

City of

BROKEN ARROW

Where opportunity lives



**2024
LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA**





Dear Broken Arrow Advocate,

Our state is blessed to have leaders at all levels who recognize that federal and local municipal partnership is critical to decision-making that will impact and improve each Oklahoman's quality of life and viability of projects. We, collectively as a Council, take our role as advocates for our city's success seriously and know that you have the same intentions as you represent all municipalities at the federal level.

As a growing community, we must focus on issues that are a priority to Broken Arrow and are vital to our continued efforts to attract and retain visitors, residents, and new businesses. In our ongoing endeavor to invest in the community's future, we would like to present to you a few of our governing body's priorities that will guide us through the next few years and well into the future.

They are as follows:

- Funding for improving interchanges at Elm Place/SH-51 and Lynn Lane/SH-51
- Funding for water and sewer distribution improvements
- Support of broadband initiatives
- Public Safety
- Opposition to the federal overreach of local zoning
- Support for direct funding from the federal government to municipalities
- Opposition to the federal government nationalizing elections
- Threat of government regulatory overreach
- Local and domestic energy
- Supply chain bottlenecks
- Historic levels of inflation

On the following pages, you will find summaries of each priority.

Thank you for allowing us to share all the exciting progress that is happening in our wonderful city and for your continued support in making Broken Arrow a great place to live, work, and play.

Respectfully,

City of Broken Arrow


Debra Wimpee
Mayor


Christi Gillespie
Vice Mayor


Lisa Ford
Councilor


Justin Green
Councilor


Johnnie Parks
Councilor

- infrastructure -



Funding for improving interchanges at Elm Place/SH-51 and Lynn Lane/SH-51

The City of Broken Arrow requested funding support through the Federal Highway Administration's RAISE Grant, Surface Transportation Program (STP), or other funding mechanisms to pay for the design and construction of a new interchange located at one of the community's main entryways into the city, Elm Place and State Highway 51. Thank you for your support which led to us receiving a \$5.84 million grant for planning purposes. This interchange experiences over 100,000 vehicles daily. The last upgrade to this interchange was in 1993. The traffic counts and patterns have changed immensely since that time. The north side of the interchange has developed at a rapid pace since the original construct. Prior to 1995, virtually no traffic headed north of the interchange. Since that time, a significant commercial district was developed with Bass Pro Shops as the anchor, as well as a hospital and surrounding medical support companies. One of the largest churches in the state of Oklahoma was built and operates to the north. The area also encompasses many residential subdivisions and a golf course. The City has bond funds and some STP monies on the order of \$9 million, but we estimate that a \$35 million cost may be necessary to address the concerns. Traffic routinely backs up the state highway during peak hours. This creates a dangerous situation.

Funding for water and sewer distribution improvements

The City of Broken Arrow has over \$200 million worth of water and wastewater capital improvements scheduled over the next several years. The only possible way to tackle this daunting task is through the federally funded water and sewer programs that are administered at the state level. The City encourages the federal government to increase the funds for these programs for the local municipalities to address the critical nature with respect to their utilities.

Support of broadband initiatives

Broken Arrow is the fourth largest city in Oklahoma, and one of the fastest growing cities in the state. Such growth often comes with significant changes at a neighborhood level, and it is not unusual to see differences in demographics emerge. However, this was intensified by the pandemic and a move to remote learning across schools. For Broken Arrow families with school-age children, the ability to remain engaged suddenly depended on the speed and availability of high-speed broadband internet. While this was also true for many families at a work level, the children were the most negatively impacted. In addition, neighborhoods of lower-income families and their students found themselves on the wrong side of a suddenly larger digital divide, creating a disparity contributed to by the area's high cost of suitable broadband service and lack of providers. These children have been effectively left behind, especially in a world that will continue to utilize home-based broadband connectivity in some capacity going forward.

To directly address this disparity, the City of Broken Arrow is moving forward with a Broadband Initiative to provide the opportunity for low-cost internet service utilizing the federal funding provided by American Rescue Plan Act funds and potential Broadband federal funding within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- infrastructure (cont.) -



Public safety

- Continuity of qualified immunity as it has been traditionally implemented
- Oppose “defund police” philosophy and policy
- Support the return of funding opportunities in terms of hiring and staffing. Example: Re-visitation of COPS Universal Hiring Grants and School Based Partnership Grants which were widely used in the late 1990s-early 2000s. Both of these hiring grants stemmed from federal sources at DOJ.
- Support opportunities for cost breaks/grants and standardization in terms of body worn camera programs
- Make a record for continued robust regional support to help with *McGirt v. Oklahoma* investigations. So far, the federal government has done a good job of sending resources and personnel to NE Oklahoma
- Support legislation and policies that protect officers from “sovereign citizens” engaging in “paper terrorism” and the “doxing of” police personnel. “Paper terrorism” is the filing of false claims against government officials and is inclusive of lawsuits, property liens, and bills/invoices. An example of “doxing of” officers would be the intentional posting of an officer’s personal information on the internet, especially sites that are hostile to law enforcement officers. This happened to some of our people at a nationally prominent political event where we acted as mutual aid to another city.
- Create legislation that makes “doxing” of law enforcement officials and their families a crime.
- Oppose ideas of putting “civilian panels” as oversight groups. Encourage local control and accountability of police. Point: The Police Department already answers to a “civilian” or non-sworn authority, the City Manager.
- Support legislation that will create long-term mental health facilities to relieve the burden on police of taking persons into protective custody.
- Create a nationwide cost-saving bid program that reduces the cost of bod-worn cameras and storage.
- Create a different criterion for grants that require high crime numbers to qualify for federal grants.
- Support the continued recognition of PTSD as a valid medical retirement condition.
- Exemption of income tax for the spouses of a law enforcement professional who die in the line of duty.
- Exemption of income tax for law enforcement personnel to take a medical retirement.
- Any mandate training or additional skills required by federal, or state officials must be financially supported by agencies responsible for administering the training.

- federal -

Opposition to the federal overreach of local zoning

There is a trend on the national stage to restrict or remove zoning regulations at the local level. Proposed legislation includes items like Economical Dormitory Zoning policies which say that people are not welcome in a community unless they can afford a single-family home, sometimes on a large plot of land. These policies run counter to American ideals and are pervasive in America. In most U.S. cities, zoning laws prohibit the construction of duplexes, triplexes, quads, and larger multifamily units on at least three-quarters of available land. This is untrue. Cities retain their identity and characteristics through zoning. But requiring cities to allow uses without the local input will have drastic impacts on the character of the local community and the protentional of the local economy. We ask that local governments be allowed to decide how their community evolves over time and make the decisions that are in their best interests.

Support for direct funding from the federal government to municipalities

Both the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program for water and sewer projects and the Surface Transportation Program (STP) for transportation projects are funded at the federal level and distributed to the state level for administration. Unfortunately, the state takes a share of those funds to support and administer each program. The loss of these funds takes away from the very purpose intended, which is to pay for the construction of infrastructure. In addition, all of these programs require a significant amount of construction oversight for due cause. However, this oversight is generally hired out to third-party consultants which further greatly depletes the funding available for the construction of new infrastructure. The City of Broken Arrow supports creating a construction administration and oversight certification program in which those communities capable of achieving this certification can oversee their construction. This effectively moves the construction oversight to the local level and increases the funds available for new infrastructure.

Opposition to the federal government nationalizing elections

The United States Constitution dictates that elections are to be determined at the state level, not by the federal government. The federal government's only role is to acknowledge, record, and note any objections to the results of state elections. The Founding Fathers had no intention of consolidating the electoral process in the nation's capitol. All such laws are inconsistent with our nation's history and are antithetical to our Constitution's structure. Moreover, any attempt to nationalize lawful state elections would only result in questionable and abuse-prone election rules across the nation. Accordingly, the City of Broken Arrow opposes the passage of all laws that would effectively amount to a wholesale takeover of elections by the federal government.

Opposition to Government regulatory overreach

We have continually seen an increase in the federal government getting involved in the day to day control of businesses under the Biden Administration. Including but not limited to:

- Federal Trade Commission's abuse of power through antitrust decisions, scrutiny of key mergers and significantly increasing its powers. On top of that trust-busting, the Federal Trade Commission has taken such an aggressive stance against mergers and acquisitions that small and medium-sized businesses fear they'll have worked for years to build something and have no exit strategy if they choose to sell. The FTC has a really important job to do in stopping anticompetitive behavior that harms consumers. But it can't do that job if instead it is trying to enlarge its powers to, as its Chair is quoted as saying, "shape the distribution of power and opportunity across our economy".
- Other agencies aggressive oversight: SEC, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, EPA, and IRS.

- federal (cont.) -



Local and domestic energy

Revenue from Oklahoma's oil and gas production taxes reached a record high in fiscal 2023, topping \$1.5 billion. Oklahoma oil and gas supports not only our state but our nation by fueling America and providing byproducts that are essential to the daily lives of Americans. Supporting legislation that supports the fossil fuels industry is a priority.

- The Biden administration should accelerate the development of the five-year program for offshore leasing. Production on federal lands and waters accounts for 22% of total oil production and 12% of natural gas.
- The administration should also call on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to ensure any new pipeline permitting policies do not hinder the ability to build the energy infrastructure needed to access the United States' plentiful domestic natural gas resources.
- The White House should work with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to release \$300 million in funding for the Three Seas Initiative that was promised to Eastern Europe in 2020 for the construction of natural gas infrastructure necessary to diversify energy supplies.
- Opposition to any legislation requiring ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) on businesses. The fossil fuel industry contributes greatly to our state's economy and Oklahoma is home to thousands of fossil fuel industry employees. ESG policies are anti-fossil fuel and are motivated by political ideology rather than financial prudence.

Supply chain bottlenecks

Supply is in large part constrained because global supply chains have not healed from lockdowns. Supply chain problems are pushing prices higher because consumers have to pay more for scarce goods and businesses have to pay more for the inputs they need to produce these goods.

Historic levels of inflation

Small businesses everywhere are being impacted by the interrelated challenges of rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and the worker shortage crisis—but inflation is hitting small businesses especially hard. The U.S. Chamber released a report in June with the following information:

“While interest rate hikes have implications for the broader economy, nine in ten (91%) respondents say small businesses are the most vulnerable to rising interest rates (52% strongly agree with this). More than three-quarters (76%) say that rising interest rates are limiting their ability to raise capital, up from 66% who said the same last quarter. A similar percentage (73%) say it's harder to borrow money because banks are tightening lines of credit.

Half (50%) of small businesses report that they have delayed plans to grow their business in response to higher interest rates. A similar number (49%) indicate they have taken out a loan within the past year to cover higher costs due to inflation.

This is the sixth consecutive quarter where inflation tops the list of challenges for small business owners. More than half (54%) say inflation is a top challenge followed by interest rates rising (23%), supply chain issues (23%) and revenue (20%).” (Source: US Chamber. June 2023. *Inflation Has Eased, But Small Business Owners Say It's Still Their Biggest Challenge.*)