



City of Olathe, Kansas

STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

2026

DRAFT

“Setting the Standard for Excellence in Public Service”

CITY OF OLATHE, KANSAS

SUMMARY OF 2026 PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

- **Will of Local Voters**—The City shares the concerns of Legislators about the federal government’s taking over of issues that have traditionally been state matters. The City believes the same standard should apply at the local level — state leaders should respect the decisions made by local voters. The City believes the government closest to the people it serves is more effective, accountable and accessible. Olathe residents can vote for four of the seven governing body members, but only two of the 165 members of the Kansas Legislature.
- **Value of Economic Development and Growth**—The City opposes efforts that would undermine the value of economic development provided to Olathe taxpayers. That includes limiting assessed valuation increases from new commercial construction.
- **Infrastructure Investment and Transportation Program**—Over the past decade, Olathe has added thousands of jobs and attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in economic investment. Cities must be able to fund infrastructure for continued state economic growth. The City opposes any legislation that restricts local governments from collecting revenue needed to pay for growth-related infrastructure. Recognizing it is critical to maintain Kansas infrastructure, the City supports responsible long-term investment in a state transportation plan. The City believes transportation funds should be used strategically and transparently to deliver measurable long-term benefits statewide. Investing in growth areas is critical to creating a sustainable revenue stream that will address the shortage in statewide infrastructure needs. High growth areas such as the eastern K-10 corridor and I-35 south of I-435 should be considered as a priority for added capacity to ensure continued economic growth and job creation.
- **Municipal Elections** - The City opposes combining municipal elections with state or federal elections. The City believes merging elections would make local issues less visible and reduce voter focus on community priorities.
- **Representation of Local Taxpayers**—As the voice for local taxpayers, the City strongly opposes legislative efforts to limit or eliminate City engagement with the Legislature. In recent years, the City’s advocacy has saved local taxpayers from unnecessary costs and protected public investments in infrastructure. In many cases, issues that could negatively impact local taxpayers are strongly supported through legislative advocacy by other interest groups. The City believes it’s essential for local governments to share accurate and timely information to help legislators make informed decisions.
- **Statutory Pass-Through Funding** – The City strongly opposes any effort to redirect local revenue that passes through the State of Kansas Treasury. This revenue pass-through is based on a longstanding partnership between local governments and the State of Kansas, and the funding sources were established to fund local programs. Both the Special Alcohol Tax funds and the local portion of

the Motor Fuels Tax should remain as intended; to be used by local governments rather than siphoned off for State use. Redirecting that revenue would not only impact the City's ability to provide service, but it would devastate the City's ability to maintain its infrastructure.

- **Right-of-Way Management** - The City supports the authority of cities to control the use of public property and right of way, including the ability to franchise entities that utilize the public right of way. The City opposes any further efforts to undermine local taxpayers (including adjacent property owners') ability to responsibly control local right of way usage, including the placement of temporary signs.
- **Annexation** –The City has repeatedly shown that it uses annexation responsibly and fairly. The City opposes laws that would restrict its ability to grow in a planned, responsible way that supports quality of life and economic stability.

State Sales Tax Exemptions – The City opposes removing local governments' exemption from paying state sales tax. Eliminating the exemption would simply shift more costs to local taxpayers, who already contribute to state revenue.

- **Enforcement of Liquor Sales Laws** - The City supports giving local governments stronger enforcement powers to prevent alcohol sales to minors under the Kansas Liquor Control Act. In addition, the City supports measures that would allow the City to require meaningful training for owners and employees of establishments found guilty of selling alcohol to minors and allow the costs of that training to be passed on to violators.
- **Removal of Tax-Exempt Property from Assessed Valuation**-The City supports giving local tax assessors the ability to remove land owned by political subdivisions from the tax rolls. Currently, that removal must be done by the Board of Tax Appeals, and the delay can make it difficult for local governments to accurately estimate mill levies for local taxpayers.
- **Alternative Property Valuations**-The City supports requiring the Kansas Board of Tax Appeals to allow all three methods of valuation when determining a property's value. This ensures fair and accurate assessments.
- **Law Enforcement**- The City's top priority is to keep Olathe safe and welcoming for everyone. The City supports police reforms that improve public trust without adding unnecessary burdens that reduce police effectiveness. The City supports reform proposals that incentivize transparency and encourage good police practices.
- **Mental Health**-The demand for mental health assistance is impacting all levels of Kansas government, including cities. That impact is felt by first responders

including police and fire departments. The City urges the legislature to consider local impacts when addressing this issue.

- **Massage Therapy**-The City supports statewide rules that promote safe, legal massage-therapy businesses and crack down on operations involved in prostitution or human trafficking. The City opposes statewide initiatives that weaken local ordinances and enforcement ability.
- **County Sales and Use Tax**- The City recognizes there is limited capacity for passing sales tax initiatives, and as such opposes any effort to amend the formula outlining sales tax distribution of countywide sales tax. The current formula requires a portion of any countywide sales tax to be returned to cities. This formula has been effective and should not be amended to exclude cities.

**CITY OF OLATHE, KANSAS
SUMMARY OF STANDING LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS**

1. **Employer-Employee Relations** - The City opposes legislation that would eliminate the local option provision in the Kansas Public Employer-Employee Relations Act (PEERA).
2. **Kansas Open Records and Open Meetings Act** - The City fully supports open and transparent government. Sometimes, keeping certain sensitive information confidential best protects the public. Examples include contract negotiations, legal matters, or cases where disclosure could create financial or legal risks for the City. Releasing sensitive information can also make it harder for law enforcement to prosecute criminal cases.
3. **“One-Call” Mandates** – The City opposes legislation requiring all municipal water and sewer services to participate in the “One-Call” program. This presents a significant cost burden on local utilities. Water and sewer utilities do not present the hazards of electrical utilities, and Olathe has experienced very few problems caused by digging near City lines. The City supports continued voluntary participation as well as continued assurance that the program and governing body remain subject to KORA and KOMA.
4. **Home Rule Authority** – The City opposes legislation that would weaken or limit the constitutionally granted home rule authority of cities.
5. **Mandates** – The City opposes legislation that imposes additional state mandated functions, activities, or practices on units of local government without the funding required for compliance.
6. **Municipal Finance** – The City supports legislation that preserves existing municipal revenue sources or provides authority for local option municipal revenue enhancement. Conversely, the City opposes legislation that erodes municipal revenue sources.
7. **Alcohol and CMB Regulation** – The City supports the continued authority of cities to license and regulate establishments where alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverage is sold or consumed.
8. **KPERS/KP&F** – The City supports achieving a fully-funded public employee retirement system within a reasonable amount of time. In addition, the City supports separating the local government portion of the KPERS system from the state and school portion. The City believes KP&F employer contribution increases should be done in a more accountable and open way to ensure adequate public scrutiny and input.
9. **Eminent Domain** – The City opposes efforts to undermine the responsible use of this essential tool to foster economic development, improve blighted neighborhoods, revitalize economically stagnant areas and provide public infrastructure.

10. **Economic Development** -The City supports having the continued use of tools such as Transportation Development Districts, Tax Increment Financing and tax abatements to help create jobs and economic growth. The City supports the continued use of STAR Bonds as an economic development tool.
11. **Impact Fees/Excise Taxes** - As Kansas' fastest growing major city, the City opposes restrictions on using excise taxes and impact fees to fund new infrastructure. The City of Olathe uses excise taxes to directly pay for roads, utilities, and other infrastructure that support growth. Without these tools, the City would have to slow growth or shift those costs to existing taxpayers.
12. **Communication and Citizen Engagement** - The City believes it is irresponsible and unethical to use tax dollars to expressly advocate for the passage of ballot initiatives or election of candidates. However, the City believes an engaged population with easy access to city related information is critical to good government. As such, the City opposes legislative efforts to undermine its ability to keep taxpayers informed and engaged about key issues impacting them.
13. **Municipal Government Water Rights** - The City opposes any change to awarding water rights that could impact its ability to effectively provide water to its customers.
14. **Energy Policy**-The City believes decisions impacting energy solutions should be left to local discretion.

**CITY OF OLATHE, KANSAS
ISSUES TO MONITOR**

1. **Asset Forfeiture**- The City will continue monitoring any proposals which may limit or impede the City's enforcement or ability to retain proceeds from forfeiture sales.
2. **Immigration**- As the federal government continues to grapple with immigration reform, state legislators often consider immigration issues. Such reforms could have a substantial impact on local governments in terms of enforcement and local resources. We will monitor any action which may impact the City of Olathe.
3. **Body Cameras**- The City will monitor efforts to unduly undermine local governments' ability to implement policies governing the use of body cameras and associated footage.
4. **Fentanyl Challenge**- Like the state and nation, Fentanyl has become a significant challenge in Olathe. The City will monitor any legislative efforts to support local governments' ability to address it.
5. **Housing Options**- The City supports exploring creative and reasonable programs and tools that could help develop additional housing options for our community. The City will monitor any legislative efforts that could allow us to positively impact this issue.

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*To be updated in January

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