



CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA

GENERAL SERVICES

Columbus In Focus

General Services Leadership Team

July 20, 2026

PARKS + RECREATION / LIBRARY / PLANNING + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS / GENERAL SERVICES

Betsy Eckhardt • Sydney Mroczek • Jeri Kay Hopkins

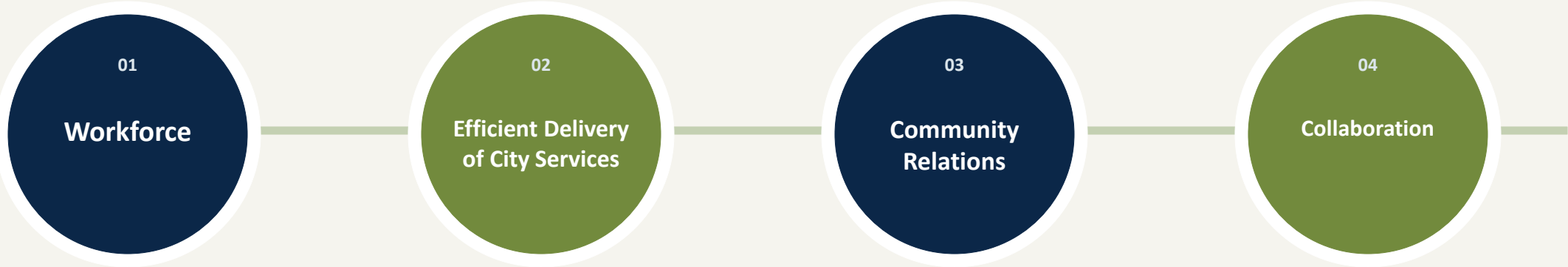
Jean Van Iperen • Matthew Lindberg

Connected services. Shared community impact.



Refining priorities into action

We are redefining goals and action items so our strategic priorities move Columbus in the right direction.



THE WORK UNDERWAY



Clearer goals. Stronger accountability. Shared momentum.

A \$1 investment helps residents avoid \$1.87 in costs

Estimated return on community investment | FY 2024–25

\$1.21M

estimated annual savings to residents

\$2.60M

Value residents would otherwise pay

\$1.39M

Public operating investment

\$55

Average annual cost per resident

The estimate excludes meeting rooms, databases, makerspace use, reference help, outreach and more.

PROGRAM REACH

367
programs

13,510
attendees

Children: 152 programs • Young adult: 121 • Adult/general: 94





Creative placemaking is expanding Columbus's reach

COLUMBUS ART GALLERY

723

visitors

42

Nebraska
communities

79

program
participants

163

volunteer
hours

Visitors also represented eight states and one foreign country.



A GROWING CULTURAL + TOURISM DESTINATION

Free exhibits connect artists and visitors

Local and regional artists connect with residents and visitors through an accessible public gallery.

Creative learning

Workshops and educational opportunities engaged 79 participants.

Volunteer support

Docents contributed 163 hours to welcome visitors and keep the gallery open.

Downtown promotion is building visibility—and a destination

Coordinated storytelling connected residents and visitors with businesses, events, arts, history and entertainment.

360,200

views

243

events promoted

307

new followers

17

businesses featured

11 SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS

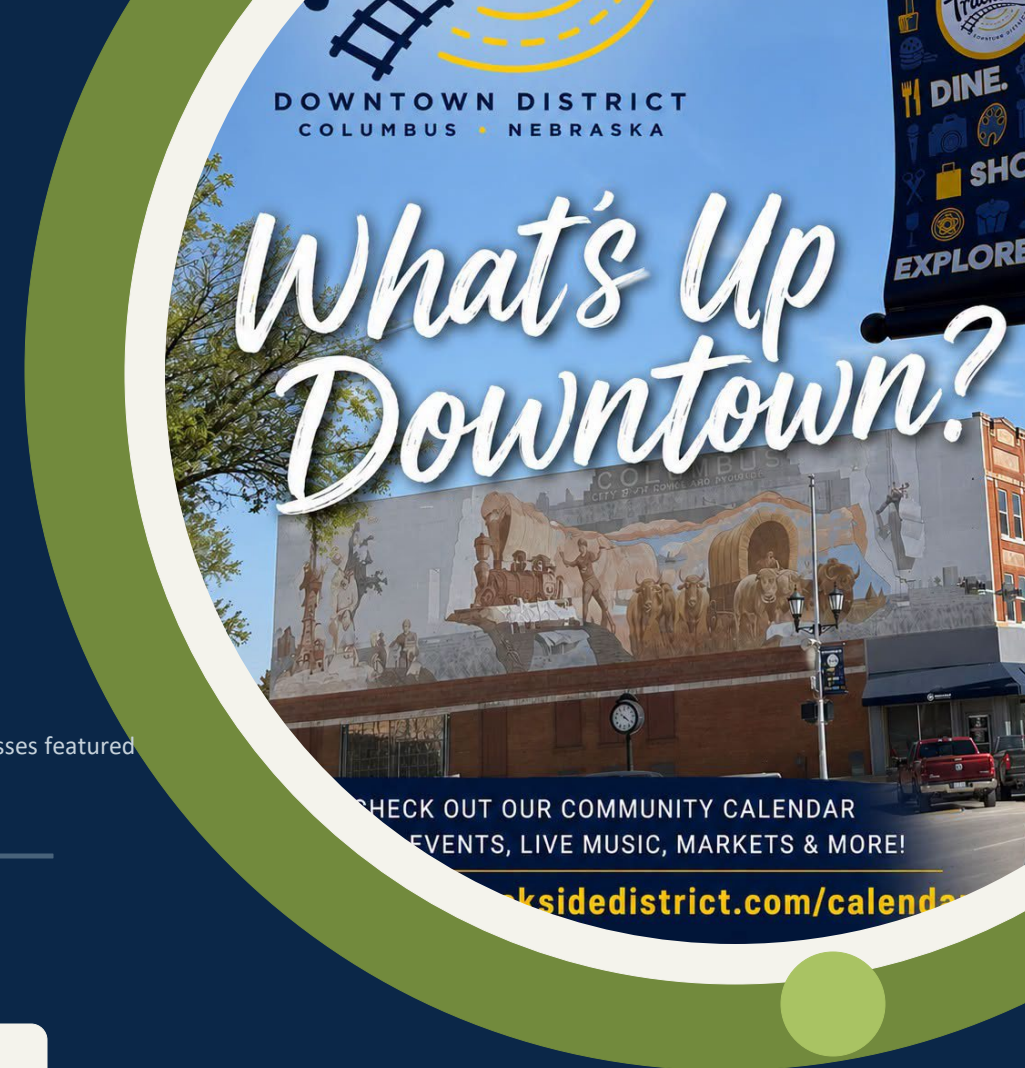
22 BLOG POSTS

MILESTONE

Frankfort Square permanent lighting completed

A multi-year enhancement supporting a more welcoming and active downtown.

Promotion also supported the Sculpture/Mural Walk, Columbus Art Gallery, historical tours and Otocast self-guided tour.



Making City work easier to see, understand and share

One message. More ways to reach people.

01

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Oil and coolant disposal video in English, Spanish and French—with Dave Boswell and Keep Columbus Beautiful.

02

VISIBLE PROGRESS

Vitality Village before-and-after graphic is generating interest on social media.

03

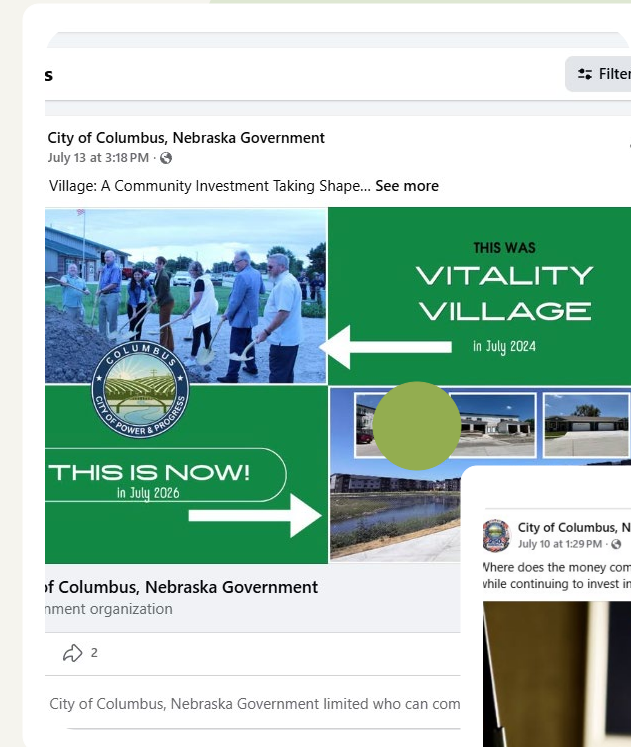
COORDINATED PROMOTION

TRAX Creative District marketing strategy developed with Jean and Adi.

04

EXTENDED REACH

Louped In guests, City news flashes and republishing by area media extend the story.



Pawnee Plunge welcomed 24,774 check-ins by July 14

A strong season of recreation, instruction and repeat use.

1,236

admissions on June 28
—the busiest day so far

185

summer swim-lesson
registrations

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIPS + PUNCH CARDS | OPENING DAY–JULY 14

12

Group

638

Household

187

Individual

471

25-punch

383

50-punch



Programs, play and investment kept summer moving

From full fields to future funding, the system is active now—and planning ahead.

11

weeks of tournaments
completed at Gerrard Park

20

adult softball teams
across men's + coed leagues

5 + 3

Beats and Eats weeks
complete + remaining

Summer Camp is underway with solid participation.

INVESTING IN WHAT COMES NEXT

3 grant applications completed

Greener Towns Nebraska • Recreational Trails Program (NGP) • Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT)

Grant-funded Tree Inventory completed

Active today. Building capacity for tomorrow.





GENERAL SERVICES LEADERSHIP TEAM

COLUMBUS IN FOCUS

Thank you, Mayor & City Council

Questions?

July 20, 2026

