

CITY COUNCIL INITIATIVE:

Retaining/Attracting Young Professionals



There must be a push to ensure Topeka is attractive to young professionals to live, develop businesses and raise families. We must create a viable atmosphere for young professionals to thrive based on principles and planning. We cannot use false marketing as a ploy, but must take real actions to foster a community that has attainable opportunities and possibilities.

Young Professionals Advisory Board: Instead of telling young professionals what they need, let them tell us directly by creating a Young Professionals Advisory Board that reports directly to the Mayor and City Council. Then, implement the initiatives!

Foster Innovation: We must have programs that provide resources to innovators: Cooperative efforts with think-tanks; relationships with tech schools and Universities; and host innovation fairs and festivals.

Incubators: Economic Development initiatives must include private/public partnerships to develop public incubators so the “next big thing” is developed in Topeka, regardless of an individual's economic status.

Capital Investment: Access to Capital and Start Up funds is the No. 1 challenge facing young professionals with business ideas. Economic Development funds must be available for capital investment. The City must also work with lenders to create programs with longer payback terms and low interest rates.

Entertainment District: Whether it's Downtown or another area, Topeka must create a Master Plan and develop an entertainment district.

Childcare: Topeka needs more affordable, reliable child care. The City must work with existing programs to increase opportunities for those who need day care all hours of the day.

Inclusion: All young professionals are not alike. They work in different industries, have varying economic statuses and are engaged in different initiatives. Reaching out to all levels of young professionals is essential to creating a vibrant community.

Public Transportation: Bus routes need expanded and hours extended. Taxi service must be significantly improved. Ride Sharing programs need development.

Safe, reliable public transportation is essential to future road improvements and quality of life.

Entertainment Options: While supporting entities such as the Topeka Performing Arts Center, Stormont Vail Events Center, Heartland Park, etc., Topeka must develop new venues, including an event center that attracts national & international travelling exhibits.

Art & Culture: Topeka must address the needs of the art community beyond just NOTO. The City must support local artist initiatives, including use of public space for art showings & gatherings, at no or minimal cost to artists. We must also develop an art incubator program.

Sustainability: A commercial recycling, renewable energy, sustainability Master Plan can improve with direction.

Better Living: Increased wages, access to health services, strong public safety, safe public schools. These are areas the City cannot allow to deteriorate and must improve if it expects young professionals to call Topeka home.

Advocacy: City Council members must advocate in the City and outside on issues that make Topeka welcoming. We must pass laws that ensure Topeka is open to all and supportive of teachers, firefighters, police, while advocating for increased and equal wages, access to health care, equality and local control. City Council members must advocate for these policies at the state & federal level, showing we stand behind values important to creating a welcoming community.

Business Training: With economic development funds, we must provide access to free or inexpensive business education programs. Not every innovator holds a business degree and we want them to have an understanding of what it takes to succeed.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer".