



2020-2021 Local Public Policy Platform

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.

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 acknowledge that our schools face numerous challenges impacting student success and commit to work 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 training, businesses and local government to provide innovative opportunities for workforce development and job skills training, including real-world exposure to various careers through internships and other meaningful opportunities.

The recent pandemic has shown the need to be prepared for different methods of delivering high-quality education to ensure our students achieve at the highest levels. 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 online learning opportunities.

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 recognizes the importance of both green field and redevelopment approaches to increase available office space and urge 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 commercial space.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

The Chamber supports adoption by the voters of Johnson County a ballot question that would allow for the sale of alcoholic liquor by the individual drink in public places without a requirement that a portion of the establishment's gross receipts be derived from the sale of food.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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 most close to the people.

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.

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.

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.

QUALITY OF LIFE

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 including public education; public safety; parks, recreation, arts, culture and entertainment; roads and transportation; housing; and access to healthcare 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.

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.

REGULATIONS

The Chamber encourages a thorough review of regulations impacting the business community with an emphasis on reducing regulatory burdens (for example, signage and sidewalk dining) that restrict businesses generally and as they

recover from the economic impact of the pandemic. 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 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.

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 – 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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