



2020 Local Public Policy Platform



A cornerstone of our success as a community has been the quality of life that is so important to those who live and work here. The Chamber supports maintaining the elements contributing to that quality of life (e.g.; public education; public safety; parks, recreation, arts, culture and entertainment; roads and transportation; housing; and access to healthcare and mental health services). We encourage regularly assessing the continued availability of those elements as well as the evolution of the characteristics of a desirable quality of life, and we believe that the optimal way to accomplish that assessment and preservation is through the efforts of a local government most close to the people and comprised of officials elected through non-partisan elections. We also recognize the value contributed by the strong history of partnerships between our local government and business community and pledge to work to continue and strengthen those relationships.

EDUCATION

The Chamber has long-supported our excellent public schools as a critical element in developing and maintaining a high-quality workforce that fosters jobs and economic prosperity. We encourage proactive collaboration among our area's public schools and institutions of higher education and skilled trades training, businesses and local government to provide innovative opportunities for workforce development and job skills training, including real-world exposure to various careers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber believes exceptional planning and development leads to positive and quality economic growth and fosters increased property values and quality of life. Collaboration between the business community and the city, together with clear, consistent guidelines are essential for timely movement through the development process.

The Chamber supports providing necessary resources, including additional city staff, commensurate with demand for timely processing of requests for development review and permitting. Strengthening the relationship with the business community and customer service are keys to economic growth and development. The Chamber suggests implementing an anonymous customer feedback process for those involved in commercial and residential development.

We acknowledge Overland Park's current lack of available Class A office space as well as large blocks of office space. A related issue is the increasing demand for, and lack of, adequate parking to serve office developments driven by contemporary office space layouts accommodating more workers in the same amount of square footage, particularly in

suburban office development. This issue arises in both new construction and redevelopment of existing space.

The Chamber recognizes the importance of both green field and redevelopment approaches to increase available office space and urges reevaluation of traditional parking ratios and solutions. We support innovative policies, including targeted incentives, to foster development of new Class A office space and encourage redevelopment of existing aging office space.

FORWARD OP

The Chamber supports the vision of Forward OP calling for our community to "lead as a forward-thinking, innovative and welcoming community." We believe the Forward OP plan that resulted from significant citizen input and thoughtful strategic planning creates a roadmap for the continued growth and success of our community.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Tourism generates more than \$800 million annually in direct spending alone to the economy in Overland Park, generating \$83.5 million in state and local tax revenue or \$1,090 per Overland Park household. The Chamber recognizes "corporate tourism" is, in fact, the largest contributor to this revenue and encourages increasing that high income-producing segment of corporate visitors and leisure-related travelers to Overland Park for pleasure and related leisure activities. The Chamber also encourages identifying additional retail, restaurant, and entertainment opportunities to attract visitors to the city, as well as appropriate public/private partnerships that encourage development.

The Chamber supports a county-wide public vote authorizing the removal of the current 30% food requirement for sales of liquor by the drink.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

City Hall – The Chamber supports exploring viable options for relocation and construction of a new city hall. The new city hall should be centrally and conveniently located and incorporate appropriate facilities and technology for public meetings as well as offices for city staff and officials, including future growth.

Technology and Cyber Security – The Chamber supports continued investment to improve the city's technology infrastructure to make Overland Park a smart and connected city.

The Chamber also supports continued efforts, processes and other cyber security measures to protect public and publicly accessible computers and computer networks, programs and data from unauthorized access and damage.

NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE

The Overland Park Chamber of Commerce believes discrimination has no place in Overland Park. ForwardOP's vision is that we will lead as a forward-thinking, innovative and welcoming community.

We are pleased the City has adopted an ordinance extending protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We are aware that actions at the state and federal level – including actions by the United States Supreme Court – could impact the City's ordinance. We urge the City to adapt its ordinance – as appropriate – based on legal rulings and legislative activity at the state and federal levels to ensure City's ordinance remains true to the original intent of providing equality for all Kansans.

PUBLIC WELFARE

The Chamber supports continued emphasis on and investment in providing a superior level of professional services responsive to the safety and well-being needs of our residents and visitors, including policy, fire and other first responder services.

The Chamber supports continued participation in programs that foster and promote availability of and access to health care and mental health and other related services, such as the Human Service Fund, the Alcohol Tax Fund, the Mental Health Co-Responder Program and the Intergovernmental Police Academy.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber encourages intentional, well-planned and varied residential development, including necessary infrastructure and other support facilities, including single family neighborhoods and multi-family housing, with a particular focus on options that attract young professionals and families. We encourage exploring policies and programs that improves the availability of an appropriate mix, supply and varied pricing of housing to attract, retain and better meet the needs and demands of our current and future workforce. Appropriate incentives and public/private partnerships that expedite this development should be considered.

SIGN CODE

The Chamber encourages the prompt completion of the review of sign code and implementation of recommendations to ensure that the code is up-to-date and business friendly.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Chamber supports a regional sustainable growth strategy that over time achieves a balance among the environment, economic growth and quality of life. We support inclusive, broad-based planning processes such as Vision

Metcalf, ForwardOP and the College and Metcalf Corridor Study as important means by which to achieve these goals. Environmental policies and regulations should not unnecessarily or unreasonably increase administrative burdens or become cost prohibitive to business.

TAXATION

The Chamber recognizes and applauds city government, both elected officials and staff, for its careful and good stewardship of its tax revenues that has resulted in Overland Park having the lowest city mill levy of any Kansas first class city. We support maintaining a fiscally responsible, competitive and stable local tax structure that will continue to generate funds sufficient provide those essential government services and amenities that are critical to business attraction, growth and retention, including the many quality of life offerings important to business and residents.

TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Chamber supports public access to meetings of the City Council, Committee of the Whole and other Council committees, and the Planning Commission through readily available live-streaming of those meetings, including a searchable video feature of the archived broadcast. The Chamber believes that the benefits of such availability are appropriately measured not just by the hard numbers of viewers, particularly in the early stage of such a program, but more importantly by the state-of-the-art image and good will generated.

The Chamber supports the addition of public comment periods at City Council meetings that balances public access with reasonable restrictions regarding time limits and topics.

TRANSPORTATION

Public transit – Support local and regional options for serving workforce transportation needs, including public/private partnerships for getting people to and from home and work as well as a means for access to healthcare and other basic services.

Regional – Reexamine and update the MARC regional transportation plan, with particular attention to the priority rankings for roadway projects vital to improving regional transportation safety, relieving traffic congestion and promoting economic development, including accelerating the schedule for expansion of the US 69 corridor.

Strategic Planning – Support efforts to strategically plan for existing and emerging transportation opportunities and needs, such as those posed by Autonomous, Connected, Electric and Shared Use Vehicles (ACES), that may significantly alter the safety, quality of life and economic vitality enjoyed locally and statewide.

Comprehensive Transportation Funding – Supports studying and advancing for consideration as appropriate local, regional and state funding mechanisms for adequately addressing existing and emerging transportation opportunities and needs, particularly those presenting demonstrable economic development benefits for the local and state economies.

For more information:

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