

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

The Legislative Platform is maintained by the Sparks City Council in support of its legislative program for a defined time. The Legislative Platform serves as a guidance document regarding the city’s advocacy position which serves to assist the Mayor, Council, City Manager and Government Affairs function in providing prompt and accurate responses to proposed legislation during the legislative process. This is particularly important during the state legislative process where time is often very short between a bill’s drafting and publishing and determining when a position is required by the local entity. Often it is impossible for the Council as a whole to properly meet and deliberate in a public forum to provide direction to the city’s lobbying effort.

The matrix below is a prioritized list of platform issues derived from current state legislative discussions, as well as council priorities and citywide strategic goals. Platform issues in bold are new from the last approved document.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM ISSUES	
<u>FINANCIAL STABILITY</u>	
1.	<u>General Government:</u>
	a. Support legislation that enhances local government’s ability to control the community it is elected to lead.
	b. Oppose state legislation that requires the local entity to provide a service or benefit without appropriate, full funding or the ability to enact a funding source (no unfunded mandates.)
	c. Support legislation that would allow for a local preference in government purchasing.
	d. Support legislation that provides local authority over raising revenue when supported by local electorate.
	e. Support legislative efforts to review and improve state revenue restructuring that does not negatively impact local government.
	f. Support legislation that protects local government revenues from state action.
	g. Oppose legislation that requires regional consolidation of services.
	h. Support public utility regulations that:
	i. Maintain local control over rights-of-way.
	ii. Provide compensation for the use of rights-of-way and overseeing public service standards.
	iii. Ensure public, educational, and governmental access is available and affordable.
	iv. Provide free access for public information services and announcements.
	i. Support measures that provide funding for community park facilities, open space, and recreation programs.
	j. Support state and federal funding and legislation for the arts that benefit local communities.

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- k. Support legislation that would enhance the efficiency of the Open Meeting Law and the electoral processes.
- l. Oppose legislation that limits the city's ability to grow services as demanded by the citizens (i.e., voter approved initiatives).
- m. Oppose legislation that rolls back property tax assessment levels resulting in limiting the city's ability to maintain or grow services as demanded by the citizens (i.e., a Nevada version of California Proposition 13 and the Nevada Tax Restraint Initiative).

2. Regional and State-wide Issues:

- a. Support efforts that reinforce local entity governance.
- b. Maintain a leadership position in mandated regional governance boards and commissions.
- c. Support efforts to stabilize the state tax environment.

3. Local Government Finance:

- a. Oppose state legislation that requires the local entity to provide a service or benefit without appropriate, full funding (seek self-determination and more local authority).
- b. Support measures that safeguard existing revenue sources from pre-emption by the state, or county governments.
- c. Oppose any change by the state or county governments in revenue allocations (current or future) that would negatively affect local government, including the redistribution of taxes or fees.
- d. Oppose any measure that would limit local entities' ability to issue or use voter-approved proceeds.
- e. Support measures that provide fiscal independence for cities and the retention of all existing local revenue sources. (2011 Nevada Legislature Interim Study)
- f. Support legislation that allows the city to maintain and/or control revenues related to franchises (i.e., gas, water, sewer, garbage, telecommunications, etc.).
- g. Support legislation that makes funds available to support the building, operations and maintenance of public facilities (i.e., facilities, parks, open space, etc.).
- h. Support legislation that provides greater accountability on the part of counties for unincorporated residential services.
- i. Support greater local authority for tax exemptions and incentives for purposes of economic development.
- j. Oppose legislation that creates surcharges for state oversight of mandated programs.
- k. Support legislation for local governments to maintain and expand the use of special improvement districts.

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- i. Oppose legislation that would further exempt or reduce revenue from fees and taxes of for-profit or non-profit organizations within special improvement districts.

4. Labor Relations:

- a. Oppose state legislation that requires the local entity to provide a service or benefit without appropriate, full funding (no unfunded mandates).
- b. Support legislation that improves access to, and reduces the cost of, healthcare for public employees.
- c. Oppose any measure that mandates the granting of new employee benefits which pose burdensome costs to the city (without forcing the issue to the bargaining table).
- d. Support any measure granting employee benefits that mandate personal accountability components. Mandated personal accountabilities should include exclusion from the benefit for non-compliance.
- e. Oppose legislation that increases worker's compensation benefits without providing for concurrent cost controls.
- f. Support legislation that limits the ability of employees to receive worker's compensation benefits for occupational injuries and illnesses that result from stress, disciplinary action or performance evaluations, or consultations.
- g. Support legislation limiting employer liability if injury occurs due to employee negligence.
- h. Oppose changes to mandatory bargaining laws that negatively impact local government.
- i. Oppose legislation to include subjective complaints of pain in determining partial disability awards.
- j. Support changes in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to increase the ability to pay provisions from 8.3 to 16.6 percent

5. Tort Reform:

- a. Support measures to reform Nevada's tort system to reduce or limit liability exposure for public agencies and restore ability of public agencies to obtain affordable insurance.
- b. Support legislation that recognizes or broadens immunities for public agencies.
- c. Oppose legislation that attempts to limit or restrict existing immunities for public agencies.
- d. Oppose legislation that limits local entities' ability to properly use eminent domain.

PUBLIC SAFETY

6. Public Safety:

- a. Support legislation that strengthens local law enforcement.

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b.	Support measures that provide a greater share of seized assets to localities and increased latitude for local spending.
c.	Support legislation that allows local agencies to recover costs from guilty parties for public property and services in accidents involving driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
d.	Support legislation granting immunity to governmental entities and their employees for purposes of liability for those entities and employees who provide emergency medical instructions or treatment as a part of their public safety job duties.
e.	Support legislation that provides the delivery of local emergency medical service to its citizens if no other regional delivery system is available
f.	Support state homeland security legislation that assists in safeguarding the homeland as well as provides direct funding to cities and high-threat regions with populations less than 700,000.
g.	Oppose any broadening of access to law enforcement records.
h.	Support legislation that requires parents or legal guardians of minors to pay the cost incurred by offenses of those minors.
i.	Oppose legislation that directly or indirectly prohibits a fire department from providing additional services to the public.
j.	Support enabling legislation that provides expanded utilization of non-sworn officers to issue nuisance citations.
k.	Support enabling legislation that provides local authority to impose mandatory court assessments to defray administrative cost of municipal courts.
REDEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
7.	<u>Redevelopment:</u>
a.	Oppose legislation that restricts the Sales Tax Anticipated Revenue Bond program.
b.	Support legislation that maintains and enhances redevelopment efforts.
c.	Oppose legislation that prohibits or limits the establishment of new redevelopment project areas or expansion of existing project areas.
d.	Oppose legislation that limits or reduces the power of local entities to properly use eminent domain.
e.	Support legislation that enhances redevelopment agency authority and financing capabilities.
f.	Support changes in redevelopment legislation that provides greater flexibility to redevelopment agencies to finance and participate in redevelopment projects.
g.	Oppose legislation that diverts future revenues from redevelopment agencies to other public entities.

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8. Economic Development:

- a. Support legislation that facilitates economic development efforts and encourages businesses to locate or remain in Sparks (2011 Session, AB 449).
- b. Support legislation that facilitates expansion of Free Trade Zones (FTZs) in Sparks.
- c. Oppose efforts to limit tax incentives that benefit the City and the State.
- d. Support legislation that assists in diversifying the economy of Sparks.
- e. Support legislation that reinforces regional efforts to recruit and establish new businesses and industries in Sparks.
- f. Support regional legislation that aids efforts by local and state tourism agencies to expand the opportunities for activities by visitors.
- g. Explore legislation that provides for international economic efforts.
- h. Explore legislative opportunities to bring technology to assist the city in economic recruitment (i.e., WiFi, DSL, fiber optics, broadband cable, voice over IP, etc.).
- i. Support legislation that provides for retention of room tax revenue for local utilization in promotion and capital improvements.

9. Housing and Community Development:

- a. Support legislation that provides assistance to homeowners in maintaining their mortgages against foreclosure by lending institutions.
- b. Support legislation that provides incentives (tax benefits, grants, loans, credits for affordable units) to local agencies, private developers, and non-profit groups in order to rehabilitate residential units and commercial properties without using existing local government resources.
- c. Support the streamlining of state reporting.
- d. Support efforts to develop state participation, financial support and incentives (tax benefits, grants, loans) for programs that provide adequate, affordable housing (home ownership or rental opportunities for first-time home buyers assistance) for all economic segments of the community including the elderly, handicapped and low-income persons.
- e. Support legislation that provides additional funding for rental subsidy assistance programs (such as Section 8) via more vouchers or certificates.
- f. Support state participation in funding innovative housing solutions for low-income, elderly, and handicapped individuals.
- g. Support legislation that provides incentives for maintaining cultural resources, including historic housing stock.
- h. Support streamlined procedures for annexation of land within a city's sphere of influence.
- i. Support legislation that maintains city's control over the construction of facilities and/or structures within its sphere of influence (i.e., cellular towers, well heads, power lines, maintenance yards, etc.)

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- j. Support legislation that encourages energy conservation (green building) design standards that do not overburden state and local governments with tax waiver incentives.
- k. Explore more effective methods for funding regional planning that does not take away from existing local government resources.
- l. Explore alternative models for regional planning implementation.
- m. Support legislation that ensures financial institutions or holding/asset management firms is responsive to code enforcement issues on bank owned properties.

INFRASTRUCTURE and HIGHWAYS

10. Transportation:

- a. Support measures that increase the ability of local agencies to finance local transportation facilities and infrastructure.
- b. Support measures to finance local and regional transportation facilities and improvements, including alternative modes of transportation and traffic management systems.
- c. Support legislation that provides for effective and efficient transportation alternatives.
- d. Support legislation that provides for long-term planning and acquisition of rights-of-way (i.e., interchanges, connectors, frontage roads, etc.).
- e. Support legislation that encourages emerging employment centers with the end goal of reducing commute miles.
- f. Support legislation that provides funding sources for highway and transportation projects.
- g. Support measures that safeguard our community and transportation networks from hazardous and toxic materials.
- h. Support legislation to relocate and expand rail yard operations to enhance the local economy (economic development issue also).

11. Public Works:

- a. Support legislation that provides greater flexibility regarding public works projects and funding sources. (i.e. new funding mechanisms utilizing existing state and federal revenues as well as new sources).
- b. Support legislation that provides for well-planned, cost-effective infrastructure.
- c. Support legislation that maintains city control over its rights-of-way.

12. Flood Control/Water Management:

- a. Advocate federal, state, and local sources of on-going revenue to fund completion of the Truckee River Flood Management Project.
- b. Support legislation that retains control over local water supply, distribution, and reclamation.

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- c. Support legislation for flood control management to mitigate loss of property and life.

13. Regional Planning

- a. Support legislation that maintains local control through policies governed by the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Governing Board (TMRPGB)
 - i. Seek potential amendments or revisions to existing TMRPGB legislation to clarify role, functions, addresses costs to local governments, and/or moves legislative mandates to local agency level.
- b. Maintain a strong working relationship with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA).
- c. Support state legislative review of current state department programs for environmental and wildlife preservation to improve responsiveness and reduce unnecessary regulations.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM — PROGRAM POLICIES

The legislative platform, as defined by the Sparks City Council, is the basis for the operational policies, procedures, and processes for the effective management of the city’s government affairs program at the federal, state, and local levels.

The operational policies, procedures, and processes suggested to be reviewed and edited by the Council are as follows:

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM OPERATIONAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES	
1.	<u>Platform Development and implementation</u>
	a. The Legislative Platform is to be developed by the City of Sparks City Council through consensus.
	b. In the interest of the timely operation of the 120-session of the Nevada Legislature, and during special sessions, the Sparks Legislative Team has full discretion to exercise their judgment in implementing the legislative platform which includes items that may not be addressed in the platform. (new language approved by council on 4/22/13)
2.	<u>Platform and Program Message</u>
	a. The approved Legislative Platform will be the guide in conducting discussions of legislative issues with Legislators.
	b. The approved Legislative Platform message will be coordinated through the Legislative Team as directed by the City Manager.
	c. No dissenting opinion on the approved Legislative Platform will be presented.
	d. City representatives, in either their elected or appointed capacity, will not lobby or testify on matters related to the city’s Legislative Platform, policies and/or operations without first advising and/or coordinating the testimony with the Legislative Team.
	i. Any city representative who lobbies or testifies without coordinating with the Legislative Team may be disciplined, including censure.
	ii. Any city representative who speaks against any majority position of the council may be disciplined, including censure.
	e. The Legislative Team will be responsible to assist in determining the need for legislative testimony and will coordinate the proper city resources.
	i. City elected officials may be utilized to introduce Legislative Platform-driven legislative issues and emphasize their importance to the city.
	ii. Staff and/or contract representatives will be responsible to present the technical aspects of Legislative Platform issues to Legislators.

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f. The Legislative Team will be responsible to coordinate briefing schedules to communicate city issues and positions on legislative matters.

i. Local government elected boards and staff.

ii. State Legislators and staff (both Sparks and northern Nevada representatives).
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iii. State Legislature Leadership.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM — COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The Legislative Platform also defines the City Council’s expectations on “to whom” and “how” the city will communicate with state and federal legislators and other local entities. The current process can be broken down into three categories:

1. State

The Legislative Team holds regular meetings with the Nevada legislators who represent Sparks. The topics of conversation range from concerns or issues raised by the legislators, to pending or proposed bill requests.

During state legislative sessions, the City Manager’s designee coordinates input from city staff and the legislative team to the contract legislative representative and staff in Carson City on business of the day.

Between legislative sessions, the Legislative Team meets regularly with Sparks’ legislators and the legislative leadership to enhance the city’s position on certain legislation and to provide additional, timely information on key issues.

2. Local

The Legislative Team engages in a multitude of local entity correspondence and communications. These include, but are not limited to, individual Council/Commission meetings and retreats; joint Council/Commission meetings and retreats; boards and commissions; public meetings; local, regional, state and federal associations; and local, regional, state and federal task forces and working committees.

3. Intergovernmental

The Legislative Team helps coordinate ongoing relationships between Sparks and our sister cities of Garibaldi Oregon and Longford Ireland. These efforts can include visits between the cities by elected officials as well as staff and Sparks citizenry. These efforts are helpful in promoting city planning, economic development, traffic planning, cultural exchange, and governmental relations.

The Legislative Team engages in communications with other local entities; the Truckee Meadows Intergovernmental Affairs Group; The Chamber of Commerce; the Innovations Group; the Flood Project Coordinating Committee (FPCC) lobbying group; and the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA). The Legislative Team communicates the results of these meetings with the City Council via email and council agenda items that are policy related.

The Legislative Team determines legislative policy based on the Legislative Platform and determines the message, lobbying effort and presenter(s) of testimony to the appropriate legislative committee. If a bill is outside the defined Legislative Platform, the Legislative Team engages the Mayor and City Council as a whole, in the proper public forum, to determine specific policy direction. The Legislative Team meets on an as-needed basis, and at least quarterly, to determine direction on legislative issues.

The Legislative Platform should include an outline of communication policy and processes defined by the City Council. The current communication policies, procedures, and processes are as follows:

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM COMMUNICATIONS	
1.	<u>STATE</u>
a.	Mayor, Council member(s), City Manager, Government Affairs function, and contract representative(s) to define meeting frequency and topics for discussion with Sparks' Legislators.
b.	City Manager, Legislative Team, and contract representative(s) to schedule and conduct periodic meetings as defined by the Mayor and Council to address issues relevant to bill draft requests before the legislative session begins.
c.	Legislative Team to schedule and conduct periodic meetings between the Mayor and Council members with Legislators as defined by the partnering program.
d.	Mayor, City Council, and state legislators to appoint members to the Sparks Charter Committee by January of every even numbered year so they may properly convene and discuss Charter issues.
e.	During the legislative session and interim, the Legislative Team and/or contract representative(s) will report at least monthly on the status of the legislative session, interim studies, and issues of importance to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager.
f.	The City Manager, Legislative Team, contract representative and finance director will attend and actively participate in the Nevada Legislature Interim Taxation Committee meetings.
g.	The Legislative Team will monitor the interim session's committee meetings and studies and keep the legislative team and City Council informed of any impact to the city's policies or legislative processes.
2.	<u>LOCAL</u>
a.	The Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and Legislative Team will attend and actively participate in regional and local meetings and retreats to engage in political activities as they develop.
b.	The Mayor, City Council, and City Manager will direct the Legislative Team on policies and procedures in relation to community involvement and political activity.
c.	The Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and Legislative Team will attend and report back on meetings attended with other agencies that involve political and/or legislative issues.
d.	The Legislative Team will actively participate with the other legislative functions in the region and report back to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager.
e.	The Legislative Team will monitor and/or attend the public meetings and retreats of the other local entities in the region and report back to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager.