

STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

90th Session



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I. Introduction and Purpose

The Strategic and Legislative Affairs (SLA) Department serves as the City of El Paso's main link to federal, state, international, and regional partners. SLA coordinates the City's work with our State Delegation and state agencies to advance City Council priorities, protect municipal authority and resources, and secure funding that benefits El Paso residents.

The State Legislative Agenda for the 90th Session outlines the priorities that will drive the City of El Paso's work at the Capitol. The Agenda directs the Strategic and Legislative Affairs Department, City departments, and consultants to develop legislation, testify in committees, respond to proposed legislation, and pursue state resources. The Mayor, as the City's intergovernmental representative, will provide additional direction to the Strategic and Legislative Affairs Team on the City's position regarding specific legislation.

Agenda Implementation Actions

SLA will work with the Mayor and City Council to:

- Create opportunities for the Mayor and City Council to provide testimony to the State Legislature, serve on state committees, and engage directly with State Agencies
- Coordinate with the Mayor and City Council to receive resolutions and recognitions from the State Legislature on behalf of the citizens of the City of El Paso

SLA will support City Departments in navigating the 90th Legislative Session by:

- Advancing City Council directives through clear, consistent messaging
- Developing position statements in coordination with the City Attorney's Office
- Commenting on state legislation that affects City programs and services
- Responding to changes in state rules and guidance published in the Texas Register
- Participating in public comment opportunities and stakeholder processes

SLA will support City Departments in securing new state funding opportunities by:

- Pursuing increased funding for Police, Fire, and Veterans services
- Seeking additional funding for critical infrastructure and transportation projects
- Advancing state funding for advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and defense-related initiatives in alignment with the City strategic plan

SLA will advance legislation that:

- Expands Hotel Occupancy Tax tools to support tourism, convention center facilities, and major events
- Obtains necessary state approvals for international bridge projects, including the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry Presidential Permit
- Implements City department priorities to improve programs, strengthen local funding tools, and enhance service delivery

SLA will build and maintain strong partnerships by:

- Working directly with the State Delegation to advance the Legislative Agenda
- Collaborating with El Paso County, other municipalities, UTEP, school districts, nonprofits, and the private sector to align and advance shared legislative goals
- Overseeing and aligning the City's state lobbying services with Council priorities and the Strategic Plan
- Participating in and actively engaging with TML committees to ensure El Paso's priorities are represented at the Capitol
- Actively engaging with other Texas border cities and international representatives

II. Agenda for the Texas 90th Legislative Session

General Legislative Priorities

Protect City Financial Resources

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintains joint state and local authority over City of El Paso employee retirement plans• Strengthens the financial soundness and health of the City's Retirement Systems
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results in the loss of City revenues or negatively impacts the City's authority to generate revenues• Increases the unfunded liabilities of the City's Retirement Systems• Would negatively affect the City's public pension systems

Uphold Local Authority

Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases the cost to the City for acquiring property or restricts the City's ability to acquire property• Results in laws or rules that will significantly affect local municipal services• Imposes general preemption, unfunded mandates, or results in actions that diminish the City's authority to regulate development or municipal ordinance-making authority
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Maximize State Resources

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funds City priority programs utilizing state funds• Reduces or waives local match requirements for state programs
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Priorities for the 90th Legislative Session

Critical Infrastructure

Roads, Highways, and International Ports

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expands local and state funding sources for road, transit, and international port of entry projects• Eliminates the diversion of state transportation revenues to non-transportation uses and amends TxDOT funding formulas to ensure El Paso receives equitable funding allocations• Expands the City's ability to operate and finance port of entry infrastructure, enhance international trade and economic competitiveness, and reduce neighborhood impacts
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restricts municipal authority and limits fiscal safeguards relating to international ports of entry

El Paso International Airport

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expands local and state funding sources for airport capital projects, maintenance, safety and security operations, marketing and promotion of El Paso as a destination, and retaining and developing new intrastate, domestic regional, and international air services• Regulates the safe use of drones / unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) devices and electrical vertical takeoff and landing aircraft (eVTOL) in and around secure airspace• Enhances safety, security, and human-trafficking prevention at the El Paso International Airport and other transportation facilities
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Utilities

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funds water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and drought and flood mitigation programs• Funds broadband, fiber, and cybersecurity infrastructure serving residents and public facilities
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removes the City's "original jurisdiction" in the rate setting process for gas and electric services or removes the City's ability to recover expenses associated with conducting or intervening in gas and electric rate cases• Restricts the City's ability to set reasonable fees for the use of City rights of way and other City infrastructure by electric and gas utilities, telecommunications, and internet service providers

Public Safety

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invests in mental and behavioral health services, crisis response, and results in more effective use of police and fire resources• Increases funding for public safety personnel, operations, equipment and facilities• Increases funding for new equipment, technology, personnel, and facilities required for behavioral health response, safe disposal of PFAS-containing materials, foreign UAS and drone countermeasures, border security activities, and increased collaboration between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies• Strengthens crime prevention and violence reduction efforts through community-based programs, youth engagement, and data-informed strategies• Enhances regional emergency communications and interoperability among local, state, and federal partners so that first responders can work together during large-scale events• Provides funding for border communities to plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and humanitarian events, while respecting local authority to protect health and safety
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negatively affects the City's ability to maintain public confidence, trust, and support in the fairness and integrity of the El Paso Police Department and El Paso Fire Department

Core Municipal Services

Public Health

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports expanded state resources for local health departments, with a focus on TB, STDs, vaccines for children, and other core prevention programs that protect community health• Expands access to mental and behavioral health services, including prevention, treatment, and recovery support programs in community settings across the El Paso region• Improves coordination between state health agencies, local health departments, and health care providers to address chronic disease, substance use, and other health disparities• Invests in public health preparedness, including the workforce, data systems, and equipment needed to respond to emerging health threats and disasters• Supports funding for comprehensive early cancer screening programs
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weakens local public health authority or creates new barriers to vaccines and other critical health services

Animal Services

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modernizes and adequately funds local animal services programs, including enhanced animal control tools, access to affordable preventive and veterinary care, capital improvements for municipal facilities, and reasonable enforcement mechanisms• Allows veterinarians to make medical exemptions when surgery is unsafe and authorize trained veterinary technicians to administer rabies vaccinations under appropriate standards of care• Promotes responsible pet ownership through statewide education efforts, licensing tools, and collaboration among animal services, public safety, and public health agencies
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits flexibility on municipally owned animal services facilities or reduces access to essential animal services

Veterans Services

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expands state programs and services for service members transitioning out of the military, veterans, military spouses, survivors, and dependents
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Parks, Recreation, and Public Spaces

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases state support for local parks, trails, and open spaces and recognizes their role in health, stormwater management, and economic development
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Libraries, Education, and Youth Programming

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases state support for public libraries to implement programs for education, digital access, and workforce development, and youth programming, including Child Friendly Cities
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Community and Economic Development

Planning and Land Use

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthens local authority to plan and manage growth, including aligning zoning and subdivision tools with adopted plans and expanding the range of housing types that can be built• Allows municipalities to adjust development standards such as parking and design, and encouraging coordinated land use planning inside and outside city limits• Allows municipalities to require development activities to perform studies that address infrastructure and neighborhood impacts• Gives cities flexibility to annex land, including federal and state-owned land• Maintains fee structures and other tools that ensure development pays its fair share of costs
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restricts municipal authority to annex land or imposes more stringent requirements on a municipality's ability to annex land• Limits municipalities' ability to collect fees based on the cost of service• Weakens the city's capacity to guide development and protect its tax base• Amends, abolishes, or repeals section 26.03 of the Texas tax code related to the treatment of capture appraised value and tax increment in the calculation of ad valorem tax rates for a taxing unit

Economic Development

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamlines and strengthens state economic-development tools tied to infrastructure, including the Skills Development Fund, Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation (JETI) process, and related programs that help El Paso attract and retain advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defense, medical industries, technology R&D, and other priority areas• Sustains and expands state funding for defense-related infrastructure• Expands flexible state tools for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators, including access to capital, and support for business formation and growth• Supports tourism, arts, and cultural initiatives which highlight El Paso's history, culture, and binational identity and which attract visitors and investment to the region• Support legislation that enhances trade, commerce, logistics, infrastructure, and modernizes transportation corridors
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expands state preemption of local economic development tools or prohibitions on locally tailored economic development strategies• Shifts border infrastructure priorities and funding away from El Paso's trade and manufacturing competitiveness

Housing and Homelessness

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthens local tools, funding, and partnerships to create, preserve, and protect safe, decent, and affordable housing options for residents throughout the community• Supports delivering anti-displacement projects, wraparound services, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, and housing and utility assistance• Advances fair housing and equal access to housing opportunities for veterans, seniors, families with children, people with disabilities, and other residents who face barriers in the private market
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Military Affairs and Partnerships

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases funding for Fort Bliss operational priorities that align with the City's strategic plan, critical infrastructure, and public services that enhance military value and mission readiness
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits collaboration, preempts agreements, or restricts joint partnerships between Fort Bliss and the City of El Paso

Climate, Sustainability, and Energy Resilience

Support legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps cities improve air quality and community health and that encourages locally chosen energy sources, energy efficiency, and emission reduction projects• Funds community resilience efforts, including projects that help neighborhoods prepare for and recover from extreme weather, drought, and other natural hazards• Supports clean electricity generation, transmission and distribution in non-ERCOT state regions
Oppose legislation that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits or preempts partnerships between Fort Bliss and the City of El Paso

Appendix I. 90th Legislative Session Schedule

Deadline or Major Event	Date
90 th State Legislative Agenda	1/30/26 - 2/17/26
Department Input and Agenda Finalized	01/30/26
Senate Interim Charges submissions	02/08/26
City Council Briefings	02/13/26
City Council Approval	02/17/26
Submit Riders to State Delegation	03/01/26
Contract State Lobbying Services	6/30/26
Pre-Session Strategy Development	7/01/26 - 10/31/26
90 th Legislative Session (Regular)	11/09/26 - 05/31/27
Pre-filing Begins	11/09/26
Session Begins	01/12/27
Last Day to File Bills	03/12/27
End (Sine Die)	05/31/27
Post-Session	06/01/27
Post-Session Governor's 20-day review period	06/01/27 - 06/20/27
Governor to call special sessions	Anytime between regular sessions
90 th Session Council Debrief	July 2027
Special Session Council Debrief	September - October 2027

Appendix II. Bill Tracking and Post Session Adoption

Bill Tracking and Response

Strategic and Legislative Affairs (SLA) will track state legislation and administrative actions that may affect the City of El Paso's authority, fiscal position, operations, and strategic priorities. Bill tracking will support timely decision making, coordinated City positions, and effective advocacy during the 90th Texas Legislative Session.

SLA will track bills impacting the City of El Paso by:

- Maintaining a centralized tracking system using contracted third-party software and internal tools to log bill summaries, status updates, key deadlines, committee actions, and preliminary risk and opportunity flags, and ensuring that all bills including those flagged by SLA staff and the City's state lobbyist, are reviewed in partnership with the City Attorney's Office before the City takes a support or oppose position
- Categorizing tracked bills by policy area and impact level, including fiscal impact, department-level operational impact, and preemption risk
- Requesting support from City Attorney's Office on drafting and reviewing support/opposition statements on filed bills, documenting non-action on bills, and performing a rapid review of late filed substitutes and amendments that may alter bill impacts
- Maintaining a record of City positions and advocacy actions to support transparency, continuity, and post session implementation planning

SLA will provide regular updates to City Council, City Leadership, City Attorney's Office, and City Departments by:

- Coordinating daily and weekly legislative monitoring with the City's state lobbyist and the Texas Municipal League (TML) to identify filed bills, committee referrals, hearings, amendments, and floor activity that may require City attention
- Providing weekly notifications and reports to the City Attorney's Office and City Departments, including anticipated timelines and requested department input
- Sending regular Memos to the Mayor and City Council summarizing major issues, high-profile legislation, and opportunities to comment and testify

Post Session Bill Adoption and Implementation Support

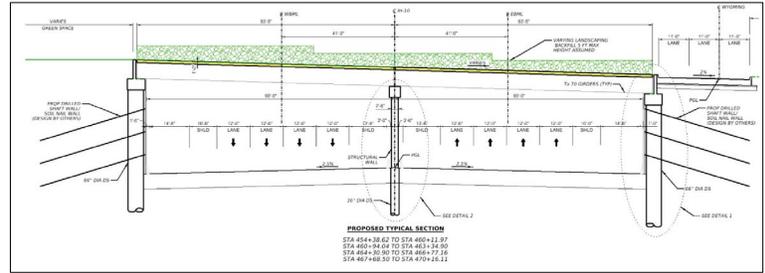
SLA will support City Departments in implementing legislation enacted during the 90th Session by:

- Preparing a post session legislative brief for City Council and City Departments
- Communicating bill adoption deadlines, effective dates, and compliance requirements in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, including rulemaking timelines and agency guidance
- Communicating to City Departments any required City actions such as ordinance updates, policy changes, interlocal agreements, procurement adjustments, staffing impacts, and reporting requirements, in coordination with the City Attorney's Office
- Estimating fiscal impacts and budget actions in coordination with the Office of the Comptroller, including anticipated revenue changes, cost increases, changes to match requirements, and funding opportunities created by new law
- Supporting City Departments in engaging state agencies on implementation details, including drafting comments, participating in stakeholder processes, and requesting technical assistance where appropriate

Appendix III. Rider Requests

Rider Request: \$25M for I-10 Deck Plaza

The City of El Paso will request a \$25 million appropriation for the I-10 Deck Plaza project in coordination with the Office of Senator Blanco and all members of the State Delegation. Funding will be used to construct the Deck Plaza and will be used in coordination with other local, state, and federal funds allocated to the project.



Rider Request: \$10M for Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry

The City of El Paso will request a \$10 million appropriation for the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry project in coordination with the Office of Senator Blanco and all members of the State Delegation. Funds will be used for construction activities that implement roadway and access modifications supporting commercial vehicle movements, upgrades to City and Texas DPS facilities and operations, and related site, utility, and traffic control work necessary to deliver the project in compliance with federal requirements.



Rider Request: \$10M for the Advanced Manufacturing District

The City of El Paso will request a \$10 million appropriation for the Advanced Manufacturing District Project. Funds will be used for construction of the AMD's enabling infrastructure and initial facilities needed to support space, aerospace, defense, and dual use manufacturing, including site preparation, grading, drainage, internal access and circulation, water and wastewater extensions, electric power distribution and redundancy, fiber, lighting and security, and the initial shared use industrial warm shell and common area improvements that allow rapid tenant occupancy.



Appendix IV. Senate Interim Charges

Proposed Interim Charge 1: Evaluating Statewide Water Supply and Data Center Demand

The Committee shall conduct a statewide analysis of the near-term and long-term impacts of large load facilities, including data centers and artificial intelligence compute campuses, on Texas water supply planning and drought resilience. The study shall include freshwater and non-potable sources, including brackish groundwater, reclaimed water, and desalination, and shall evaluate impacts across all Regional Water Planning Areas.

The Committee shall:

1. Inventory current and planned data center development in Texas, including location, expected capacity, commissioning timelines, cooling technology assumptions, and associated water demands, with the analysis structured by Regional Water Planning Area, river basin, and aquifer where practicable.
2. Evaluate water use profiles by cooling approach, including chilled water systems, evaporative cooling, hybrid systems, and emerging low water technologies, and quantify water intensity ranges under Texas climate conditions.
3. Identify water supply risks and pinch points tied to drought of record scenarios, including risks to municipal supply, agriculture, and industrial users, and assess potential impacts on environmental flows and groundwater sustainability.
4. Review existing statutory authorities, permitting pathways, and reporting requirements relevant to industrial water use, groundwater production, reuse, and discharge, and identify gaps in transparency, metering, and demand forecasting for large load facilities.
5. Develop legislative recommendations to ensure that data center water demand is incorporated into statewide and regional water planning, including recommendations on data collection standards, confidentiality limits, and a consistent methodology for forecasting industrial water demands.

Proposed Interim Charge 2: Direction to the Texas Water Development Board on Forecasting and Planning Integration

The Committee shall study whether existing statewide and regional water planning processes adequately capture rapid load growth from large load facilities, including data centers, and shall evaluate statutory and administrative options to strengthen the Texas Water Development Board's ability to model, forecast, and publish water demand estimates tied to these facilities.

The Committee shall:

1. Direct the Texas Water Development Board to propose a standardized statewide methodology for estimating and validating water demand associated with large load facilities, including assumptions for cooling technology, climate, operational intensity, and onsite reuse.
2. Direct the Texas Water Development Board to recommend how these demand projections should be incorporated into the State Water Plan, the Regional Water Plans, and associated planning datasets, including guidance to Regional Water Planning Groups.
3. Evaluate options for improving the timeliness and accuracy of industrial demand updates between formal planning cycles, including annual or biennial refresh mechanisms and triggers tied to interconnection requests, building permits, tax incentive applications, or other verifiable indicators.
4. Evaluate how state financing programs and technical assistance programs administered by the Texas Water Development Board can better support non-potable and alternative water supplies for large load facilities, including reclaimed water expansion, brackish groundwater development, aquifer storage and recovery, and desalination where appropriate.
5. Identify legislative recommendations to strengthen coordination among the Texas Water Development Board, relevant state agencies, and local water providers to ensure that water supply strategies are aligned with large load growth.

The Committee shall request the Texas Water Development Board to deliver:

1. A written statewide assessment summarizing current and projected large load water demands through 2080.
2. Recommended statutory changes, if any, needed to implement an ongoing forecasting and planning integration framework.
3. A proposed data reporting template for large load facilities that supports planning while protecting bona fide proprietary information.

Appendix V. Proposed Legislation

Draft Legislation: Establishing Project Financing Zone (PFZ) eligibility and applicability for projects in El Paso

Legislative model reference: [Texas Tax Code Chapter 351.1015 \(b\)](#) | [S.B. 1057 \(88R\)](#), [Texas Tax Code Section 351.1015](#)

The intent of this legislation is to expand Project Financing Zone (PFZ) eligibility for qualified projects in El Paso utilizing the population applicability criteria and proposing this as bracketed legislation via proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border. This draft legislation language was submitted to the Office of Senator Blanco for review and amendment.

By: [DELEGATION]

S.B. No. _____

AN ACT

relating to the eligibility of certain international border municipalities to use project financing zone revenue for a convention center facility and related infrastructure.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 351.1015(b), Tax Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (1-a) to read as follows:

(b) This section applies only to a qualified project located in:

(1) a municipality with a population of at least 650,000 but less than 750,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census; or

(1-a) a municipality that:

(A) is located on an international border.

SECTION 2. Section 351.1015, Tax Code, is amended by adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(b-1) A qualified project located in a municipality described by Subsection (b) (1-a) includes a convention center facility and related infrastructure, as those terms are used in this chapter, when the municipality designates a project financing zone under this section.

SECTION 3. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to a project financing zone designated on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September 1, 2027.

Draft Legislation: Modifying Project Financing Zone (PFZ) Boundaries for projects in El Paso

Legislative model reference: [Texas Tax Code Chapter 351.1015 \(a\) \(4\)](#) | [S.B. 1250 Senate Research Center 89R9927 CJD-F](#)

The intent of this legislation is to enable modified Project Financing Zone (PFZ) boundaries for qualified projects in El Paso. The proposed PFZ boundary for the El Paso Convention Center maintains a contiguous area not exceeding the maximum area of a three-mile radius and contains a qualified project. This draft legislation language was submitted to the Office of Senator Blanco for review and amendment.

By: [DELEGATION]

S.B. No. _____

AN ACT

relating to the definition of a project financing zone for certain municipalities when a standard three-mile radius extends beyond the jurisdictional boundary of the municipality due to an international border.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 351.1015(a) (4), Tax Code, is amended to read as follows:

(4) "Project financing zone" means an area within a municipality:

(A) that the municipality by ordinance or by agreement under Chapter 380, Local Government Code, designates as a project financing zone;

(B) the boundaries of which are:

(i) within a three-mile radius of the center of a qualified project; or

(ii) if designated by a municipality described by Subsection (b) (1-a), a contiguous geographic area the total area of which is less than or equal to the maximum area allowed under Subparagraph (i) that:

(a) is located within the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality; and

(b) contains the qualified projects;

(C) the designation of which specifies:

(i) for a zone the boundaries of which are prescribed by Paragraph (B) (i), the longitude and latitude of the center of the qualified project; or

(ii) for a zone the boundaries of which are prescribed by Paragraph (B) (ii), the exact boundaries of the zone; and

(D) the designation of which expires not later than the 30th anniversary of the date of designation.

SECTION 2. Section 351.1015, Tax Code, is amended by adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a-1) A municipality described by Subsection (b) (1-a) may designate a project financing zone under Subsection (a) (4) (B) (ii) if any portion of the three-mile radius described by Subsection (a) (4) (B) (i) extends along the international boundary of the United States in El Paso County.

SECTION 3. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to a project financing zone designated on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September 1, 2027.