Summary

In 2020 the City of Garden City seeks to preserve the values and funding essential to effective local governance. The 2020 Legislative Policy outlines a set of legislative issues that the City will ask Federal representatives to champion. These issues ensure that core government services to Garden City residents remain intact; particularly roads, public safety, passenger rail, commercial air service, and airport infrastructure along with protection from unfunded mandates. Furthermore, the goals promote undiminished Home Rule, including the ability to adequately provide for managed growth through annexation and the proper use of eminent domain. The following agenda identifies these and other core areas of legislative importance to Garden City as well as specific items we are asking our delegation to address during the 2020 session.
**Home Rule**

Garden City does not support actions at the federal level that erode representative democracy or local self-determination.

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**Housing**

While housing needs in Southwest Kansas continue to grow, new construction lags behind expectations and demand. Garden City believes new housing construction and continued rehabilitation of existing housing stock is the best way to meet its housing demand. Garden City does not support disproportionate cuts to USDA rural development programs. Such cuts impact citizen funding for housing, which is vital to the continued prosperity of the economy in rural communities.

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**Immigration**

Immigrant and refugee labor is vital to the southwest Kansas economy. Garden City supports legal immigration. Therefore, SKC believes the Kansas Legislature and the United States Congress should approach the immigration issue in a sensible way. For SKC, a sensible approach is an approach built on three essential foundations: 1) all immigration legislation is tempered with an understanding of such legislation’s economic impact for companies employing immigrants; 2) a recognition that immigrants living in SKC member cities require a reduction in time and distance barriers between the individual and his or her pursuit of legal status; and 3) a recognition that SKC member-cities require additional resources to integrate immigrants into the community.

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**FEMA**

The City of Garden City supports new legislation prohibiting FEMA from adding previously unmapped or any new Special Flood Hazard Areas to Flood Insurance Rate Maps without local government agency approval. In addition, we support new legislation prohibiting FEMA from using an approximate method for establishing new Special Flood Hazard Areas, particularly in developed areas of the country. The approximate method was designed by FEMA to streamline map modernizations and employs no reasonable opportunity for due process by affected property owners and local officials. New Special Flood Hazard Areas should only be added to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps after a detailed study and concurrence of local government.

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**Internet Sales Tax**

Federal legislation should not preempt state and local sales tax authority. We categorically oppose including any other issue, including changes in the ability of cities to impose and collect taxes and franchise fees on telecommunications providers, as part of streamlined sales tax legislation.

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**Transportation**

Transportation infrastructure is critical to the safety of region residents and travelers. Transportation infrastructure is also vital to the regional economy’s maintenance and growth. Therefore, Garden City believes in the continued advocacy and funding for transportation infrastructure and maintenance in southwest Kansas.

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**Air Transportation**

Federal funding for passenger air service is vital to Southwest Kansas. The Essential Air Service Program is critical to providing the region with access to multiple major international airports. Garden City encourages continued support from the Congressional Delegation. Garden City supports increased FAA safety regulations; however, the qualifier of seat time has drastically reduced the number of qualified pilots under FAA regulations for Essential Air Service, thus resulting in canceled flights. Garden City supports incorporating qualified classroom training for commercial pilot certification in order to meet the increasing demand for passenger air transportation service in Southwest Kansas communities. Garden City also supports continued and uninterrupted funding of Federal Aviation Administration and expansion of the Airport Improvement Projects for airports. Federal funding through the Airport Improvement Program is critical to maintaining the infrastructure of airports.

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**Rail Transportation**

Garden City supports enhanced passenger and freight rail service in Kansas. In particular, we strongly support the continuation of Amtrak passenger rail service along the Southwest Chief line, which operates between Chicago and Los Angeles. Passenger ridership on the Southwest Chief steadily increases as more Kansans take advantage of the convenience of passenger rail transportation. Garden City encourages Federal funding to preserve long distance passenger rail routes throughout the country.

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**Highway Transportation**

Federal transportation dollars should be spent on transportation infrastructure. Transportation infrastructure is vital to our state’s and country’s economy, individuals’ safety and our nation’s defense.