



City Administrator's Report

August 2025

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Leslie Herring, City Administrator
Date: August 14, 2025
RE: Update on some of the key areas of focus of the Administration Department

Current Priorities

2nd Quarter (April) 2025 through 3rd Quarter (September) 2025

1. Annual Financial Review and Planning

- ✓ The 2024 fiscal year audit is underway and is expected to be completed and presented by the City's independent financial auditor at the June 2025 regular City Council meeting.
- The 2025 budget review and 2026 budget planning process are under way. Throughout the summer, budget presentations have focused on:
 - Creation of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding recommendation
 - Integration of the 2024 community priorities survey findings and recommendations
- The Revenue Neutral Rate and Budget Hearing are both scheduled for September 11, 2025.

2. Study and Test Traffic Calming on Residential Streets

- ✓ City staff collected data with the speed trailer on W. 49th Ter. and W. 47th Ter. in April and May and shared it with the State of Kansas's Local Field Liaison for the Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) to conduct a free Practical Road Safety Assessment (PRSA). The PRSA brings subject matter experts into local communities to work with local officials and stakeholders to evaluate existing conditions and to make recommendations for measures to mitigate local traffic concerns.
- This priority has been established through Planning Commission study and consultation with the City Council. The approach is recommended by City staff.
- The Local Field Liaison reviewed this summer and the site visit is scheduled for the afternoon of Monday, September 8th.

3. Explore Programs and Policies to Preserve and Enhance Tree Canopy

- A small working group of Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers resulted from the February joint work session between those two bodies. This working group will build on the research and groundwork laid by a Planning Commissioner-led effort to engage in policy work to preserve the City's tree canopy.
- ✓ Upon request from Councilmember Buckman, the Heartland Tree Alliance Program Manager presented their work and services at the May City Council meeting.

- ✓ City staff invited the Kansas Forest Service to perform a tree inventory, which was conducted from May 28 – June 3rd.
 - In July, Kansas Forest Service staff prepared a report to present to the City Council. After debriefing with the small working group of Planning Commissioners, City Councilmembers, and City staff this week, the report will be presented at the September Planning Commission meeting.
 - Thereafter, recommendations are expected to be created in concert with this small working group and will be developed with Westwood-specific goals in mind and then presented to the Planning Commission and City Council upon completion in 2026.
4. Improve Process for Issuing Permits and Licenses
- Now that the City has a Codes Administrator back on staff, as part of Michael's training staff is creating a number of process and permitting requirements checklists and FAQs to provide to permit applicants, with the aim of creating standard and clear requirements to provide for smooth and efficient permitting.
 - Now that the City has a part-time Administrative Assistant, as part of the onboarding staff will work to evaluate the process and forms for issuing City licenses.
 - Work is ongoing between the Codes Administrator and part-time Administrative Assistant working with GovBuilt and one another to improve and streamline permitting and licensing processes.
5. Support Planning Commission's Review of Zoning Regulations
- Following several recent cases for waivers and exceptions from the zoning ordinance for the construction of new houses, the Planning Commission called for a discussion to develop recommendations to review the zoning regulations and determine what, if any text amendments should be considered to improve and update the City's regulations.
 - The Planning Commission received a staff report at their August regular meeting of the identified City Code provisions that have drawn the eye of the Planning Commission over the past year.
 - Beginning this week, a small working group of Planning Commissioners, a City Councilmember, and City staff will begin work to evaluate conflicts within the regulations as well as to evaluate provisions that are unclear or not reflective of modern trends in building permit applications. This work will likely result in recommendations to the City Council for text amendments, expected to be discussed at each and every Planning Commission meeting over the next several months until text amendment recommendations are determined by the Planning Commission to be ready for public hearing and advancing to the City Council for adoption by ordinance.
6. Create and Deploy Communications Content Calendar
- Following the adoption of the 2024 Governing Body Strategic Plan and the Communications Strategic Plan, staff is creating a content calendar for use in planning messaging to the community through The Buzz, quarterly mailed newsletter, City website, and social media. This work is under way and expected to be concluded and implemented by October.

Lingering Priorities

A. Implement Rainbow Blvd. Complete Streets Plan

- KDOT and KUHS are working together and with the UG of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, KS to reconcile engineering reports and recommendations and to determine the optimal geometric redesign on the Wyandotte County side of the project area, which will then inform connecting to the Johnson County (Westwood) side of the project area.
- The stakeholder group – working together since January 2022 – is considering KUHS's stated preference to demonstrate the lane reconfiguration – from four to three lanes – on the Johnson County side of the County Line, as a preferred early phase in implementing the recommendations from the 2024 study. Monthly status meetings between Westwood, KDOT, KUHS, and The UG have been taking place since November 2024 and are ongoing.

B. Secure Funding for W. 47th Place Complete Streets Project

- ✓ 100% funding through the Johnson County CARS program and through use of the Woodside Village Community Improvement District No. 2 sales tax was secured in Spring 2025.
- Design is under way and is expected to take place over the course of the remainder of 2025, with construction in 2026. As opportunities for Council decision points arise, staff will bring them forward.

C. Recodify Municipal Code

- Consideration of the recodification by City Ordinance is included on this month's meeting agenda.
- Upon publication of the ordinance approving the recodification – scheduled for Tuesday, August 19th – the City code will be published in its new online, searchable format on the City website. Thereafter, all ordinances will be incorporated into the City Code real-time by City staff self-publishing updates to the website.

D. Select Prime Development Partner for 4700 Rainbow Blvd.

- Staff conducted a work session with the Governing Body at the May 2024 regular City Council meeting to discuss parameters and guidance for building this process and RFP.
- The Mayor and City Administrator worked together to draft an RFQ/P document, which was provided in draft form to the City Council and issued in July 2024.
- The RFQ Review Committee interviewed four teams in September 2024 and invited all to move forward to the RFP phase of the selection process. RFP responses were received in October 2024 and team interviews were conducted the first week of November.
- In Winter 2025, City staff, Councilmember Hannaman, and City Attorney Denk negotiated with the two highest ranking of the four development teams. KU Health Systems continues to work through its process to consider the terms of agreeing to disposition of their real property. Once the City, Westwood Foundation, and KU Health Systems are aligned on a final recommendation, a public presentation and formal recommendation to the City Council will be scheduled.

Building Permits

The following is a snapshot of select building permits of note issued last month:

Residential

New Construction:

- 2916 W. 49th Pl. – New single-family detached house

Additions:

- 2509 W. 47th St. – Add bedroom and bathroom; renovate deck

Alterations:

- 2500 W. 50th Pl. – Deck and patio