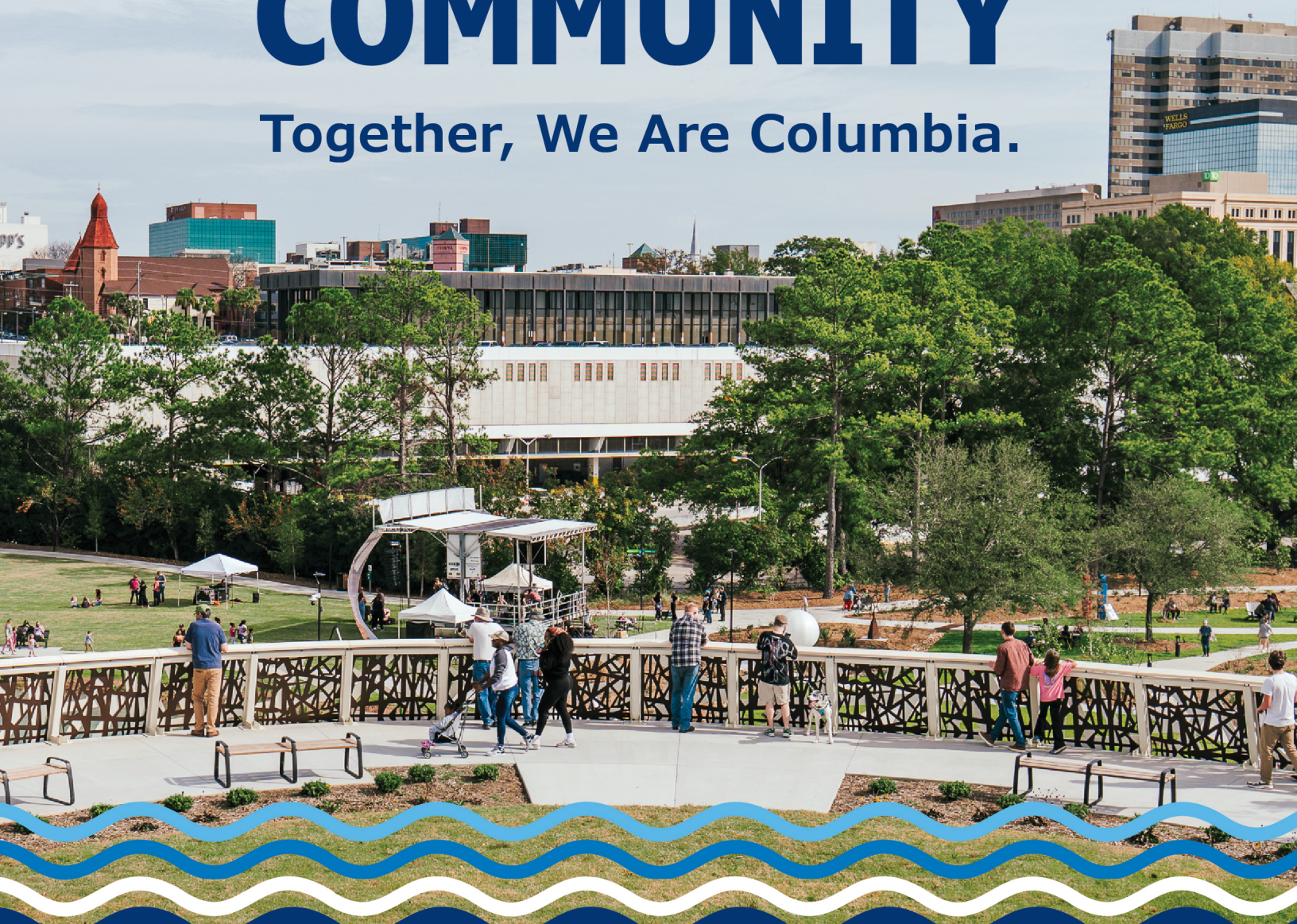


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# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Together, We Are Columbia.



[www.columbiasc.gov](http://www.columbiasc.gov)

# City Manager's Note: Report to the Community

There are moments in the life of a city when you can feel the shift. When vision begins to take shape in a way that is not only seen, but experienced. This is one of those moments for Columbia.

As your City Manager, I am proud to share that we are not simply growing; we are growing with intention. Through my professional G.R.O.W.T.H. Plan, a comprehensive three-year strategic framework, we are aligning our investments, our partnerships, and our priorities to ensure that every step forward reflects the kind of city we are building together. This plan is a commitment to creating a Columbia that balances the charm and connectivity of a small community with the opportunity and energy of a thriving capital city. Across our City, that commitment is coming to life in meaningful and measurable ways.

We are investing in housing solutions that support our workforce, ensuring that the people who serve this City every day have access to attainable places to call home. We are activating new spaces and reimagining existing ones to better serve our residents, our employees, and our visitors.

We are also seeing the continued evolution of Columbia as a destination—one where culture, cuisine, and community intersect. Developments like Gather COLA are redefining how we experience food and fellowship, creating vibrant hubs that bring people together and support local entrepreneurs.

At the same time, we are restoring and enhancing treasured public spaces like Finlay Park—spaces that anchor neighborhoods, invite connection, and provide room to breathe, gather, and grow.

And in the heart of our downtown, transformative projects are underway that will shape Columbia for generations. From the redevelopment of key corridors to catalytic investments like the future Grand Bohemian Hotel—an estimated \$70 million project that will introduce luxury accommodations, cultural programming, and expanded retail opportunities—we are strengthening our position as a dynamic, walkable, and culturally rich capital city.

These efforts are complemented by major investments in infrastructure and service delivery, including our new Municipal Complex and adjacent mixed-use developments that will bring housing, retail, and enhanced public access together in one connected, vibrant corridor.



Each of these projects reflects a larger strategy—one that is deliberate, collaborative, and rooted in long-term impact. We are pursuing growth that is equitable, sustainable, and aligned with the needs of our community.

That means creating a City where accessibility is not an aspiration, but a reality—where cost of living remains within reach, where walkability connects our neighborhoods, where food access supports healthy living, and where job stability creates pathways for generational success.

It means continuing to build a place where you can truly live, work, and play.

To ensure transparency and keep our community connected to this progress, I encourage you to visit our Growth page on the City’s website and explore the many projects shaping Columbia’s future by visiting:



Columbia’s story is still being written—and what makes it powerful is that it is being written together. Through thoughtful planning, strategic partnerships, and a shared belief in what this City can be, we are building something that reflects not only where we are, but where we are going.

**And I can say with confidence—Columbia, it’s our time!**

**With gratitude and appreciation,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa".

**Teresa Wilson**

City Manager  
City of Columbia



# 2026 BUDGET AT A GLANCE



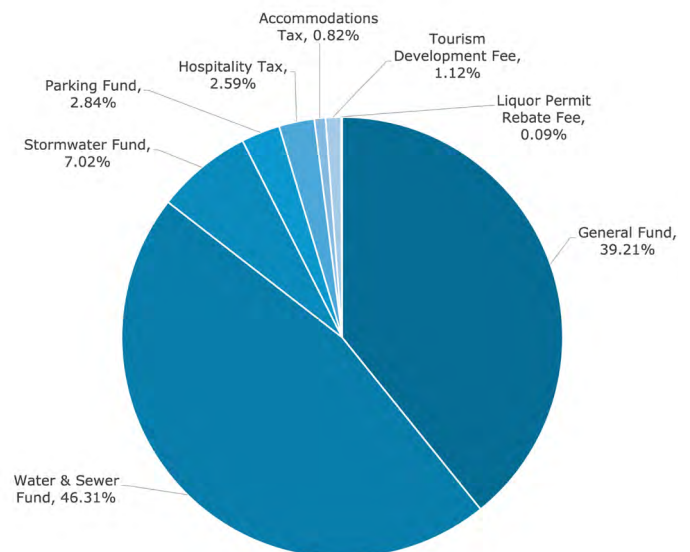
## CITY OF COLUMBIA FY 2025–2026 BUDGET

FUND	FISCAL YEAR 2025–2026
General Fund	\$183,962,740
Water & Sewer Fund	\$217,259,000
Stormwater Fund	\$32,910,502
Parking Fund	\$13,311,327
Hospitality Tax	\$16,694,051
Accommodations Tax	\$4,491,583
Tourism Development Fee	\$5,272,836
Liquor Permit Rebate Fee	\$434,164
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$474,336,203</b>

### BUDGET PRIORITIES

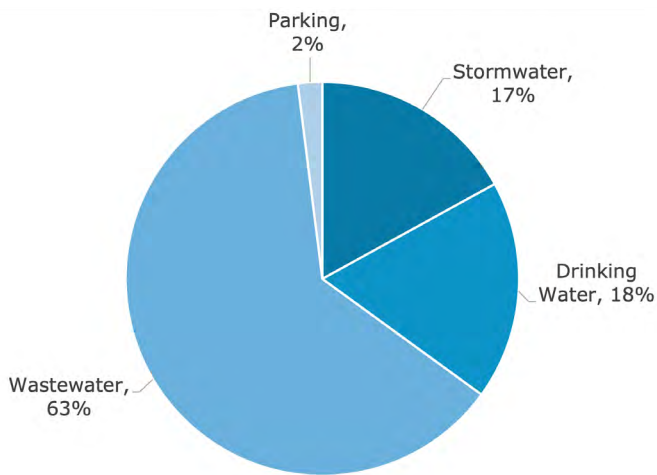
- Performance Management and Pay-for-Performance:** Continued implementation supports accountability, workforce effectiveness, and competitive pay.
- Public Safety Recruitment and Retention:** Continued funding for the Step Pay Plan, professional development initiatives, and facility upgrades to support workforce stability, skill development, and operational readiness.
- Sustaining Core Services:** As we expand our vision, we remain committed to protecting and strengthening day-to-day services that residents depend on.
- Balancing Growth with Fiscal Responsibility:** Strategic initiatives must be pursued within the City’s financial means, requiring close alignment of resources with long-term priorities.

### BUDGETS BY OPERATING FUNDS





## FY 2025-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM—ALL FUNDS



FUND	FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025
Drinking Water CIP	\$20,600,000
Wastewater CIP	\$72,400,000
Stormwater CIP	\$19,635,000
Parking CIP	\$2,533,827
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$115,168,827</b>

**SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**



# FY 2025–2026 GENERAL FUND REVENUES

**REVENUE TOTAL:  
\$183,962,740**

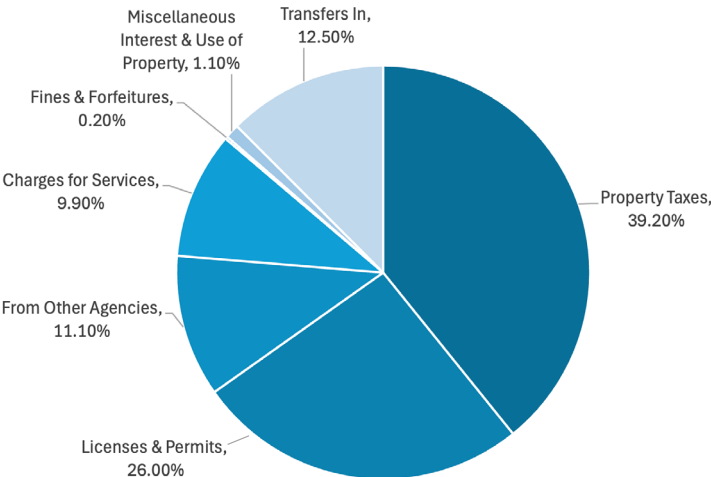
- Property Taxes: \$72,102,689
- Licenses & Permits: \$47,816,419
- From Other Agencies: \$20,437,331
- Charges for Services: \$18,240,177
- Fines & Forfeitures: \$330,250
- Miscellaneous Interest & Use of Property: \$2,086,489
- Transfers In: \$22,949,385

# FY 2025–2026 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES

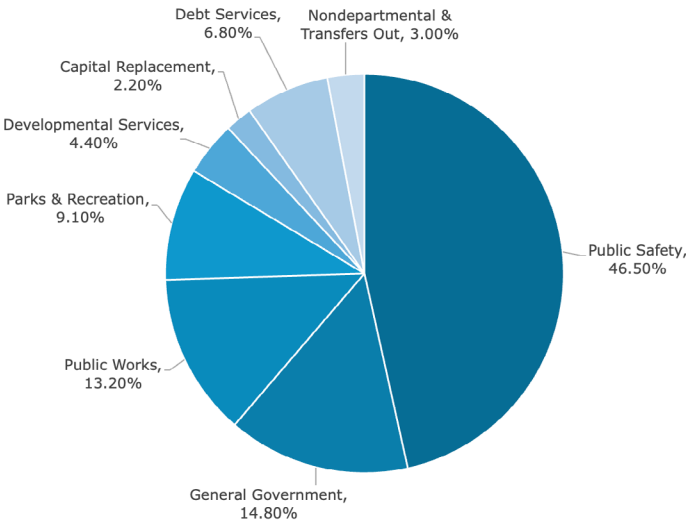
**EXPENDITURE TOTAL:  
\$183,962,740**

- Public Safety: \$85,489,763
- General Government: \$27,267,225
- Public Works: \$24,314,501
- Parks & Recreation: \$16,699,642
- Developmental Services: \$8,108,396
- Capital Replacement: \$4,000,000
- Debt Services: \$12,590,870
- Nondepartmental & Transfers Out: \$5,492,343

**REVENUES BY SOURCE**



**EXPENDITURES BY SOURCE**



# FY 2025-2026 KEY DRIVERS

## Redevelopment of Finlay Park:

- Since this major downtown asset has reopened, ongoing operational and maintenance funding is required to ensure long-term success.

## Expansion of Homeless Services:

- Additional resources are needed to support coordinated outreach, housing solutions, and service delivery.

## Capital Investment and Debt Service:

- Facility construction and capital replacement programs have increased the City's long-term debt obligations.

## Facility Transitions:

- The move into new City facilities and the concurrent repurposing or sale of underutilized properties presents both fiscal and logistical challenges, but also long-term benefits.



# FREQUENTLY DIALED NUMBERS

Animal Services .....	(803) 776-7387	Mayor’s Office .....	(803) 545-3075
Building Permits.....	(803) 545-3420	Municipal Court.....	(803) 545-3150
Business Licenses.....	(803) 545-3345	Nonemergency for 911 .....	(803) 252-2911
Chamber of Commerce.....	(803) 733-1110	Office of Business Opportunities ....	(803) 545-3950
City Clerk.....	(803) 545-3045	Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement.....	(803) 545-3031
City Hall.....	(803) 545-3000	Parking Services .....	(803) 545-4015
City Manager’s Office .....	(803) 545-3480	Parks and Recreation .....	(803) 545-3100
Code Enforcement.....	(803) 545-3430	Planning and Development .....	(803) 545-3222
Climate Protection Action Campaign .....	(803) 545-2722	Police Department.....	(803) 545-3500
Columbia Empowerment Zone .....	(803) 748-0964	Post Office .....	(800) 275-8777
Columbia Music Festival Assoc. ....	(803) 771-6303	Potholes (Street Maintenance).....	(803) 545-3790
Columbia-Richland 911 Communications Center (Nonemergency) .....	(803) 252-2911	Procurement and Contracts.....	(803) 545-3470
Community Development .....	(803) 545-3373	Property Tax (Richland County).....	(803) 576-2640
Cooperative Ministries .....	(803) 799-3853	Public Relations, Media, and Marketing.....	(803) 545-3020
Crime Prevention .....	(803) 545-3555	Purchasing Department.....	(803) 545-3373
Development Center .....	(803) 545-3483	Recycling .....	(803) 545-3800
Drew Wellness Center.....	(803) 545-3200	Richland County Info.....	(803) 929-6000
Driver’s Licenses .....	(803) 896-5000	SC State House .....	(803) 734-5049
Economic Development.....	(803) 734-2700	SLED Headquarters .....	(803) 737-9000
Emergency Management .....	(803) 545-4296	Streets Division.....	(803) 545-3790
Engineering .....	(803) 545-3400	Traffic Engineering .....	(803) 545-3850
Finance.....	(803) 545-3490	Transitions.....	(803) 708-4861
Fines and Bonds.....	(803) 545-3150	United Way of the Midlands .....	(803) 733-5400
Fire Department .....	(803) 545-3700	Vehicle Registration.....	(803) 896-5000
Forestry and Beautification.....	(803) 545-3860	Vital Records.....	(803) 898-3630
Garbage and Trash Pickup .....	(803) 545-3800	Voter Registration (Lexington).....	(803) 785-8361
Human Resources .....	(803) 545-3010	Voter Registration (Richland) .....	(803) 576-2240
LGBT Liaison .....	(803) 391-0942	Water and Sewer Taps.....	(803) 545-3400
Loans/Housing .....	(803) 545-3373	Water Distribution.....	(803) 545-3300
Marriage Licenses .....	(803) 576-1963	Water Testing.....	(803) 545-3400
		Zoning .....	(803) 545-3333

# SOCIAL PLATFORMS

## City of Columbia

**Facebook:**  
City of Columbia Government

**X:** @CityofColumbia

**Instagram:**  
@cityofcolumbiascgov

**LinkedIn:**  
City of Columbia Government

## Police Department

**Facebook:**  
Columbia Police  
Department, SC

**X:** @ColumbiaPDSC

**Instagram:**  
@columbiapdsc

## Columbia Water

**Facebook:**  
Columbia Water

**X:** @ColumbiaSCWater

**Instagram:**  
@columbiascwater

## Fire Department

**Facebook:**  
Columbia Fire  
Department (SC)

**X:** @ColaFire

**Instagram:**  
@columbiafire

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# The City of Columbia Grows Together

These special infrastructure projects and economic development initiatives bring the City of Columbia together to drive growth and strengthen our future.

## Main Street/Vista District Connector

This project enhances safety for pedestrians and motorists along Assembly Street between Pendleton Street and Lady Street in downtown Columbia. Located near the State House, government offices, and the University of South Carolina, this corridor sees heavy daily use and has raised safety concerns for all who travel through it. To address these issues, the City is introducing improved pedestrian lighting, updated street design and parking configurations, as well as traffic calming features such as landscaping and beautification. These enhancements are designed to reduce exposure to traffic, improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users while maintaining current vehicular capacity.

## Congaree Riverfront District

This long-term vision for a connected riverfront along Congaree River is in development and will bring Riverfront Park and Granby Park together into one unified destination. This effort will establish a clear identity, thoughtful design framework, and defined character for the district, creating an inviting experience that celebrates the river's natural beauty, honors its history, and supports smart, complementary private investment. This tremendous effort to make this district's dream come true means so much to both Columbia and the Midlands and will shape the future of the region for years to come.

## Municipal Complex at 1401 Main

The 1401 Main Street building is being transformed into a centralized Municipal Services Complex to make City services more accessible and efficient for residents. By bringing multiple departments together in one location, the City is strengthening collaboration, improving service delivery, and creating a more streamlined experience. This effort also opens space across the city for future economic development while supporting the continued energy and growth of Columbia's downtown Main Street District.

## Williams Street Extension

This project will expand riverfront access and improve north-south multimodal connectivity along the west side of downtown. This work will also improve the gateways of the riverfront, as well as the citizens' enjoyment and use of the water.

## Rosewood Water

This infrastructure project involves upgrading aging water mains to enhance water quality, improve pressure, and strengthen fire protection for the Rosewood neighborhood and surrounding areas. Phase 1 features approximately 40,000 linear feet of new mains and is nearly complete. Phases 2 and 3 will each replace about 35,000 linear feet, along with service renewals and road improvements, with completion anticipated in 2027 and 2029.

## Resilient Water Supply

A new water intake from the Congaree River is an important investment in Columbia's future by strengthening the reliability and resilience of our water system. Designed to deliver up to 80 million gallons per day, it adds critical backup for The Columbia Canal Water Treatment Plant and allows essential repairs to the historic Canal embankment in a cost-effective way. This project protects vital services today while supporting long-term growth and stability for the community.

## Headgate Repairs

The replacement of the twelve headgates that were damaged during Hurricane Joaquin and the severe flooding of October 2015 is underway. The work includes removing temporary bulkheads, installing new gates and operators, adding rock anchors for stability, and placing a trash rack to manage debris. Together, these improvements mark an important step in restoring the Columbia Canal to its full, pre-disaster function, supporting both water supply and hydroelectric generation.

## Embankment Repairs

This project focuses on repairing the historic Columbia Canal following damage from Hurricane Joaquin and the October 2015 flooding. Key efforts include removing the existing rock dam, rebuilding the breached areas, stabilizing the embankment, renovating the hydroelectric generating station, restoring Riverfront Park facilities, and documenting historic features. Together, these improvements represent a major step toward returning the canal to full operation, supporting both water supply and hydroelectric generation while preserving its historic character.

## Finlay Park

The recently completed Finlay Park offers a host of amenities, green spaces, scenic overlooks, playgrounds, and rental spaces for our Columbia community, as well as visitors to the Midlands. The park brings our city closer together while offering exciting events to draw people in and raise pride in Columbia.

## Development Opportunities

The City of Columbia is prioritizing economic development opportunities within City-owned buildings to help reshape and energize downtown. Several available properties are being positioned for transformative redevelopment. Notably, Washington Square is set to become the future home of the Grand Bohemian Hotel, marking the City's first four-star hotel and a significant milestone in elevating Columbia's hospitality and tourism offerings. As additional City-owned properties become available, the City will continue to pursue thoughtful redevelopment opportunities that support long-term growth, investment, and vibrancy across downtown Columbia.



**Scan to Learn More**



# City of Columbia Police Department



## Building a Stronger, Highly Trained Team to Create a Safer Columbia

The Columbia Police Department (CPD) proudly serves our community by working alongside residents and partners to prevent crime and foster a safer, more confident city for all.



### HIGHLIGHTS

CPD continued strengthening public safety through strategic initiatives, officer recruitment, and proactive enforcement efforts:

- Earned state and national law enforcement accreditation from Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA®).
- Achieved 95% clearance rate of homicide investigations by arrests.
- Recruited and hired 45 officers and 11 police cadets as of February 2026.
- Seized more than 550 illegally possessed or used firearms.
- Launched the Southeast Region & Code Enforcement crime suppression initiative in the Booker Washington Heights and Millwood corridor.
- Received a “Gold Medal” for participating in all South Carolina Department of Public Safety Law Enforcement Challenges focused on reducing impaired driving and speed violations.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Further advance the “Ceasefire Columbia” initiative, an evidence-based, gun violence reduction and deterrence effort.
- Continue specialized training for mounted patrol.
- Upgrade Axon body-worn cameras for officers.
- Partner with Columbia Housing Authority and the Parks & Recreation Department to install public safety video cameras.

## Striving Every Day to Retain and Create Wealth in Columbia

Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc. (CEZ) works hand in hand with other departments, to support both the growth and retention of small businesses by enhancing our spaces and making them more appealing to businesses.

### HIGHLIGHTS

CEZ, Inc. made significant strides this year in fueling small-business growth, expanding economic opportunity, and investing in key initiatives:

- Completed a \$400,000 capital improvement project by renovating 4,000 square feet of commercial space and expanding opportunities for small businesses near the downtown and Bull Street districts.
- Recruited four startup businesses, supported four expansions, and helped create or retain 71 jobs across the City of Columbia as of February 2026.
- Managed a portfolio of four small business loans as of February 2026 to provide capital to support affordable housing, business development, expansion, and working capital needs.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Advance beautification and reinvestment efforts at North Main Plaza, enhancing building façades, lighting, signage, and tenant spaces to strengthen this key commercial corridor.
- Promote safer communities by eliminating blight, improving property conditions, and supporting development that fosters active, well-maintained environments.
- Strengthen partnerships and expand awareness of programs and initiatives that support small businesses and drive economic development.

# Columbia-Richland Fire Department



## Dedicated to Our Community's Safety

The Columbia-Richland Fire Department (CRFD) is committed to reducing risks in our community and expanding professional emergency response.



## HIGHLIGHTS

CRFD is proud to have supported the following efforts and achievements to keep our community safe:

- Responded to more than 1,800 fire-related incidents and provided over 19,500 civilian rescues and EMS services.
- Hired over 65 new employees, including 40 new firefighters, and deployed new fire trucks to Stations 6, 7, and 16.
- Completed more than 7,800 fire inspections with a correction rate of 91%.
- Supplied more than 600 families across Richland County with food during the holiday season, setting a record for the annual Firefighters Feeding Families Holiday Food Drive.
- Coordinated approvals for the Olympia Fire Station and hosted a groundbreaking ceremony in February 2026 with construction expected to be completed in 2027.
- Began construction of a new Live Fire training facility designed to meet current National Fire Protection Association standards with completion expected in 2027.

## ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Expand fire inspections across our community in 2026.
- Install 300 free smoke alarms in high-fire-risk Columbia neighborhoods.
- Improve firefighter training outcomes through new recruitment strategies and completion of the new training facility.

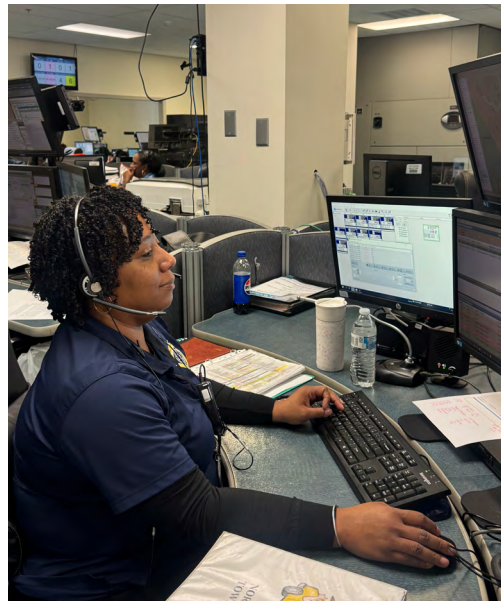
## There for the Community When It Matters Most

The Columbia-Richland 911 Communications Department (CRC) provides around-the-clock emergency dispatch and public service response to all people in both the City of Columbia and Richland County.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Columbia-Richland 911 Communications provided effective emergency response services for our city and county from training to new hires and everything in between:

- Hired a new training officer and certified three managers as in-house CPR instructors.
- Increased staffing levels to better serve the city and county.
- Earned the Palmetto Award for Outstanding Performance at the APCO Fall Conference in Myrtle Beach (Chaunta Rice).
- Processed over 887,500 calls, averaging over 2,430 calls per day.
- Dispatched service for over 488,400 calls, averaging over 1,338 dispatches per day.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Advance Year 3 accreditation goals.
- Further implement RapidSOS AI technology to process alarm calls.
- Expand capabilities to accept alarm calls via text.

## Maintaining, Protecting, and Enhancing Columbia's Water and Infrastructure

The Columbia Water Department works every day to protect and support our community by maintaining the City's drinking water and wastewater systems, overseeing key construction projects, and safeguarding stormwater drainage and water quality.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Columbia Water and its service teams supported residents and businesses across the region through critical infrastructure improvements, system maintenance, and essential water and wastewater services:

- Finalized construction plans for Phase I of the Williams Street Extension project connecting Williams Street from Senate Street and extending south to Blossom Street.
- Expanded the chlorine analyzer network by installing four additional analyzers throughout the distribution system, strengthening real-time water quality monitoring, and ensuring consistent disinfection residuals systemwide.
- Upgraded and modernized the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant's electrical supply by replacing original electrical switchgear.
- Established a dedicated Water Mainline Construction Crew to lower installation costs and strengthen emergency response efforts.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Implement the environmental review process for the Assembly Rail Separation Project.
- Execute a comprehensive basin rehabilitation project focused on restoring structural integrity, improving equipment reliability, and extending the service life of critical basin assets.
- Replace Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters throughout the system.
- Conduct proactive maintenance on major equipment and plant basins.
- Continue implementing digital platforms to enhance customer experience.
- Implement the Solids Handling Upgrade project by the end of 2026, introducing gravity belt thickeners to enhance solids management at the WWTP for decades to come.

## Dedicated to Enhancing Columbia's Neighborhoods

The Community Development Department works to enrich the quality of life for our residents by expanding access to economic opportunities, housing resources, and supportive community services.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Community Development supported neighborhood revitalization, housing stability, and financial assistance programs to benefit the City's residents:

- Awarded 12 neighborhoods a total of \$14,231.91 through the Love Your Block program to support community improvement projects as of February 2026.
- Assisted 521 clients through the Customer Assistance Program, resulting in a total of \$288,180.92 in aid as of February 2026.
- Assisted 20 individuals in becoming homeowners through Affordable Housing Loans, including nine loans funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, along with 11 City Lender II loans funded through General Funds, totaling \$1,956,934 in City investment as of February 2026.



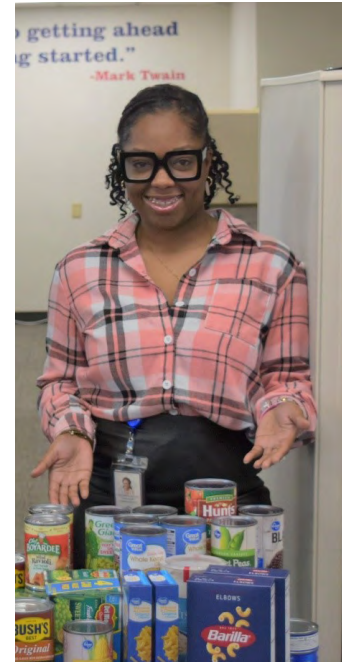
### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Ensure appropriate funds are used to assist Low and Moderate Income (LMI) residents.
- Further develop the Financial Literacy Workshops.
- Assist at least 15 additional individuals in becoming homeowners and support at least three current homeowners with needed home repairs.

## Working Together to Support the City and Its People

The Customer Services Department supports Columbia Water customers by answering utility billing inquiries and directing questions to the appropriate departments.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Customer Services worked to streamline and improve various processes for the City, its employees, and its citizens:

- Increased production by over 25% in completing field service orders.
- Decreased customer wait times to an average of less than six minutes.
- Began integration of digital platforms to enhance customer user experience.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Complete the Mezzanine renovations that will align with the 1401 Main Street renovations by fall 2026.
- Expand training and professional development opportunities.
- Roll out and implement the CityWorks and Banner iPad integration for the field services team.

## Supporting the Unsheltered to Get Back on Their Feet

The Homeless Services Department is dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing chronic homelessness by providing meaningful programs, strong community connections, and pathways to housing.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Homeless Services permanently housed 38 individuals as of February 2026 and made a meaningful impact throughout the community:

- Secured additional South Carolina Opioid Recovery Funds (SCORF), expanding Rapid Shelter Columbia’s capacity to support individuals with opioid use disorder through housing stabilization and recovery-focused services.
- Planned and executed H.O.P.E. Week and World Homeless Day, community events focused on increasing public awareness, education, and community engagement around homelessness.
- Advanced the Rapid Shelter Columbia Foundation’s mission to address homelessness by securing a \$500 grant from 4Imprint, a \$7,000 grant from the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, and additional funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to expand support.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Implement the Second Sunrise Rapid Rehousing model, funded through SCORF, providing rent, utilities, and intensive case management for Rapid Shelter residents with opioid use disorder.
- Advance the development of Rapid Shelter Columbia Foundation to expand eligibility for public and private funding opportunities, strengthen organizational sustainability, and support long-term program growth.
- Launch the United for Impact 2027 Multidisciplinary Equity Conference.

## A Constant Source of Support for City Staff

The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for attracting world-class talent and supporting the incredible people who already work for the City.



### HIGHLIGHTS

HR made meaningful progress this year by strengthening talent recruitment, supporting employee growth, and helping drive the City's continued success:

- Led department-specific hiring events to support targeted recruitment.
- Increased employee participation in AllOne Health, the City's Employee Assistance Program.
- Introduced a performance & development manager to support departments, supervisors, and employees through the annual evaluation process.
- Refined the New Employee Orientation guide by updating the branding and refreshing the relevant materials.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Implement NeoGov Onboarding and Learn platforms to support paperless workflows, enhance the new employee experience, and expand professional development opportunities for City employees.
- Focus on department-specific talent development through mini-hiring events, workshops, and recurring think tanks to encourage collaboration and reinforce strategic alignment.

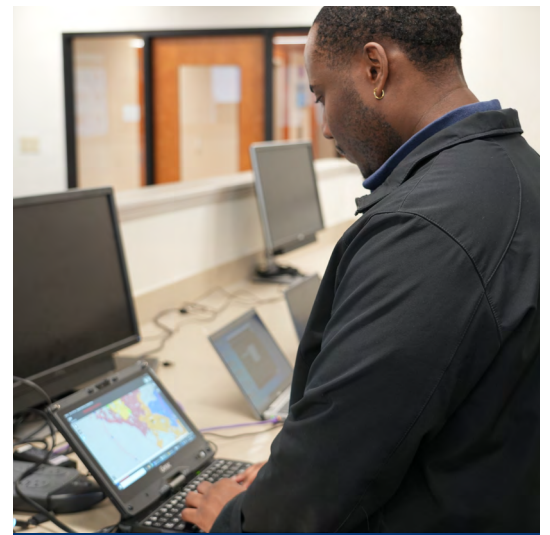
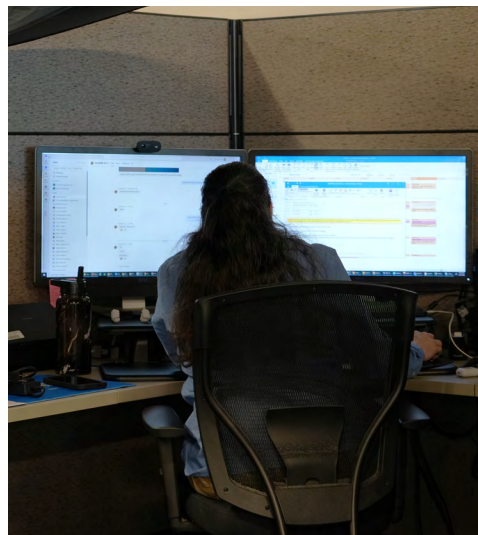
## Investing in the Technological Infrastructure of Columbia

The Information Technology (IT) Department ensures the City’s technological systems run smoothly by efficiently managing networking, cybersecurity, and infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

### HIGHLIGHTS

IT led the implementation of audits and security technologies to support multiple departments and a wide range of operational needs:

- Supported the Municipal Court during the Information Technology Security (ITS) Audit conducted by the SLED Information Security Division (ISD) and the Government Risk & Compliance (GRC) Unit.
- Expanded physical and cybersecurity capabilities, delivering security technology enhancements across multiple City facilities.
- Assisted the City Clerk’s Office in transitioning to a new agenda management platform.
- Installed, configured, and tested police technology in more than 25 new Columbia Police Department vehicles.



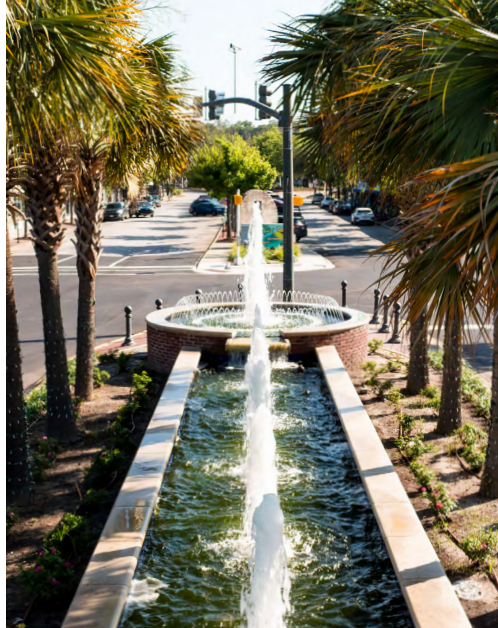
### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Continue the Citywide Computer Refresh initiative, replacing end-of-life hardware to support Windows 11 deployment, strengthen security, and ensure consistent performance across departments.
- Implement a time clock replacement project, transitioning from fingerprint devices to advanced facial recognition time clocks.
- Migrate City Works to a cloud-based platform to reduce on-premises infrastructure, improve availability, and support future enhancements and integrations.

## Providing Order in the Court for Columbia

The Columbia Municipal Court addresses matters related to city ordinances, minor criminal offenses, and a range of civil issues such as traffic violations, property concerns, and contract disputes.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Municipal Court strengthened its team and streamlined operations this year, improved efficiencies, and resolved a high volume of cases while continuing to provide professional and unbiased service to all:

- Reorganized the agency and established leadership teams to maximize operational efficiency.
- Achieved full staffing for the first time in years through a strategic and targeted focus on hiring and retention.
- Equipped all Ministerial Recorders with City-issued cell phones to streamline the warrant request process.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Complete the implementation of electronic warrant issuance and signing.
- Resolve electronic dispositions smoothly and efficiently in coordination with Court Management Systems (CMS) and South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV).
- Strengthen communication and technical skills to enhance team capabilities while fostering a positive and safe workplace environment.

## Supporting Business Growth in Columbia

The Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) champions small business success by supporting initiatives that help entrepreneurs grow through creative financing, hands-on technical assistance, and opportunities to build resilient, thriving businesses.

### HIGHLIGHTS

OBO partnered with local businesses, suppliers, and partners to ensure Columbia remains a strong environment for business growth:

- Hosted the 13th NxLevel for Micro Entrepreneurs course and partnered with Midlands Technical College for the 29th FastTrac Growth Venture course.
- Held the Small Business Week Conference in Columbia.
- Coordinated the grand opening of more than five small businesses.
- Hosted and participated in workshops and events reaching over 5,000 attendees.
- Issued six Commercial Retention and Redevelopment loans totaling \$870,000 in public investment.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Launch the pop-up incubator at 1401 Main Street.
- Expand Young Entrepreneur Development courses.
- Strengthen public-private collaborations to bring new resources to local entrepreneurs.

## Proudly Leading Columbia to an Even Brighter Future

Daniel Rickenmann, Columbia's newly re-elected mayor, is a forward-thinking entrepreneur and committed public servant who brings heart to improving quality of life for everyone in the capital city.



### HIGHLIGHTS

The Office of the Mayor continues to build momentum through strategic partnerships and impactful initiatives that strengthen our community and expand our reach:

- Served as chair of the Mayor's Alliance to End Childhood Hunger, advancing efforts to expand the Mobile Market and the GAP Program in partnership with Instacart to connect citizens with fresh groceries.
- Executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) to support energy collaboration, following reciprocal visits between KEPCO and City of Columbia teams.
- Awarded more than \$150,000 in grants through the Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund, supporting youth-led, youth-driven environmental projects across the community.
- Hosted the Cell-a-Brates Smartphone Film Contest in collaboration with Columbia Streams to award more than \$15,000 through the Artist Microgrant Program and launched the first Local Artist Holiday Art Market.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Advance housing diversification strategies to support growth and improve affordability.
- Promote Columbia as a premier destination for business opportunities for companies both big and small.
- Collaborate with City Council to implement innovative technology solutions that will enhance City employees' effectiveness and customer service.

## Ensuring All Columbia Neighborhoods Feel Safe and Secure

The Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement (ONSE) reduces violence through a collaborative, community-centered public health approach, working to strengthen neighborhood safety while connecting individuals at higher risk with the support and resources they need.

### HIGHLIGHTS

ONSE secured funding and increased community engagement while actively working to improve our neighborhoods:

- Boosted community engagement by 24% through targeted efforts.
- Secured \$578,120 in new funding and managed \$942,063 as of February 2026 to provide free violence prevention programs and supportive services to residents.
- Conducted more than 45 violence prevention and neighborhood safety training sessions for community members, an increase of 32%.
- Increased neighborhood touchpoints by 20%, connecting with more than 7,300 residents.
- Expanded free, supportive services and prevention programming for residents through grant funding.
- Relunched the 4 Block Promise initiative, engaging faith-based and worship leaders through ongoing community meetings.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Establish long-term sustainability for ONSE.
- Strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations.
- Secure a minimum of \$250,000 in new funding by December 30, 2026, through grants, partnerships, and philanthropic sources to support violence prevention, intervention, and outreach efforts.

## Creating a Welcoming and Beautiful Environment for All

The Parks & Recreation Department brings the community together through improving outdoor spaces, creating recreation opportunities, and hosting community events.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Parks & Recreation made our community even more vibrant with numerous park openings, renovations, and amenities:

- Opened the newly renovated and highly anticipated Finlay Park, which will serve as a community centerpiece for years to come.
- Completed Randall Avenue Park and celebrated a successful grand opening.
- Finished the revitalization efforts at Mays Park.
- Installed two Prisma Health Fitness Courts at Woodland Park and Rosewood Park.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Enhance park safety and security by installing Motorola cameras throughout the park system.
- Improve infrastructure aesthetics for our grounds, facilities, and park amenities.
- Purchase and install an outdoor restroom at Woodland Park.
- Install splash pads at Melrose Park and Hampton Park.

**Facebook:** Columbia Parks & Recreation Department • **X:** @ColaSCParksRec • **Instagram:** @colascparksrec

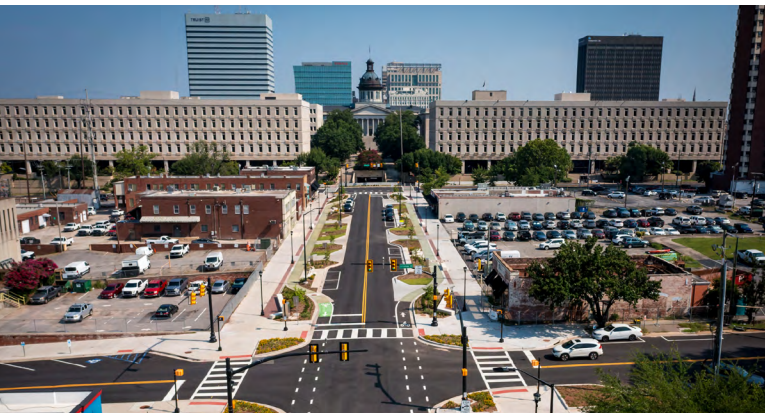
## Keeping Columbia Moving in the Right Direction

The Planning & Development Services Department helps shape Columbia’s quality of life by supporting vibrant neighborhoods, encouraging business growth, and protecting our environment.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Planning & Development worked hard to make Columbia an even more livable and desirable community:

- Supported Columbia’s growth by issuing over 8,100 permits representing more than \$1 billion in project value, completing over 19,000 building inspections, and issuing more than 1,100 certificates of occupancy—enabling approximately 700 new multifamily units and more than 1,000 new single-family, two-family, and townhome units.
- Completed the Downtown Strategic Planning process, culminating in the successful adoption of the Downtown Strategic Plan and Design Guidelines.
- Administered the Bailey Bill Historic Tax Abatement Program, certifying 23 projects totaling more than \$3.1 million in investment in existing buildings as of February 2026.
- Opened the newly designed South Main Street in coordination with SCDOT and USC, featuring the first separated cycle track in the Midlands.
- Grew the city through more than 25 separate annexation petitions totaling approximately 124 acres.
- Introduced department-wide accessibility improvements, including Spanish translations of key permitting documents and a new Multifamily Building permit to support phased occupancy.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Advance data-driven housing strategies through growth modeling, the Comprehensive Plan housing element update, and continued residential development.
- Strengthen neighborhood stability and historic preservation.
- Coordinate multimodal projects with SCDOT and Richland Penny, leveraging the newly hired Multimodal Transportation Coordinator and pursuing grant funding.

# Procurement & Contracts



## Helping Our City Grow by Delivering for Columbia's Departments and Businesses

The Procurement & Contracts Department is committed to providing outstanding customer service while promoting fair and transparent competition in securing the goods and services that support the City's daily operations, creating recreation opportunities, and hosting community events.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Procurement & Contracts increased bid participation and expanded its vendor base to continue fostering Columbia's smart growth:

- Increased involvement in public outreach events to raise bid participation.
- Strengthened the department's vendor database with new additions.
- Implemented two new software upgrades.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Implement a new e-Procurement system.
- Increase participation in community events.
- Improve the average response rate for solicitations.
- Serve as a trusted resource for the procurement community.

## Telling the Stories of Columbia

The Public Relations, Media, & Marketing Department shares Columbia’s stories with the rest of the world while also keeping our citizens up-to-date and ensuring they have access to every opportunity in our community.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Public Relations worked hard this year to launch new marketing and public service campaigns while partnering with City departments to inform, engage, and educate both residents and visitors.

- Expanded digital engagement, increasing social media interaction by more than 300%.
- Raised more than \$5,000 for Sistercare through Sistercare Saturdays, sponsorships, and the Mayor’s Walk Against Domestic Violence.
- Launched the ColaTown Radio Show in partnership with The Point, creating a new weekly platform for sharing our community’s stories and department updates.
- Improved departmental stability and retention through restructuring efforts that clarified roles and strengthened internal operations.
- Delivered one of the City’s most successful digital campaigns, surpassing one million views.



### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Further implement the rebrand rollout across facilities, communications, and outreach materials.
- Expand social media presence by increasing growth across all platforms with significant increases in followers, impressions, views, and engagement.
- Grow public service annual campaigns to increase participation, partnerships, and community impact.

# Public Works

## Instilling Pride in Our City by Keeping It Gorgeous and Safe

The Public Works Department proudly supports our state capital by keeping the community safe, clean, and thriving. Our dedicated teams care for the city through Animal Services, Forestry and Beautification, Street Maintenance, Traffic Engineering, and Solid Waste Management, all while building a healthier, more vibrant future for everyone.



### HIGHLIGHTS

Public Works had a hugely impactful year, contributing to the City's beauty in many ways:

- Installed the new Welcome to Columbia gateway signage.
- Received the BeeCity USA designation, which provides a framework for conserving native pollinators by providing them with a healthy habitat.
- Adjusted waste collection routes to improve operational efficiency and service to citizens.
- Received a \$100,000 grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies.
- Columbia Animal Services Veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Bonovich was recognized as the State's Best Veterinarian, and the shelter was awarded a \$50,000 Petco Love Grant.

### ON THE HORIZON

Look at the exciting plans shaping the future of our city:

- Continue the Beat the Heat—Plant a Tree program, where over 900 trees will be distributed.
- Further the median cleaning program by utilizing the new street sweeper.
- Beautify the Five Points medians and various neighborhoods.
- Continue building the animal shelter and increase live release rates.
- Implement the New Penny Sales Tax Paving Program by prioritizing districts for street paving and sidewalk installations.



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