



# 2021 Legislative Priorities

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Dear Reader:

The Governing Body of the City of Mission annually adopts a state legislative platform to present Mission's legislative initiatives and policy positions.

The cornerstone of the legislative program is the belief that the governing of public affairs should be as close to the people as possible. Supporting activities that promote and encourage the exercise of authority and responsibility by locally elected officials is a top priority of the City of Mission. This belief is exemplified in local home rule authority, an amendment to the Kansas Constitution that was approved by the citizens of the state over half a century ago.

Generally, the City of Mission supports the Statement of Municipal Policy of the League of Kansas Municipalities and the legislative agenda of Johnson County, Kansas. The City Council works cooperatively each year with the League and other cities to enhance the mutual benefits of Kansas cities.

If you have any questions concerning the 2021 Legislative Program, please, do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the City Council.

Sincerely,

Ron Appletoft  
Mayor

## **Governing Body**

### **Mayor**

Ron Appletoft

### **Ward I**

Trent Boultinghouse  
Hillary Parker Thomas

### **Ward II**

Nick Schlossmacher  
Arcie Rothrock

### **Ward III**

Kristin Inman  
Debbie Kring

### **Ward IV**

Sollie Flora  
Ken Davis



## 2021 Legislative Priorities

*State and municipal governments work together to provide citizens with many services they require and have come to expect. This partnership is dependent upon stable funding, decision-making at the appropriate level, and removing barriers to efficient and effective access to services. The City of Mission understands our citizens' needs and is equipped to respond to them effectively and efficiently. While we respect the State government's role, we continue to advocate for the protection of home rule authority to ensure citizens' needs are met. We support the preservation of local authority, maintenance of local control of local revenue and spending, and oppose the devolution of State duties to local units of government without planning, time and resources. The City of Mission has established the following as our legislative priorities for the upcoming session and advocates in the interests of our elected representatives and on behalf of those who live and work in our community.*

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### **Finance and Taxation**

#### **Alternative Property Valuation**

The City supports appraisals based on fair market value as historically used in Kansas and opposes caps in property valuations as unconstitutional and inequitable.

#### **Internet Sales Tax Collections**

The inability of governments to collect local option sales or compensating use tax on remote sales continues to erode a fair and viable revenue source. Mission supports any state legislation that assists in collecting state and local sales and compensating use taxes due from in-state purchasers, to include short-term rental companies. Remitted taxes should be distributed using existing methods/formulas for the state and local governments. Mission further supports the adoption of the safe harbor provisions based on the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc. et al.*, 138 S. Ct. 2080 (2018) in order to bring tax fairness to Kansas brick-and-mortar businesses.

#### **Repeal the Property Tax Lid and Maintain Local Control Over Revenue and Spending**

The City of Mission opposes actions by the state to impose constitutional or statutory limits on the authority of local governments to establish appropriate levels of taxation. Discretion and flexibility are important components of responsible and effective fiscal management, ensuring that local elected leaders can respond appropriately to the priorities of their constituents. Arbitrary caps on taxing and spending limits restricts that ability. Any additional transparency measures should not be burdensome or costly.

## **Tax Policy**

The City supports stable revenues, and urges the Legislature to avoid applying any further limitations to the ad valorem property tax base, including exceptions for specific business entities or the state/local sales tax base, as well as industry-specific, special tax treatment through exemptions or property classification. We do not support changes in State taxation policy that would narrow the tax base, significantly reduce available funding for key programs, or put Kansas counties and cities at a competitive sales tax disadvantage with Missouri. We do not support a sales tax on professional services. We support the state's thoughtful consideration of reductions in sales tax on food and pharmaceuticals, while balancing the impact on, and obligations of, local units of government across the state. Changes to tax policies should not be undertaken without a full understanding of the overall impact upon all taxpayers, taxing entities, and the sources and amounts of tax revenues to be generated or eliminated by such policy changes. Sales tax exemptions should be limited to those for which the benefit outweighs the tax dollars lost.

### **Retain the Local Government Sales Tax Exemption**

Mission supports the current law that exempts local government and public construction projects from sales tax. Imposing sales tax on current government purchases and projects will have only one effect: increased local taxation. Only the State government benefits from this sales tax and our citizens would pay the bill through higher property taxes.

### **Support Maintenance of State Funding**

The issue of maintaining local government revenues is a prime concern for Mission. State transfers to local government have significantly been reduced or eliminated over the last ten to fifteen years. Mission urges for the preservation of local government revenues which pass through the State's treasury. These funds come from a longstanding partnership between local governments and the State and are generated via economic activity at the local level. Both alcoholic liquor tax funds and the local portion of motor fuel tax are critical to local service delivery with uses limited to appropriate statutory purposes, and should not be withheld from local governments.

## **Government Policies and Procedures**

### **Constitutional Home Rule**

The City of Mission strongly oppose any alternations or limits to home rule authority and we support the full control and authority over those matters which are granted to municipalities by the Kansas Constitution.

### **Redevelopment and Reinvestment in Cities**

Mission supports current state statutes that provide the local jurisdiction with authority both in determining how and when to use existing economic development tools and in creating new incentive programs to meet community goals. These goals are identified and supported through land-use planning, infrastructure allocation, and financial incentive tools that local communities and stakeholders develop through ongoing communication and prioritization. Each economic development or redevelopment project is unique, and may not be possible without the availability of these tools or the authority to use them. Tools such as Tax Increment Financing

(TIF), the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, the Downtown Redevelopment Act, the Transportation Development District Act and the Community Improvement District Act should be maintained with maximum flexibility and allow for efficient use by communities.

### **Open Records and Open Meetings**

We believe that an open government is essential to building public confidence, and that all levels of government should be subject to the same open meeting and open records requirements. State laws governing open records should balance the public's right of access with the necessity of protecting the privacy of individual citizens, the costs of producing requested records, and the ability of public agencies to conduct their essential business functions.

### **Preserve the Ability to Advocate and Educate**

The City supports local officials and their representatives' ability to freely participate in the legislative process to advocate and educate on issues affecting local governments. Representatives from cities provide facts and information crucial to intergovernmental relations, and as such, should have the same rights as private interest lobbyists. We should not be restricted on the use of public funds to accomplish this purpose. Local officials, representing their citizens and taxpayers, must retain the authority to make decisions regarding membership in organizations and to participate in the legislative process without cumbersome reporting requirements.

### **Maintain Non-Partisan Local Elections**

The City supports local elections remaining separate from state and national elections. Additionally, we are opposed to any legislation that would require local elections to be conducted with partisan identification.

### **Restore Local Gun Control**

The City of Mission supports the regulation of firearms and weapons at the state or local level, but we believe that local government should have the ability to regulate and enforce the possession and use of weapons within city-owned facilities, including City Hall, public parks, the outdoor pool, community center and City vehicles. The City also supports the ability of local governments to set policies regarding the carrying of weapons and firearms by their employees while they are engaged in the course of their employment. Absent any return to local control, Mission supports state restoration of concealed carry training, permitting and background checks, to be required for any individual who desires to conceal a firearm on their person.

## **Education**

### **K-12 Education Financing**

As the State legislature continues to refine a funding formula, Mission requests the State fund special education at the required statutory levels and we support a fair and equitable plan that provides for the quality of education our residents expect.

## **Public Employees**

### **Support Full Funding of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System**

The City supports achieving a fully-funded public employees' retirement system within a reasonable period of time. The State should fully fund its portion of the employer contributions at the Actuarial Required Contribution (ARC) levels and at the required times. The system should accumulate sufficient assets during members' working lifetimes to pay all promised benefits when members retire. Changes to the KPERS system should not impact a city's ability to hire and retain qualified public employees, particularly in competitive employment markets.

## **Environment and Energy**

### **Alternative Energy Sources**

As a traditional agricultural leader and a state with tremendous natural resources, Kansas is positioned to be a forerunner in renewable energy production. The City supports the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and encourages the Kansas Legislature to provide incentives for such energy sources that protect air quality and reduce dependence on oil. More specifically, the City supports policies which allow and encourage homeowners and businesses to utilize and invest in alternative energy rather than imposing fees or additional barriers which result in discouraging investment that can save residents and businesses money.

### **Energy Efficiency**

Energy efficiency saves money, drives investment across all sectors of the economy, creates jobs, and reduces the environmental impact of energy use. Accordingly, the City supports public and private incentives to encourage energy efficiency by local governments and citizens.

### **Statewide Energy Policy/Plan**

We support the development of a coordinated and comprehensive energy policy/plan, including the use of renewables, developed with strong input from cities. Further we support the establishment of a statewide Energy Office to support the development and implementation of statewide energy policies. Further, we support creative and cooperative implementation of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies that are environmentally sustainable and economically successful.

### **Recognition of Financial Risks Posed by Climate Change**

We recognize that climate change is an increasing threat to Kansans' health, safety and prosperity. The ongoing climate crisis poses a substantial financial risk to cities that demands coordinated action at all levels of government. Mission supports state investment in and commitment to decarbonize our electricity, transportation, agriculture and buildings sectors, so that Kansas can build community resilience and mitigate the financial impacts of climate change on cities

## **Innovative Green Technologies**

The City would like to encourage the state to investigate and adopt innovative green technologies to drawdown greenhouse gas emissions and/or sequester carbon dioxide including for example carbon dioxide mineralized concrete and photocatalytic concrete technology.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Comprehensive Transportation Plan**

Mission supports full funding of the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program. We oppose any use of these funds to balance the state's General Fund budget, and any reduction in funding that jeopardizes existing programs.

### **Electric Charging Station Infrastructure**

We support the expansion of electric charging station infrastructure throughout the state in order to increase the pace of electric vehicle adoption and positively impact local communities. WE support a change to allow sales of electricity at EV charging stations and for EV charging stations to not be classified as regulated utilities.

### **Transportation Maintenance**

Because transportation infrastructure is critical to state and local development activities, Mission supports the continued maintenance of the transportation infrastructure in Kansas. We further support continued funding for multimodal transportation networks, including for mass transit, biking and walking infrastructure.

### **Infrastructure Funding**

The City of Mission supports increased federal and state funding to assist local communities with their water and storm water infrastructure and any associated security needs.

### **Building Codes**

Mission opposes any measures to preempt local building energy codes with respect to prohibiting the incentivization or requirement of net zero or net zero-ready buildings.

## **Human Services**

### **Investment in the Social Safety Net**

The City supports restoring funding to social services programs that provide a safety net for the most vulnerable in our communities, including without limitation those focusing on promoting child welfare and mental health services. Continued support for these programs at the state level is imperative in order to keep our communities safe, productive, and vibrant, and can aid in preventing more substantial costs in the future.

## **Mental Health**

Mental health is a critical component of the public safety and health of Mission's residents and all residents of the state of Kansas. Access to quality mental health services and an increasing need for these services is a growing concern of the City. The City supports increased funding for programs and services to provide enhanced training and support for police and fire departments; for public safety co-responder programs; to provide increased services to youth, for community mental health centers; and for state psychiatric hospitals. Mission advocates for the ability to establish public/private partnerships to increase provision of and access to mental health services and removing from the property tax lid the ability to fund mental health services and programs at the local level.

## **Medicaid Expansion**

The City supports the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. Accordingly, we anticipate that statewide expansion of Medicaid will assist uninsured City residents in obtaining needed medical insurance and services.

## **Housing Needs**

Mission supports the continued funding and promotion of affordable housing options. Accessibility to such housing stock is important to job growth and economic success in communities.

In addition, we support the repeal of 2016 legislation curtailing local control over inclusionary zoning policies and rental property licensing programs regulating interior inspections. Local officials, who are tasked with the responsibility to develop and maintain safe, sustainable cities and counties, should have the flexibility to address the need for affordable, varied types of housing as integral components of both their economic development and public safety duties.

## **Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment**

We support increased funding for proven state tobacco prevention programs to improve the State's "F" grade by the American Lung Association. We also support criminal justice reform measures targeted toward the treatment of drug use as a health issue, not a criminal one.

## **Other**

### **Promotion of Equity and Equality**

Mission supports comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that offers protections to every person in the state of Kansas without regard to age, race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, military status, sexual orientation or gender identity. We continue to support and encourage statewide efforts like the formation of the Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice to help advance racial equity in our local communities.

### **Increase in Tobacco Sales Tax**

With the Kansas cigarette sales tax rate well-below the national average, the City supports a statewide increase in the tobacco sales tax as a deterrent to tobacco use.

## **Legalization of Marijuana**

The City supports legalization of marijuana in Kansas. At a minimum, the State should adopt legalization of medical marijuana which should be subject to existing state and local sales tax and cities should be able to levy their own excise fees and receive a portion of any state funds to offset the impact of medical marijuana. City should have the ability to opt-in to allowing dispensaries in their City

## **Municipal Court**

The City supports increased use of audio-visual technology to allow greater flexibility and access to the judicial system when the local jurisdiction is operating under a declared state of emergency or other situation which poses increased public health risks for patrons or staff.

## **Pandemic Response and Recovery**

We support state policies and funding in response to the current pandemic and eventually recovery that effectively balance state and local relations in the best interest of protecting the public health, preserving community and promoting safe economic recovery and growth. Any changes to the Kansas Emergency Management Act should balance city and county authority and additionally should clarify enforcement and sanctions related to public health violations. Long-term federal and state assistance whether financial, resources, access to vaccination, recovery, and redevelopment should all be grounded through local government input and flexible to local government needs.