# 2017 Annual Report

Department of Public Service





### Message from the Mayor



The City of Columbus is in a time of unprecedented growth, and our Department of Public Service is a key agency in a city of thriving neighborhoods. We know that providing quality and critical city services such as road construction and maintenance, snow and ice removal, refuse and recycling, and public parking and mobility options are the lifeblood of our efforts to enhance our community.

I believe our best days are ahead of us. We are home to a variety of businesses and industry, many institutions of higher learning and a smart, diverse and open population. The outstanding men and women who work in the Department of Public Service keep our city clean, safe and more efficient.

I'm proud of all of their work on behalf of the city's residents, taxpayers, businesses and visitors.

The Department of Public Service and its important work play a major part in making Columbus America's Opportunity City.

**Mayor Andrew J. Ginther** 

### **Department Overview**



Jennifer L. Gallagher, P.E. Director

Each day, Public Service staff impact the lives of more than 860,000 residents and hundreds of thousands of visitors and business employees working in our community. The Public Service team must operate at peak efficiency to deliver trash collection, recycling, traffic management, roadway maintenance, sustainable design, transportation mobility options, construction safety, and other fundamental services.

In 2017, more than 725 employees of the Department of Public Service provided a variety of core services that maintained and improved City of Columbus residents' traveling safety, quality of life, and supported the economic development of the city. Director

Jennifer L. Gallagher, P.E., oversaw the team of employees, an operating budget of over \$110 million and a Capital Budget of almost \$123 million for job-creating projects, roadway reconstruction, equipment and facilities, sidewalk and bikeway projects, all the while maintaining over 6,400 lane miles of roadways and 1,000 traffic signals, as well as recycling collection and weekly refuse collection from over 339,000 households.





Much of the Department's 2017 major accomplishments focused on Mayor Ginther's goals and strategic priorities, which worked toward Columbus being America's Opportunity City. These goals included:

- Neighborhoods engage and promote strong, distinct and vibrant neighborhoods, with particular focus on the greater Linden and Hilltop areas.
- **Safety** enhance safety in all Columbus neighborhoods through effective, efficient and sustainable deployment of resources, and community-driven safety strategies.
- **Economic Development** promote economic opportunity and shared prosperity through public investment and policies that help create jobs, increase median wages, improve access to affordable housing, and strengthen neighborhood infrastructure.
- Early Childhood Development and Education invest in programs and initiatives that reduce infant mortality and prepare children for future success, including high-quality pre-kindgergarten, after school care, and summer programs.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** promote diversity and inclusion across all city operations, and increase workforce and supplier opportunities for minorities and females.
- Operational Efficiencies complete a comprehensive review of city operations, identify efficiencies and reinvest savings in critical city services and programs.

This year Public Service, through its divisions and support services, contributed in multiple ways toward each of these goals. Some of these accomplishments were completed by small groups of staff while others took multiple divisions within the Department to carry out the initiative. The following pages highlight some of the greater achievements for each of the goals that were realized in 2017. Additionally, each Division is highlighted in this document showcasing the hard work the Public Service staff accomplished this past year.

### Neighborhoods

In total, the Department bid \$196.6 Million worth of construction projects throughout multiple City neighborhoods.

- Specific projects totalling \$6.9 Million in the Hilltop and \$9.9 Million in Linden.
- Of that total, the Department oversaw \$32 million
  in road resurfacing projects, bringing much needed street improvements to
  neighborhoods throughout Columbus.
- Alley Surface Treatment Program chip and sealed 249 alleys that totaled approximately 24 miles throughout the city.

Public Service worked closely with COTA to implement the Transit System Redesign launched in May. This first ever overhaul of the entire bus network benefited Columbus residents with improved transit service. Preparing for such an overhaul required much coordination between Public Service and COTA. The Department's responsibilities included modifying traffic patterns, identifying new bus loading zones, moving parking meters, removing signs, and permitting new shelters.

The Department participated and provided input into the Linden Master Plan. Department staff attended community meetings and met with the Neighborhood Design Center planners to discuss details of already planned projects and the feasibility of ideas that had been generated through the planning process.

The Division of Refuse Collection Services implemented a pilot program in several neighborhoods (Franklinton, Hilltop, Linden, Reeb-Hosack) to study the effects of collection methods and containerization and its role in the amount of illegal dumping and litter. This pilot project, in partnership with neighborhood leaders, focused on alleys and produced results that allow us to better partner with neighborhoods on collection methods.







Engage and promote strong, distinct and vibrant neighborhoods, with particular focus on the greater Linden and Hilltop areas.

### **Neighborhood Pride**

# Leawood Gardens/Thunderbird Acres, Hilltop & South Linden

The Department has aggressively participated in the Neighborhood Pride program, bringing an intensive effort to patch potholes; clear trash and do other cleanups

Strengthen community activism, build stronger neighborhood/city relationships, empower neighborhoods and business to work with the city to improve their community

in selected neighborhoods throughout the city in conjunction with the work of other city departments. The Division of Infrastructure Management participated in the Neighborhood Pride team effort by way of:

#### Sweeping

- Posting over 1,000 sweeping signs
- Swept over 275 curbed miles of roadway
- Removing 80 tons of street debris.

#### Street repair

Nearly 2,000 potholes, bumps and cracks repaired

Public Right of Way brush cutting, bulk trash, litter and debris removal

- Over 40 tons of bulk debris
- Over 80 bags of debris
- Multiple shopping carts
- More than 70 cubic yards of brush cutting



### Safety

The Department had a successful year obtaining Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Safety funding for several public safety initiatives throughout the City. We received design and construction funding for three challenging roadway segments in Columbus, where crashes and congestion have been identified as an issue. This investment of federal dollars will look to identify safety solutions and construct roadway improvements at the following locations:

- Morse Road (I-270 east to Stygler Road)
- Refugee Road and Winchester Pike intersection
- Morse Road and Sunbury Road intersection

Enhance safety in all Columbus neighborhoods through effective, efficient and sustainable deployment of resources, and community-driven safety strategies.



As part of ODOT's signal timing program, we received funding to retime all the signals along Morse Road through the Northland neighborhood. This funding assists corridors with crash patterns that can be linked to poor signal timing. The goal of this project is to improve driving efficiencies and reduce crash risk along this highly traveled corridor.

The Department worked with the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and neighborhood leaders to study pedestrian crossing solutions for Cleveland Avenue in the Linden neighborhood. As part of this, several potential improvements were identified that will assist citizens to safely cross Cleveland Avenue. Particular attention was paid to areas around the new COTA CMAX stations where pedestrian crossings will increase in 2018.

The Divisions of Infrastructure Management and Refuse partnered with the Mayor's Office and the Department of Safety to cleanup two large homeless encampments along major highways around Downtown. As part of this cleanup, approximately 1,000 propane tanks were collected and disposed by the Department eliminating the risk of a potential tank explosion occurring near busy highways. Additionally, 25 tons of debris was removed and discarded.

In an effort to promote health, reduce car emissions, and safe mobility, the Department looked for opportunities to develop bicycle lanes as part of major infrastructure improvement projects. Example projects include bike lanes added as part of the Indianola roadway resurfacing project between Oakland Park and Morse Road in the Clintonville neighborhood as well as the West Broad Street resurfacing project through Franklinton that is currently being designed.

In 2017, the Department exceeded its safety goals of reducing recordable injuries and lost workdays by 10% compared to 2016 results. The number of recordable injuries was reduced from 42 in 2016 to 35 in 2017, a 17% decrease. The number of workdays was reduced sharply – from 771 in 2016 to 370 in 2016, a 52% decrease. The 35 recordable injuries and the 370 lost workdays in 2017 are the lowest ever for the department.

### **Economic Development**

Good, reliable access is a key component to improving the city's economic prosperity. Each year, the City of Columbus spends millions of dollars ensuring new development not only has adequate transportation access but also is creating an environment where people want to do business. In 2017, Public Service devoted countless hours working closely with the Department of Development to further the city's economic development efforts. Key project participation included:

Promote economic opportunity and shared prosperity through public investment and policies that help create jobs, increase median wages, improve access to affordable housing, and strengthen neighborhood infrastructure.

- Construction of realigned Hamilton Road to support the new Big Lots corporate headquarters
- Design of Cannon Drive realignment to support the OSU Wexner Medical Center Expansion
- Reconstruction of 15th and High supporting new OSU office and retail development
- SR 315 and Olentangy River Road reconstruction supporting the new Ohio Health headquarters
- Transportation planning for the future Scioto Peninsula development
- Out of the box transportation solutions for the pursuit of Amazon's new headquarters potentially being located in Columbus.

The Division of Infrastructure Management implemented the well-received online Right-of-Way Permitting in 2017. This allows businesses wanting to operate in the City's right-of-way to purchase their permits online versus coming Downtown to the Beacon Building to do so in person. Additionally, the Permits Section put into operation an Interactive Voice Response system, which is an automated telephone system that interacts with callers; getting the customers to the person they need based on the subject instead of to a general mailbox.

The Division of Design and Construction worked with the Division of Infrastructure Management for a refinement to process construction right of way encroachments for the Department of Building and Zoning permit work. The Division of Design and Construction









has been refining the review of E plans to allow Developers to obtain construction agreements for private work in the right of way. This has allowed some projects with less critical infrastructure needs to obtain site approvals much quicker than previously was possible under the prior approval system.

# Early Childhood Development

### & Education

The Department successfully obtained federal Safe Routes to School funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation. This funding allows the city to construct sidewalk and bike improvements to better facilitate children commuting to school. 2017's project included Toronto Street from Trevitt Street to Champion Avenue in the Near East neighborhood. Toronto Street runs directly east-west of Trevitt Elementary School and pedestrians are using the roadway to walk along the street.

Invest in programs and initiatives that reduce infant mortality and prepare children for future success, including high-quality pre-kindgergarten, after school care, and summer programs.

Working with City Council, the Department initiated a new project with Columbus City Schools to identify on a much larger level, where all the sidewalk needs are throughout the city as it pertains to getting kids to and from school. This includes determining the best sidewalk projects near bus stops and schools that have the most walkers. While still in its infancy, the goal of this project is to determine a significant, long term funding source for these identified needs in addition to the federal Safe Routes to School funding.

In an effort to educate the City's youth about litter, the Division of Refuse completed several creative programs this year. They included:

- The Wartville Wizard: A total of 24 education presentations were given to 719 youths at 12 Recreation Center summer camps.
- A total of 27 3rd grade classes received a Litter Literacy presentation from a police officer or retired teacher.
- K-6 Litter Activity Guide: Created a 14 lesson/activity curriculum guide on litter for grades K-6. The lessons were interdisciplinary to include social studies, math, language arts, music and the visual arts.
- Design Challenge: Gave a presentation on the "UP" Your Alleytude Design Challenge at the REIMAGINE Conference June 14 and 15 at the Africentric School. Jared Laughbaum, science teacher at Indianola Informal, used the "UP" Your Alleytude Design Challenge with two 8th grade classes (50 students). The design challenge began September 19 and students presented their plan to a panel of judges in mid-October.

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

The first Departmental comprehensive EEO report for the Department was created and areas of improvement were identified. From this report, an EEO recruitment plan was created to work on bridging the gaps found.

Promote diversity and inclusion across all city operations, and increase workforce and supplier opportunities for minorities and females.

From this EEO report, the Department identified the need for more women at almost all levels of the organization

(except Director's Office). We also increased our use of various women's groups for networking job openings, including: Women's Transportation Seminar, Builders Exchange HR group, National Association of Women in Construction, etc.

The Division of Refuse worked with Columbus Public Schools to reach out to students not going to college about entry level positions for those with clean driving records. This was a good recruiting tool used to contact many minority and women students and showced a variety of opportunities.

Additionally, we created recruiting marketing materials for three general target demographics: high school education, some college education, and college graduates.

With regards to the Department's fiscal spending, 10.1 percent of the total spending (\$10.2 Million) went to diverse companies. When only looking at the spending that resulted from Public Service's request for proposals, 25.2 percent was paid to diverse companies (\$3.1 Million).

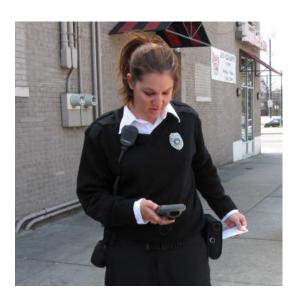


### **Operational Efficiencies**

The Division of Refuse Collection Services is implementing RouteSmart vehicle routing software for collection services to maximize vehicles and personnel, while also mitigating risk factors. Efficiencies already found include:

- Routed refuse trucks to transfer stations and the dump at different times to eliminate long delays in dumping
- Reduction of number of 300 gallon container routes
   reduction of 8 routes
- Reduction of number of 90 gallon residential collection routes reduction of 15 routes

The Division of Traffic Management maintains 997 traffic signals throughout the City. Keeping them in good working order is a full time job for the Department's Traffic Maintenance Section. In 2017, the Section worked diligently to identify operational efficiencies when it came to performing work orders with their existing staff. 469 work orders were completed throughout the year, up from 276 work orders in 2016 (a 94.1% increase in that type of work from the previous year.)



Bluebeam software for Electronic Plan Review was implemented for all Capital Improvement projects in the Department. Eliminated all paper and the time of delivering multiple sets of plans to multiple locations for review.

Parking Services is always looking for ways to do more with less. Staff is now equipped with new electronic handheld devices that transmit parking citation data in real-time to allow customers to have more information including pictures of the citation instantaneously.

The Residential Parking Permit Program prioritizes resident access in our vibrant neighborhoods. Our online services gained popularity in 2017. Parking Services processed 6,257 residential parking permits and saved the trip for 20 percent of the city's permit holders who processed their permit renewals online.

Complete a comprehensive review of city operations, identify efficiencies and reinvest savings in critical city services and programs.

# 2017 HIGHLIGHTS



### **Director's Office**

The Office of the Director includes the Senior Leadership Team as well as Communications, Human Resources and the Office of Support Services. These offices provide much needed support to the four divisions within the department.

In 2017, a major focus for the Office was incorporating the Mayor's Goals and Initiatives into the Department's everyday practices. Throughout the year the Director's Office also participated in various multi-departmental efforts including the Celebrate One Working Committee, Smart Columbus, Age Friendly Columbus, and the Regional Corridor Analysis Study. The support service offices found numerous ways to assist Department staff. An example of this was the Human Resources

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

**\$110 million** in operational funds managed.

\$133.6 million in construction contracts.

Advertised **37** Construction projects, **11** requests for proposals and **48** purchase orders.

**359** Pieces of City Council Legislation processed.

**147** New hires, promotions or transfers processed.

**233** Pre-employment or random drug tests facilitated.

17% Fewer recordable employee injuries and 52% fewer employee lost days on the job.

Office proactively met a training need for engineers that was not being fulfilled. When the licensing requirements changed for engineers and they were required to attend a 2-hour in-person ethics training, Human Resources organized multiple sessions of on-site ethics training that met the licensing requirements.

### Managed the Largest Public Service Capital Budget in History

The Department's 2017 capital budget of nearly \$123 million was the most ever managed by Public Service. This included projects for all four divisions.

#### **Enhanced Recruiting Efforts**

Expanded department recruiting for various positions through more targeted social media postings, attending career fairs, and exploring the abilitiy to use coop and vocational programs as a conduit for certain positions.

#### **Planned Facility Upgrades**

Several of the Department's maintenance outposts and refuse facilities are in need of improvements, including technology upgrades. The Director's Office worked to identify and plan for these improvements.

# Awarded \$12.4 Million in Grant Funding

Worked to obtain federal funding through multiple grant opportunities.



# Infrastructure Management

The Division of Infrastructure Management planning duties include long term services management for transportation infrastructure assets, pavement and structures management, pedestrian and biking facility management, zoning and right-of-way permit reviews, plat reviews, street sweeping, litter control, mowing, alley maintenance, pothole patching, graffiti removal, and snow removal. The division had an authorized strength of 190 full-time and 2 part-time employees in 2017. Street maintenance operations are conducted from five maintenance outposts plus an

administrative and training facility. The Columbus Snow Warriors have been recognized by the American Public Works Association for excellence in Columbus' snow and ice removal program and promoting best practices that minimize environmental impacts.

Gaining efficiencies was a major focuss for the Division this past year. In 2017, Infrastructure Management made technicalogical strides in GIS, with a good deal of efforts devoted toward Warrior Watch 2.0, Route Optimization, Work Order Management, Recollect with the intent of increasing data intergrity and creating more efficiencies throughout the entire Division.

## Researched New, Greener Opportunities

Tested flameless all in one pothole patcher machines that fit with the City's green initiatives that focus on compressed natural gas and electric for operations.



Added 3.3 linear miles of new roadway.

Issued 7,660 "certified" addresses.

**25** miles of alleys treated with chip and seal by Street Maintenance.

Constructed **4.3** miles of shared-use path, **3.7** miles of bike lanes, **0.8** miles of sharrows, and **26** bike racks.

Planned **3.7** miles of new sidewalks in Celebrate One neighborhoods.

**5** Rounds of roadside mowing completed.

1,207 tons of debris swept up.

2,786 potholes cases closed.

14,628 Right-of-way permits processed.

# Improved Investigation Response and Assessment Strategies

Staff investigated over 7,500 service requests from potholes to street cleaning.
The alley condition ratings cycle was reduced from
3 years to every 2 years.

#### **Enhanced Customer Service**

Added an online customer portal to obtain a right of way permit allowing customers to apply, pay and obtain permits online. An interactive phone system was added to provide customers with a quick selection menu.

## Increased Maintenance Functionality

To support contracted services, in-house maintenance staff crack sealed 158,000 linear feet of roadway.

Blaw-Inox

# Design & Construction

The Division of Design and Construction duties include the design and administration of transportation infrastructure improvement projects, capital project prioritization, scoping, project management, plan review, in-house design, and management of construction contracts, construction inspection, surveying, and materials testing. division had authorized strength of 132 full-time and 36 part-time employees in 2017.

Project delivery is the main focus for the Division. Major construction projects completed in 2017 included:

- Short North Improvements Phase 1
- Poindexter Village Roadways Phase 2
- Joyce Avenue Phase 3 (23rd Avenue to Kenmore Avenue)
- Gender Road and Refugee Road
- · West Broad Street on the Scioto Peninsula
- UIRF-Clintonville/Indianola Avenue Road Diet
- Hamilton Road Phase B (S-Curve)
- Central Ohio Transit Authority's Bus Rapid Transit Project

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

**\$32 Million** in design and construction costs for the Roadway Maintenance Program.

Resurfaced **300** streets totaling **183** lane miles of roadway.

**1,280** Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramps added.

1,120 Plan reviews completed.

**\$38 Million** in private construction inspection agreements.

## Revised the Scoping Process for Design Projects

Eliminated on average 2-4 weeks of approval time per scope.

#### Completed Columbus Traffic Signal System Phase C

In this third phase to migrate all Columbus traffic signals to a new central traffic control system, 213 signals were upgraded.

#### Explored Using Ground Tire Rubber Asphalt Mixture

This mixture that enhances the durability and longevity of pavements was placed on a roadway for analysis with positive results. Using GTR mixture also allows for the reuse of recycled tires.



#### 100% Electronic Plan Review

All plans are now reviewed
electronically, saving hundreds of
thousands of dollars in printing and
transportation costs versus paper
review. This also allows the Department
to be more environmentally friendly.

# Traffic Management

The Division of Traffic Management duties include parking services, parking enforcement, traffic engineering services, traffic maintenance, safety studies, parking studies, speed studies, capacity reviews, signal warrant analysis, installation and maintenance of pavement markings, traffic signals, traffic signage, parking meters, and parking management and violation services, including the Parking Violations Bureau. The division had an authorized strength of 161 full-time and 3 part-time employees in 2017.

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

21,453 work orders completed by the Traffic Maintenance Section.

**963** Site compliance plans reviewed.

**116** Traffic Impact Studies completed.

Completed 303 zoning application reviews.

**505** Traffic signal work orders completed.

Installed **9,244** signs and fabricated **5,343** street name signs.

**584** Pavement marking work orders completed.

Implemented **11,030** traffic signal timing changes.

In 2017, much of the Division's focus was on Columbus becoming a rapidly growing city. Long range planning continued with Connect Columbus and COTA's NextGen Plan, identifying growth corridors throughout the city to focus land use density and subsequently mass transportation. The section that performs private development reviews saw a noteable increase in zoning and site plan submissions. With all the additional development occurring, the maintenance of traffic staff was busy coordinating MOT plans and closures, particularly in and around Downtown.

### **Enhanced the Traffic Management Center**

Utilized new data sources to detect traffic backups and improved communication technology with Columbus Fire and Police Departments.



#### Researched New Smart Paint Technology for the Blind

Worked with Ohio State University to perform research designed to improve navigation for blind pedestrians.



## Improved Signal Maintenance Operations

Reworked operations to perform 223 signal inspections, which represents an increase over prior years, without sacrificing productivity in other areas.

## Assisted in the City's Growth and Development

Saw a significant increase in reviews relating to new City development, highlighted by a 25% increase in the number of traffic impact study reviews.

### Refuse

The Division of Refuse Collection duties include trash collection for about city residents, management of the City's contracted residential recycling and yard waste services, management and operation of the Keep Columbus Beautiful program, collection and disposal of dead animals in the public rightof-way, collection of residential bulk trash, and collection of trash from containers in the public right-of-way. The division had an authorized strength of 231 employees in 2017. Operations are conducted from three refuse stations, an administrative facility, and a warehouse. Trash is collected using trucks with mechanical arms, making refuse operations safer for collectors, faster for residents and more cost effective for the City.

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Tracked or disposed:

- 313,704 tons of municipal solid waste
- **22,571** tons of bulk items
- **41,710** tons of recycling
- **34,596** tons of yard waste
- 251 tons of hazardous waste

Investigated **1,409** cases of illegal dumping, **3,604** Refuse Code violations, and submitted **16** cases to Environmental Court.

**719** Youths educated on littering at **12** Columbus Recreation and Park Camps

Organized **433** Litter cleanups with **9,568** cleanup volunteers

Keep Columbus Beautiful (KCP) is a City of Columbus community improvement program and a national affilliate of Keep America Beautiful. KCP focuses on public education and volunteer service related to quality of life environmental issues including litter, recycling and beautification. In 2017, "End Littering in Columbus," a strategic litter plan was developed by KCP and designed in partnership with the Neighborhood Design Center.

#### Implemented RouteSmart

Implementing route optimization software in the refuse trucks allowed for fewer miles travled and more stops and lifts per hour.

### **Initiated the Refuse Alley Collection Pilot Program**

Implemented a pilot program to determine best practices for collecting refuse in alleys.



### Rebranded Keep Columbus Beautiful

Changed the logo and colors and redevelolped the website and promotional materials to more closely align wth Keep America Beautiful.

Collaborated with Ohio State University on the Annual Student Move In/

**Move Out** 

Provided 13 free bulk trash drop-off locations in the campus area.

### **Parking**

The Parking Violations Bureau manage parking in the City to ensure reasonable access and turnover for residents and visitors. Responsibilities include parking regulations, parking meters, parking tickets, impoundment and parking permits. In 2017, the Parking Violations Bureau was part of the Division of Traffic Management. 2017 also brought the hiring of a new Assistant Director, devoted to parking management. Moving forward, the

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Over **4,500** parking meters maintained.

6257 Residential parking permits issued.

733 Residential parking permits renewed online.

39 ADA spaces installed.

130 Valet and loading zones managed.

to parking management. Moving forward, the Parking Violations Bureau will be under the direction of the Assistant Director of Parking.

Major parking initiatives this past year included investigating new technologies in parking to determine future investments. This included meeting with vendors and getting a firm grasp of the different parking enforcement equipment. In conjunction with Traffic Management, parking staff also focused much of 2017 on parking strategies for the Short North neighborhood that is facing developmental pressure



# A THANKS TO OUR LEADERSHIP



Andrew J. Ginther *Mayor* 



Shannon Hardin Council President



Michael Stinziano
Council President Pro Tempore



Elizabeth Brown Council Member



Mitchell J. Brown Council Member



Jaiza Page Council Member



Emmanuel V. Remy Council Member



Priscilla R. Tyson Council Member

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