

City of Socorro, Texas

PRESS RELEASE

FEBRUARY 6TH, 2026

Rudy Cruz Jr. **Ruben Reyes**
Mayor At-Large Representative

Cesar Nevarez
District 1 Representative

Alejandro Garcia
District 2 Representative

Gina Cordero
District 3 Representative
Mayor ProTem

Irene Rojas
District 4 Representative

Adriana Rodarte
City Manager

CITY OF SOCORRO - PUBLIC UPDATE: PROPOSED FEDERAL DETENTION FACILITY

For Immediate Release: CITY OF SOCORRO – PUBLIC STATEMENT

Regarding the Proposed Federal Detention Facility and Upcoming City Action.

The City of Socorro understands the deep concern many residents have expressed regarding the proposed immigration detention facility within our community. Transparency, public safety, and clear communication are priorities for City leadership, and we want to provide the public with accurate information about what has occurred, the limits of local authority, and the actions the City is taking.

How the Property Was Purchased

Publicly recorded documents filed with the El Paso County Clerk confirm that the United States Department of Homeland Security purchased multiple parcels of privately owned land within the Eastwind Industrial subdivision located inside the City of Socorro. The transaction occurred between the federal government and a private property owner and was recorded in February 2026.

The City of Socorro was not a party to this sale, did not approve the transaction, and does not have authority to prevent the federal government from purchasing private property within city limits.

Local Government Authority vs. Federal Authority

Under federal law and the U.S. Constitution:

- Cities cannot prohibit the federal government from purchasing land.
- Cities cannot impose taxes or fees on facilities owned and directly operated by the federal government.
- Certain land-use controls may be preempted when a federal facility is involved.

These limits are real, but they do not mean the City has no role or no tools.

What the City of Socorro Can Do

The City of Socorro retains authority to:

- Protect public health, safety, and welfare
- Require compliance with applicable fire, life-safety, and emergency response standards
- Coordinate with El Paso County Emergency Services District No. 2 regarding fire protection and emergency readiness
- Advocate for adequate infrastructure, including water capacity, access, and emergency response planning
- Regulate and impose cost-recovery fees on private entities, where permitted by Texas law

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Upcoming Special City Council Meeting

To ensure transparency and allow public participation, the City of Socorro is preparing to call a Special City Council Meeting on:

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Socorro City Hall - Council Chambers
860 N Rio Vista Rd, El Paso, TX 79927

At this meeting, City Council will consider the introduction and first reading of an ordinance establishing fees applicable to private contractors that operate detention facilities within the City, where allowed by law.

This ordinance would not impose fees on the federal government, but would address the costs associated with police, fire, emergency medical, inspection, and administrative services when facilities are privately operated.

The purpose of this action is to ensure that the financial burden of providing essential municipal services is not shifted onto Socorro residents.

Current Actions Being Taken by the City

In addition to the proposed ordinance, the City of Socorro is:

- Working closely with El Paso County, Lower Valley Water District and El Paso County Emergency Services District No. 2 on fire and life-safety oversight, consistent with concerns raised by state leadership regarding the heightened risks of detention facilities
- Coordinating with state and federal officials to demand transparency and accountability
- Reviewing all available municipal authority related to inspections, emergency planning, and operational compliance
- Committing to continued public updates and open meetings

Moving Forward

The City of Socorro remains committed to:

- Opposing any development that places residents or detained individuals at risk
- Using every lawful tool available to protect public safety
- Working with local, state, and federal partners while firmly advocating for our community
- Keeping residents informed and engaged throughout this process

We encourage residents to attend the upcoming special meeting, participate in public comment, and stay informed through official City communications.