
City Manager's Report

NOVEMBER 16, 2015

Grants Applied for and Received

There was no activity this month.

Community Planning & Development (CP&D)

➤ Planning

At the October 1, 2015, Planning Commission meeting, the Commission:

- Received updates on the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 initiative, the stadium lighting ordinance project, and the Bronson Park Master Plan. The stadium lighting draft ordinance will go before the Planning Commission on November 5. Final citizen workgroup and community-wide meetings on the draft ordinance were held during October.

Nine site plan projects were processed during October as follows:

1. A new storage building for the Kalamazoo County Jail at 1500 Lamont
2. A building addition for Family and Children Services at 1608 Lake
3. A re-use of the building at 2914 Portage for a grocery store for El Gallo Blanco
4. Two new student duplex buildings at 1201 Kimbark
5. A new brewery and pub facility at 3600 Covington
6. A building addition for Kalamazoo Clinical at 401 Howard
7. A new Nazareth Center building for the Congregation of St. Joseph at 3427 Gull
8. Add Verizon Wireless equipment on the water tank at 1233 Edgemoor
9. Add Verizon Wireless equipment on the water tank at 2634 Mt. Olivet

On October 29, staff launched Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 with 50 community leaders attending a workgroup orientation session. Staff gave a presentation outlining the role of the workgroup members and the overall process to develop a new strategic vision and update the Master Plan. Additionally, workgroup members had a roundtable discussion to identify key attributes of their workgroup topic as well as barriers to achieving outcomes. The workgroup topics are: Great Neighborhoods/Downtown, Balanced Transportation, Development Character and Land Use, Sustainable City, and Shared Prosperity/Economic Stability. Workgroups reported out on the top three key attributes and obstacles for each topic. This information will be put into a report and shared online with a calendar of upcoming workgroup meetings and community engagement events. The orientation document is online at www.kalamazoo.org/imagine-kalamazoo-2025.

➤ Housing

CP&D began automated call reminders for rental certificate inspection appointments on October 1. The calls are programmed daily to go out for inspections three days in advance in an attempt to reduce last minute and same day cancellations / rescheduling by property owners/managers. CP&D initiated the automated calls in an effort to use inspectors more

efficiently, and staff has received positive feedback from property owners.

The tall grass and weed season is winding down, with final inspections and referrals being handled in the next week.

➤ Zoning

At the October 8 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, the Board:

- Approved a use variance for Michael Jones to allow the distilling of spirits at 2041 S. Burdick Street in the Commercial – Neighborhood Zone District. This location already had a Special Use Permit approval from the Planning Commission for a brewpub at this location, so it will be a brewpub with a distillery component.

➤ Code Compliance / Anti-Blight

The Kalamazoo County Hoarding Task Force began meeting in December of 2014. This group includes representatives from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) and CP&D, City of Portage, Charter Township of Kalamazoo, Legal Aid, Housing Resources Incorporated, Service Masters of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Kalamazoo County Animal Control, Senior Services, Gryphon Place, Area Agency on Aging, Interact of Michigan, and LISC. The Task Force was created to combine resources of multiple agencies in the greater Kalamazoo area to combat hoarding. The Task Force has created a resource list which is now available via the 211 information line. The Task Force is also drafting a manual which will include agency contact information as well as examples of how to tackle certain types of hoarding situations. Service Masters of Kalamazoo also sponsored a one-day hoarding awareness program on October 29 with Matt Paxton.

The Code Compliance Inspectors completed 286 inspections for various violations including 4 condemnations and 3 requests for tickets during the month of October.

➤ Building & Trades

In October, there were 336 permits issued, representing \$5,287,096 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 3,177, representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$48,699,198.

➤ Community Development

Program Year 2015/16 Agreements have been executed and the following activities have started:

External providers:

- Homeowner rehabilitation
- Vacant housing rehabilitation to be sold to low income buyers
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program
- Minor/critical roof and home repairs
- Fair housing services
- Building repairs for youth programming
- Home repair for the elderly
- Lease purchase program

- Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing

City projects:

- Crime prevention
- Youth programming
- Graffiti removal
- Portage streetscape improvements
- Douglas Firehouse renovation

The application process for Program Year 2016/2017 has started. CP&D staff held two mandatory pre-submission trainings. Twenty-six people attended the trainings representing 18 agencies.

Economic Development (ED)

Staff is currently working the 27th Brownfield plan amendment. Changes will include addition of three chapters as well as the amendment of one chapter. Plan changes will go before the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority during their November meeting. If approved, the plan changes will go before the City Commission on December 7 for final approval.

Staff completed oversight of the demolition of the former JA Richards and 535 E. Ransom Street demolition.

Staff continued work on multiple projects, to include 3 potential new projects within the city.

Human Resources (HR)

The Weight Watchers at Work Program coordinated by Human Resources, which officially began on 10/1/15, has helped the 18 registered employees in combined weight loss of 126.8 through 10/29/15 (4 weeks of the program)!

➤ HR Advisors

Completed supervisory training for EEOC Title VII Discrimination & Harassment Prevention with Light Duty Policy Training, achieved 100% attendance of all identified personnel, in advance of the federal deadline.

Staff participated in/prepared for Captain promotional interviews for 7 candidates, finalized scoring and posted eligibility list.

Staff administered/prepared for Sergeant promotional file reviews and interviews for 23 candidates, finalized scoring and posted eligibility list.

Staff finalized promotional test content lists and sources for all promotional exams to be conducted in 2016 (Detective, Sergeant & Lieutenant).

Staff participated in two-day local "Employer of the Day" recruitment event featuring the Public Safety Officer position, in partnership with Michigan Works, Northside Ministerial Alliance and Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

Staff completed three brief compensation surveys for City of Ann Arbor.

Monthly CDL Random Alcohol and/or Drug screenings were conducted for October.

➤ **Benefits**

Staff sent out required notices and information to remainder of retirees regarding 2016 Open Enrollment (10/12/15–11/23/15), for coverage effective 1/1/2016.

Staff worked through process with BCBS and Mercer to establish a Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) with a Health Savings Account/High Deductible Health Plan (HSA/HDHP) under Equity Health (the HSA administrator) as a second medical plan offering to the NBU group for 2016.

Staff contracted with Cornerstone Municipal Advisory Group from Troy, Michigan to help us coordinate the collection of medical insurance data for ACA reporting requirements to employees and the IRS for tax year 2015.

➤ **Training Schedule**

Class Title	Date	Location	Time	# Attended
FMLA 101 and Forms Update	10/1/15	Stockbridge – Main Conference Room	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	17
Mandatory Supervisory Discrimination & Harassment Prevention / Light Duty Policy Training	10/5/15	KDPS – Station 4/5 Training Room	7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	30
Workers Compensation – What Managers & Supervisors Need to Know	10/19/15	City Hall – Community Room	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	4
Preventing Fraud & Abuse and Ethics Policy Review	10/22/15	City Hall – Community Room	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	6
Hiring and Interview Training	10/29/15	City Hall – Community Room	8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	4

Information Technology (I.T.)

I.T. staff handled 617 unique trouble tickets in the month of October. These trouble tickets were I.T. problems handled by I.T. staff that originated with a phone call, email, or in-person visit to the I.T. Helpdesk.

The web-based reporting tool built by I.T. staff was used by citizens 62 times during the month of October. This automated web-based system allows citizens to use their web browser or smartphone to report numerous City-related issues including potholes, streetlight outages, traffic signal issues, and tall grass and weeds. All reports were automatically routed to the appropriate City staff via email.

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS)

➤ Criminal Investigation Division (CID)

The CID investigated a shooting at the Fox Ridge Apts. where the suspect shot a female in the leg. Warrants were obtained but suspect is believed to have fled out of state and has not been located as of yet.

The CID also investigated a shooting at the Interfaith Apts. where the victim was shot 5 times but survived. The suspect was located and arrested in Florida and is awaiting extradition.

The CID investigated a shooting on Florence Street where the victim reported being shot in the leg. After extensive interviewing, the victim finally admitted to accidentally shooting himself.

➤ KVET

KVET made 39 drug cases and seized 8 firearms in October.

KVET has investigated 52 meth labs so far for 2015.

Management Services

➤ Assessor

Bills were sent to all delinquent accounts for personal property collections. We are in the process of reviewing the returned mail for account activity and active status. Collections have been made on numerous accounts. Our focus is currently on a list of accounts which are owing more than \$5,000 in a given year. We hope to have a list of known accounts that will be requested for write off by the end of November. After that point, we will add to the list as the reviews and further research dictate.

Work continues on the neighborhood reviews. Field work related to the review is wrapping up. Permit work will start in November and continue through January.

The number of new full tribunal Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) cases for 2015 was 13 (2014 had 26). The MTT spreadsheet has been updated to reflect the new cases, estimated values in contention and anticipated refunds.

Cases filed for 2015 are at 40. Cases that were filed earlier this year are already scheduled for hearings.

➤ Purchasing

Working collaboratively with City Departments bid documents were prepared and distributed through the City's website for seven purchasing projects.

Reviewed and set up 126 purchase orders and processed 31 change orders.

Purchasing staff are administering prevailing wages for nine construction contracts.

The Purchasing Division administered the annual intergovernmental auction of surplus personal property. All local government entities in the Kalamazoo area were invited to sell their surplus items in the October 3 auction.

➤ Treasury

The utility billing study has been drafted. In November, we will begin meeting as a group to begin discussions on the current utility billing processes.

Utility Billing – Utility Bills issued in October:

15,614 Original Bills
3,023 Reminder Notices
2,605 Final (shut off) Notices

Parks & Recreation

➤ Recreation

The recreation division successfully launched the department's new online registration software component ActiveNet on October 1st. This software will give our customers a user-friendly platform, allowing them to view all the programs and services we offer, register for programs and reserve parks online. It allows the department to reach many more customers, and give the public real time access to our programs, events, and rental information. It also gives the department the ability to have a current database of our customers to be able to provide updates, any program cancelations, and current news.

On October 16, we held our annual Inclusive Halloween Dance at the Coover Center. There was a great turnout with a few of the regular participants even dressing up for the dance. Elvis made his annual appearance and wowed the crowd with his dancing and singing.

October 17 was the day for our annual Harvest Festival at the Farmer's Market. We had a tent that showcased a craft-making session for kids. Visitors participated in creating a fall craft that they were then able to take home.

The highlight for the month was our annual Safe Halloween event that was held on October 24 at Bronson Park. We had a new community partner this year. Lowe's Home Improvement donated supplies, pumpkins, candy, and had volunteers to help run the pumpkin race. They were a great addition this year, and it went so well for them that they expressed interest in coming back next year. The event was a HUGE success, with an estimated 3,000 people attending. Staff and volunteers provided various games, photo stations, craft centers, and our bounce house. KDPS had the bomb squad robot there, which is always a big hit with the children. Alan Kazaam performed his magic show near the end of the event which was a great culmination to a terrific day. Residents were provided doughnut holes, cider and candy while supplies lasted.

➤ Communication/Outreach

On October 22, the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network (KYDN) held their “Lights on After School” program in Bronson Park. We partnered with KYDN to help with this year’s event. Staff assisted with setting up and overseeing the use of the department’s sound system and music for the event. School-aged kids from KPS and the surrounding area attended the gathering to show the importance of quality after-school programs in the Kalamazoo Community. Commissioner Cunningham and County Commissioner Moore spoke to the children. The event had games, a parade in the park, and food that was donated by the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home. The event was well attended and a great success.

➤ Parks

The month of October saw many events in the parks, but things are continuing to slow down as the colder weather starts to move in. A majority of the temporary employees have left and the remaining full time staff remain very busy with leaf removal as well as facility winterization.

The improvements at Hays Park are complete. The hydro-seeding for the turf areas surrounding the play equipment and asphalt pathway was installed in late September and the play equipment mulch was installed in early October. Staff have witnessed children using the equipment and residents walking their dogs throughout the park. On October 23, staff was approached by a community member to host a volunteer effort in a park in November and suggested Hays Park. We are also examining the possibility of removing the existing bollards along Factory Street and replacing with a two rail wood fence.

The construction for the improvements at Woods Lake Park continues. All four concrete masonry unit walls for the park shelter have been erected and the roof trusses installed. The concrete footings for the engineered shade structure adjacent to the park shelter have been installed. The fishing station located at the western edge of the park is complete. The segmented retaining walls adjacent to the park shelter have been staked and earthwork has begun. Several new boulder retaining walls have been constructed along the pathway at the beach’s edge. Earthwork continues for many of the site paths. A portion of concrete walkway has been poured along the beach.

On October 3, staff assisted the Kalamazoo Watershed Council, Public Services and members of the community in an effort to clean up a segment of the Kalamazoo River along the southern edge of the Versluis-Dickinson Softball Complex near the Interfaith Homes of Kalamazoo. The parks and recreation department provided snacks, folding tables, trash bags, trash pickers and a 10x10 tent to be used as a base for volunteer operations. Several large contractor bags of trash were removed from the river bed as well as the area along the banks of the river.

On October 14, the Director and Parks Manager gave a presentation at the Radisson Hotel to the Kiwanis Club of Kalamazoo regarding the department’s parks system, strategic goals, community needs assessment, and accomplishments for 2015. The Kiwanis Club is interested in contributing to potential improvements at Davis Street Park as well as assisting with volunteer maintenance at the Florence Street Splash Pad to support the local youth in the community.

Public Services

➤ Accounting

Staff received several damage claims during October including several from the water main break on Westnedge and Locust

Staff completed monthly quality quantity billing for minor/major industrial users, contract industrial users and contract municipalities within the required timeframes as well as invoicing for Kalamazoo County shared Traffic Engineer and Traffic Signal Technician.

➤ Administration

Public Services staff met with EPA and MDEQ representatives to discuss the pending options and monitoring for the Allied site and discussed the Cork Street 5-year review and recommended institutional controls and maintenance requirements.

Staff met with various outside agencies concerning various residents' traffic concerns within the County and City.

➤ City Wide Maintenance

Staff worked numerous hours on their preventative and demand maintenance on City-owned equipment and structures and repaired and/or contracted repairs/replacement of vandalized City-owned infrastructure throughout the county.

Staff continued their efforts in removing graffiti from various Public Services buildings and street structures throughout the system.

Staff repaired the leaks within the downtown snowmelt system and rehabbed the heat exchangers for the snowmelt boilers.

➤ Customer Service

Staff logged 109 work orders for streets, sidewalk and forestry related work request in October. The Cemetery Coordinator responded to 127 cemetery related calls, met with eleven cemetery related visitors, processed 17 foundation orders and sold four final resting sites.

➤ Engineering

Staff worked with the contractor to ensure the completion of the Local and Major Streets projects for 2015 by the end of October

Staff worked with MDOT to obtain the approval to run a portion of the downtown trail way along Kalamazoo Avenue. The final route has been agreed to by all parties. FTCH is continuing to work on the design.

Staff reviewed current and proposed trailway routes as part of the non-motorized plan update; staff continued their review of all streets that have not been rated since 2012, and reviewed industry standards to determine other ways to maintain streets economically.

Staff continued their work on the Houston Street collaborative project between CP&D and the Vine Neighborhood.

Staff continued to provide all required inspections services for new services and mains as well as providing required MISSDIG staking for City utilities inside and outside the City limits.

➤ Environmental Services

Staff completed one hundred and sixty-nine water system cross-connection inspections since January and a new cross connection testing/repair bid was sent to Purchasing to obtain quotes for city owned devices.

Staff collected and analyzed the state required 120 monthly water distribution bacti and chlorine residual samples for October; conducted volatile organic samples at Central and Station 11; analyzed twenty main construction, two tanks for the City of Kalamazoo and four contract samples for Parchment Water System, and completed all required unit process control and NPDES permit required Wastewater sampling for October.

Staff members participated in various environmental stewardship meetings concerning contaminated site remediation efforts, and various staff attended the Industrial Pretreatment seminar in Lansing at which MDEQ presented the City of Kalamazoo an award for having an Industrial Pretreatment Program for 30 years.

Staff also participated in a watershed grant project for KVCC Downtown to off-line stormwater volumes to the City stormwater sewer collection system.

Staff received acceptance of 2015-2016 Wellhead Protection grant proposal for \$60,000 to include the chemical inventory project, update the contaminant source inventory/risk assessment, educational ads, radio campaign, metro bus placard educational campaign and upgrade www.protectyourwater.net website.

➤ Field Services

Field Services Staff replaced several lead service lines; repaired several service leaks, curb box, hydrants and restored several lawns, laid several tons of asphalt and several feet of sidewalks damaged during water related utility work, and cleaned 20,467 feet of the sanitary collection system.

Field services staff completed the middle portion of the concrete cemetery wall along Forbes Street that was engineered by the Deputy Director; staff anticipate that the remaining two outer sections will be replaced within the next few years.

Staff worked with the crack sealing contractor to ensure that the BTR Park, Burdick and Arboretum Streets were sealed properly.

➤ Fleet Services

Fleet began obtaining leasing estimates for CP&D fleet and fleet pool vehicles were made available to rent by staff for work related activities in October.

Fleet closed two hundred eighty-one vehicle work orders in October. Two hundred and twenty-three repair work orders were repair type orders and sixty of the orders were preventative maintenance.

➤ Safety

Staff attended a MIOSHA safety seminar in October to learn of the agency's 2016 focus areas for compliance and to obtain necessary information concerning required training for staff. Staff worked with a consultant to continue ongoing efforts to review and revise the various safety training programs for Public Services. The vacant Safety Manager position was revised in October to include required certifications and increased responsibility and the position is set to be posted in November.

➤ Solid Waste

Approximately 288 tons of bulk trash, 21 tons of brush, and 112 tons of recycling were collected in October. 173 yards of debris was removed from the City's right of way as part of code enforcement during the month of October.

Staff submitted the Solid Waste bid for quotes, the bid requested pricing for both single and dual recycling streams and monthly/quarterly bulk pickup and weekly/biweekly recycling;

Staff held a conference with EPA, MDEQ, MDOT, Kalamazoo Nature Center, SW Michigan Conservancy, Portage ECC, and the Kalamazoo County Deputy Drain Commissioner on the invasive weed known as Japanese Knotweed which is destructive to infrastructure. Staff also educated several divisions within the city on how to identify the weed. Staff has identified a pilot area to test various herbicides on the weed which is known to spread quickly and to go dormant for up to twenty years. Staff is working with several of the agencies on an education campaign that will include information on the species, communications via website, neighborhood associations, greenhouses, landscaping companies, Facebook and the View from the Curb.

➤ Wastewater

Staff worked on various capital improvement and maintenance projects as well as monitored and implemented on-going treatment enhancement efforts.

Staff continued their work with contractors concerning the replacement of two of the Tertiary Screw Pumps at the wastewater treatment plant.

Staff continued to gather system infrastructure information for inclusion in the Wastewater Systems Strategic Plan for the next five-ten years' worth of capital improvement projects at an estimated cost of four to five million dollars annually.

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit expired in October 2015 but will remain in effect until the new permit is drafted and approved. The TMDL group is working on the draft TMDL agreement to present to the MDEQ and EPA.

➤ Water

A total of 498,155,705 gallons or an average 16.07 MGD of water was pumped into the Water System in October.

Graffiti was removed on several water facilities. Signs and trail cameras are being installed at various water stations due to increased vandalism of equipment and buildings.

Staff dealt with twenty-three customer water quality concerns at various locations throughout the system and staff continued to troubleshoot, replace and repair water supply and distribution equipment.

Staff continued their ongoing efforts to document standard operating procedures required for the Water Systems Environmental Protection Agency's required Risk Management Program and Emergency Response Plan.

Water system pump, well rehab, hydrant and station maintenance projects are ongoing throughout the system. Staff members prioritized the list of necessary upgrades to the City's Water System for inclusion in the Water Systems Capital Improvement Program Budget and Strategic Plan for the next fifteen years at an estimated cost of five to six million dollars annually.

Transportation

➤ Ridership

There were 268,880 passenger trips provided system-wide in the month of September, 2015, and a total of 2,208,046 passenger trips provided system-wide year-to-date through September.

Year-to-date through September, 2015, the number of rides provided on Metro County Connect service is up 9.18% over the same time in 2014. The Community Service Van program also had an increase of 62.36% over previous year through September. The number of rides on the Metro Transit fixed-route bus service has dropped 8.45% through September, 2015, which is reflective of new identification badges issued in October 2014 by Western Michigan University that no longer allow for use as bus fare by previously graduated students.

➤ October Activities

Metro Transit participated in the Area Agency on Aging Annual Senior and Caregiver Expo on Tuesday, October 6 at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds and Expo Center.

A bus decorated in child-friendly fall themes was available for a trunk-or-treat event at Charlie's P.L.A.C.E. on October 31.