



City Administrator's Report

June 2025

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Leslie Herring, City Administrator
Date: June 12, 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 2026 budget process is beginning and staff is working on a number of preparations to ensure a comprehensive and smooth budget process during summer 2025, including:
 - Comprehensive evaluation of City staff wages and benefits
 - Creation of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding recommendation
 - Integration of the 2024 community priorities survey findings and recommendations
 - Explore Options and Make Recommendations for Program(s) to Offset Housing Costs and to Support Businesses
- Budget presentations will take place at the City Council's June and July regular meetings, with special meetings called as necessary

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 is sending it this week to 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.
- Once the Local Field Liaison reviews the data, a date will be scheduled for the site visit and area residents notified.

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. On short notice, the Forest Service staff was able to squeeze Westwood into its schedule from May 28 – June 3rd and conducted the inventory within that period.
- Kansas Forest Service staff is preparing the inventory to present to the City Council at an upcoming meeting and will, thereafter, create a management plan in concert with the small working group of Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers and City staff. This plan will be developed with Westwood-specific goals in mind and will be presented to the public at a future date, upon completion.

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. *This work is beginning in earnest this week.*
- 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.

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 intends to schedule work sessions to evaluate conflicts within the regulations as well as to evaluate provisions that are unclear. This work will likely result in recommendations to the City Council for text amendments.

6. Create and Deploy Communications Content Calendar

- Following the adoption of the 2024 Governing Body Strategic Plan and the Communications Strategic Plan, staff will create a content calendar for use in planning messaging to the community through The Buzz, quarterly mailed newsletter, City website, and social media.

Lingering Priorities

A. Implement Rainbow Blvd. Complete Streets Plan

- Both KDOT and KU Health Systems are engaging additional engineering study before committing to the scope of implementation of the recommendations of the planning study that concluded in June 2024. This additional engineering study is still on track to be completed within 2025 Q2. The next status meeting is set for June 24, 2025.

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

- ✓ In December 2024, the City and Woodside developer came to an agreement to use CID2 revenues accruing since 2018 to serve as the local match for a funding application to the Johnson County CARS program to implement the recommendations in the 2021 MARC PSP to reimagine W. 47th Place between Rainbow Blvd. and State Line as a Complete Street.
- ✓ During the months of January and February, City staff worked with the City Engineer, Woodside, and met with a small working group of other stakeholders in the corridor to get direction on a scope of work to develop an engineer's estimate of probable cost to submit to the County for CARS funding (resolution on this month's Council meeting agenda).
- ✓ The CARS funding application was submitted in March 2025. Staff received notice in late April that matching funding is being recommended in the amount of \$944,000. This funding recommendation will go to the CARS Committee for approval to send to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. An official award notice and agreement to be executed between the County and the City are expected in Fall 2025.
- ✓ In late May, the attorney for Tanner & White and the City came to terms to execute an agreement to allow the CID2 revenues to be used as the local match for the County funding to replace the use of City CIP or General Fund revenue to complete these public improvements.
- The City Engineer has now been released to perform the design engineering for the project. Design 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

- ✓ In January 2023, CivicPlus (which acquired MuniCode) embarked on a recodification of the Westwood Municipal Code. City staff provided access to all necessary City materials and CivicPlus went to work reviewing and preparing the Code for public, searchable online access.
- ✓ In February 2024, City staff received the Code sections for review and have since been working with CivicPlus staff, the City Attorney, and the Governing Body and Planning Commission to review and tweak the City Code to prepare it for final review and adoption.
- ✓ In October 2024, the City role in review of the Code sections concluded and CivicPlus has all they need to finalize the Municipal Code for consideration and adoption by the Governing Body.
- In April 2025, CivicPlus notified staff that the ordinance for adoption of the recodification would be sent to the City in June 2025. Once CivicPlus receives the Council-approved ordinance, they will activate the online searchable City Code on the City's website.
- This week, CivicPlus confirmed the code will be ready for Planning Commission/City Council review and adoption by ordinance this month.

D. Select Prime Development Partner for 4700 Rainbow Blvd.

- ✓ Staff conducted a work session with the Governing Body at the May 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 was posted to invite responses on Monday, July 15th.
- ✓ The RFQ Review Committee interviewed four team in September and invited all to move forward to the RFP phase of the selection process.
- ✓ RFP responses were received in October and team interviews were conducted the first week of November. A recommendation was prepared in November by the RFQ/P Review Committee for City Council consideration.
- City staff, Councilmember Hannaman, and City Attorney Denk engaged in negotiations with the two highest ranking of the four development teams. KU Health Systems continues to work through its steps to consider the terms of agreeing to disposition of their real property.
- It is anticipated that a public presentation by the successful team will be held at an upcoming regular City Council meeting, once the City, Westwood Foundation, and KU Health Systems are aligned on a final recommendation.

Building Permits

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

Residential

New Construction:

- 2012 W. 47th Ter. (demo permit issued May 2025)

Additions:

- 3001 W. 50th Ter. – Add front porch, alter entry and front door, kitchen remodel, add basement bathroom
- 2708 W. 51st Ter. – Two-story addition to rear of house, limited interior remodel to expand living room on first floor and add bedroom and convert bedroom to office on second floor

Alterations:

- 4806 Belinder Ct. – First floor renovation of three bedrooms, bathroom addition, kitchen expansion; basement finish to add bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and living area.
- 2340 W. 51st St. – Partial basement finish

Demolition:

- 2012 W. 47th Ter. (new construction permit issued May 2025)
- 2916 W. 49th Pl. (new construction permit currently under review)

Misc:

- 2800 W. 47th Ter. – Upgrade EV charger
- 3001 W. 47th Ter. – Install EV charger

Commercial – None of note