supports continued and increased State funding from TxDOT for construction, operations, and safety improvements.
- The City supports cost sharing tools like traffic impact fees for new developments and supports the continued availability of this tool by cities to fairly allocate the cost for roadways.

## **Water**

- The City supports legislation and state funding that incentivizes water conservation and conjunctive water use. And also supports a statewide public awareness campaign to emphasize the importance of water conservation in the same way that the state emphasizes energy conservation.
- The City supports additional state funding opportunities to help utilities meet municipal water supply needs, and state funding of large infrastructure projects to help with the movement and development of water sources.



# PRESERVING ROCKPORT AND THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

The City supports legislation that supports a strong, healthy, vibrant, and economically resilient community where people of all ages and interests can live, work, and play safely.

## Arts, Economic Development, and Parks:

- The City supports preserving the use of Municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax {HOT} to fund the arts and maintain municipal autonomy in the allocation of HOT revenue.
- The City supports funding of arts and the creation of pursuing and retaining employers
- The City supports legislation that enhances the investment in parks and open spaces and conserves open spaces that connect communities safely to the mental, social, and physical benefits of outdoor and recreational opportunities, and ensures that state sporting goods sales tax dollars dedicated for parks are not diverted for any other causes.

Legislation that would be detrimental to the City's high quality of life would include any attempts to divert HOT tax revenue and economic development incentives, or budget cuts to the Texas Commission on the Arts. The City would also oppose legislation that makes changes to the local authority the City has to require parkland dedication by developers to ensure green spaces in neighborhoods.



# DRAFT LEGISLATION REQUEST

- Request legislation clarifying that municipal drought declarations supersede a Homeowners Association (HOA) authority to fine homeowners during declared periods of drought, to ensure that residents aren't being fined by their HOA for the appearance of their lawn to the detriment of water conservation efforts.
- Request amendments to Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code to include provisions for municipalities "greater than or less than" specific population thresholds and those with islands or bays connected to or bordering the Gulf of Mexico. These restrictions should include Rockport, a peninsula with a population of approximately 11,000 residents.

This exclusion limits our City's ability to utilize HOT revenues for critical needs, such as repairs, construction, and cleanup of sea walls, beaches, and bays—areas essential to maintaining our tourism economy and protecting our coastal infrastructure. We respectfully request legislative action to revise Chapter 351 to include peninsular municipalities like Rockport, ensuring we have equitable access to these vital resources.

- Request relief from Unfunded Mandates, like many municipalities, Rockport faces challenges in implementing new regulations and mandates without corresponding funding sources. These requirements often strain our budget and limit our ability to address other community needs effectively.
- We respectfully urge the inclusion of provisions in future legislation that allow cities to recoup costs associated with compliance through appropriate fees or funding mechanisms. This would ensure municipalities can meet state requirements without compromising essential services or projects.

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