



2024 Legislative Priorities

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December 20, 2023

Dear Reader:

The Governing Body of the City of Mission annually adopts a state legislative program to communicate Mission’s legislative initiatives and policy positions in a manner that is reflective of Council priorities and values, including diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and investment in infrastructure, both physical and human.

The cornerstone of the City’s legislative program is the belief that public affairs should be governed 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.

Generally, and when not inconsistent with Mission’s stated priorities, we support the Statement of Municipal Policy of the League of Kansas Municipalities. The City Council works cooperatively each year with the League and other cities for the shared benefit of Kansas cities.

If you have questions concerning the 2024 Legislative Program, please, do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the Governing Body.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sollie Flora".

Sollie Flora
Mayor

Governing Body

Mayor

Sollie Flora

Ward I

Trent Boultinghouse
Hillary Parker Thomas

Ward II

Lea Loudon
Mary Ryherd

Ward III

Debbie Kring
Brian Schmid

Ward IV

Ben Chociejski
Cheryl Carpenter-Davis



2024 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 and protections for 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 identify. 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 support the preservation of local authority, local control of 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.

Finance and Taxation

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. We oppose arbitrary caps on taxing and spending limits that restrict that ability. Transparency measures should not be burdensome, costly, or punitive.

Tax & Appraisal 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. As a result of state tax policy changes, local governments have been increasingly pressured to rely on residential property taxes. 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 urge the Legislature to be cautious when pursuing policy changes related to assessed valuation, and do not believe an artificial cap is the best way to provide long-term, equitable relief to Kansas homeowners and taxpayers.

Sales Tax & Exemptions

Cities should continue to retain voter-approved local sales tax allocations. The Legislature is granted authority to make decisions relating to statewide sales tax. Local voters vote on and are granted authority to make decisions regarding local sales taxes. Any sales tax exemptions considered by the Legislature should only apply to the state portion of sales tax and not eliminate voter approved local sales taxes.

Statutory Pass-Through Funding

The City supports the preservation and funding of local government revenues which pass through the State's treasury including Local Ad Valorem Property Tax Reduction (LAVTRF), City County Revenue Sharing (CCRS), alcoholic liquor funds and the local portion of motor fuel tax to local governments.

Government Policies and Procedures

Home Rule Authority

The City of Mission supports the retention and strengthening of local home rule authority to allow locally elected officials to conduct the business of the City in a manner that best reflects the values and standards of their constituents. This includes matters dealing with public health and safety, such as local health orders and rental inspections, and the ability to govern possession of firearms in public spaces in the interest of community safety.

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 further support State efforts to encourage racial equity and promote diversity.

Abandoned and Blighted Properties

Mission supports streamlining and expediting the process for local governments, neighborhood organizations and private businesses to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance, foreclosed housing, and commercial structures to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners. Cities should continue to retain the ability to manage vacant property registry programs to counter blight.

Housing-Rental Inspections

Cities should be provided the authority to require inspections of rental housing for the safety of tenants and to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners.

Non-Partisan Local Elections

The City supports non-partisan local elections and further supports local elections remaining separate from state and national elections. We oppose any legislation that would require local elections to be conducted with partisan identification.

Firearm Safety

We strongly believe the ability to govern how firearms are possessed or transported throughout our community is a matter of local control. 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. We urge State legislators to amend K.S.A. 75-7c which currently restricts local government from enacting important firearm safety measures in their communities.

Education

K-12 Education Financing

Mission is supportive of the Kansas Legislature adequately and equitably funding primary and secondary education to a level that places Kansas among the leading states in support of a world class education and strongly encourages the State to fund special education at the statutorily required ninety-two percent of excess costs. Mission also believes public funding for education is for the public schools, not for non-public schools or homeschooling.

Environment and Energy

Addressing the Climate Crisis as a Public Policy Priority

Climate change poses a global environmental, economic, social, and public safety crisis. We ask that the State recognize this crisis and join Mission in elevating sustainability and decarbonization as among the top and most urgent of policy priorities. The ongoing climate crisis 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.

Energy Policy and Control of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mission supports the establishment of a statewide Energy Office to support the development and implementation of statewide energy policies. We further support the development of a coordinated and comprehensive energy policy/plan, developed with strong input from cities, that would encourage the further implementation of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies. As energy efficiency saves money, drives investment across all sectors of the economy, creates jobs, and reduces the environmental impact of energy use, we support public and private incentives to encourage energy efficiency by local governments and citizens. Further, Mission encourages the adoption of policies that will position Kansas as a forerunner in renewable energy production. Accordingly, encourages the Kansas Legislature to provide incentives for such energy sources that protect air quality and reduce dependence on oil and gas. 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. Mission further encourages the State to investigate and adopt innovative green technologies to drawdown greenhouse gas emissions

and/or sequester carbon dioxide (for example carbon dioxide mineralized concrete and photocatalytic concrete technology).

Infrastructure

Improved Coordination with Municipalities with Respect to Federal Funding Opportunities

With recent historic investments at the federal level in infrastructure, sustainability, and clean energy through the Bipartisan Infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act, Mission encourages the Legislative and Executive branches of State government, along with various State agencies to more closely engage with cities to ensure that federal funds are as accessible and flexible as possible for local spending. Continued support, coordination, and guidance to local governments is critical in order to maximize opportunities to successfully leverage these federal investments. We appreciate efforts like the Build Kansas Fund, but there is a need to seek input from municipalities before the roll out of such programs to ensure that the application criteria is in alignment with what cities need.

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.

Multimodal Transportation and "Vision Zero"

We encourage the State to increase planning for and funding of multimodal projects to improve our bike and pedestrian infrastructure. We further encourage the State to prioritize achievement of "vision zero" with the goal of increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

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.

Stormwater Management

Mission endorses regional and cooperative solutions to stormwater quality and quantity challenges that address point and non-point source pollution. We further endorse state measures to incentivize and enable investment in green infrastructure (e.g., street trees, use of native plants) to support sustainable communities.

Building Codes

Mission opposes any measures to preempt local building codes. Further, cities should continue to be allowed to shape local codes to incentivize net-zero or net-zero ready building requirements.

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. Continued support for these programs at the state level is imperative to keep our communities safe, productive, and vibrant.

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 existing and expanded State efforts to address the housing needs and challenges and, in particular, would like to see additional support for small urban communities which are often excluded in existing programs. Local officials should have the flexibility to address the need for affordable and varied housing types in accordance with their economic development and public safety duties. We urge the Legislature to continue building on existing programs as a lack of affordable and available housing continues statewide, including here in Johnson County. The City also encourages State and local collaborative conversations around homelessness and helping our unhoused populations. Local communities continue to try to address these needs, but more assistance is needed. We urge the Legislature to consider options to assist cities in maintaining and expanding affordable housing stock, including expansion of new housing incentives to cities with fewer than 60,000 residents, and/or providing matching funds. Mission would like to see State surplus funds targeted towards supporting those most in need.

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. 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.

Miscellaneous

Legalization of Cannabis

The City supports legalization of cannabis in Kansas. At a minimum, the State should adopt legalization of medical cannabis 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 cannabis. Each city should have the ability to opt-in to allowing dispensaries in their city and to further regulate operations.