

2025

Federal Legislative Agenda



Summary

In 2025 the City of Garden City seeks to preserve its values and funding essential to effective local governance. The 2025 Legislative Policy outlines a set of legislative issues that the City of Garden 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 2025 session.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is critical to the safety of regional 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.

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 to meet the increasing demand for passenger air transportation service in Southwest Kansas communities. Garden City also supports continued and uninterrupted funding of the 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.

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.

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. Highway infrastructure is especially important in agriculture-focused regions like Southwest Kansas; therefore, Garden City encourages Federal funding to enhance highways in the area.

Water

The ongoing replacement and improvements to water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure are critical to Garden City's health and economic prosperity through the safe, affordable, and efficient delivery of drinking water and sanitation to our residents. In addition to infrastructure, the city has pursued the Garden City Water Reuse Project to maximize efficiency, better utilize

the community's water resources, and protect its source water supply. Garden City supports legislative policies that promote aquifer best management practices and encourages efforts to work with all water users to address the decline in the Ogallala Aquifer by developing local projects that meet regional water conservation goals.

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.

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.

Immigration

Immigrant and refugee labor is vital to the southwest Kansas economy. Garden City supports legal immigration. Therefore, Garden City believes the Kansas Legislature and the United States Congress should sensibly approach the immigration issue. For Garden City, 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 Garden City require a reduction in time and distance barriers between the individual and his or her pursuance of legal status; and 3) a recognition that Garden City requires additional resources to integrate immigrants into the community.

In addition, Garden City requests that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) give serious consideration to opening a field office in Southwest Kansas where services are desperately needed. To help address this issue in the meantime, we request an increase in the frequency of USCIS mobile services in Southwest Kansas as follows:

- Provide at least monthly mobile services in Southwest Kansas
- Provide full services(biometrics, interviews, etc.) during each visit.
- SKC member cities will continue to provide support staff, designated space (rent-free), and technology.
- Increased frequency of naturalization ceremonies.

Lastly, Garden City strongly believes that the United States Congress should engage to deliver bipartisan legislation that provides a permanent solution for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Such legislation should include a pathway to citizenship within a reasonable time frame.