



**SHAWNEE  
COUNTY  
GOP**

## **Shawnee County Republicans Local Candidate Primary Survey**

### **1. Tell voters about yourself:**

Henry McClure has 45 years of real estate experience in real estate transactions of all kinds. Most of my career has been dedicated to Shopping Mall re-development, commercial leasing, commercial sales, Mixed-Use/TIF redevelopment and sales of residential and commercial real estate. I have played real advisory roles including but not limited, commercial and residential development, leasing, zoning, real estate tax valuation, platting issues and Brokers Opinions. #mcre1

### **2. What is the state of the Topeka economy and what is the biggest thing the mayor or city council can do to improve it?**

The economy in Topeka remains stagnant, with negligible growth in new business ventures or economic opportunities. Individuals with stable employment and no reliance on government assistance may be insulated from immediate hardship; however, the wealth disparity between the top 1% and those living in poverty continues to widen at an alarming rate. Excessive taxation policies are placing undue pressure on homeowners, resulting in displacement, while substantial funds are allocated to chamber members as apparent recompense for prior political favors.

Topeka must fundamentally reevaluate its approach to economic development. Decades of strategies centered on population growth and tax base expansion have proven ineffective, largely due to inefficient allocation of resources. For instance, Go Topeka incurs \$3.5 million in overhead costs to manage a \$5 million grant, representing an unsustainable administrative burden that diminishes the impact of these funds. Significant resources have also been misallocated to corporate subsidies and opaque agreements that fail to deliver tangible benefits to taxpayers.

As Mayor, I propose the establishment of a citizens' commission tasked with creating a compelling "DRAW" to our community, fostering private-sector-driven growth independent of government subsidies. This commission should develop standardized development agreements for Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Improvement Districts (CID), and Rural Housing Incentive Districts (RHID). Topeka must shift away from government-driven market manipulation and the practice of selecting favored entities, instead prioritizing organic market development to ensure sustainable economic progress.

**3. Roads are a major concern to the residents in the city of Topeka. What is your plan to address this major concern?**

As mayor, I will prioritize placing public involvement at the forefront of Topeka's transportation planning to ensure full compliance with the federal guidelines mandated by the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO) and the U.S. Department of Transportation. I will collaborate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), and other funding agencies to maximize funding while adhering to MTPO's Public Participation Plan.

By emphasizing transparent, inclusive, and proactive community engagement, we will incorporate resident input into all transportation projects, fostering trust and accountability. Additionally, I will advocate for allocating the \$5 million in economic development funds to enhance Topeka's Street infrastructure, as well-maintained roads are critical for economic growth, safety, and community connectivity.

**4. How satisfied are you with the current City Council's demands of property tax collection and their use of public funds? And compared to the current Topeka City Council, what, if anything, would you seek to do differently concerning property tax demands and the spending of taxpayer dollars?**

How satisfied are you with the current City Council's demands of property tax collection.

Property tax hikes are a sore spot for many Topeka, Kansas, residents, especially when they outpace inflation or hit during tough economic times. In 2025, Topeka's city council is grappling with a proposed property tax increase to address a \$15 million budget deficit, driven by rising costs for social services like adult care and infrastructure maintenance. The council has proposed raising the mill levy by one full mill, from 36.952 to 37.952 mills, which would increase property taxes for homeowners. For a home valued at \$150,000, this could mean an additional \$17.25 per year in taxes, based on the Kansas assessment rate of 11.5%. This proposal, set to be finalized after a public budget hearing

on September 10, 2024, has sparked concern among residents and businesses, who, like those in nearby Kansas City facing valuation spikes, demand clarity on how funds will support critical services without overburdening taxpayers their use of public funds

As a seasoned real estate developer deeply invested in the Topeka community, I am compelled to express my profound outrage and frustration over the flagrant misuse of public funds by the city government. The pattern of reckless spending, unprofessional conduct, and questionable decision-making is not only deplorable but an affront to the taxpayers who deserve better stewardship of their hard-earned money.

Let us begin with the egregious purchase of the hotel, where the city squandered \$554,000 on a consultant who failed to personally respond to a legitimate \$7.6 million offer I had on the table. This lack of professionalism and disregard for viable opportunities is symptomatic of a broader issue: the city's consistent mishandling of transactions at the expense of its citizens. My firsthand experience reveals an arms-length approach that is not only inappropriate but borders on incompetence.

Equally infuriating is the city's imposition of \$1.7 million in unnecessary street improvements on a fellow developer for the Chick-fil-A and Whataburger project. These excessive requirements, driven by overzealous consultants, serve no practical purpose and burden developers who are working to revitalize our community. This is but the tip of the iceberg. The city's \$9.5 million allocation to the AT&T building mirrors the same shortsighted deal as the \$1 million Wolf Camera lease—a gross overpayment for negligible returns.

The reliance on consultants in Topeka is not just excessive; it is reckless and potentially corrupt. The city paid \$1 million to a California-based engineering firm for street improvements and road projects that were overdesigned and devoid of common sense. At every turn, the city opts to hire external consultants rather than leveraging local expertise or applying basic business acumen. This practice must cease, and we need leaders who can provide grounded, practical guidance to steer Topeka toward fiscal responsibility.

Furthermore, the funding of non-governmental organizations demands immediate scrutiny. GO Topeka's \$3.8 million in operational overhead is indefensible, as is their allocation of \$1.3 million to charities. While cloaked as generosity, these donations are little more than strategic maneuvers to curry favor and perpetuate the re-election of entrenched officials. Such actions undermine public trust and reek of corruption.

I demand a comprehensive audit of these expenditures and a reevaluation of the city's priorities. Topeka deserves leadership that respects taxpayer dollars, fosters transparent and professional dealings, and prioritizes the economic vitality of our community. As a real estate professional whose livelihood is tied to this city, I implore you to address these issues with the urgency they require. The time for accountability is now.

Would you seek to do differently concerning property tax demands?

The day we make these changes our lives change – here is my plan and a draft to change the state law.

#### Homestead Tax Act of 2025

Henceforth, property taxes will be calculated based on the purchase price for the duration of ownership. True market value is determined by what a willing seller accepts, and a willing buyer pays. Additionally, homeowners aged 65 and older will benefit from a significant tax reduction, with the assessed value of their primary residence reduced to 10%.

#### Benefits to all Kansans

Taxation at real values in real time will attract people to Kansas by ensuring fairness and financial relief for senior citizens, allowing them to remain in their homes without excessive tax burdens. This policy prevents individuals from being taxed out of their homes, promoting stability. It compels the government to align with real estate realities, eliminating phantom evaluations and inflated values. By fostering transparency, it ensures equitable taxation and encourages sustainable community growth.

#### Draft

#### HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.

A PROPOSITION to amend section 1 of article 11 of the constitution of the state of Kansas; relating to property taxation; determining valuations for real property used for residential purposes.

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Kansas, two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the House of Representatives and two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the Senate concurring therein:

Section 1. The following proposition to amend the constitution of the state of Kansas shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the state for their approval or rejection:

Section 1 of article 11 of the constitution of the state of Kansas is hereby amended to read as follows:

"§ 1. System of taxation; classification; exemption. (a) The provisions of this subsection shall govern the assessment and taxation of property on and after January 1, 2013 2027, and each year thereafter. Except as otherwise hereinafter specifically provided, the legislature shall provide for a uniform and equal basis of valuation and rate of taxation of all property subject to taxation. The legislature may provide for the classification and the taxation uniformly as to class of recreational vehicles and watercraft, as defined by the legislature, or may exempt such class from property taxation and impose taxes upon

another basis in lieu thereof. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable to the taxation of motor vehicles, except as otherwise hereinafter specifically provided, mineral products, money, mortgages, notes and other evidence of debt and grain.

The taxable valuation of real property used for residential purposes

including multi-family residential real property and real property necessary to accommodate a residential community of mobile or manufactured homes including the real property upon which such homes are located, classified for property tax purposes pursuant to subclass (1) of class 1, shall be determined based on the sales price for the year in which the property transferred ownership if the transfer was sold at fair market value or valued pursuant to law as fair market value in the year in which the transfer occurred for the current owner.

Property shall be classified into the following classes for the purpose of assessment and assessed at the percentage of value prescribed therefor:

**and the spending of taxpayer dollars?**

**5. Do you agree with the purchasing of Hotel Topeka and are you in favor of or opposed to the continuation of taxpayer dollars being used to maintain it. Why or why not?**

No

First, such purchases divert taxpayer money from core priorities like infrastructure, schools, or healthcare into speculative ventures that cities are ill-equipped to manage. Hotels are complex businesses, and governments often lack the expertise to operate or repurpose them efficiently, leading to cost overruns or underutilized properties. The Citywest deal, for instance, sparked local protests over the loss of a community amenity and strained public services, showing how these decisions can backfire.

Second, these acquisitions distort the real estate market. When a city buys a hotel, it can inflate property values or depress competition, as private buyers are sidelined. This tilts the playing field, favoring government-backed projects over free-market solutions. It's the kind of meddling that punishes honest businesses and stifles innovation, as you've seen in your decades in the industry.

Finally, the lack of transparency in these deals reeks of cronyism. Backroom negotiations often determine which properties are bought and how they're repurposed, with little accountability for the inevitable losses taxpayers will shoulder if the project fails.

Public funds should stick to public needs, not prop up or take over private enterprises. Cities buying hotels is a risky bet that often leaves taxpayers on the hook while undermining the competitive markets that drive prosperity

**6. Should DEI be utilized in the hiring/recruitment process of city employees or government contracts?**

NO way NO how.

**7. What lasting thoughts would you like to leave with primary voters and what is your message of why they should vote for you in August?**

Change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change." It's often attributed to [Tony Robbins](#),

Topeka's stagnation reflects a deeper issue: an entrenched resistance to meaningful change. The power of change lies in its ability to break cycles of complacency, disrupt outdated systems, and unlock a community's potential. For too long, Topeka has leaned on the same strategies—corporate handouts through Go Topeka, recycled ideas from the Greater Topeka Partnership, and a narrow pool of voices dominating boards and commissions.

These approaches have failed to broaden our tax base, attract new residents, or spark economic vitality. Real change demands bold, inclusive action. It starts with empowering the public to shape the city's future, not leaving decisions to a select few. Diversifying appointments to commissions and boards brings fresh perspectives, fostering policies that reflect the needs of all Topekans, not just the well-connected.

Change means prioritizing grassroots innovation over top-down directives from NGOs and the Chamber, encouraging ideas that emerge from neighborhoods, small businesses, and everyday citizens. This shift can transform Topeka into a dynamic, resilient city. By embracing change, we can build an economy that draws new families, supports local entrepreneurs, and reduces the tax burden on residents. It's about creating a Topeka where opportunity thrives, not one trapped by the inertia of "how things have always been done."

Voting for a leader like Henry McClure, who is willing to challenge entrenched interests and champion a new vision, harnesses the power of change to redefine our city's trajectory.