

Fort Bend County Business Collaborative

2021 Legislative Agenda



Redistricting Process

- Support redistricting efforts that increase Fort Bend representation and reflect majority Fort Bend voting populations within each Fort Bend Senatorial and House seat during the next decade.

Local Control

- Support elimination of unfunded state mandates on local government and public education bodies and/or require permanent funding (direct funding and/or grants) for those mandates and any new mandates imposed on those entities.
- Oppose additional property tax and revenue cap legislation and exclude and exempt economic development incentives from property/revenue tax calculations as related to existing property tax and revenue cap law.
- Allow local economic development corporations flexibility to use restricted use revenue sources (e.g. sale use tax, hotel occupancy tax) on a temporary basis to support city operations, and emergency initiatives during a Disaster Declaration as declared by the Governor of Texas.
- Refine HB2439, returning control to local municipalities to regulate building materials and requirements for residential and commercial enterprises.
- Support a fair and transparent process for appraisals.

General Business

- Support legislation that provides legal liability protections to entities providing services to persons that contract a virus identified in a pandemic national emergency declaration by a US President .
- Support policy and funding for expanded broadband and 5G wireless deployment that induces and/or increases high speed data connectivity to the home in urban, suburban and rural communities.

Economic Development

- Support the reauthorization of Chapter 313 as is, set to sunset December 31, 2022.
- Oppose any efforts to erode or restrict use of current economic development tools including but not limited to economic development sales tax corporations (Type 4A and 4B), tax abatement (Chapter 312), Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, Chapter 380 and 381 agreements, the Freeport Tax Exemption, Hotel Occupancy Tax and Texas Enterprise Zone Program, to name a few.
- Support expansion of 380 and 381 economic development agreements to allow land to be used, transferred, conveyed, or swapped and ensure that Chapter 380 and 381 agreements entered into by local governmental bodies are provided the necessary assurances required to acquire long term financing.
- Support Sugar Land, Richmond and Katy's rights to continue participation in the qualified hotel project program and receive a refund or rebate of various state and local taxes to finance the construction of a qualified hotel project.

Healthcare

- Provide additional autonomy for mid-level health care providers, particularly in rural and underserved communities, to increase access to care and bring down healthcare costs.
- Continue the relaxed regulation environment for telehealth services and advance funding for underserved communities to increase telehealth education and access to the equipment necessary.
- Provide financial incentives for healthcare providers to encourage the incorporation of telehealth services in their practices and institutions to increase access to care and lower healthcare costs.
- Maintain funding levels for mental health services.
- Maintain and fully fund the Medicaid shortfall from 2019.
- Support the maintain funding for a safety net for trauma and rural hospitals.

Education & Workforce

- Fully fund the public-school finance system.
- Delay and/or provide waiver protection for up to two years to public school districts for mandated curriculum enhancement programs and teacher incentive packages to overcome operational issues and the fiscal burden caused by COVID-19.
- Provide sustainable state funding for the programs defined in HB3 in the 86th Legislative Session and provide local discretion to meet the needs of the students, particularly supplementation of the lost revenue from the 2.5 percent cap on valuations, full day Pre-K, and safety, security, and mental health programs.
- Continue to incentivize weighted funding for career and technology pathways.
- Develop a funding calculation to public school districts that includes remote and hybrid learning modalities within the district as a result of COVID-19 and its aftereffects.
- Institute a moratorium on state testing requirements on public schools for the 2020-2021 school year to enable districts to remediate the effects of learning loss caused by COVID-19.
- Provide Tuition Revenue Bonds to the University of Houston (UH) at Sugar Land for a second College of Technology Building, allowing for the entire College of Technology to relocate to UH Sugar Land Campus.
- Provide Tuition Revenue Bonds to Texas State Technical College in Fort Bend County to address additional training lab capacity; and, fully fund TSTC's performance-based financial formula based on job placement and earnings.

Infrastructure

- Oppose eliminating local tolling options.
- Raise or Index the gas tax in Texas to support transportation funding and/or provide enhanced funding or alternative funding for transportation projects.
- Support the development and implementation of a user fee for vehicles using alternative fuels.
- End diversions of the transportation revenues for non-transportation purposes.
- Support and protect the use of Eminent Domain for strategic infrastructure projects that enhance the quality of life for a community.
- Support enhanced funding for freight transportation infrastructure projects to address economic and population growth.
- Support local option fees for road improvements/additions as approved by local authorities.
- Support current weight requirements for vehicles operating on county roads, except for local proposals approved by local authorities.
- Maintain funding and expand eligibility programs to ensure efforts for state flood planning and resiliency.