

**December 8, 2022**

**Item No. 7.3.**

**Presentation and discussion in relation to the Texas A&M Student Senate Community Relations Committee.**

**Sponsor:** Ross Brady, Assistant to the City Manager

**Reviewed By CBC:** City Council

**Agenda Caption:** Presentation and discussion in relation to the Texas A&M Student Senate Community Relations Committee.

**Relationship to Strategic Goals:**

Good Governance

**Recommendation(s):** Staff recommends the Council receive the presentation from the Student Senate representatives.

**Summary:** None.

**Budget & Financial Summary:** None.

**Attachments:**

1. SGA Legislative Priorities



## **A&M Student Government Legislative Priorities**

### **Introduction**

As of Fall 2022, 68,000 students attend Texas A&M in College Station, compared to College Station's population of around 120,000 people. This combination of large size and high population of students is unique among even college-centric towns, requiring innovation and presenting challenges as well as opportunities.

Student Government has compiled this outline of what students really care about and want to see from College Station. We hope that by working together, we can keep making this community better.

### **Middle Housing**

The new zoning district presents an opportunity to give student housing designated places to go. Large portions of Southside and Eastgate have been converted to student housing, many of which violate the four-unrelated occupancy limit. There are a large number of students living in noncompliance, which causes anxiety. City-initiated rezoning for the areas that are already being used as shared housing to Middle Housing reduces the prosecutorial burden on the city, gives students peace, and clarifies what areas are designated to be higher-density walkable communities.

### **Rental Inspections**

We are excited by past Council action on rental inspections, and we hope that you continue to make it a priority. Complaint-based code enforcement is not effective in preventing code violations, as rapid turnover and young renters leads to a lack of accountability for landlords. Proactive rental inspections, just like any other form of consumer protection, are needed as a way to protect students. Rental inspections also improve the quality of the housing stock and incentivize upkeep of units.

### **Culture and Entertainment**

Having a variety of things to do is important to students. Public spaces, cultural events, and entertainment venues all contribute to quality of life and encourage students to connect with the community. Further investment in the arts will help keep students in College Station for the weekends. Preserving the character of Northgate while creating other entertainment options can reduce pressure on the bars.

### **Transportation**

Getting around College Station is extremely difficult. The A&M buses are great for getting to class, but there is limited service on weekends and no connectivity between different parts of town. Making the city more bike-friendly and walkable will reduce congestion and improve

accessibility for residents without cars, especially international students. Clearer communication to residents on areas under construction and detours would also be helpful.

### Economy

Not only do many students work in College Station part-time, many want to stay here after graduation. We are excited by the biotech corridor and new businesses coming to town, but job opportunities for graduates are still very limited, especially in high-tech fields. Diversifying the College Station economy will help retain talented new graduate workforce, as well as provide more skilled internship and part-time job opportunities for students.

### Conclusion

Students represent a large portion of the population and economy of College Station, yet our voice is often absent from local policy conversations. Improving relationships between the student body, the city, and the university will help keep College Station a great place to live, learn, and raise a family.

Thank you for your commitment to students while governing our unique and vibrant city. Please reach out if you have any questions!

In the Aggie Spirit,

Jessica Williams '24  
Community Relations Chair  
[cr.tamusenate@gmail.com](mailto:cr.tamusenate@gmail.com)

Sam Presnal '23  
Vice President for Municipal Affairs  
[samhpresnal@tamu.edu](mailto:samhpresnal@tamu.edu)