

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas

PUBLIC WORKS

2023 Annual Report

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Director's Welcome



The one thing I think most about regarding 2023, is the Public Works team's persistence. There were some real challenges to keep key initiatives moving. It's a real testament to the mindset of the team, "We Can and We Must". This motto came out of some internal continuous improvement discussions a couple of years ago and it reflects the urgency around the state of the public infrastructure and the essential services Public Works provides.

The other thing I think about is the process and selection of a new County Administrator and how hungry employees all over the organization were for new leadership. Mr. Johnston stabilized morale fairly quickly and began to show trust in Public Works very quickly, which was much appreciated. He walked into a turbulent atmosphere and a difficult budget situation, and has done an admirable job.

It is even more exciting that so many Public Works employees successfully pursued opportunities within the team. There were numerous promotions into leadership or up the leadership ladder in 2023, bringing a wide array of backgrounds and new perspectives. The years of focus on a culture of building leadership at all levels began to build momentum; the pipeline for leadership and opportunity for all was taking shape. I'm proud of our team for what has been accomplished in this way, unlike any other.

I'm just as excited about our storytelling using a data-driven approach over the last five years, which began to take hold in 2023, with the elected body making infrastructure one of their top four priorities and additional investment in streets. This commitment will need to continue for many years but it is a great start knowing the organization understands the looming crisis and is beginning to face it head on.

Public Works services touch people's lives hundreds of times each day. The people in the Public Works team are charged with being great stewards and being expert professionals and have done some amazing work. There is much work to do, but there is a culture of comradery and bold strategies toward bright outcomes for this community. But make no mistake, the challenge is daunting and will require sustained commitment over the period of many years. The team will need to consistently produce great work, and the community will need hold us accountable and provide great support.

We thank you for allowing us to serve you.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Fisher".

Jeff Fisher
Director of Public Works

OUR MISSION

Promote great culture, act boldly, and provide sustainable infrastructure that protects and enhances our community.





OUR VALUES

Positive Culture, Great Service & Smart Investment.





New Team Members

New Team Members

Welcome New Team Members!

The individuals pictured below aren't just staff; they are the people who keep the critical and vital services that our community needs running.

They patch potholes, keep ambulances on the road, clear snow from streets, repair law enforcement vehicles, and ensure wastewater is carried away from homes and businesses.

Public service matters, and the Public Works team believes that if we create a great work culture, great service

will follow. The first step in creating this culture is to build supportive environments.

Whether that means helping our colleagues train for new certifications, prepare for interviews, join leadership roundtables, or assist with planning the department's next social event, we're all committed to the same thing: providing great service and a great work environment.

Join us in welcoming our new team members in 2023!



Jordan Allen
Street Maintenance



Lidija Begic
Buildings & Logistics



Kristina Blevins
Engineering



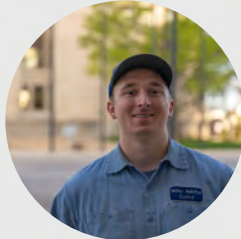
Daniel Botello
Water Pollution Control



Chuck Brackett
Water Pollution Control



Jacinto Briones
Buildings & Logistics

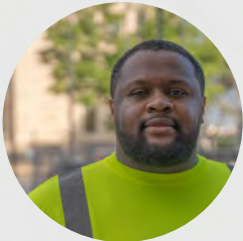


Ariston Butler
Water Pollution Control



Lesha Chitty
Water Pollution Control

New Team Members



Ron Common
Street Maintenance



Joseph Crowley
Street Maintenance



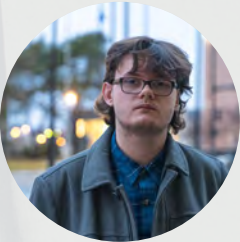
Tony Denson
Fleet Services



Jesus Glavan
Water Pollution Control



Alexandria Goode
Public Works



Aden Green
Street Maintenance



Brandon Gunnels
Street Maintenance



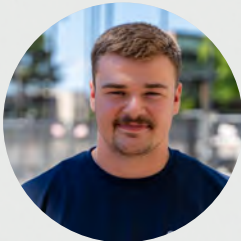
Derek Jackson
Fleet Services



Roy Jackson
Water Pollution Control



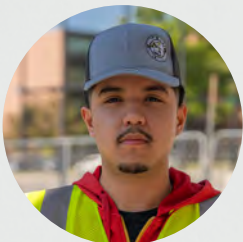
Christian Kennedy
Geospatial Services



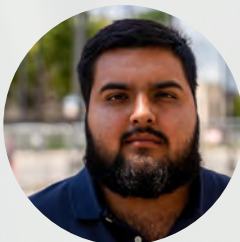
Brody Lanter
Fleet Services



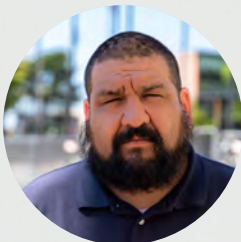
Clayton Lucas
Water Pollution Control



Abraham Madrigal
Street Maintenance



Sebastian Mejia
Fleet Services



Jeremy Monslow
Fleet Services



Samuel Muder
Water Pollution Control

New Team Members



Travis Onsen
Fleet Services



Lori Peaches
Solid Waste



Mickey Tarwater
Street Maintenance



Ngi Tun
Water Pollution Control



Kong Vang
Water Pollution Control



Milenko Vranac
Buildings & Logistics



Mark Weckwerth
Water Pollution Control



Fue Xiong
Water Pollution Control



Terri Lee Williams
Water Pollution Control



Strategic Plan

2022-2024 Strategic Plan



Vision

We build leadership at all levels

Motto

We can and we must

Mission

Promote great culture, act boldly, and provide sustainable infrastructure that protects and enhances our community

Values

Positive culture – we do our business of delivering essential and vital services to our community with energy, selflessness, and seamless teamwork.

1. Commit to leadership development at all levels
2. Lead positive change and continually improve
3. Diversity of thought creates better decisions
4. Hire for attitude and train for skills
5. Leave everything better than when we found it

Great customer service – take great care to treat all customers with a high level of professionalism, respect, and empathy, and to be prudent & honest stewards of public funds.

1. Be active listeners
2. Be empathetic
3. See customer requests as opportunities
4. Close the customer service loop
5. Respond to all customers within 24 hours

Smart investment – utilize verified data and information to optimize public and private funds to strategically do the community's work and make objective recommendations to the elected and appointed officials.

1. Invest in team members' growth
2. Be data-driven
3. Prioritize what we can be great at
4. Return on investment drives decisions
5. Seek opportunities to reduce and right-size

2022-2024 Strategic Plan



Outcomes

We measure success with outcomes and the difference we make. Goals, strategies, and outputs must be consistent with our values, and we must create goals that bring us closer to these outcomes:

- 1. *Trust in Public Works*** – Conduct business in a transparent manner, with great foresight & preparation, and provide excellent internal and external customer service, as well as effective public communications to promote public awareness.
- 2. *Sustainable systems for delivering public services*** – Evaluate all business systems, create best practices, document best practices through policies and procedures, reduce bureaucracy and streamline processes to promote economic vitality.
- 3. *Culture of excellence*** – Commit to leadership development at all levels; team members have a selfless, supportive, mission-oriented attitude; highly disciplined thought and action create an environment of accountability, quality work, reliability, achievement, trust, safety, and pride.



Segments

Buildings & Logistics



About the Team

The Buildings & Logistics (B&L) team is an integral part of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, responsible for the management and maintenance of more than 200 facilities across the county.

Their services include overseeing and performing maintenance on all Unified Government-owned and operated facilities, ensuring that they remain accessible and convenient for residents and visitors. Additionally, the team works to provide comfortable, and safe

environments for employees. The diverse range of buildings that B&L manages includes police stations, fire stations, recreation centers, the Wyandotte County Public Health Department, the Criminal Justice Complex, Juvenile Services Center, Court Services, Memorial Hall, and City Hall.

By managing these facilities, B&L plays a critical role in maintaining infrastructure and supporting the community's health, safety, and quality of life.

Public Works Engineering



About the Team

The Engineering team is responsible for the design, construction, inspection, and maintenance of infrastructure in Kansas City, Kansas. This includes roads, bridges, sewer systems, stormwater management systems, and more. The Engineering team also provides technical assistance to other city departments and agencies.

If it looks like construction, Public Works' Engineering team is involved. Their team includes the County Engineer, the City Traffic Engineer, the City

Stormwater Engineer, Project Engineers, and Project Managers. Engineers are responsible for the design and planning of new projects.

They are committed to providing safe, reliable, and efficient infrastructure for residents, businesses, and visitors, and they work hard to ensure that all projects are designed and constructed to meet the highest standards of quality and safety. The division also works to maintain existing structures in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Fleet Services



About the Team

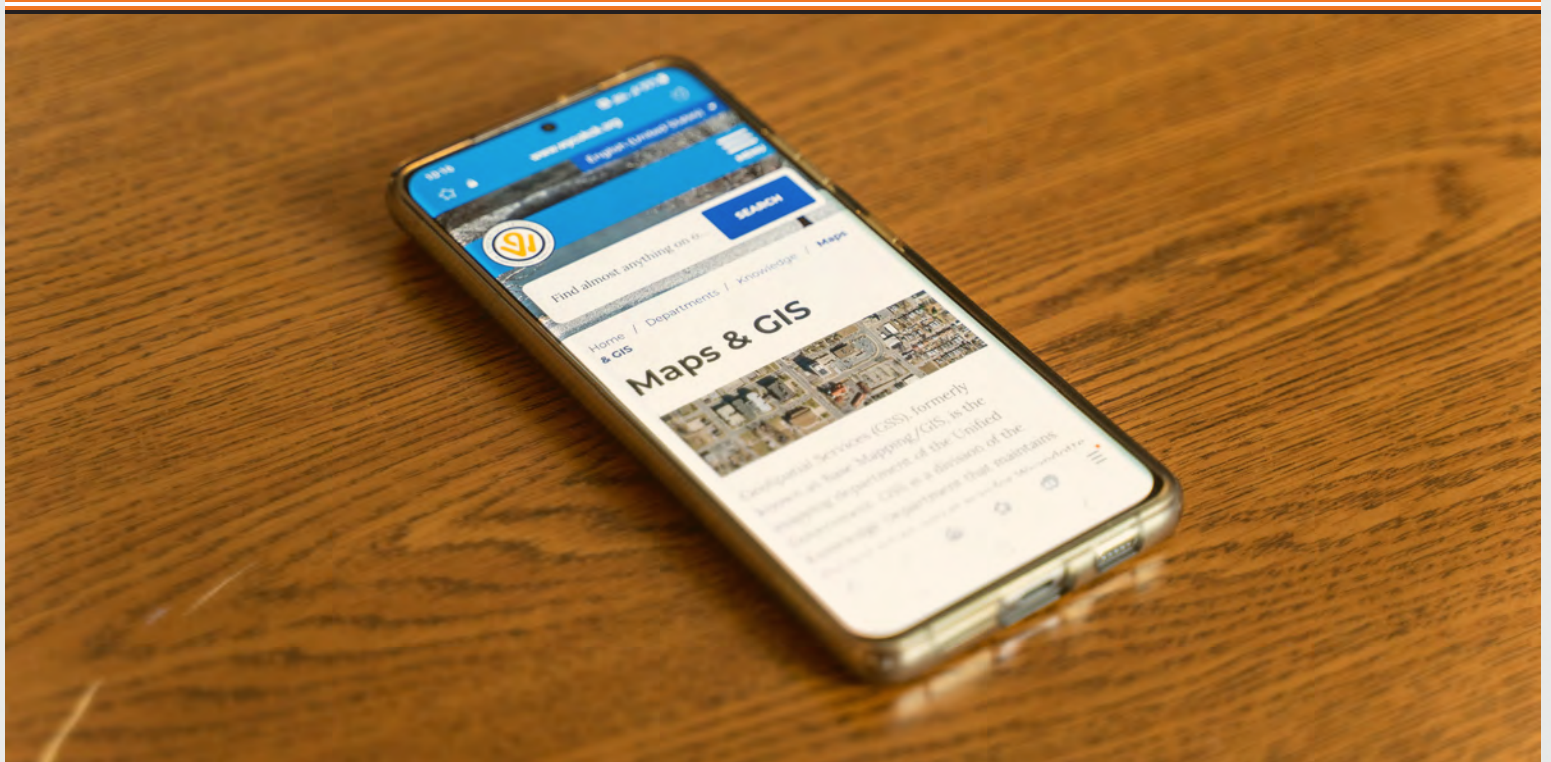
The Fleet Services team plays a critical role in ensuring the efficient operation of over 1,300 cars, trucks, commercial construction equipment, tractors, trailers, and emergency vehicles owned by the Sheriff's Office, Police Department, and other coworkers.

Their team comprises more than 30 dedicated employees who are responsible for equipment repairs, engine overhauls, tune-ups, brake jobs, clutch and transmission repair & replacement, electrical system

diagnostics, hydraulic system repair, and tire maintenance. The Fleet Services team is committed to providing reliable and cost-effective maintenance services for the county's vehicles and equipment.

By keeping the fleet running smoothly, the team enables the Sheriff's Office, Police Department, and other colleagues to perform their critical functions and provide the community with the services they need.

Geospatial Services



About the Team

The Geospatial Services (GSS) team is an essential component of the Unified Government.

They provide mapping products and services to residents and businesses in the county, including maintaining a comprehensive dataset that covers land parcel information, street networks, political boundaries, emergency response facilities, recreational facilities, and other critical data related to Unified Government operations. GSS also offers analytical capabilities that help various

departments tackle complex challenges by visualizing data in ways that enhance decision-making.

By leveraging their expertise in geospatial data analysis, GSS plays a key role in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Unified Government's operations.

Their services enable departments to make informed decisions and better allocate resources to support the needs of the community.

Parking Control



About the Team

Public Works' Parking Control Division is responsible for enforcing city parking ordinances and managing parking facilities for visitors and employees.

They also engage with area businesses and organizations to enhance and improve the downtown parking environment. Parking Control Officers patrol designated areas, including public parking facilities, parking meters, and on-street parking. They also manage the assignment of monthly parking to employees and area businesses

and oversee the school crossing guard program. By enforcing parking regulations, the division promotes traffic flow and enhances the overall quality of life in the community.

The Parking Control Division is dedicated to providing efficient and effective parking services, promoting traffic safety, and enhancing the downtown area for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.

Solid Waste Management



About the Team

The Solid Waste Management team is responsible for managing many of the solid waste programs in Wyandotte County. Their primary role is to ensure the effective and efficient collection and disposal of residential trash and recycling.

They oversee contracted residential trash and recycling collection services, as well as programs for household hazardous waste disposal, recycling and yard waste disposal, e-waste collection, and the development of green activities.

Additionally, the team collaborates with organizations like the Environmental Protection Agency, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Livable Neighborhoods to organize clean-ups for events like Earth Day.

The division's five team members also assist residents, businesses, and community organizations with graffiti removal and neighborhood clean-ups. The team works tirelessly to provide a clean and safe environment for the community.

Street Maintenance



About the Team

The Street Maintenance team plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and cleanliness of roads in Kansas City, Kansas. They are responsible for maintaining more than 2,400 lane miles of improved roadway and alleys, providing essential services such as pavement maintenance, mowing of publicly-owned properties, signage services, snow removal, street sweeping, and right-of-way management.

As one of the first responders to emergencies, the Street team is always

on standby to address any issues related to roads, ensuring that residents and visitors have a safe and efficient means of transportation. They also provide critical support for special events such as neighborhood clean-ups, parades, and other community activities, contributing to the overall beautification of the city.

The Street Maintenance team is an integral part of the Kansas City community, providing necessary services to ensure that the roads are safe, clean, and visually appealing.

Water Pollution Control



About the Team

The Water Pollution Control (WPC) team is an essential component of Kansas City's success, providing sewer services, managing stormwater runoff, and protecting water quality. Their work is critical to safeguarding local streams, rivers, and lakes, ensuring they remain clean and safe for both people and wildlife.

WPC operates and maintains an extensive network of treatment plants, sewer pipes, pump stations, and water quality monitoring facilities throughout

the city. By collecting data on water quality, the WPC can assess the overall health of the waterways and identify areas where improvements are needed.

Their work has been instrumental in providing reliable and cost-effective wastewater and stormwater treatment for over a century.

Residential customers, businesses, and visitors have all benefited from their efforts, enjoying safe water treatment and a healthier environment.



Levels of Service

By the Numbers



528,023

Gallons of fuel used



56,241

Tons of trash collected



13,751

Tons of recycling



7,058

Million gallons cleaned



4,558

Equipment repairs



264

Miles of pipe cleaned

By the Numbers



211

ADA ramps installed



42,000

Feet of curb replaced



10,877

Tons of salt used



86,000

Tons of asphalt used



37,108

Potholes patched



77

Lane miles paved



Major Moments

Major Moments

Outcomes & Strategies Document

Physical infrastructure is the foundation of modern life, and now that this infrastructure has served generations over the past 50 to 100 years, it must be rebuilt or replaced. For more than a year, Public Works engaged the governing body through several infrastructure sub committees tasked with creating a plan for overcoming the community's infrastructure challenges. The resulting document, which was adopted by resolution in 2022, outlines nine desired outcomes and the strategies needed to obtain them. View it online at wycokck.org/pw



Public Works Roundtable

Leadership matters and Public Works believe developing leaders at all levels of the organization is an essential part of creating a strong culture based on trust, teamwork, goodwill, hard work, and empathy. The Public Works Roundtable is a twice-yearly event where team members gather to discuss leadership development, culture development, continuous improvement, best practices, and relationship building. Roundtable event dates, locations, and topics are developed by a revolving team of Public Works employees from multiple levels within the department.



Early Learning Driver Training (ELDT) Program

A DOT rule change in 2022 for CDL training raised costs for the Unified Government. To cut unbudgeted expenses, Transit, Parks & Rec, and Public Works formed a committee for in-house driver training. External training costs \$5.8K per person and involves a 30-45 day absence. The ELDT program team introduced online training and an in-field course at 4th & Minnesota. In-house training has saved \$107,360, allows team members to train with the vehicles they operate, and gets them in the field from day one.



Major Moments

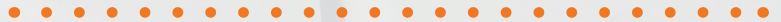
New Sewer Maintenance & CSI Facilities

Teams broke ground on a new sewer maintenance and crime scene investigation facilities in 2023. The new 62,000 square foot sewer maintenance facility is centrally located, has designated service areas, and can garage up to 50 maintenance vehicles. The new site will provide many efficiencies and in turn increase emergency response times. The CSI facility will expand the police department's ability to serve the community and continue their pursuit of making KCK one of the safest communities in the metro.



Waterscan/COVID-19 Testing

Wastewater can tell you quite a bit about what's happening in a community. In 2023, the Water Pollution Control (WPC) team continued their partnership with Life Science, a private contractor, to perform weekly tests of wastewater samples to help identify COVID-19 trends, both locally and regionally. The partnership generates revenue for the division that both covers expenses and allows WPC to reinvest in the lab equipment that is needed to make sure the water we put back into the environment is clean, safe, and will not harm the natural environment.



Water Pollution Control Rebranding Team

The term "Water Pollution Control" dates back 75 years when the Water Pollution Control Act was passed at the federal level. In response, many agencies and associations used this terminology in their names. Over time, agencies began updating their public appearance in favor of names that more accurately captured the work they do. At the Unified Government, the WPC team formed a committee to consider updating the division's name and appearance so that customers could more easily understand the importance wastewater services they provide.



Major Moments

Pothole Patching Increases

Teams patched more than 28,000 potholes in 2022. In 2023, the number of potholes patched increased by nearly 25%. Part of the increase can be attributed to new patching machines and methods, but a substantial number is due to KCK's declining Pavement Condition Index (PCI). KCK's PCI has fallen from a 56 in 2018 to a 51 in 2023. As roads age and PCI declines, potholes and major issues like cave-ins will become more common. To prevent this, the Unified Government must commit itself to sustained increases in street preservation funding.



Increased Pavement Preservation

As identified in the Outcomes & Strategies Document, KCK's PCI continues to decline. Without increased street preservation funding for long periods of time, all of KCK's streets will be in a poor or failed state in 10 to 15 years. Recognizing this challenge, Commission has increased street maintenance funding annually by 25% for the previous two years. That increase means teams can do more work. In 2023, 15 lane miles and 11,000 feet of curb were added to existing work.



Salt Brine Comes to KCK

Snow and ice removal is a big deal, especially in the Midwest, where storms can vary widely from week to week. Public Works' Street Maintenance team managed 12 storms in 2023, using 5,568 tons of salt and 13,037 labor hours. The total cost of the season was \$599,826. New to the fleet in 2023 was the addition of a salt brine truck. Salt brine is a mixture of water and salt, and it prevents snow and ice from bonding to surfaces. Working together, multiple teams across the government built the salt brine system in-house to keep the cost of deploying it on local streets to a minimum.



Major Moments

Illegal Dumping Grants

Illegal dumping is a challenge many cities face, and it can be a burden on both neighborhood beauty and solid waste budgets. In 2023, the Solid Waste team joined forces with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to tackle two large illegal dumping spots in KCK. Dumping sites at 4600 Sortor Drive and 3651 Minnesota Avenue were selected for a clean up. To help keep costs low, Public Works' Solid Waste team applied for and received a KDHE grant that capped expenditures for the clean up at \$2,500 per site.



Expanded Enterprise Vehicle Program

In 2020, the Fleet Services team created an Enterprise Vehicle Lease fund. It was designed to capitalize on private sector buying power and municipal discounting to build equity that tax payers can benefit from. In 2023, it's safe to say the program has been extremely successful, with more than 220 vehicles participating.

After two years of service, these vehicles are returned to the leasing agency and sold. Profits from the sales are used to lease new vehicles, bringing down the Unified Government's overall fleet costs.



Ditching Program Planning

In late 2022, the Governing Body approved a more equitable and adequate stormwater rate structure. Set to take effect in 2024, the rate transition included funding for a ditching program. Ditches play an important role in keeping rainwater away from home, businesses, and local streets. KCK has more than 600 miles of ditching, and while property owners are responsible for their maintenance, a lack of maintenance for many decades across the city has caused trouble for almost everyone. Under the new program, the city will be able to help restore ditches.





Challenges

Challenges

Pavement Condition Index Declining

Public Works began tracking Kansas City, Kansas' Pavement Condition Index (PCI) in 2018. At that time, the city's average PCI was 56 and anticipated to fall without significantly increased funding. When streets reach a score of 40 or below, they are considered poor or failed. In 2022, data was again gathered, and the average PCI fell to 51. At this rate and without increased funding, a majority of streets in Kansas City, Kansas, will be in a poor or failed state in 10 to 15 years.



Bridges Reaching Critical Point

Kansas City, Kansas, has more than 270 bridges, including 5 major river crossings. Bridges are an important part of streets, and their failure negatively impacts the city. One major bridge, the Kansas Avenue bridge, is already closed, and its replacement cost is estimated at more than \$120 million. Right now, bridge maintenance is funded at \$476 thousand annually. Bridge maintenance funding needs are more than \$14 million annually. Without change, closures will further strain an already aged and deteriorating transportation system.



Facility Maintenance Nearing Tipping Point

The Unified Government is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of more than 200 publicly owned buildings. A review of 87 structures established a Facilities Condition Index (FCI) of 19 and declining. Like PCI, the FCI is a general report about the health of structures. Without a change to current practice, buildings in the study will decline to an FCI of 33 by 2031. The known backlog of deferred maintenance requires more than \$90 million (2018) total. A full-scale buildings review is needed, and the Unified Government will need to be creative in managing this liability.



We Can & We Must