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# ADVOCACY AGENDA



## FEDERAL PRIORITY ISSUES

The City of Gastonia seeks funding for major transportation projects, community development, affordable housing, and infrastructure initiatives.



## STATE PRIORITY ISSUES

The City of Gastonia will focus efforts on projects and initiatives that support the City's financial, economic development, local governance, utilities, transportation, parks and recreation, community development and housing, museum services, and public safety.



## COUNTY PRIORITY ISSUES

The City of Gastonia supports projects and initiatives that provide opportunities to partner with Gaston County to improve employment, economic development, transportation, and address homelessness.

# THE CITY OF GASTONIA



Robert Kellogg, Dave Kirlin (Mayor Pro-Tem), James Gallagher,  
Mayor Walker E. Reid (center), Charles Odom, Jennifer Stepp, Donyel Barber

## VISION

The City of Gastonia serves as a model for civic leadership as we engage our community of dedicated neighbors (**Great People**). We share a collective passion for personal safety, economic vitality, inclusiveness, cultural richness and overall sustainability (**Great Place**). Our distinct character is built upon a rich and unique heritage and fueled by enthusiasm for the promise of a bright tomorrow (**Great Promise**).

## MISSION

To provide fair, competent, responsive, cost-effective services at the highest level.

## CORE VALUES

Accountability • Inclusiveness • Safety • Professionalism • Honesty • Integrity



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## FEDERAL PRIORITY ISSUES

*The City of Gastonia seeks funding for major transportation projects, community development, affordable housing, and infrastructure initiatives.*

The City seeks funding through the US Department of Transportation's BUILD Program for the construction of a new bridge across Interstate 85 in Gastonia that will improve traffic safety and connectivity for the City of Gastonia and the City of Lowell as well as allow for the economic development of a large area that will create new jobs and benefit Gaston County and the entire region.

- The Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina Departments of Transportation are currently preparing a plan to build a high-speed-rail line from Atlanta to Charlotte. The City supports options that include stops in Downtown Gastonia.
- Government bonds taxable would only make local governmental infrastructure projects more costly to local taxpayers and rate payers.
- The City supports full funding for Federal Transit Authority programs and efforts to secure discretionary funding for transportation system needs in our region.
- The City seeks to ensure that projects at the Gastonia Municipal Airport that are included in the Federal Aviation Administration's Work Plan maintain high priority and adequate funding.
- The City supports continued funding for infrastructure initiatives in the areas of Transportation, Brownfield grants, Public Water and Sewer system rehabilitations and expansions, as well as the continuation of adequate funding for targeted Economic Development, Public Safety, Community Development Block Grants and HOME Programs.



## STATE PRIORITY ISSUES

*The City of Gastonia will focus efforts on projects and initiatives that support the City's financial, economic development, local governance, utilities, transportation, parks and recreation, community development and housing, museum services, and public safety.*

### FINANCIAL

- The City supports the position that the State should not cut or eliminate State-shared revenues to local governments unless other suitable revenues replace them.
- The City opposes unfunded mandates that are established through legislation or regulation that require additional local expenditures without corresponding revenues. Tax Reform or redistribution of revenues should not adversely affect the City's revenues necessary for local services.
- Seek legislation to provide municipalities with authority for additional locally-controlled revenue options and flexibility in the use of those options, including – but not limited to – city-only sales tax, city occupancy taxes, prepared food and beverage tax, and impact fees for transportation.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The City supports legislation that will provide funding for State-level incentive programs necessary to keep North Carolina competitive in its efforts to bring additional jobs and economic development to local communities when competing with projects in other states.
- The City supports legislation that provides additional tools for the City to use in the redevelopment of downtown properties. For example, the City believes Chapter 160A could be amended to provide for more flexibility in the negotiation of economic redevelopment agreements and the sale of city properties when addressing urban blight and downtown revitalization.
- The City supports State Historic Preservation Tax Credits and advocates that they not be curtailed. These credits are important economic development tools for Gastonia and the State of North Carolina. The City supports the re-establishment of the North Carolina Mills Tax Credit or a similar incentive that will stimulate the market place to for restore and reuse large vacant industrial, agricultural, and utilities buildings.
- The City seeks funding for downtown and FUSE District related infrastructure projects.
- The City supports the efforts to revitalize the P&N Rail Line under its current operator, Progressive Rail.

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- The City supports greater opportunities for local “Home-Rule” decision-making, specifically:
  - Amend the Annexation statutes to allow cities to close doughnut holes and restrict all water and sewer expenditures to areas only within public rights-of-way and easements.
  - Legislation allowing municipalities to develop and implement procurement and bidding policies which incorporate reasonable “local preference” mechanisms.
  - Legislation that will provide sufficient funding at the state level for incentive programs such as a competitive film incentive program, robust state historic preservation tax credits, and the Main Street Solutions funds necessary to grow jobs and the economy.
  - The City supports current law which provides that local government elections are best determined by local government authority.
  - Seek legislation granting local governments the authority to build broadband infrastructure and to partner with private internet service providers using long-term infrastructure leases.
  - Seek legislation that supports adequate, fair school funding between state and county in all school systems across the state by repealing municipal authority to fund schools.
  - Support a system of spirituous liquor sales that maintains a local referendum about the decision to sell, preserves local control over the location and density of outlets, and preserves the local revenue stream.

## UTILITIES

- The City supports the cooperative interconnection of water and wastewater utilities through partnership and contractual negotiation, and encourages the General Assembly to enact legislation which provides fiscal and regulatory incentives in support of such initiatives. Conversely, the City strongly opposes any State legislation which would compel the transfer or sale of utility systems without local consent. Additionally, the City supports legislation to provide continued low interest and no interest loans and grant funding opportunities for regional water and sewer interconnections. The City supports full funding for the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) of the NCDEQ.
- The City supports the full funding of the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund for stormwater and water quality projects.

## TRANSPORTATION

- The City supports the Catawba Crossings transportation project. Improving connections from Gastonia to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and its Intermodal Facility is a key transportation and economic development priority. Bridge crossings of the Catawba and South Fork Rivers should be the highest priority transportation goal in our region.
- The City supports the extension of light rail, commuter rail, and rapid transit from Charlotte to Gastonia, including daily passenger rail service that will extend from Charlotte to Gastonia.
- The City supports legislation that would allow (for all non-federally funded interstate highway projects) for the reimbursement of utility relocation projects to be phased over a period of five years. NCDOT should allow municipal utilities with adequate, functioning, and existing underground lines within State road rights-of-ways to remain in place for NCDOT road-widening projects.
- The City seeks State funding and plan approval for traffic calming initiatives along the Franklin Boulevard Corridor including pedestrian enhancements.
- The City supports the NCDOT-funded project to widen Interstate 85 and partner with NCDOT to ensure that the City has input in the planning and construction of improvements.
- The City seeks to partner with NCDOT to fund a dedicated turning lane on South New Hope Road, heading west, at the Franklin Boulevard intersection. Seek legislation to ensure that the amount of Powell Bill funds appropriated by the state are sustained and distributions to municipalities are increased and grow over time.
- Seek legislation to boost funding availability for public transit and transportation programs.

## PARKS & RECREATION

- The City supports the continued funding of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant Program (PARTF Grants).
- The City supports the continuation of allocations for the Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTP Grant).
- Support Crowder's Mountain State Park.
- Support Mountain Island Educational State Forest.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

- The City seeks legislation that provides additional tools and financial resources for addressing affordable housing.
- The City seeks financial resources for programs and partnerships that addressed homelessness.

## MUSEUM

- The City supports full funding and inclusion in the Governor's Budget for the NC Science Museum's Competitive Grant Program, an important program that allows the City's Schiele Museum to provide high quality science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs to students in Gastonia, Gaston County and throughout our region.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- The City opposes any legislation that would undermine Gastonia's Residential Rental Property Remedial Action Program.
- The City seeks additional funding for the continued improvement of the Charlotte Area Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) communications system in partnership with regional and federal partners.
- Only support legislation providing additional post-employment benefits to public employees that includes a funding mechanism to fully support the cost and liability of the benefit and support the study of existing post-employment benefits, such as special separation allowance programs, to ensure that the liability of providing the benefit isn't solely borne by the last employer.
- Seek legislation to provide additional grant funding to municipalities for equipment and facility needs for public safety (fire, police, EMS).



*North Carolina General Assembly Building*

## COUNTY PRIORITY ISSUES

*The City of Gastonia supports projects and initiatives that provide opportunities to partner with Gaston County to improve employment, economic development, transportation, and address homelessness.*

- The City seeks to partner with Gaston County on the acquisition and development of additional property for industrial use and job creation.
- The City seeks to work with Gaston County on mutually beneficial studies that include economic development, transportation, and other items of interest.
- The City seeks County financial support for the Franklin Urban Sports and Entertainment (FUSE) District project.
- The City seeks to continue to partner with Gaston County to fund and construct strategic utility extensions.
- The City seeks to partner with Gaston County to update the ten year homelessness plan and work with area non-profit groups to improve existing conditions.

