



2019 State Legislative Program

The *2019 State Legislative Program* is a policy document that expresses the position of the City of Manhattan for the 2019 Legislative Session. It is not intended to be either an exclusive or an all-inclusive document, but rather captures the major policy positions of the City. The City of Manhattan endorses the legislative positions and policies of the 2019 Statement of Municipal Policy from the League of Kansas Municipalities to the extent where it does not conflict with items listed in this document (available online at <http://www.lkm.org/smp/>). We encourage area legislators and citizens to contact City officials regarding any issue that could potentially impact local units of government. City Commissioners and City Administration welcome questions and insights and are happy to offer their knowledge and experience on those matters affecting local government.

Please direct questions or requests for additional information to

City of Manhattan

Jared Wasinger, Assistant to the City Manager

1101 Poyntz Avenue

Manhattan, KS 66502

(785) 587-2404

FAX: (785) 587-2409

wasinger@cityofmnhk.com

Contents

2019 CITY OF MANHATTAN ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY	3
2019 TOP LEGISLATIVE ACTION PRIORITIES	4
Internet Sales Tax	4
Dark Store Valuation – Alternative Property Valuation – Hypothetical Lease Fee	4
North Campus Bioscience & Global Food Systems Corridor	5
Comprehensive State Transportation Plan	5
Property Tax Lid	6
Kansas State University - Higher Education Funding	6
2019 SECONDARY LEGISLATIVE ACTION PRIORITIES	6
Mental Health and the Expansion of Medicaid	6
State Shared Revenues	7
Property Valuation Caps	7
City Right-of-Way Management	8
Public Retirement Systems (KPERS)	8
Abandoned and Blighted Housing	9
Weapons and Firearms	9
FORT RILEY	10
2019 STANDING LEGISLATIVE ITEMS	11
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	11
FINANCE	11
Accumulated Interest on Delinquent Special Assessment Taxes	11
Budget Timing	11
School Finance Formula	11
Financing Tools	11
State Budget Concerns/Tax Policy	11
Taxes Paid Under Protest	11
Unfunded Mandates	11
GOVERNANCE	12
Airline Revenue Guarantee	12
Annexation	12
Consolidation of Services	12
Home Rule and Local Control	12
Local Elections	12
Political Signs in Public Right-of-Way	12
Public Property and Rights-of-Way	13
Stormwater Grant and Loan Program	13
Water & Wastewater Quality	13

2019 CITY OF MANHATTAN ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

TOP ACTION ITEMS

[Internet Sales Tax](#) - Given the recent Supreme Court ruling in *South Dakota v. Wayfair*, the City supports legislation establishing an online sales tax framework assuring state and local governments the authority to collect sales tax on remote sales, ending the tax abatement for online retailers. Remitted taxes should be distributed using existing methods/formulas to state and local governments.

[Dark Store Theory – Alternative Property Valuation](#) - The City of Manhattan opposes any legislation that artificially limits or otherwise alters property valuation. BOTA should use proven techniques to consider fair market value and State Legislation should be adopted to prohibit the use of hypothetical lease fee as a property valuation technique.

[North Campus Bioscience & Global Food Systems Corridor](#) - The City supports the Legislature exploring amendments to existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) laws that would 1) allow cities to capture all or a percentage of Kansas withholding taxes generated from new bioscience jobs within designated bioscience districts, and 2) allow the use of TIF revenues to be used toward the private development of R&D facilities and other infrastructure within designated bioscience districts.

[Property Tax Lid](#) - The City of Manhattan supports adding employee benefit funds as an exemption to the tax lid, and supports removing the special election process and replacing it with a protest petition.

[Comprehensive State Transportation Plan](#) - The City supports the Legislature following through on the T-Works spending plan, implementation of an effective long-term multi-modal transportation program, and increasing the motor fuels tax to better fund KDOT and increase contributions to the Special City/County Highway Fund (SCCHF).

[Kansas State University – Higher Education Funding](#) - The City of Manhattan supports the Kansas Legislature fully funding the budget requests from the Kansas Board of Regents regarding Kansas State University.

SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS

[Mental Health and the Expansion of Medicaid](#) - The City supports the continued restoration of grant funding that has been cut from Community Mental Health Centers such as Pawnee Mental Health, and also supports the State of Kansas providing a sustained source of funding to assist financing operations of their Mental Health Stabilization Center in Manhattan. The City supports the expansion of the State's Medicaid Program, KanCare.

[State Shared Revenues](#) - The City supports the reactivation of previously eliminated state-shared revenues. The City strongly opposes budget-balancing measures that simply displace the problem by reducing or eliminating revenue distributions and reimbursements to local government.

[Property Valuation Caps](#) - The City supports a uniform and equal basis of valuation and rate of taxation of all property subject to taxation, and opposes any efforts to cap property appraisal increases.

[City Right-of-Way Management](#) - The City of Manhattan supports legislation that enables local officials and the citizens they represent to better control and manage the public right-of-way.

[Kansas Public Employee Retirement System \(KPERs\)](#) - The City of Manhattan encourages the legislature to honor its full funding commitments to KPERs. The City requests that the legislature include local governments in discussions about changes to KPERs or the Kansas Police & Fire Retirement System (KP&F).

[Abandoned and Blighted Housing](#) - The City of Manhattan supports legislation that streamlines and expedites the process to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance, foreclosed housing, and commercial structures.

[Weapons and Firearms](#) - The City supports the ability of local governments to set policies regarding the carrying of weapons and firearms by municipal employees while they are engaged in their work. We support the local regulation of firearms and weapons.

2019 TOP LEGISLATIVE ACTION PRIORITIES

Internet Sales Tax

The inability of governments to collect local option sales or compensating use tax on remote sales continues to erode local and state revenues. The League of Kansas Municipalities estimates that cities Kansas have missed out on over \$369 million in revenue over past 10 years. Collection of sales tax on remote sales would level the playing field between online and brick-and-mortar retailers by eliminating the tax abatement for certain online retailers. This is not a new tax, rather it is simply an issue with the collection of a tax that should already be occurring. We encourage the State to establish a program that would require remote sellers to secure the collection of a buyer's tax rate. If main street retailers cannot keep up as a result of this growing disadvantage, the ripple effect in lost jobs and revenue along with vacant buildings throughout business districts will threaten our communities' sustainability. Legislation must be passed to correct this.

- 2017 was the all-time highest year for retail store closures. Brick and mortar stores in Kansas communities are feeling those impacts. The City of Manhattan estimates over \$6 million in lost revenue from uncollected tax on remote sales between 2011-Present.
- Following the Supreme Court's ruling in *South Dakota v. Wayfair*, over 30 states have passed legislation similar to South Dakota, allowing states to tax remote sales from out-of-state sellers who generate an economic nexus within their state.

ACTION ITEM:

- **Given the recent Supreme Court ruling in *South Dakota v. Wayfair*, we support legislation establishing an online sales tax framework assuring state and local governments the authority to collect sales tax on remote sales, ending the tax abatement for online retailers. Remitted taxes should be distributed using existing methods/formulas to state and local governments.**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- HB 2235 & HB 2400 - similar to the South Dakota law upheld by the US Supreme Court

Dark Store Valuation – Alternative Property Valuation – Hypothetical Lease Fee

The City of Manhattan supports a fair and consistent approach to the valuation of property. Property taxes are an important revenue stream for local government services. Taxation should reflect the services furnished and funded by cities and take into consideration economic realities and properties should always be valued at true market value.

- Inconsistencies in the valuation process lead to large swings of value and in turn affect a city's ability to properly plan for estimated revenue available.
- In combination with the State of Kansas Property Tax lid that was passed a few years ago this alternative valuation process is very debilitating for cities and counties that may be experiencing growth and a demand for services.
- The Kansas Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA) process should be fair and equitable for both the taxpayer and counties, driven by true market values, or if the alternative state-wide reclassification should occur.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City opposes any legislation that artificially limits or otherwise alters residential and commercial property valuation.**
- **BOTA should use proven techniques to consider fair market value for residential and commercial properties and State Legislation should be adopted to prohibit the use of hypothetical lease fee as a property valuation technique.**

North Campus Bioscience & Global Food Systems Corridor

The City of Manhattan and Kansas State are jointly preparing for the growth associated with the 2025 Vision of K-State and the realization of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The North Campus Corridor adjacent to and near NBAF will require vital infrastructure improvements in order to serve as a catalyst for private development. Such improvements will reconstruct and widen streets, develop safer intersections with pedestrian and vehicle traffic controls, improve and add sidewalks with pedestrian amenities, install signage and way finding, and insert entry features at pivotal intersections.

- It is anticipated that several agricultural and animal health research organizations will seek to locate in Manhattan over the next five to ten years, with a majority of private development expected to be in the form of R&D type facilities. The private sector companies will be seeking to develop relationships with various agriculture departments such as the K-State Food Science Institute, the Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI) and NBAF-related research.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City of Manhattan supports the Legislature exploring amendments to existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) laws that would 1) allow cities to capture all or a percentage of Kansas withholding taxes generated from new bioscience jobs within designated bioscience districts, and 2) allow the use of TIF revenues to be used toward the private development of R&D facilities and other infrastructure within designated bioscience districts.**
- **The City of Manhattan supports continuation of the STAR Bond Program.**

Comprehensive State Transportation Plan

Long-term multi-modal transportation program planning is vital to growth areas such as Manhattan. Regional approaches to transportation planning are key.

- T-WORKS has lost over \$1 billion since inception. The current funding level is far from adequate to address ongoing statewide needs in the areas of preservation, maintenance, and safety.
- Over the past ten years the City has received on average \$1 million per year in Federal and State transportation grants funneled through KDOT for vital infrastructure projects. The City has many concerns with funds continually pulled from KDOT regarding available state fund grants, and worries that continued cuts could negatively affect the city's ability to get federal grants through the state as well.
- The Kansas Legislature should continue to look for ways to raise new revenues to address the state's remaining transportation needs. This could include increases to motor fuel taxes. Distributions from those motor fuel taxes to cities and counties should not be decreased from their current level.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City supports the Legislature following through on the T-Works spending plan passed in 2010 (\$4.6 billion) and supports the creation and implementation of a new and effective long-term multi-modal transportation program aligned with the region's priorities.**
- **The City of Manhattan supports increasing the motor fuels tax to better fund KDOT and increase contributions to the Special City/County Highway Fund (SCCHF).**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- SB 224 –Raised motor fuels tax \$0.05. Received Senate hearing in 2017.
- HB 2382 –Raised motor fuels tax \$0.11. Received House hearing in 2017.

Property Tax Lid

Local taxing and spending decisions for a community should be made by local officials who were elected to shoulder that responsibility and should not occur at the State level. The City supports repeal of the property tax lid. If repeal of the tax lid does not occur, additional exemptions and changes to make the law more feasible should be considered.

- Cities are often hit by health insurance increases that are outside of their control. Those marketplace increases should be exempt from the tax lid.
- The cost of a special election is significant, and would not coincide with the timing necessary to approve a budget and provide it to the State. A protest petition would be more effective.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City supports full repeal of the tax lid.**
- **The City supports adding employee benefit funds as an exemption to the tax lid.**
- **The City supports removing the special election process and replacing it with a protest petition.**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- SB 167 – Full Repeal
- HB 2424 – Exemption of Employee Benefits. 2017 Committee Report recommended bill be passed as amended by Committee on Taxation.
- HB 2376 – Changing the election process to protest petition. Received House hearing in 2017.

Kansas State University - Higher Education Funding

The City of Manhattan has a great partnership and town-gown relationship with Kansas State University. Past budget cuts from the State to higher education have made it harder for Kansas State to grow and thrive as an economic hub for this region.

- K-State is the largest employer in the area and is a key driver for the economy in the City and also for the State of Kansas.
- K-State received approximately \$1.79 million in budget restorations in 2018, but funding still falls short from fully restoring the significant cuts to higher education that have occurred over the years. K-State was forced to make an additional \$15 million in cuts for the 2018-19 academic year due to enrollment declines.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City of Manhattan supports the Kansas Legislature fully funding the budget requests from the Kansas Board of Regents regarding Kansas State University.**

2019 SECONDARY LEGISLATIVE ACTION PRIORITIES

Mental Health and the Expansion of Medicaid

State funding for community based mental health services must be restored and expanded across the State in order to improve a mental health system that is stretched beyond its ability to provide the right care at the right time, in the right place for Kansas citizens. Expansion of Medicaid would also provide coverage for those who have a mental illness so they can access needed mental health treatment in their communities. In Kansas, untreated mental illness is associated with an estimated 128 suicides, 21,000 incarcerations and 29,000 unemployed adults, costing the private sector, including employers, nearly \$429 million per year.

- The State has cut the Mental Health Reform Grant by \$20 million over last 10 years. The State took a positive step in 2017 by restoring \$7.5 million, but more is needed. State levels of funding should at a minimum be restored to their 2007 levels.
- Nearly 3,000 people alone in Riley County would benefit from Medicaid (KanCare) expansion that are currently not eligible.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City supports the expansion of the State’s Medicaid Program, KanCare.**
- **The City supports the continued restoration of grant funding that has been cut prior from Community Mental Health Centers such as Pawnee Mental Health Center here in Manhattan.**
- **The City supports the State of Kansas providing a sustained source of funding to Pawnee Mental Health Center to assist in the financing operations of their Mental Health Stabilization Center in Manhattan.**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- HB 2313 - Lottery ticket vending machines with portion of proceeds going towards mental health crisis centers.
- HB 2044 – KanCare Expansion. Passed Senate and House and was vetoed by the Governor in 2017.

State Shared Revenues

The State has discontinued, reduced or threatened a number of shared revenue sources that have previously constituted significant contributions to local government, including the following: Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) program; City County Revenue Share (CCRS) distributions; and State Liquor Tax Distributions. The resulting effect of these reductions to local governments has become a greater burden on the State’s taxpayers.

- In 2002 and 2003, the State was experiencing financial difficulties and cut Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) and City County Revenue Share (CCRS) to local municipalities. The intention of the State legislature at that time was to reinstate those items when the economy turned around. Those revenues have not been returned to any municipalities as of yet. *The State Legislature is required by Kansas statutes to help relieve the burden on property taxpayers by funding LAVTR program.*
- In sum, the City of Manhattan estimates to have missed out on \$15,078,749 in revenue from those sources since 2002. The city was receiving in the range of \$500,000 per year from LAVTR in 2002 and estimates nearly \$9,648,061 in lost revenue from that source. The CCRS revenue was in the \$300,000 per year range in 2003, and lost revenue is estimated at \$5,430,688 over that time.
- The City is especially concerned about the direct impact to citizens if further reductions are made in State Liquor Tax distributions which fund numerous social service agencies, programs, and initiatives supported by the Special Parks and Recreation Fund and the Special Alcohol Programs Fund.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City supports the reactivation of previously eliminated state-shared revenues.**
- **The City strongly opposes budget-balancing measures that simply displace the problem by reducing or eliminating revenue distributions and reimbursements to local government.**

Property Valuation Caps

Properties should be assessed at fair market value. In 1986, Kansas Voters passed legislation in which properties should be taxed on a uniform and equal basis. At the time, the amendment was passed due

to the state's entire property tax system being out of alignment in regards to valuation of different types of properties.

- In a growing community market like Manhattan, where homes often sell quickly and actual sales prices can rise significantly each year, this cap would be limiting.
- The State Constitution does not allow for property appraisal valuation caps as they would violate the uniform and equal standards for property appraisals.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City supports a uniform and equal basis of valuation and rate of taxation of all property subject to taxation.**
- **The City opposes any efforts to cap property appraisal increases.**

City Right-of-Way Management

More and more private companies and individuals are requesting to locate infrastructure in the public right-of-way for personal benefit or profit. The City is currently seeing a large amount of small cell facilities that are wanting to locate in the public right-of-way and will continue to see growth in the future. State and federal policies continue to erode the city's ability to control those small cell facilities and other entities in its own right-of-way.

- Cities should be able to enforce maintenance and repair standards on franchises that disturb the public right-of-way and/or damage the existing public infrastructure.
- Cities should be able to negotiate aesthetic policies and practices for equipment being located in the public right-of-way.
- Cities should be able to receive fair market compensation for use of the public right-of-way by private entities.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City of Manhattan supports legislation that enables local officials and the citizens they represent to better control and manage the public right-of-way.**

Public Retirement Systems (KPERs)

The State of Kansas should fully fund its portion of the employer contributions at the Actuarial Required Contribution (ARC) levels at the required times. The KPERs system should accumulate sufficient assets during a members' working lifetime to pay all the promised benefits to that member when they retire.

- In 2015 the State of Kansas cut their employer contribution to KPERs and in 2016 the State of Kansas delayed their \$93 million payment to KPERs until 2018. Yearly commitments should be funded by the State and not delayed.
- Between 2003-2014 the State of Kansas only funded KPERs at an average funding ratio of 65.1%. That funding ration puts the State of Kansas in the bottom 25% of State Funded public retirement systems.
- Any changes to the current system should consider the need of local governments to predict and control employee benefit costs and to recruit and retain qualified employees. This includes accumulated leave and human resources policies to determine a retiree's benefits.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City of Manhattan encourages the legislature to honor its full funding commitments to KPERs. The City requests that the legislature include local governments in discussions about changes to KPERs or the Kansas Police & Fire Retirement System (KP&F).**

Abandoned and Blighted Housing

During the 2017 session, the Senate debated SB 31, legislation allowing cities to provide an effective and efficient method for dealing with the procedural challenges that are often faced when dealing with abandoned properties in the community. The health and welfare of the general public in Manhattan is important.

- Often times there are non-responsive owners or other interest holders, ownership is in question, or the city is not able to get an owner or interest holder to take responsibility for property maintenance on the structure. Cities should be able to address some of those issues in abandoned houses, reducing the time those structures might pose a health and safety danger to others. The bill allows cities more flexibility to better deal with those abandoned homes and prevents that situation from occurring.
- Such legislation could allow the City, or a non-profit organization, to rehabilitate properties for future use rather than properties ending up degrading further and ending up having to be demolished.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City of Manhattan supports legislation that streamlines and expedites the process for local governments, neighborhood organizations and private businesses to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance, foreclosed housing, and commercial structures to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners.**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- SB 31 – was debated by the Senate but sent back to committee for additional review in 2017.
- SB 338 (2016) – Passed by the House and Senate and vetoed by the Governor.

Weapons and Firearms

In 2017, an exemption provision of K.S.A. 75-7c20 expired, now allowing the concealed carry of firearms in public open areas, buildings and facilities, unless adequate security measures are in place. The City of Manhattan owns and operates a wide range of facilities, including city hall, playgrounds, swimming pools, a daycare, a zoo, an airport, a courthouse, and many utility and street facilities. It is not financially or logistically possible to create controlled entrances with “adequate security measures” at such a wide variety of facilities and outdoor spaces. Allowing the public to carry firearms in these facilities may be contrary to other laws or requirements, such as KDHE requirements for licensed daycares. In addition, the presence of firearms at certain family-oriented activities such as parks, sports fields, playgrounds and zoos has caused discomfort or disturbance to the other users of these areas.

- A local government should be able to assess its properties and determine where concealed or open carry is permitted or prohibited. The City supports prohibiting firearms through the posting of signs.
- As an employer, we believe Cities should have the same ability to regulate its employees’ carry of firearms while engaged in their work as a private employer would have.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **The City supports the ability of local governments to regulate the carry of firearms and weapons within City-owned-and-operated facilities and public spaces.**
- **The City supports the ability of local governments to set policies regarding the carrying of firearms by municipal employees while they are engaged in their work.**

PRIOR BILLS SUPPORTED:

- Senate Substitute for HB 2278 – became law without Governor’s signature in 2017; provides public employers with immunity from liability in the event any employee is involved in an accident who carries a weapon in compliance with state law while on duty.

FORT RILEY

Fort Riley is a vital asset to the entire Flint Hills region. Defense spending makes up over 1/3 of the region's economy and Fort Riley provides an economic impact to the state of Kansas of nearly \$1.8 billion. Reductions and instability in defense spending at the federal level is detrimental to Fort Riley and dependent economies.

- Multiple deployments in 2019 may have some impacts on the local, regional and state economies in 2019.
- Currently, Fort Riley has capacity to increase its force structure significantly. This would mean regional growth of increased troops and family members. The City supports the Fort's efforts in advocating for additional force structure to be located in Fort Riley.
- Ongoing intergovernmental support partnerships and collaboration between the City and Fort Riley, along with the State of Kansas, will be key to implement recommendations from a recent economic analysis study done for the region. Additional programs should be developed together that will help identify necessary resources to propel the Flint Hills region and the State into a 21st century economy.

ACTION ITEM:

- **The City of Manhattan greatly appreciates the support of our legislative delegation over the past years in addressing identified needs for Fort Riley. The City supports continued funding and operations for the Governor's Military Council, as well as further development of partnerships with the Fort, regional entities and the State of Kansas.**

2019 STANDING LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City supports continued funding for the Kansas Department of Commerce and other State economic development programs that would help leverage local investments in attracting and keeping high-skill, high-wage jobs.

FINANCE

Accumulated Interest on Delinquent Special Assessment Taxes

The City of Manhattan requests, and supports, amending K.S.A. 79-2004 to provide that delinquent special assessment taxes are differentiated from general property taxes and the associated interest from those delinquent special assessment taxes is distributed to the entity which levied those taxes.

Budget Timing

The City of Manhattan supports legislation to allow the adoption of City budgets by November 30 but keep the August 25 deadline for certification of the amount of ad valorem tax revenue needed. The current statutory framework for the adoption of municipal budgets makes it difficult for cities to plan for budgets that must be presented to governing bodies five months before the start of the fiscal year.

School Finance Formula

The City of Manhattan supports the State adopting a school finance formula that meets the standards set forth by the Kansas Supreme Court and includes a military second count date.

Financing Tools

The City of Manhattan opposes any changes in state law that would restrict the flexibility of cities to use financing tools including TIF, CIDs, STAR Bonds, and TDDs to promote economic development in their communities.

State Budget Concerns/Tax Policy

The City of Manhattan supports the Kansas Legislature to find ways to balance the budget without shifting the burden to local government entities. Local governments should also be included in any discussions regarding restructuring of the State tax systems to ensure solutions are reached that fully assess the resulting financial burden on local taxpayers.

Taxes Paid Under Protest

Due to the effect that taxes paid under protest can have on the City, the state and the county should be required to notify the City when taxes, including compensating use and ad valorem taxes, are paid under protest, so that we have accurate data when making budgetary decisions.

Unfunded Mandates

State and federally mandated functions, without the financial resources to accomplish their legislative intent, are contrary to the spirit of constitutional home rule and are not conducive to cooperative intergovernmental relationships. The City opposes unfunded mandates and proposes any legislation

or function of sufficient importance mandated to local governments by the State or Federal branches of government be fully funded by the State and/or Federal government on a continuing basis.

GOVERNANCE

Airline Revenue Guarantee

Adequate and affordable air service is a key factor in improving the economy and tourism potential of regions and cities throughout Kansas. Support from the State of Kansas, in partnership with regional communities, facilitated the recruitment of non-stop jet service from Manhattan Regional Airport via American Airlines. The City of Manhattan thanks the Legislature and Governor for reinvesting state funds to recruit additional commercial air service, or expanding existing service, at the Manhattan Regional Airport through airline revenue guarantees or similar arrangements, rather than direct subsidies, and asks for fairness regarding the distribution of state funds for either direct subsidies or other similar programs across the state and encourages state officials to support Kansas transportation systems by flying MHK versus utilizing out of state airports.

Annexation

The City of Manhattan opposes any change to legislation that limits the authority of the city to grow through annexation.

Consolidation of Services

The City of Manhattan supports processes for local consolidation of services without undue statutory barriers and specifically supports the consolidated Riley County Police Department structure, and the legislation (K.S.A. 1944-27) which allowed such consolidation to occur.

Home Rule and Local Control

The City opposes any change in state law which would limit the Home Rule authority of cities.

Local Elections

The City of Manhattan supports local government elections remaining non-partisan in nature.

Political Signs in Public Right-of-Way

K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 25-2711 prohibits a city from regulating or prohibiting the placement of political signs on private property or the unpaved right-of-way for city streets in the period 45-days prior to an election through the two days following the election. Like most cities, the City of Manhattan prohibits the placement of all non-governmental signs in the city's rights-of-way. The state law creates a content-based exception to such a prohibition, which may conflict with First Amendment jurisprudence. The City acknowledges that the Kansas Attorney General, in AG Op 2018-16, stated that the state law does not violate the First Amendment because a city can simply decline to regulate ROW signage at all times, or at least during the election period, to comply with both the First Amendment and the state law. The City of Manhattan supports the authority of local government to regulate and prohibit the presence of signs in its rights-of-way in a content-neutral manner, at all times.

[Public Property and Rights-of-Way](#)

The City of Manhattan supports legislation that enables cities to enforce maintenance and repair standards on franchisees that disturb the public right-of-way and/or damage the existing public infrastructure, and also allows the City to negotiate, within reason, location of facilities and how the final product may look.

[Stormwater Grant and Loan Program](#)

The City supports the creation of a Stormwater Grant and Loan Program to assist local communities in the continued implementation of the best practices for stormwater management.

[Water & Wastewater Quality](#)

The City supports funding for state utility loan programs, such as the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund, that help local utilities meet infrastructure needs. In addition, the City encourages the state and federal governments to adopt broader standards and provide assistance to private property owners to better control non-point source pollutants to our rivers and streams rather than burdening point sources such as wastewater treatment plants, which comprise only a small fraction of the input stream.