

# CITY OF GASTONIA

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AGENDA

(2011)

Before the 2011 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly, as well as the 1st Session of the 112<sup>th</sup> U. S. Congress, it shall be the official adopted position of the City of Gastonia, that the following priority initiatives/positions be aggressively pursued:

### FEDERAL PRIORITY ISSUES:

1. The City strongly supports the Authorization of a new Surface Transportation Funding Program that recognizes:
  - I. The central role and impact of Transportation Infrastructure and Transit on the economic viability and development of cities and their interconnected metropolitan regions;
  - II. The very clear long-term need to develop a sustainable, growing revenue source tied to “vehicle miles traveled” and not to the unsustainable formula of “gallons of fossil fuels burned”.
  - III. That the City’s highest priority for Infrastructure funding and completion is the expedited reconstruction and capacity upgrade of the I-85/US321 Interchange.
  - IV. That the City’s highest priority for Transit funding is the construction of the Multi-Modal Transit Center Project, currently under design.
2. The City strongly supports the creation and funding of Grant or tax incentive programs supporting “Green Energy” using waste byproducts (wastewater bio-solids, woody/green waste, refuse/trash, methane, etc.) to produce electricity and/or alternative fuels, and which offer an alternative to land application or land filling of bio-solids, and/or such other materials.
3. The City strongly supports the creation and funding of Grant programs to assist the introduction of regional, multi-agency 800 MHz communication systems for Public Safety interoperability.

### STATE PRIORITY ISSUES:

1. The City strongly supports the position that the State should not respond to its projected Budget deficit by seeking to cut or eliminate State-shared revenues to local governments.

Rather, the State should react to revenue decreases much like local governments do, by cuts to program expenditures.

2. The City strongly supports action of the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Community Assistance to Reallocate its \$5M award of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Neighborhood Stabilization Program #3 (NSP3), formula funds on a competitive application basis to only those eligible entities, and their project partners, experienced in managing CDBG/NSP project funds.

- I. Grants will range from \$500,000 to \$1Million.
- II. Preference will be given for the development of affordable rental housing.

**(This will support and allow the \$12M redevelopment of the Highland Hospital as 75 affordable Senior Housing Units; and, the \$2.5M redevelopment of the Marietta Street Apartments as 18 quality, market-rate apartment/condos only if the City receives the Maximum Grant of \$1Million.)**

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Legislative)

3. The City strongly supports a rating system more strongly weighted towards site/applicant specific criteria as part of the Qualified Application Plan (QAP) related to NC Housing Income Rating Designations through the NC Housing Finance Agency. The current rating criteria and procedures rely on regional growth patterns. As a result, Gastonia and Gaston County are unfairly penalized in qualifying for Low Income Housing tax credits when lumped together in a regional designation which includes Mecklenburg and York Counties. This could negatively impact the Highland Hospital Senior Housing Project Initiative and its absolute need to receive a substantive tax credit allocation to move forward.
4. The City strongly supports the continued funding of the North Carolina Grassroots Science Museum's Collaborative, which provides approximately \$226,000/year in critical program funding to the Schiele Museum for K-12 science competency education.
5. The City strongly supports the consolidation, interconnection, and regionalization of water and wastewater utilities through partnership and contractual negotiation, and encourages the State General Assembly to enact legislation which provides economic and regulatory incentives in support of such initiatives; or, economic or regulatory disincentives to the alternate. Conversely, the City strongly opposes any legislation which would mandate or compel consolidation or interconnection without local consent.
6. The City supports the existing system of State-regulated and locally-governed Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Boards, but also recognizes the possible need to bring greater efficiency and cost effectiveness to the overall system by the consolidation of smaller, under-performing jurisdictions. As such, the City asks the General Assembly to preserve local ABC Control and reward (not punish) those high-performing jurisdictions who are serving their citizens efficiently.

7. The City continues to support the existing legislative framework for extending municipal boundaries through annexation, but recognizes the Joint Legislative Study Commission's desire to bring greater fairness and representation to the current process of involuntary annexation. As such, the City asks the General Assembly to give thoughtful consideration to the NC League of Municipalities position(s) toward compromise on this issue. **(Without adequate and reasonable opportunities for the extension of municipal boundaries, the City of Gastonia will have no control over the land use planning decisions critical to the development of interchange areas associated with the Gaston East-West Connector Toll Road [Garden Parkway]).**
8. The City strongly supports Greater opportunities for local "Home-Rule" decision-making, specifically:
  - I. Legislation allowing municipalities to develop and implement procurement and bidding policies which incorporate objective, "local preference" mechanisms.
  - II. Legislation allowing municipalities to, with voter approval, request and impose, up to 1/2¢ municipal sales tax to fund ongoing Public Safety programs.
9. The City strongly supports program reforms within the NC Department of Transportation (DOT) designed to:
  - I. Assure the prioritized, expedited funding, design, and construction of a capacity-upgraded, and reconfigured I-85/US321 Interchange (**#1 Transportation Priority**).
  - II. Make funding distribution (equity formula) more objective and equitable across the State.
  - III. Increase internal coordination; decrease bureaucracy and delays; and speed up project design, review, and construction.
  - IV. Transfer jurisdictional responsibility of roads to local governments only to the extent that adequate, stable sources of funding accompany such transfers.
  - V. Develop adequate long-term revenue sources for road and transit funding which will grow in connection to the growth in system demand.
  - VI. Focus scarce resources on maintenance and reconstruction over new construction.
  - VII. Provide enhanced and/or expedited funding consideration to TIP-approved ROAD projects in jurisdictions where local funds are invested on State-jurisdiction roadways (**i.e. City's G.O. Bond program to expend \$24.6M on State Roads**).