



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole & Common Council

Meeting Date: May 5, 2026

Item Title: Utilities & Public Works Merger

Submitted By: Matt Amundson, City Administrator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present naming options for a consolidated department that encompasses the City's **Utility operations (Electric, Water, Sewer)** and **Public Works functions (Streets, Parks)**, and to provide a recommendation for Council consideration.

Background

As the City continues to evaluate organizational efficiency, there is value in clearly identifying and branding departments in a way that is understandable to residents, functional for staff, and appropriate for formal use in ordinances, policies, budgets, and intergovernmental communications. A consolidated department name should reflect the full scope of services provided while maintaining clarity and professionalism.

Department Name Options

The following naming options are grouped by general theme for discussion purposes.

Traditional / Straightforward

These options emphasize clarity and are commonly recognized in municipal governance.

- Department of Public Works & Utilities
- Public Works and Utility Services
- Public Services Department
- Infrastructure & Utilities Department
- Municipal Services Department

Community-Focused

These options emphasize service delivery and quality of life.

- Community Services Department
- Community Operations Department
- City Services & Utilities

Operations-Focused

These titles align well with field-based crews and daily service delivery.

- Field Operations Department
- Municipal Operations & Utilities
- Public Operations Department

Simplified / Branding-Friendly

These are shorter names useful for signage, vehicles, and public communication.

- City Services
- Public Services
- City Infrastructure
- Works & Utilities
- Community Works

Recommendation

For formal municipal use—including ordinances, budgets, and intergovernmental communication—staff recommends the following as the primary option:

Department of Public Works & Utilities

This name:

- Clearly communicates the department's responsibilities
 - Is widely recognized by residents and partnering agencies
 - Aligns with common municipal naming conventions
 - Minimizes confusion during transitions or audits
-

Next Steps

1. Council direction on the preferred department name
2. If approved, update references in governing documents, organizational charts, and public materials
3. Incorporate the name into future budget and staffing discussions
4. Adopt Ordinance having Public Works items go before the Utility Commission

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Draft Ordinance to Amend Section 2-41(b) and to Create Section 102-58(h) of the City of Columbus Code Of Ordinances

Action Requested of Council:

Consider and take possible action on naming of combined Department and adoption of Ordinance