

# CITY OF DODGE CITY LEGISLATIVE POLICY 2026



**FUTURE FORWARD**

**CIVIC AND PROFESSIONAL**

**FOCUSED AND WELCOMING**

**RESILIENT AND DEPENDABLE**

Dodge City is a future forward community that approaches growth with a civic and professional mindset. As a regional hub in southwest Kansas, the community is focused and welcoming, supporting a strong workforce, diverse population, and a business environment built on collaboration and reliability. Dodge City has demonstrated that it is resilient and dependable, consistently managing public resources responsibly while investing in infrastructure, public safety, water systems, and quality of life improvements. Continued partnership with Dodge City represents a commitment to a community that delivers measurable results, supports regional stability, and remains prepared to meet both current and future challenges.

**CITY OF DODGE CITY**

[www.dodgecity.org](http://www.dodgecity.org)



★  
K A N S A S

---

PO Box 880      Dodge City KS 67801      Phone: (620) 225-8100      Fax: (620) 225-8144

# *2026 Legislative Policy*

---

## **SUMMARY POSITION**

This policy statement presents general legislative goals and objectives formally adopted by the Governing Body of the City of Dodge City. This statement will be provided to the Dodge City legislative delegation for its consideration at the 2026 legislative session. The focus of this policy statement is on general policies and principles; however, some positions on specific legislative proposals are included under appropriate general policy statements. Future revisions to this statement will include additional positions of the City on specific proposals and bills introduced during the 2026 session.

## **FEDERAL**

### **FEMA**

Although FEMA has revised its mapping strategies, it still discounts the protection that existing structures provide. For Dodge City, this happens when an existing structure is structurally sound but since design standards have changed, a sound structure is now considered useless. It still adds previously unmapped flood areas into a classification of “Undetermined Flooding”. No one knows the effect this will have on the citizens living in or development in this newly classified area. Also, the “one fit” approach does not work. Attention needs to be given to local conditions to determine the “best fit” for the area.

If accreditation is still necessary, Dodge 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, Dodge City supports new legislation prohibiting FEMA from using the “approximation method” for establishing new special flood hazard areas, particularly in developed areas of the country. The “approximation 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. Dodge City supports legislation that would extend the accreditation time. This would allow cities to responsibly budget and prepare for the financing necessary to meet the required improvements to the levy system.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**AIR:** The Essential Air Service (EAS) program is critical to providing the Dodge City region with reliable access to multiple major hubs and international airports. Dodge City strongly supports the continued federal funding of passenger air service to the Dodge City Regional Airport.

Federal funding through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) is essential to maintaining safe, efficient, and compliant airport infrastructure. AIP funding must remain available to all airports, and uninterrupted funding is critical to the timely planning and delivery of airport improvement projects. Dodge City supports continued and uninterrupted funding of Federal Aviation Administration programs, including the Airport Improvement Program for airports

**HIGHWAY:** State and Federal transportation dollars should be spent on adequate and equitable transportation infrastructure in all of Kansas. Transportation infrastructure is vital to our local, state, and country's economy, individuals' safety, and our nation's defense The City-County Highway Fund is essential to maintaining local roads and bridges and should be fully funded and not be diverted for other purposes. Dodge City also advocates for the planning of dividing Highways 54, 50/400, as IKE projects.

**RAIL:** Dodge City supports enhanced passenger and freight rail service in Kansas. In particular, the improvement, preservation, and reinvestment of Amtrak passenger rail service along the Southwest Chief line, which operates between Chicago and Los Angeles is strongly supported. Dodge City encourages State and Federal funding to preserve this needed transportation link to access the southwestern region of the State. Passenger ridership along this section of the Southwest Chief steadily increases as more Kansans take advantage of the convenience of passenger rail transportation. Dodge City believes freight and rail service is one important way to maintain and grow the economy of the region.

## **HOUSING**

Dodge City strongly recommends the continuation of USDA rural development programs and to allow for the inclusion of true rural communities like Dodge City. In addition, we urge Congress to prevent disproportionate cuts to rural development programs. Such cuts affect rural housing, water/sewer, and business programs, all of which are vital to the continued prosperity of the economy in rural communities.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The City strongly supports renewable energy alternatives and the biogas industry. Dodge City believes that developing a viable biogas, solar and wind energy industry in the United States and the State of Kansas can boost the economy and provide a reliable, sustainable, distributed source of renewable energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Communities and private organizations around the nation are utilizing renewable energy alternatives not only to diversify

---

energy supply and reduce dependence on imported fuels, but also to improve profitability for operations through energy and co-product sales, nutrient recovery and avoided energy costs.

Dodge City encourages continued support for RINS (renewable identification numbers), which provides an important incentive to producing renewable natural gas and promote financial opportunities to move forward in developing a robust biogas industry. The City suggest that no changes be made to the Renewable Fuel Standard program and that the Environmental Protection Agency does not lower the targets for cellulosic biofuels from the current statutory targets.

## **RAILROAD QUIET ZONES**

We urge Congress to reexamine the Train Horn Rule with the Federal Railroad Administration. Rules for implementing quiet zones should be less burdensome and allow for differences in community circumstances while continuing to protect public safety. We also request Congress provide federal funds for the purpose of establishing quiet zones and consider new technology which may enhance the safety of quiet zones while minimizing or eliminating train horn noise.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Immigrant and refugee labor is vital to the southwest Kansas economy. Dodge City believes in legal immigration and that the Kansas Legislature and the United States Congress should approach the immigration issue in a sensible way. For Dodge 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 Southwest Kansas require a reduction in time and distance barriers between the individual and their pursuance of legal status; and 3) a recognition that Southwest Kansas residents require additional resources to integrate immigrants into the community.

In addition, Dodge 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 service visits.
- Provide full services (biometrics, interviews, etc.) during each visit.
- Dodge City will continue to provide support staff.
- Increased frequency of naturalization ceremonies.

Lastly, Dodge 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.

# STATE

## **HOME RULE**

**HOME RULE:** Dodge City strongly supports the constitutional home rule authority of Kansas cities. Consistent with the Home Rule Amendment of the Kansas Constitution **approved by voters in 1960**, Dodge City supports the ability of local elected officials to make decisions for their communities, particularly local tax and revenue decisions. Self-governance by locally elected officials must be preserved to ensure that local issues and problems are handled at the level of government closest to the citizens that they represent.

**ANNEXATION:** The ability of Dodge City to grow is inherent to the ultimate success of annexation powers as they are currently established in state statute. Dodge City recognizes the statutory framework which was amended in 2011 and 2015. Further amendment would shift this balance in a way that would impede orderly growth. Therefore, Dodge City strongly opposes any further change which would limit the authority of Dodge City to grow through annexation.

**EMINENT DOMAIN:** Eminent domain is a fundamental municipal necessity. The authority to acquire property through condemnation proceedings is critical for public improvement projects. Dodge City supports increased flexibility for local government to use eminent domain for economic development purposes, including blight remediation, without seeking legislative approval.

**PUBLIC PROPERTY & RIGHTS-OF-WAY:** Dodge City opposes any legislation which would restrict the ability of cities to control and manage public property and rights-of-way or the ability of cities to franchise those entities that utilize the rights-of-way.

**CITY ELECTIONS:** Dodge City strongly believes that City Elections should remain non-partisan and separate from state and national elections.

## **BUILDING AND FIRE CODES**

Longstanding practice in Kansas has allowed cities to administer and approve internationally accepted building and fire safety codes and conduct plan reviews and inspections based on those adopted codes. Dodge City opposes any measure to preempt local building codes and any deviation from this practice or legislative changes that would erode local boards and governing bodies from making amendments to these adopted codes.

Dodge City encourages the State Legislature and Office of the State Fire Marshal in their efforts to update and adopt a new state fire code to seek feedback from all stakeholders including local building officials, fire marshals, and local elected officials from across the state.

## **GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS**

### **KANSAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT (KOMA) and KANSAS OPEN RECORDS ACT**

**(KORA):** Dodge City supports all levels of government being subject to the same open meeting requirements which promote citizen involvement without being unduly burdensome. Open records laws should balance the public's right to access with the necessity of protecting the privacy of individual citizens and the ability of public agencies to conduct essential business functions. The statutorily required sunset for all exemptions to the Kansas Open Records Act is impractical and should be removed.

### **PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

City employees are the foundation of effective city government. City governing bodies must have the authority to develop personnel policies to attract and maintain a high-quality public workforce.

**KPERS/KP&F:** Dodge City accepts the State's efforts to maintain the solvency of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System by providing employees with a diverse professional investment portfolio that will offer long-term security. Dodge City supports the current statutory framework regarding KPERS and KP&F as passed by the 2012 Kansas Legislature. The local KPERS system should remain separate from the state and school retirement system. Changes to the KPERS/KP&F system should consider the impact on cities' ability to hire and retain qualified public employees.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS:** Dodge City believes that employment persons with lawful employment status should be allowed to serve as law enforcement officers in Kansas. The City strongly encourages the state legislature to amend statute (KSA 74-5605 (b) (1) that requires citizenship for law enforcement officers. The City asks to consider aligning with U.S. Military requirements in the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program. We believe that this amendment will expand the pool of law enforcement candidates and increase diversity across Police Departments in Kansas communities who are struggling with recruitment.

### **MUNICIPAL FINANCE:**

**KANSAS TAX SYSTEM:** Cities are important partners in creating jobs, reviving the economy, delivering vital services, and providing quality of life. Any changes to the Kansas Tax System must avoid shifting additional financial burdens to local governments.

Additionally, Dodge City realizes that there is a large reliance on property taxes to fund local and state government. All property taxing authorities should be equally transparent, and should abide by the same limitations, restrictions, and requirements. Any additional transparency measures should not be burdensome or costly.

**PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS:** Dodge City believes that the existing property tax base should be protected and therefore encourages the Kansas Legislature to resist any proposal to

further exempt any specific property classification from taxation. The machinery and equipment exemption should not be expanded. The Kansas Legislature should actively review existing exemptions to determine whether the exemptions are still appropriate or should be repealed.

**REVENUE SHARING:** The Kansas Legislature should reinstate existing revenue sharing programs. If the State is unable to fully fund said programs, the Kansas Legislature should authorize cities to impose alternative revenue sources to maintain appropriate levels of funding for the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens.

**TAX/SPENDING LID:** Dodge City believes that local spending and taxing decisions are best left to the local officials representing the citizens that elected them. We strongly oppose any state-imposed limits on the taxing and spending authority of cities.

**UNFUNDED MANDATES:** Dodge City opposes unfunded mandates. If the State seeks to promote policy objectives, such mandates should be accompanied by an appropriate level of funding.

### **INTERNET SALES TAX**

The collection of sales and use tax should not preempt state and local sales and use tax authority. Should federal legislation allow for the State imposition of such taxes, we support the distribution of those funds to cities and counties using an equitable formula. Kansas should continue to participate in the Streamlined Sales Tax Project. Cities are important partners in creating jobs, reviving the economy, delivering vital services, and providing quality of life. City leaders should be included in legislative discussions regarding restructuring the Kansas tax system and any modifications must avoid shifting additional financial burdens to local governments. The City of Dodge City opposes the removal of sales tax exemptions for Kansas Municipalities.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION:**

The State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program and the Heritage Trust Fund assist communities in maintaining and/or preserving their historic buildings. It also serves as a critical resource for economic development and provides valuable private investment that preserves our history and heritage not only for today but for future generations.

Dodge City supports maintaining and enhancing the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program and Historic Preservation Grants. Such programs assist communities in restoring their historic buildings and serve as a critical resource for economic development and job creation. Without such gap assistance, many if not all redevelopment plans would be impossible to fulfill. These credits and grants provide valuable private investment that preserves our history and heritage not only for today but for future generations.

Heritage Trust Fund · The Heritage Trust Fund grant program is a state-funded grant program awarded annually since 1990 to Register-listed properties statewide. Heritage Trust Fund

funding is collected by county Registers of Deed from document filing fees and transmitted to the state quarterly. Approximately \$1 million is available annually, but it is typically 3 to 4 times that amount requested. SKC advocates supplementing the Heritage Trust Fund to provide more funding for historic downtowns and commercial properties.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Dodge City relies on state and federal programs to remain competitive in efforts to attract and retain businesses and qualified labor. Unfortunately, many government programs are designed for either urban or rural communities. Dodge City is neither, based on the region's micropolitan statistical area (μSA) geographical designation. Therefore, Dodge City is too big for rural-oriented programs and too small for urban-oriented programs. Dodge City is dedicated to the design and implementation of economic development programs for the growing segment of Kansas communities that are ineligible for many programs.

**ZONING:** Zoning is a fundamental municipal responsibility and is best controlled by local governments to ensure that acceptable and compatible uses of property are in place to retain and preserve the character of a community. This regulatory process is an activity best suited to the locally elected officials when considerations of health, safety and welfare of the community are to be determined. Dodge City opposes any change which would limit authority of cities.

**STAR BONDS:** Dodge City supports the ability of cities to utilize STAR bonds to promote economic development in their communities.

**CHILDCARE:** The current childcare system is failing both families and communities across Kansas. The supply of childcare has been on the decline for years, disproportionately affecting certain families, including those who work nontraditional hours; live in rural communities; have an infant or toddler, or child with special needs; or are immigrants. The City supports creating a regulatory environment that supports rather than impedes the creation of more childcare facilities. In addition, to adapting the regulatory environment, the City supports additional funding to those facilities attempting to meet the requirements and close the gap on children without childcare. This issue impacts economic development, employers, and the future of our region.

**BROADBAND:** Access to reliable broadband service is increasingly important to the economic health of Kansas cities. We support the establishment of the Broadband Deployment Grant to facilitate broadband expansion in Kansas. Guidance for the grant program and broadband related statutes must recognize the important role of local governments play in such expansion and not remove important planning and right of way authority from local governments.

## **GAMBLING**

By law, two percent of gambling revenue in Kansas must go to the Problem Gambling and Addictions Grant Fund which is designed to treat problem gamblers and people with other addictions. Grants are to be awarded for the direct treatment of pathological gambling and for research regarding the impact of gambling on residents of Kansas, including determining the

effectiveness of education and prevention efforts.

The Problem Gambling Fund must be protected for the purpose it is intended and must be allocated throughout the State with an emphasis on the gaming zones where people are at greater risk to develop issues with problem gambling.

The State of Kansas should avoid legislation which would negatively affect existing gaming facilities and the communities which have dedicated public funds for infrastructure and growth related to such facilities.

## **HOUSING**

The State of Kansas has provided many useful tools for communities to utilize incentives where gaps between construction rates and market rates prohibit development without incentives. The retention of these programs is critical to Dodge City as is the simplification of the processes required to make utilization timely and less complicated.

Dodge City strongly supports the Moderate-Income Housing (MIH) Program, an initiative funded by the State of Kansas and administered by Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC), which works to help cities and counties develop multi-family rental units, single-family for-purchase homes, and water, sewer and street extensions in communities with populations of fewer than 60,000 people. MIH funding can also be used to finance construction costs, rehabilitate unsafe or dilapidated housing, and offer down-payment and closing-cost assistance to homebuyers. We encourage the State of Kansas to continue providing MIH funding and expand its financial commitment to this very important housing program.

The retention and simplification of programs such as Reinvestment Housing Incentive Districts and Neighborhood Revitalization Program that are currently permitted by statute in qualifying communities is vital to Dodge City.

The Kansas Legislature should continue to grant affordable housing tax credits. The tax credit program continues to be a gap financing necessity which is imperative for developers to create affordable housing facilities.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**TRANSPORTATION:** Passenger rail, freight rail, commercial aviation, general aviation, and adequate highways are critical to the safety of our citizens as well as a vital means of maintaining and growing our local economy. Dodge City believes in the continued advocacy and funding for transportation infrastructure and maintenance in Southwest Kansas.

**HIGHWAY:** Transportation infrastructure is critical not only to the safety of regional residents and travelers but also to the maintenance and growth of the regional economy. Dodge City supports increased transportation safety including continued funding for highway maintenance and infrastructure investment and efforts to promote traveler safety.

**RAIL:** Preserving long distance rail service through Dodge City and Southwest Kansas is important as rural regions must offer many alternative modes of transportation. Dodge City believes freight and passenger rail service is one way to maintain and grow the economy of

---

Dodge City. Such service includes but is not limited to Amtrak passenger rail service. Dodge City believes Amtrak should continue to be adequately funded and that necessary upgrades to rail infrastructure be provided through a joint effort involving federal, states, Amtrak, and BNSF.

**AIR:** State matching funds, including programs such as the Kansas Airport Improvement Program (KAIP), are vital to leveraging federal dollars and advancing airport improvement projects. Continued state investment in airport infrastructure supports not only aviation safety and compliance, but also regional economic development, business attraction, workforce mobility, and the long-term viability of air service in southwest Kansas.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Immigrant labor is vital to Dodge City’s economy and continued growth and development. In correlation with this issue and due to the increased number of safety and transportation risks with uninsured drivers, Dodge City supports an initiative for limited and restricted driver’s license. The City also supports current legislation that gives in-state tuition to undocumented students at Kansas colleges and universities.

## **EDUCATION**

**EDUCATION:** An adequate and stable workforce is essential to maintaining and growing the economy of Dodge City and Southwest Kansas. Therefore, Dodge City believes in establishing educational opportunities for local and regional residents. Such opportunities include, but are not limited to, specialized training programs and educational degree programs. To meet these educational goals, Dodge City wishes to maintain adequate funding to allow for growth and advancement of educational programs in K-12, as well as post-secondary and graduate programs. Additionally, Dodge City supports adequate funding for all Kansas Board of Regents institutions.

Southwest Kansas is the only quadrant of the state without a four-year public university. To bridge this gap and to provide a stronger higher education presence in our region, a University/Training Center has been established to offer bachelor and master’s level programs to meet the demands of the workforce with an initial focus on healthcare services. Students will obtain their first two years of education and their associate degree through one of the region’s community colleges and then can finish their bachelor or advanced degree through the University/Training Center. Headquartered in Dodge City, students across the region will have access to programs through a blended mix class format with some face-to-face classroom time in addition to web-based offerings. The opportunity to “Grow Our Own” is extremely critical to the long-term success of our regional workforce and the state of Kansas.

## **HEALTHCARE AND ACCESS TO SERVICES**

**RURAL HEALTHCARE:** The obstacles faced by health care providers and patients in rural areas are vastly different than those in urban areas. Rural communities face significant health challenges primarily due to access to health services and a severe lack of healthcare providers, meaning residents often have limited access to basic medical care, struggle to reach specialists, and may need to travel long distances to receive treatment.

Rural hospitals strive to provide their patients with the highest quality of care while simultaneously tackling the unique challenges of their often-remote location, small size, limited workforce, and constrained financial resources. Low patient volumes make it difficult for these organizations to manage the high fixed costs associated with operating a hospital, making them financially vulnerable to policy and market changes, and to Medicare and Medicaid payment cuts.

Dodge City supports eliminating barriers that limit provider capacity and patient access to critical health services and telemedicine technologies.

**MEDICAID:** Medical providers are challenged in meeting their communities' needs. We support the expansion of Medicaid/KanCare through receipt of the state budget neutral money therefore allowing such entities the ability to support critical services for their citizens.

**MENTAL HEALTH:** The need for mental health services continues to be significant throughout Dodge City and Southwest Kansas. Therefore, Dodge City supports increased funding for mental health programs including funding for community mental health centers and additional bed space for patients with mental health needs. Furthermore, additional training and support services for first responders is key to addressing these challenges on a local level to better support those on the front lines of the crisis.

## **WATER**

**WATER:** Dodge City is dedicated to a thoughtful water policy that enables Dodge City to safely and effectively meet water needs while also protecting resources. Dodge City believes increased local involvement is critical to the successful implementation of the current Kansas Water Plan and the Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas plan which is intended to coordinate the management, conservation and development of water resources across the state for the next fifty years. Dodge City also strongly encourages the development of new and sustainable water supplies.

The expanded use of reclaimed or re-use water is one way that communities/cities can meet the future demands for water. The use of this water for non-potable uses needs to be considered. A couple of examples are: 1) expanding the use of re-use water for irrigation of private property; 2) use in construction projects; or 3) use in Managed Aquifer Recharged (MAR), Aquifer Recharge (AR), or Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project.

To provide for the future growth of a community, cities must be diligent in purchasing water rights; however, in the past, water rights were 'tied together' and municipalities lost additional allocation with this procedure. When water rights are converted to municipal use from agriculture use, there is a reduction in the amount allowed for consumption. Agriculture consumption is in the form of irrigation. Most of the water consumption incurred by municipalities occurs during the summer months by irrigation. Consequently, municipalities should not have a reduction when converting water rights.

Dodge City supports legislation to allow municipalities the ability to "untie" currently owned water rights and reduce or eliminate the conversion of water rights from agriculture to municipal.

### **Closing Statement**

The City generally supports legislative initiatives which would improve the quality of life for our citizens and enhance the effectiveness of local governments consistent with Home Rule. The City generally supports the provisions of the Statement of Municipal Policy of the League of Kansas Municipalities.



## CORE PURPOSE

Together we serve to make Dodge City the best place to be.

## CORE VALUES

### Safety

Together we endeavor to provide a safe and secure workplace and community.

### *Honesty, Integrity & Respect*

Together we work honestly and with integrity, while respecting the rights of others.

### *Ongoing Improvement*

Together we value progress, growth & new possibilities by providing and preparing for the community's future.

### *Working Towards Excellence*

Together we strive to achieve high performance and service standards set by us and expected by the community.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Together we promote open communications with our community members to improve quality of life and preserve our heritage to foster a better future.

