



OP Chamber.™ 2024

Local Public Policy Platform

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chamber supports non-partisan elections and believes civility should be one of the cornerstones of our democratic process. We encourage candidates, their committees, and their parties to respect the intent of non-partisan elections. The Chamber applauds the dedication of state and county election officials, values the procedures in place to safeguard elections and respects the validity of our election outcomes.

We encourage regularly assessing the continued availability of the elements that contribute to our exceptional quality of life and we believe that the optimal way to accomplish that assessment and preservation is through the efforts of a local government closest to the people. The Chamber believes civil, constructive discussion focused on solutions yields a productive, effective democracy.

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 AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber has long supported our excellent K-12 public schools and post-secondary institutions as a critical element in developing and maintaining a high-quality workforce that fosters jobs and economic prosperity. We acknowledge that our schools face numerous challenges impacting student success and commit to working with our schools to ensure all students are well-prepared to succeed. We encourage proactive collaboration among our area's public schools and institutions of higher education and skilled trades, businesses, and local government to provide innovative opportunities for workforce development and job skills training, including real-world exposure to various careers through internships, externships, apprenticeships, and other meaningful opportunities.

The Chamber believes all students should have access to reliable high-speed internet connections and appropriate digital devices in order to have reliable access to resources that support training and learning opportunities.

Access to childcare continues to be a barrier to employment for many residents. The Chamber encourages the City of Overland Park and Johnson County, in cooperation with employers and other community partners, to consider innovative strategies that lead to increased access to safe, reliable and affordable childcare. The Chamber encourages all units of government to coordinate requirements impacting childcare to minimize barriers to service delivery.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber believes exceptional planning and development leads to positive and quality economic growth, job growth and job retention that fosters strong property values and quality of life. Collaboration between the business community and the city, together with clear, consistent guidelines, is 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 recognizes the importance of both green field and redevelopment approaches to increase available high quality office space. We support innovative policies that assist Overland Park in competing in a global marketplace including targeted incentives to foster long-term development of new high-quality office space and developments, encouraging redevelopment of existing aging commercial space, and promoting enhancements to our quality of life consistent with the principles of Forward OP, Vision Metcalf and similar initiatives.

The Chamber supports the City of Overland Park's Comprehensive Plan Update in which the city will consider the plan's alignment with Forward OP and other community plans such as the Johnson County Housing Study, the Mid America Regional Council's Climate Action Plan and the recommendations of the Infrastructure Advisory Group. We believe the process should include significant input from the community and carefully balance needs throughout the city while being mindful of budgetary impacts.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

The Chamber supports intentional placemaking as an economic development approach which includes strategic considerations of new development, leveraging existing city infrastructure and assets, and connecting residents to a shared community identity to make Overland Park a more engaging place to live, work and visit. Intentional placemaking should be holistic in approach, incorporate new and innovative developments, forge partnerships between the city and developers, and create unique community features providing value to residents and visitors.

The Chamber supports initiatives that advance Overland Park's regional and national competitiveness as a destination for corporate, leisure, group, and sports markets. The Chamber also advocates replenishing Overland Park's hotel capacity and encourages future hotel and venue development. The Chamber supports workforce programs that assist with the recruitment, training and retention of workers within the tourism industry.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Robust and reliable infrastructure, including but not limited to transportation, communications, technology, utilities and community amenities, is critical to the continued success of the City and County and the Chamber encourages ongoing evaluation and investment in the area's infrastructure.

The Chamber believes it is important for the City Council, professional staff, and community to continue to carefully consider the recommendations of the Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG) as part

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The Overland Park Chamber is the bold voice for business – the resource, advocate, convener and changemaker – that drives economic success forward in our city, county and state.

of a long-term, comprehensive approach to maintaining existing infrastructure while proactively investing in new projects to keep pace with the City's growth.

The Chamber supported and advocated for the passage of the 3/8th-cent sales tax dedicated to supporting infrastructure. The Chamber believes annual tracking and accountability of the revenues received and expenditures are critical to the goals established by the IAG. Additionally, the Chamber believes that the other funding recommendations included in the (IAG) Recommendations Report should be fully vetted in order to assess the impact on businesses and residences of Overland Park.

The Chamber supports continued investment to improve the city's and county's technology infrastructure to make both smart and connected, increasing availability, speed, and access to broadband across the region.

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.

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 of our residents and visitors, including police, fire and other first responder and co-responder services.

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

QUALITY OF LIFE

A cornerstone of our success as a community has been the quality of life that is valued by those of all ages and stages who live and work here. The Chamber supports maintaining the elements contributing to that quality of life including public education, public safety, parks, recreation, arts, culture, civic engagement, charitable and community service, entertainment, roads and transportation, housing and access to health care and mental health services.

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.

The Overland Park Farmer's Market is a tremendous asset for our community providing opportunities to connect local agricultural producers with area residents. The Chamber believes Downtown Overland Park serves as a fitting location for this asset and we support ongoing efforts to expand and modernize the location to enhance the success of the market.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber encourages intentional, well-planned, varied, and attainable residential development, including necessary infrastructure and other support facilities, including single-family neighborhoods and multi-family housing, with a focus on options that attract young professionals and families. We encourage exploring policies and programs that improve 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 and residents of all ages. Appropriate incentives and public/private partnerships that expedite this development and redevelopment should be considered.

REGULATIONS

The Chamber encourages a thorough review of regulations impacting the business community with an emphasis on reducing regula-

tory burdens (for example, signage and sidewalk dining) that restrict businesses.

The Chamber encourages the City of Overland Park to carefully assess the impact of new building codes and infrastructure standards, including weighing potential benefits against the impact of these new standards on short-term and long-term housing costs.

The Chamber further encourages the City and County to streamline the approval process for commercial development applications and proposals for acceptable deviations.

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 to 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.

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. The Chamber recognizes that public transit can improve safety and provide economic and environmental benefits for the community. The Chamber also recognizes that public transportation supports "aging in place" and is a valuable asset that will assist in supporting an aging population wishing to remain active in our community.

Regional – Support the implementation of the regional Connected KC 2050 Transportation Plan with emphasis on projects that enhance transportation routes within Overland Park and Johnson County.

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 – Support 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 local and state economies.

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