

OP Chamber. 2026 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 digital devices with appropriate oversight 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.

The Chamber supports our local institutions of education from K-12 to higher education, including those comprising the Johnson County Education Research Triangle (JCERT), and believes continuing local administration and oversight of these entities is critical to the future economic success of our region.

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 collaboration between city staff and the business community and promoting extraordinary customer service are key 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 Framework OP, Forward OP, Vision Metcalf and similar initiatives.

As work continues to develop an updated Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the Chamber encourages the adoption of an updated UDO by the City of Overland Park that is pro-business and pro-economic growth, consistent with the vision outlined in Framework OP. This includes carefully evaluating the planning and permitting process, in collaboration with the business community, to identify and streamline procedures that increase efficiency and ultimately reduce prices.

Provisions of the updated UDO should continue to support alignment with Forward OP, the Johnson County Housing Study, the Mid-America Regional Council's Climate Action Plan, and recommendations from the city's Infrastructure Advisory Group.

The Chamber supports the City of Overland Park adopting language in its Uniform Development Ordinance suspending time limitation provisions in land use applications and approvals if litigation is commenced against the city related to an application or approval.

The Chamber encourages the City of Overland Park to execute strategies that will inform residents of the new UDO, the potential impact the UDO has on future development, and how the UDO will be utilized to determine future planning decisions.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

The Chamber supports intentional placemaking as an economic development approach that 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.

The 2026 World Cup presents an unparalleled opportunity for the City of Overland Park and Johnson County to showcase the region to the world. The Chamber believes the city and county, with input from the private sector, should be prepared with a comprehensive action plan and appropriate funding to ensure Overland Park and Johnson County are prepared to address the impact that visitors will place on our infrastructure, public health and safety resources.

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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.

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 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 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.

The Chamber believes that emergency and non-critical patient transport is essential for a comprehensive, high-quality system of care expected by the residents of Overland Park. Johnson County MedAct is a major component of the region's healthcare system and, as such, should be adequately staffed, equipped and funded to provide superior emergency and non-emergency care and transport to the most appropriate medical providers in the metropolitan region.

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.

The Chamber supports a comprehensive, countywide approach to addressing the year-round needs of the unsheltered within Johnson County and urges the use of public/private partnerships to develop and maintain viable, long-term solutions that meet demand.

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

The Chamber supports the city's long-range planning efforts to address current and future outdoor recreational needs, including our parks, trails and community centers.

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.

Sustainable economic growth requires a variety of housing solutions that are accessible to all socio-economic levels. 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 part-

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

The Chamber encourages the City of Overland Park to carefully evaluate the impact of new building codes and infrastructure standards, including comparing the potential benefits to the effects these changes may have on short-term and long-term construction and development costs, particularly with regard to the impact on attainable housing efforts.

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 Framework OP, 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 / BUDGET / FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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.

The Chamber encourages local units of government to exercise increased fiscal management and accountability as local unit budgets continue to increase.

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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