



2021 Legislative Platform

INTRODUCTION

City of Sparks Vision

Be the city of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.

City of Sparks Mission

By establishing financial stability and an effective work environment, the City of Sparks provides a safe environment, economic development, special events, cost-effective sustainable services, and opportunities for citizen involvement.

City of Sparks Strategic Plan

The City's Vision and Mission are supported by six strategic goals:

1. **Managing Growth:** Proactively plan, manage and maintain the City's current "small town feel" by focusing development in existing areas while protecting open spaces and parks.
2. **Connectivity:** Support fast and efficient connections – transportation and communication systems – between neighborhoods, recreation, schools, shopping areas, and City facilities.
3. **Community Facilities and Services:** Deliver and maintain responsive community services and facilities that support the safety and wellbeing of our residents and visitors.
4. **Community Character:** Ensure that Sparks' physical environment, services and amenities make it a city of choice for residents and businesses.
5. **Resiliency and Sustainability:** Ensure the City's ability to absorb disruptive change while retaining or restoring our environmental, social and economic health.
6. **Housing and Affordability:** Provide solutions to housing needs for all economic segments of the community, while promoting economic growth and ensuring financial sustainability.

These six goals guide and serve as the foundation of the City's 2021 Legislative Platform.

Sparks Mayor and City Council

The residents of the City of Sparks are represented by (from left): Mayor Ed Lawson, Councilman Donald Abbott (Ward 1), Councilwoman Dian Vanderwell (Ward 2), Councilman Paul Anderson (Ward 3), Mayor Pro Tem and Councilwoman Charlene Bybee (Ward 4), and Councilman Kristopher Dahir (Ward 5).



Sparks Legislative Team

The Sparks Legislative Team includes Mayor Ed Lawson, Mayor Pro Tem and Councilwoman Charlene Bybee, City Manager Neil Krutz, and Assistant City Manager Alyson McCormick. Kaempfer Crowell, Ltd., and Hardy Consulting Group, LLC, represent the City of Sparks before the Nevada Legislature.



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Purpose of City of Sparks Legislative Platform

The City of Sparks Legislative Platform is approved by the City Council and guides the City's advocacy during the legislative process. The Legislative Platform allows the City's Legislative Team to quickly take positions on bills while the Nevada Legislature is in session and a meeting of the City Council cannot be timely arranged.



LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The City's Legislative Platform is based on and intended to advance the goals in the City's Strategic Plan. Therefore, the City's Legislative Platform is divided into categories that match the City's strategic goals.

Managing Growth

In order to responsibly manage growth, the City will support legislation that:

- Makes City revenues less dependent on constant geographic growth, including but not limited to changes to the real property tax system, such as removing or reducing depreciation.
- Requires local governments to provide additional services and benefits only if that legislation also provides funding or the ability to enact local funding sources.
- Provides local authority to raise revenue when supported by the local electorate.
- Maintains local control of land uses through regional planning processes.
- Expresses support for federal actions that allow the City to grow north and east.

Connectivity

To provide efficient and effective connections between people and places, the City will support legislation that:

- Maintains local control over rights of way, allows fair compensation for the use of rights of way, and ensures access to public utilities is available and affordable to the public and educational and governmental institutions.
- Streamlines State reporting requirements by permitting electronic storage and transfer of documents and reducing redundancies.
- Improves local governments' ability to finance transportation facilities and infrastructure, including alternative modes of transportation and traffic management systems.
- Supports effective and efficient transportation alternatives.
- Empowers local and regional agencies to engage in long-term planning and acquisition of rights of way for large projects, including but not limited to interchanges, connectors, and frontage roads.
- Provides funding for and encourages well planned, cost-effective transportation and communications infrastructure projects.

- Permits and encourages mixed land uses in order to reduce commute miles.
- Incentivizes communications services providers to provide adequate and affordable services, particularly to low-income individuals.

Community Facilities and Services

In the interests of providing responsive and beneficial community facilities and services, the City will support legislation that:

- Maintains or increases revenue sources, including changes to the real property tax system, to enable the City to maintain or improve public services.
- Improves the efficiency and clarity of the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Act, and electoral processes.
- Empowers the City to maintain, control, and increase revenues related to franchises for services such as natural gas, electricity, water, sewer, solid waste, and telecommunications.
- Increases counties' accountability for services in unincorporated areas.
- Provides additional funding for services that support local law enforcement, including but not limited to resources dedicated to mental health and substance abuse disorders.
- Improves local governments' ability to recover costs of repairs and services related to criminal offenses involving driving under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances.
- Assists regions with populations under 700,000 people in safeguarding against acts of terrorism.
- Clarifies and limits access to law enforcement records.
- Empowers municipal courts to impose fees to defray administrative costs.
- Provides greater flexibility when funding public works projects.

Community Character

To preserve and improve upon the City's community character, the City will support legislation that:

- Protects or increases funding available to support the construction, operations, and maintenance of public facilities such as parks, open space, and gymnasiums.

- Encourages or provides additional funding for the arts and recreation programs.
- Reinforces local entities' self-governance.
- Maintains or increases the City's leadership role on regional boards and commissions.
- Maintains and enhances redevelopment efforts, including but not limited to allowing the establishment or expansion of redevelopment areas and providing greater flexibility in funding and financing redevelopment projects.
- Increases local governments' control over uses of revenues from redevelopment agencies and projects.
- Assists local, regional, and state tourism agencies in expanding the range of activities available for visitors.
- Maintains or increases local retention of room tax revenues for promotion and capital improvements.
- Incentivizes maintaining cultural resources, including but not limited to historic buildings, housing stock, and archeological sites.

Resiliency and Sustainability

In order to build upon the City's environmental, social, and economic resiliency and sustainability, the City will support legislation that:

- Stabilizes the Nevada tax environment.
- Safeguards existing City revenue sources from State or County encroachment.
- Enhances the City's fiscal independence and retention of existing revenues.
- Increases local authority to incentivize economic development.
- Improves access to and/or reduces the costs of providing healthcare to public employees.
- Controls local governments' costs of providing workers' compensation benefits.
- Limits a public employer's liability if an occupational injury or illness occurs due to an employee's own negligence.
- Maintains or increases management rights with respect to labor relations.
- Maintains or decreases mandatory costs in public employees' labor agreements.

- Maintains or expands immunities of government agencies and employees and improves public entities' ability to obtain affordable liability insurance.
- Improves public entities' ability to hold employees accountable for misconduct.
- Maintains local governments' ability to properly pursue eminent domain.
- Facilitates economic development and encourages businesses to relocate to or remain in the City of Sparks.
- Aids in diversifying the City of Sparks's economy.
- Encourages and incentivizes energy conservation design standards without overburdening state and local financial resources.
- Provides sources of ongoing revenue to support flood control improvements, flood mitigation strategies, and water reclamation infrastructure.
- Retains local control over local water supplies, distribution, and reclamation.
- Aids in maintaining or improving working relationships with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe with respect to the Truckee River Operating Agreement.
- Improves responsiveness of State agencies and clarify regulations regarding environmental and wildlife preservation.
- Preserves open space that is important for environmental or recreational purposes.

Housing and Affordability

In order to provide affordable and sustainable housing solutions for the community, the City will support legislation that:

- Assists homeowners in avoiding foreclosure in times of economic crisis.
- Incentivizes rehabilitating existing structures to provide affordable housing through measures such as tax benefits, grants, loans, and fee credits.
- Supports and incentivizes programs that provide adequate, affordable housing, including rental opportunities and first-time homebuyers' assistance, for all economic segments of the community including veterans and persons who are elderly, disabled, and/or low-income.
- Increases funding for rental subsidy assistance programs.
- Empowers innovative housing solutions.