



2017 Legislative Agenda

Economic/ Workforce Development:

- We support tax policies and other economic development tools that encourage investment in Douglasville and Douglas County businesses, enhancing our global competitiveness and creating more jobs for our community. We oppose legislative measures that would negatively impact our business climate, are discriminatory in nature or would harm our ability to create, attract, retain and expand jobs in our community.
- We believe Development Authorities are at the core of most economic development projects in the state. We oppose legislative measures that seek to inhibit development authorities from recruiting and retaining quality jobs to our state and local community.
- We encourage incentives to train and educate needed workforce in the growing fields of industrial maintenance, STEAM, and related career pathways in order to fill numerous available jobs. The Chamber currently promotes these fields to elementary, middle and high school students, parents and counselors with regard for career pathway options with the College and Career Institute (CCI) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing, and Mathematics) Programs.
- We urge Congress to require remote sellers to collect sales tax and distribute the funds back to the consumer's state. Once the state receives the sales tax, the state should be required to remit the appropriate sales tax revenue to local governments within their state. Such legislation to assist state and local governments to uniformly collect existing sales taxes should be expedited and not be tied to broader federal tax reform, as it has no impact on the federal tax burden. (recommended by Douglas County and Douglasville)

Transportation:

- We strongly support the funding for studying, planning, designing, and construction of a redesigned I-20/I-285 interchange on the western side of Atlanta to improve the safety, speed and traffic flow from the West, which affects every county in West Georgia. This interchange has not been significantly improved, modified or redesigned since its original development, and now, clearly lacks ability to safely and adequately address capacity flowing through this corridor.
- We strongly encourage our government partners at the local, state, and federal level to study, design, plan, and construct a redesign of the Bright Star Bridge/I-20 corridor to include on/off ramps at I-20, which could safely accommodate flow and greatly relieve pressure along I-20 at Hwy 5, Chapel Hill Road/Campbellton Street, and other interior corridors. We view this also as an economic catalyst for positive growth in the County and region.

- We strongly support two of the most important projects defined in the Douglas County Comprehensive Transportation Plan: the Lee Road Widening and the Lee Road Extension. While the Lee Road Widening project is expected to be ready to go to construction in mid-year 2016, it is very important to have support for full construction funding for this project in order not to delay implementation. The Lee Road Extension is the next important phase of the plan for this corridor. Support is also needed to obtain preliminary engineering funds through the regional transportation planning process. These two projects along with the expected completion of the Lee Road Interchange by the end of this year will positively impact existing and future mobility and create new opportunities for quality economic development in Douglas County.

Water:

- We support amending the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, so as to allow for the certification of certain local water and/or sewer authorities and storm water utilities as “local issuing authorities” by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.
- We support workable inter-basin water transfer regulation and the continued management of our region’s water resources to meet the needs of our growing population and industrial sectors.

Education:

- We request adequate funding to provide an education of excellence to every student. Given the undisputable positive impact of public education on the long-term economic prosperity and well-being of our community, we ask that public education operating budgets be funded fully under current state funding laws and no less favorably should the funding formula be changed.
- We urge the General Assembly to align legislative initiatives with state constitutional provisions regarding the control, management, and funding of our public schools.

Healthcare:

- We support local hospitals and emergency medical providers by requesting improved reimbursement levels for Medicaid providers (who provide essential, but unprofitable services such as emergency care), maintaining the current Certificate of Need (CON) process that has served Georgia and our community well, and continuing to look for ways to help avoid costs associated with unfunded mandates and defensive medicine.