

2011 LEGISLATIVE POLICY STATEMENT



The Lawrence City Commission desires to express its appreciation for the dedication of legislators serving Lawrence and the Douglas County community. Because we serve and share the same constituents we desire to partner with you for the betterment of our citizens and community.



City of Lawrence

This next budget and legislative year will undoubtedly prove to again be challenging to both state and local government. The City of Lawrence urges our legislators to not make cutbacks in the state budget that will require cities to pass on those cuts or look for alternative funding at the local level. Challenging economic times require even greater cooperation among levels of government to ensure that tax dollars are spent wisely and resources are directed where priorities demand.

We have prepared a list of legislative issues impacting the City of Lawrence that are likely to be addressed during the 2011 session. Many of these concerns are on-going each year as the legislature convenes. Municipal governments will be particularly concerned about any proposals that would place caps on the taxing authority of cities. Attempts to erode the home rule authority of the City of Lawrence to determine local spending and taxing priorities will be met with opposition.

LOCAL TAXING & SPENDING DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE BY LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Lawrence City Commission strongly opposes the enactment of State imposed spending or taxation controls or lids. The so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) proposals create an arbitrary and capricious procedure for what should be an essential function of representative democracy: elected officials determining the appropriate spending and taxing policies of their community. Local tax and spending decisions should be made by locally elected officials – not by artificial limits in the state statutes or constitution. The City desires to partner with the Legislature to find solutions which will ease the hardship of property tax burdens on low income, elderly homeowners while maintaining adequate funding sources for City services.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Lawrence supports the transportation plan adopted by the 2010 legislature. State resources are a key source of funding for cities as they face aging infrastructure and dwindling resources to protect these investments. The City

supports the State's T Works program and urges the legislature to look at additional funding streams to enhance investment in the state. Support for all modes of transportation is important to the Lawrence community. Investment in infrastructure is investment in jobs and growth potential.



ARRA and KDOT funding provided resources for a key gateway intersection improvement into downtown Lawrence in 2009-2010.



A KDOT Transportation Enhancement Grant provided funding for the restoration of a brick street in an historic neighborhood.

ALCOHOL AND LIQUOR TAX FUNDS ARE KEY CITY RESOURCES

The City of Lawrence and many community groups rely heavily on monies received from State taxes levied on alcohol purchases. Pursuant to State law, one-third of the fund revenues are allocated to the City's General Fund, one-third to the Special Recreation Fund and one-third goes in the City's Special Alcohol Fund. Resources in the City's general fund provide support for a number of City services, while monies deposited in the City's Recreation Fund provides resources for a number of park and recreation activities. A number of not-for-profit Lawrence organizations and our school resource officers rely on the funds from the City's Special Alcohol Fund for their programs. These programs and services are vital to the health of the Lawrence community. The City of Lawrence opposes any efforts to divert or diminish the distribution of local alcohol tax fund dollars to the state. The City supports the addition of local alcohol and liquor taxation authority.



Cuts to alcohol and liquor tax revenue will mean cuts to vital community programming for youth.

PROTECTING SALES TAXES: AN ESSENTIAL CITY REVENUE SOURCE TO FUND CITY SERVICES

Sales taxes are a vital component of City budgets funding essential municipal services and capital improvements. An important federal and state issue that must be addressed is the legal authority to impose state, city, and county sales taxes on electronic commerce and catalog sales. A sales tax on e-commerce and catalog sales protects an important revenue source for state and local governments and puts traditional land based businesses in our communities on an equal taxation footing with their electronic competitors. The Kansas Legislature should continue to pursue the "Stream-lined Sales Tax" efforts and other opportunities to include Internet and catalog sales tax collection.



City of Lawrence rail-to-trail project financed with a KDOT transportation enhancement grant and City sales tax revenues.

Local city and county sales tax revenue must continue to go to municipalities. Any effort to divert local sales taxes will be opposed.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY TO ENACT EXCISE TAXES

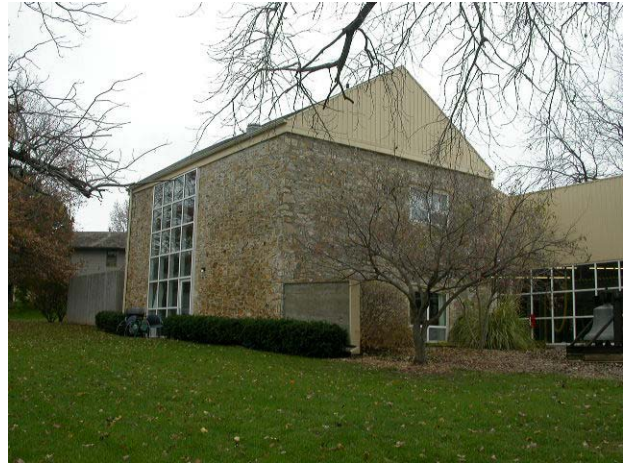
The City of Lawrence supports the enactment of legislation to allow all Kansas cities the ability to enact development excise taxes. In 2006 the Legislature adopted legislation which allows certain cities to maintain existing excise taxes – but not cities such as Lawrence. This places cities such as Lawrence at a competitive disadvantage – essentially penalizing Lawrence taxpayers who must pay more for infrastructure than residents of cities with excise taxes. This is fundamentally unfair and the Legislature should enact legislation allowing all cities this financing option.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION

Lawrence's ability to franchise utility companies and regulate its public rights-of-way must not be compromised. Private companies which use a public asset – such as locally owned right-of-way – should continue to be required to collect franchise fees. These utilities should also continue to be required to relocate in the right-of-way for public projects at their own expense – and not at the expense of local taxpayers.

TOURISM

The City of Lawrence offers many destination places for travel and entertainment. The City encourages the State of Kansas to enact a comprehensive tourism plan and to increase state funding of tourism promotion and marketing. Tourism brings sales, hotel and guest tax and additional revenue to the state and should be viewed as an investment.



Historic Grover's Barn in Lawrence was part of the Underground Railroad.

KPERS AND KP&F – COMMITMENTS TO OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS

KPERS and KP&F are very important benefits for the individuals who have chosen public service in the State of Kansas, including City of Lawrence employees. We do all Kansans a disservice by ignoring current and future funding obligations for this vital benefit system. Any proposals to change KPERS and KP&F should encourage – not discourage – public service.



HOMELAND SECURITY

The City of Lawrence urges an active partnership between state and local governments regarding issues of homeland security. The City's police department and our City/County fire and medical department are essential resources in providing security and safety to our community. These departments rely on funding resources that should be protected by our State legislature.

STATE LIMITS ON ANNEXATION POWERS

In the 2010 session, legislation was again introduced that would have severely limited the authority of the City to annex new property. The City of Lawrence opposes efforts to limit the ability of cities to annex. We oppose changes to the current state annexation statutes. Annexation provides a key tool for municipalities' ability to manage and plan for growth.



In 2010, the City of Lawrence acquired 450 acres of the former Farmland Industries property adjacent to the City for future industrial growth.

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

In 2011, the legislature will look at congressional redistricting as a result of the 2010 census. The City of Lawrence urges the legislature to partner with communities during this process. Federal funding and relationships with members of Congress are vital to protecting the City's interests at the federal level.

UNFUNDED MANDATES

The City of Lawrence opposes unfunded mandates from the State of Kansas as they drain limited resources from needed City programs and activities. State legislators know how federal mandates hamper the State's ability to respond to problems and issues, similarly the State should not impose unfunded mandates on local units of government. The City supports state and federal financial assistance for mandated public works improvements, such as the current levee recertification requirements.

RESPONDING TO OUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

We continue to support State efforts to encourage resource conservation and recycling. The City also encourages the legislature to adopt measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adopt measures to encourage energy conservation and use of public transportation and to provide resources for bicycling modes of transportation. Incentives should be created for the use of alternative fuels and transportation, retrofitting of existing structures for energy efficient technology, and increased use of solar, wind and other environmentally friendly energy resources.



ENSURING ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLIES FOR OUR FUTURE

Because a good water supply is essential to the welfare and growth of the Lawrence community, the City Commission has taken steps to assure continued quality water resources. The City opposes federal and state regulatory changes to quality standards that are not demonstrably related to public health unless adequate state and federal financial assistance is provided to meet such new treatment requirements. We oppose water transfers that will negatively affect Lawrence's current and future water supplies.

The City of Lawrence supports continued study and implementation of appropriate plans to respond to the sedimentation

issues of Kansas Reservoirs. Clinton Reservoir is a vital water supply source for the Lawrence community. The City of Lawrence supports increases in the municipal water fees funding the State Water Plan if such increases fund water project beneficial to preserving the quantity and quality of our vital water resources. Municipal water fees should only increase in proportion to increases on other water plan fees for industrial and agricultural users.



Clinton Reservoir is vital to Lawrence's water supply



Maintenance of the Bowersock Dam on the Kansas River is also key to Lawrence's water supply.



The restoration of this brick street in Old West Lawrence was made possible in part through a transportation enhancement grant through the Kansas Department of Transportation.



Project funding for improvements to 23rd Street were provided by Kansas Department of Transportation KLINK funds and the City of Lawrence.



The State Motor Fuel Tax Revenue provides an important funding source for infrastructure maintenance.



Cities must be able to regulate utility companies that use the public right of way.



Intersection improvements at 2nd Street and Locust funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



This project at the Rotary Arboretum park was made possible through a donation. The Legislature should consider additional incentives for charitable contributions to municipalities.

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The City of Lawrence is committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community.