



LEGISLATIVE 2026 PRIORITIES

City of Springfield • City Utilities of Springfield • Greene County • Missouri State University

Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership • Ozarks Technical Community College

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce • Springfield-Greene County Library District

Springfield Public Schools • Springfield Regional Arts Council • Visit Springfield, Missouri

Springfield Metro Partnership 2026 Legislative Priorities

Economic Development

The Springfield Metro Partnership supports proven tax credit programs that are used to stimulate employment and leverage private investment. We oppose efforts to reduce the effectiveness of programs that significantly impact job creation and result in a positive return on investment for the state.

Voluntary annexation is a key component to ensuring the future growth, health, and vibrancy of a community. As a result, the Partnership supports legislation that enhances the ability of cities to grow using the 'voluntary' annexation process.

The Partnership supports efforts to increase the availability of development-ready commercial and industrial building sites to foster local and statewide economic growth.

The Partnership supports releasing the restricted \$30 million in state funding for a convention and event center in Springfield, recognizing its importance to regional economic growth and tourism.

Education and Workforce Development

Missouri's prosperity in the global economy is directly linked to our ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce. The Partnership encourages investment in all levels of education, including adequate and sustained funding of the foundation formula and equitable funding and critical infrastructure investments for public universities and community colleges, while recognizing the critical workforce needs of key industries such as healthcare in the Springfield region.

The Partnership encourages robust investment in Missouri One Start, the state's workforce development system, and in the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant, to help meet employers' current and future needs.

The Partnership supports increasing the income eligibility for the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant from \$80,000 to \$100,000 for taxpayers who are married filing jointly and from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for all other taxpayers, adjusted annually based on inflation.

The Partnership supports innovative solutions to current workforce barriers, including childcare, transportation, housing availability and mental health services.

State Investments and Financial Future

Maintaining a balanced state budget without placing undue tax burden on citizens or reducing the effectiveness of essential state programs is key to Missouri's success. The Partnership supports strategic investments in programs and projects that support regional and statewide growth, including workforce and economic development efforts.

The Partnership encourages a fiscally responsible approach to state budgeting that ensures any broad-based tax reform measures include a corresponding and reliable revenue replacement.

The Partnership supports preserving local authority over real and personal property taxes and advancing balanced state reforms that respond to taxpayer concerns regarding rising assessments while ensuring communities can sustain essential services and fulfill local responsibilities.



Springfield Metro Partnership Legislative Guiding Principles

Elementary and Secondary Education

Quality education at all levels is a critical component to the health of the region. We support adequate and sustained funding of the state's K-12 foundation and transportation formulas.

Expecting academic rigor and accountability of our schools is key to providing students the skills necessary to compete in a global workforce. The Partnership supports the implementation of high and rigorous standards that develop the full potential of every child and opposes legislation that erodes the authority of local school boards or diverts resources from public schools to non-public schools.

The Partnership also supports investing in early childhood education, libraries and continuing education opportunities based on the public return on investment.

Higher Education

The Partnership encourages the General Assembly to eliminate the core funding disparities that result in Springfield area higher education institutions receiving less funding per student than other institutions throughout the state.

The Partnership supports funding public higher education institutions at the highest possible levels, including a four percent core funding increase for all public colleges and universities because of the positive impact they have on all facets of life in Missouri, including economic and workforce development.

The Partnership supports funding for capital priorities at Ozarks Technical Community College and Missouri State University. Funding these projects aligns higher education funding with the state's workforce priorities, while meeting the needs of employers.

Environment

The Partnership encourages environmental standards that provide a balance between protecting our area's natural resources and ensuring regional economic growth. We support innovative strategies for meeting environmental mandates that require community affordability to be addressed within the evaluation process.

Libraries and the Arts

The Partnership supports the role of the arts, libraries, and cultural organizations as contributing to the economic health, educational growth and tourism of our region.

We support funding from the Non-Resident Professional Athletes and Entertainers Tax, and the distribution of those funds as intended, without budgetary constraints or withholdings, including allocation to the Missouri Cultural Trust.

The Partnership supports current local policies and procedures regarding access to material for library users.

Local Authority

There are narrow circumstances, such as a statewide crisis, in which a governor needs the ability to override local regulations. Beyond those circumstances, the Partnership opposes limiting local authority. State-mandated solutions and preemption of local laws limit the flexibility of local government. An alternative to preemption is for the State of Missouri to forge alliances with local government.

Preserving Local Elections

The Partnership supports preserving the April option for municipal elections and keeping local elections nonpartisan.

Local Funding

Passed in 2021, Senate Bills 153 and 97 have enabled Missouri to collect existing online use taxes without requiring a statewide vote, safeguarding local brick-and-mortar businesses from unfair out-of-state competition. The Partnership supports amending state law to grant local jurisdictions the same ability to adopt and collect existing online sales tax, ensuring additional protections for local businesses and local revenue opportunities.

The Partnership supports efforts to improve public safety due to its impact on the economic growth of the region.

The Partnership supports capital investments in local quality of place enhancements, including regional trail systems, the Springfield-Branson National Airport, Lake Springfield developments, a convention and event center, and safety and capacity upgrades to Interstate 44.

Travel & Tourism Industry

Growth in the travel industry is essential to Missouri's economic health, as it drives job creation and generates significant revenue. In Springfield alone, tourism generates more than \$1 billion in annual economic impact and supports nearly 20,000 jobs. Investment in tourism marketing consistently delivers a strong return, making it a proven and effective economic development strategy.

The Partnership supports continued funding of the Division of Tourism at a level that allows the state to compete effectively for out-of-state visitors while also encouraging Missourians to travel within the state. We also support exploring a new dedicated tourism funding mechanism and changes to the Tourism Supplemental Fund to provide stable, reliable resources that enable long-term, strategic tourism investments, strengthen local economies, and increase statewide economic impact for cities and communities across Missouri.

Additionally, the Partnership supports continued funding for the Meet in Missouri program and updates to the Show-Me Act. These programs serve as essential incentives for attracting visitors, meetings, conventions, events, and film production to communities across Missouri.

We also support continued funding for the Missouri Route 66 Centennial Committee to help attract new international visitors. The 2026 Route 66 Centennial represents a rare and powerful opportunity to showcase Missouri on a global stage and drive long-term international visitation to the state.

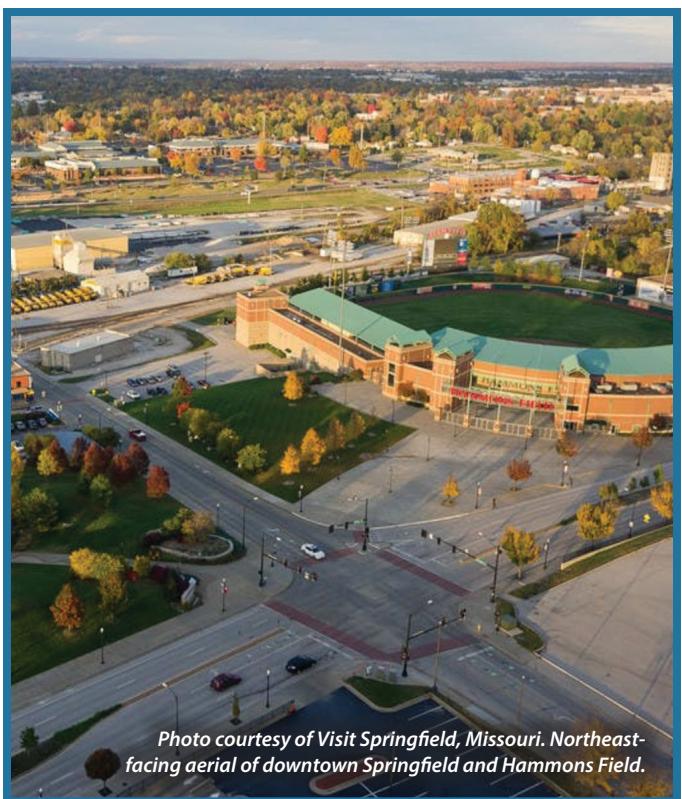


Photo courtesy of Visit Springfield, Missouri. Northeast-facing aerial of downtown Springfield and Hammons Field.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Transportation and infrastructure are critical to the economic success of our region and state. The Partnership encourages legislators to partner and collaborate with local leaders, public officials, transportation planning organizations, citizen groups and other stakeholders to provide predictable and long-term funding for transportation investment. We support efforts to find alternative sources of funding for transportation infrastructure to ensure continued and robust investment.

We support efforts to accelerate the construction of projects when local communities are willing to assist with the financing of transportation improvements.

The Partnership supports continued funding for Springfield's public transit system to address the significant increase in costs to operate the transit system.

The Partnership opposes the transfer of state-owned roadways to local ownership and maintenance.

The Partnership supports the expansion of broadband throughout the state.



Rail Haven, a 1938 Springfield Route 66 landmark honoring the birthplace of Route 66.

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