

Our Home, Our Decisions Tips

The materials can be used “as is” (after removing slides from the presentation that contain localization suggestions) but the following are some ways cities can localize and use the “Our home, our decisions” materials:

- Develop your own presentation – If you have someone who can edit video, you can add local images and local interview clips to the one provided. You could also add your city’s logo. The PowerPoint presentation can be localized in many ways that are suggested in slides that have been included in the provided presentation. The presentation was prepared on plain, blank slides and you may want to redesign the slide background to make it more attractive and interesting. You could also add your city’s logo to each slide and add or remove animations and transitions.
- Localize it – You may want to replace some or all the photos in the presentation with photos from your city. You can add information about your city budget to bring closer to home the potential impact of state revenue cap proposals, such as:
 - One Texas city has nearly tripled its street maintenance budget in recent years to deal with a backlog of needed street repairs. This may not have been possible if the legislature had imposed revenue caps on cities. You can include examples from your city’s budget that might be affected by revenue caps.
 - During one legislative session when passage of a revenue cap appeared possible, a large county in Texas imposed a temporary moratorium on consideration of new economic development tax incentives. You may want to include examples of local projects that received property tax incentives which may not be possible in the future if the legislature adopts a revenue cap.
 - You may want to include a chart or graph showing what percentage of your city’s budget comes from local revenue sources versus how much, if any, is from the state. The point is that some state officials want to control local funding for city services, but they want no responsibility for providing those services.
 - Using the value of a median priced home in your city, include an example of the percentage and/or dollar amount of the property tax bill that goes to the school district versus the percentage and/or amount that goes to the city. The point is that the city is not the cause of high property taxes.
 - If you have a local school district that is classified as a “property wealthy district” and subject to state recapture, you can include information on how much local tax revenue is sent to the state. This highlights the legislature’s decision to drive up local property to reduce the state’s share of funding schools.
- Schedule presentations – The presentation can be used when city officials are invited to speak to local organizations or you may want to arrange meetings and invite organizations and citizens to attend. People who are already actively engaged in civic affairs are most likely to have an interest in the presentation. Examples include:
 - Business and economic groups such Chambers of Commerce, downtown development organizations, economic development organizations and local associations of retailers, manufacturers, restaurants, builders, etc.

- Professional and trade groups such as local labor organizations and local associations of Realtors, attorneys, medical professions, architects, engineers, educators, accountants, etc.
 - Local fraternal, social and charitable service organizations.
 - Neighborhood councils and associations.
 - Members of city boards and committees.
- Presenting the information – One or more individuals can be designated to rehearse and deliver the presentation who is knowledgeable about city operations and who can answer questions from the audience. You can prepare and distribute handouts that list additional sources of information about the city, the budget, city services and how citizens can get involved.