

STATE OF KANSAS                    )  
WYANDOTTE COUNTY            )) SS  
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS )

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2017

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, January 5, 2017, with eleven members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Walker, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Murguia, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Walters, Commissioner Seventh District; Philbrook, Commissioner Eighth District; and Holland, Mayor/CEO, presiding. The following officials were also in attendance: Doug Bach, County Administrator; Joe Connor, Gordon Criswell and Melissa Mundt, Assistant County Administrators; Bridgette Cobbins, Unified Government Clerk; Ken Moore, Chief Legal Counsel; Dennis (Tib) Laughlin, Director of General Services; Michael Peterson and Jud Knapp, Budget Department; Alyse Villarreal, Finance Department; Maddie Waldeck, Treasurer's Office; Joanna Sabally, Health Department; and Doug Bailey, Sergeant-at-Arms.

**MAYOR HOLLAND** called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL:** Walters, Philbrook, Bynum, Walker, Townsend, McKiernan, Murguia, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Holland.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING** of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be held Thursday, January 5, 2017, at 5:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building, for an update on What Works Cities (WWC)/Stabilization, Occupation and Revitalization (SOAR).

**CONSENT TO MEETING** of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

**Doug Bach, County Administrator**, said we have a good group of staff that's here, not only at the table but also in the audience. As you look out there's a lot of people that have been very actively involved in the project and the presentation that's going to be given to you tonight. The title for this is fairly long, but one thing that I'll probably take it back that this is a directive from the Commission to beautify our community and put it on the positive term that you all set out in your last strategic plan of the steps that could be taken to make this happen. We're excited to go through and provide this for you.

As we started to get into it a lot of the information when you start to evaluate things and understand, we realized that there is just a lot of data that we didn't have regarding the information and if we're going to start to measure and look at how we can invest our money in the community and how we make a difference in certain areas if we don't really know where we are to start with, it's hard to tell when we enter into certain areas and if we're successful in that. Those are some of the steps they are getting into tonight to talk about what they've done. It's all the people in this room tonight that really show, or most of them, that have been involved with starting to coordinate and the communication that's going on between the different areas to allow us to move forward to where we are today.

As we take steps from here I think, as Melissa and her team will outline, there will be some more stringent steps that will take in the community so these will be some things that maybe aren't as happy to hear from people in the community because we're going to start to enforce or push things more, set a lot of timelines and targets that will be laid out here for everyone to look at. We certainly haven't solved all the obstacles or questions that have to be done to clean up blight in our community, but they've gone a long ways in getting there.

I'm going to turn this over to Melissa Mundt, Asst. County Administrator, who is leading our team efforts on this and let her start the presentation.



**Melissa Mundt, Assistant County Administrator,** said we are back and we are here to talk about SOAR. We're really excited this is also kind of also our conclusion in engagement in What Works Cities in a big way with the performance management side of the contract. The other side of the contract came back to you all in November with our Open Data Portal, but this is kind of the concluding the wrapping up tying on the bow, but it's also the part that took us the most to get our hands around. We're all excited to be here today. My co-chairs for the What Works Cities Project are sitting next to me that were the performance measurement guru's; Joanna Sabally and Maddie Waldeck. Also flanking out to the side are some of our data folks. A group of them very affectionately cared about by our performance management team because they supplied us with information we needed to be able to bring what we're bringing to you tonight.

Before you, you do have a packet which is a comprehensive list of what we're going to be talking about tonight and I'm only going to highlight on this because if I were to read every one of these we would be here a lot longer than the 1.5 hours that's slated and we want to get to the end where you can have some questions and give us some feedback.

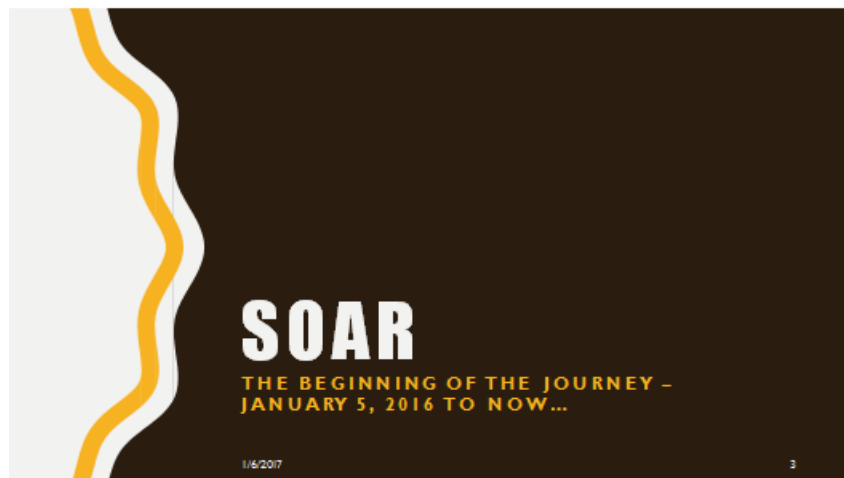
Not to leave out the folks behind me that I was high-fiving earlier before the start of the meeting, this has been a yearlong effort. Today is one year from the moment that we met out at Wyandotte County Lake as staff and said how are we going to get after this for our community, what can this organization do and so it's one year today and we're all pretty pumped. It's the

January 5, 2017

anniversary of SOAR for us as staff and for you it's really the kickoff of the work that lies ahead from a policy decision.

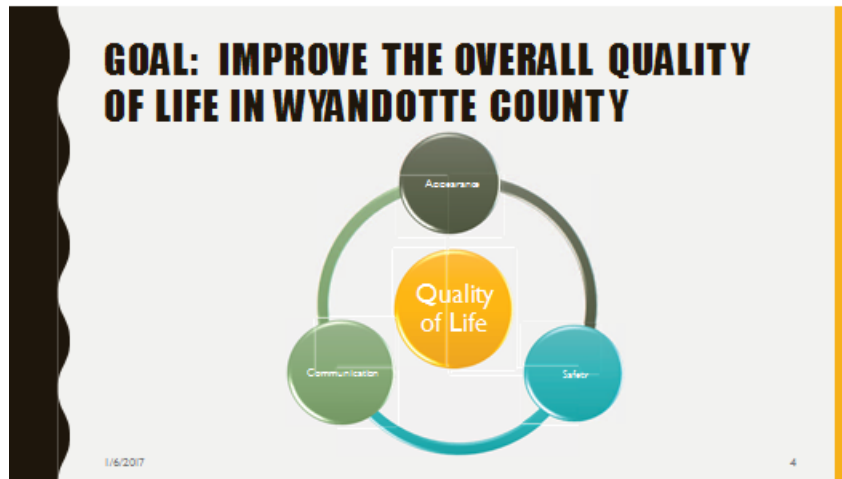


Staff wants to note that we take the new vision to heart. As our County Administrator mentioned a minute ago, we want a healthy, fulfilled and inspired community and this group is truly inspired about what we're about to show you.



January 5, 2017

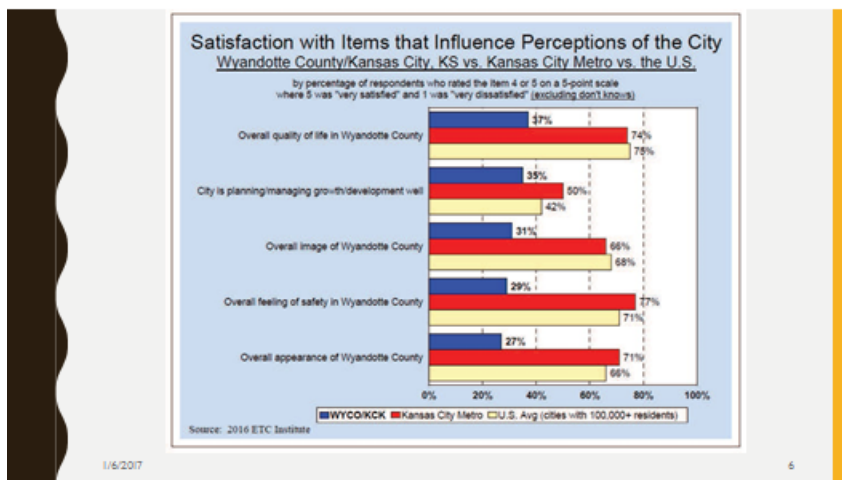
As I just stated it's been a year today since we started on this journey and we have learned a lot about blight, vacancy, property maintenance and everything in-between that is affecting or impacting our city and we discovered a lot together.



Let's look at what we've learned and everything boils down to this—I know Commissioner McKiernan has a big pen that he likes to talk about. Get that out. What we have learned is that in order to improve the quality of life in Wyandotte County we have to approve our appearance, we need to improve the feeling of safety in our community and we have to enhance our communication. That's really what it boils down to and throughout the rest of this presentation you will see the reoccurring themes of safety, communication and appearance.



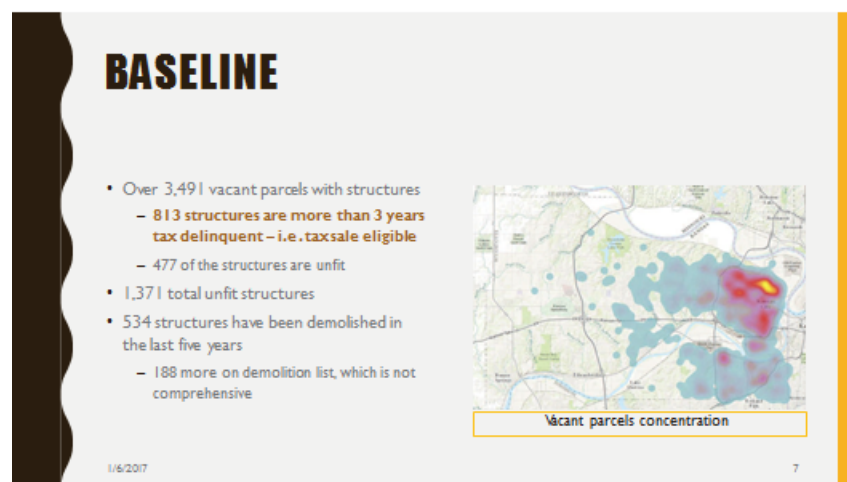
So, where are we starting at? It's always good to have some good baseline data for you to be able to share out in the community and for us to know where we're starting from.



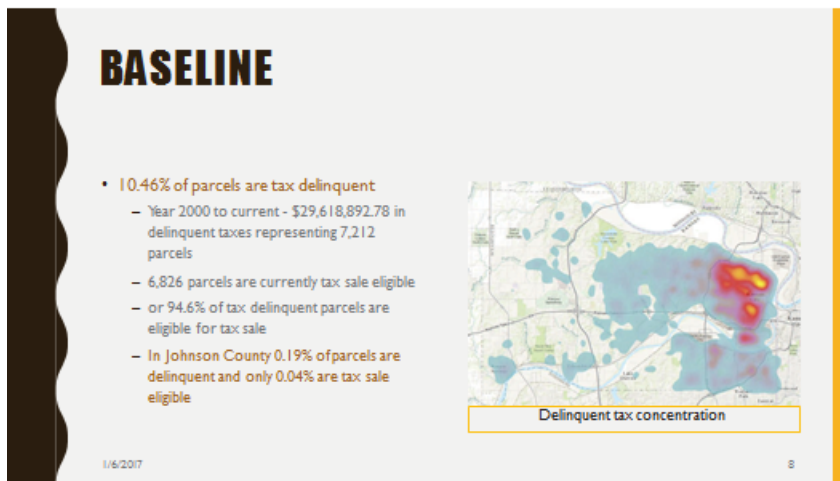
Truly our group took to heart when the Citizen Survey came back last spring and we were just in the middle of starting to look at our four different areas that we're working in which was process, communications, research and data. We said we've got data here and it doesn't take much research to look at this slide and understand where our challenges are. We didn't like sitting at

January 5, 2017

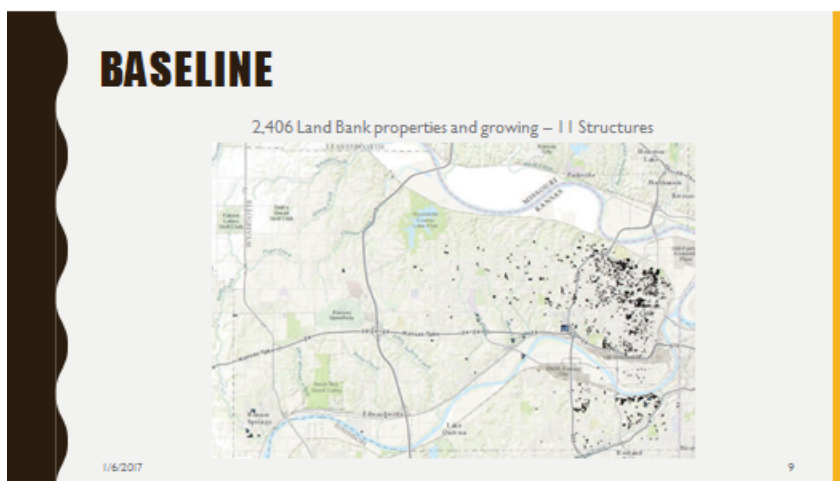
the bottom on these and certainly wanted to do something about it. We took that seriously and decided that needed to change and it had to start with us.



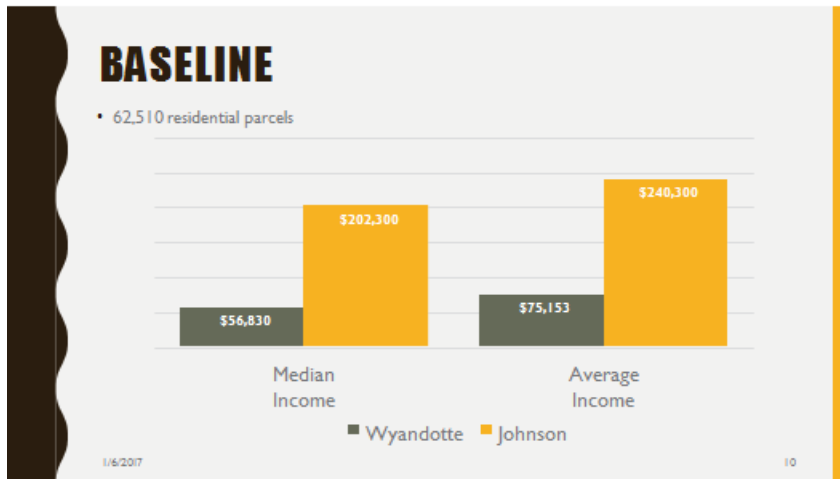
Here is our baseline information, sort of where we're jumping off from. As of the end of December, the end of 2016, we had over 3,400—almost 3,500 vacant parcels with structures in our community and over to the right is a heat map of those vacancies so you can see where those are occurring. Our data team can tell you how we note that those structures are vacant because we have new ways and of those 813 are more than three years tax delinquent. We're going to come back to this number several times throughout the presentation because I think there are a few of you that don't like vacant structures in your neighborhood because of what they do. Of the vacant structures 477 of those cross-referenced within NRC are unfit. You can see the total of unfit structures that we have in the community, just over 1,300, almost 1,400 and even with all of Erin Downing's hard work in the demolition area we still have 188 more on the demo list which we firmly believe is not comprehensive.



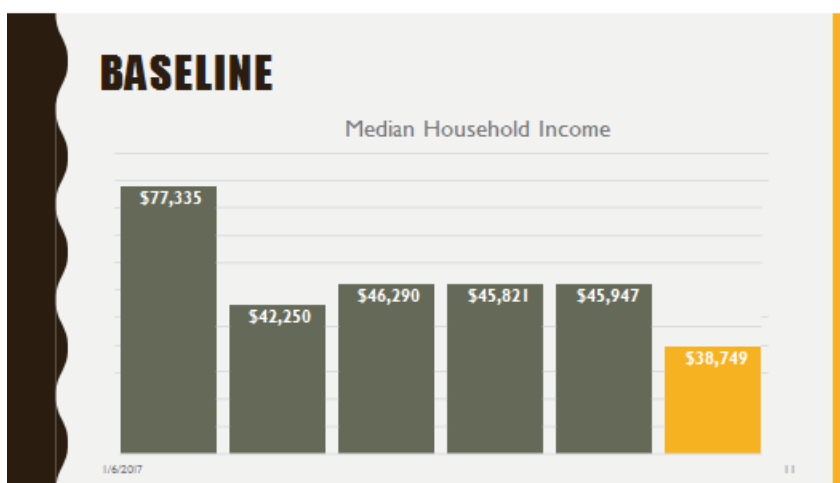
Then we looked a little further because, again, trying to understand where we're at and where we're trying to head towards as we're shooting for the stars. Our delinquency is very high, 10.46% and of that the bulk of those are tax sale eligible as you will see so that means they have aged past three years and some of them as you are aware are much higher. We looked our partners to the south and you can see the comparison there. It doesn't need to be stated. We do know in the state it averages between two and three percent delinquency so no matter what comparison you make we're extraordinary high.



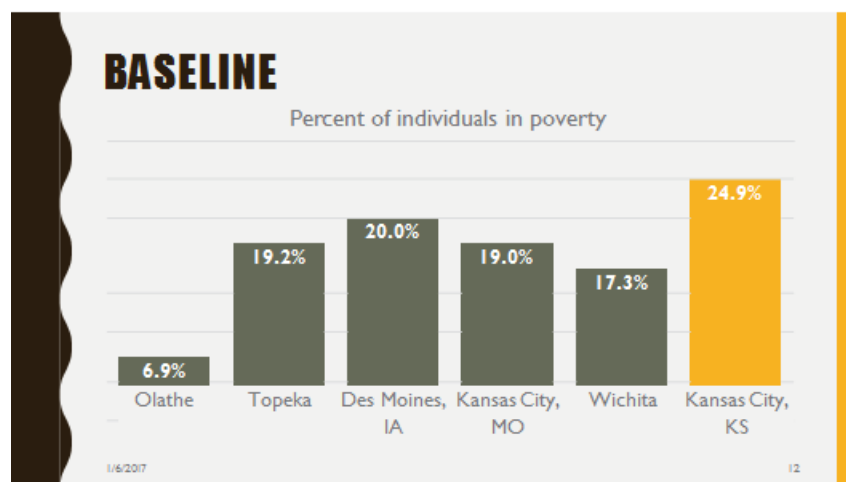
Our Land Bank properties are growing as you are aware. For the first time last year Chris Slaughter and his group took in 11 structures and we will add more to that here after this last tax sale in December.



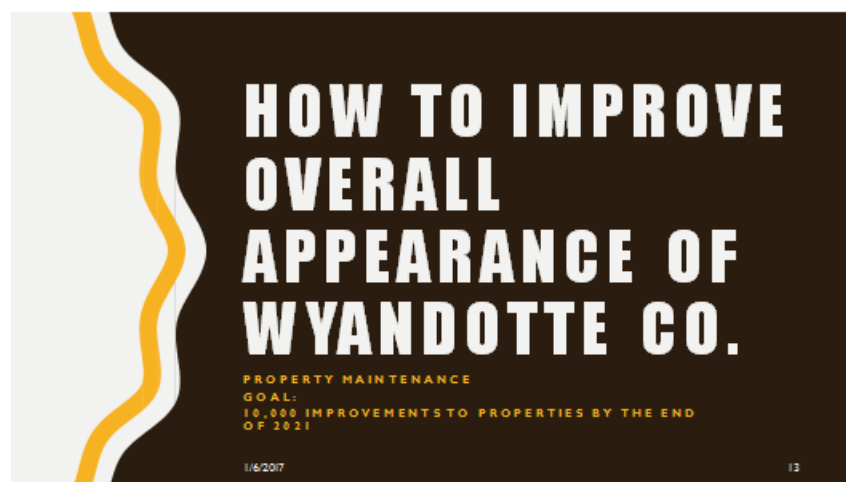
We also wanted to look at sort of what other challenges we had. Clearly our residential parcels we have 62,000 of those and our median income varies significantly to the community to the south. That's not reflective of the state but we are in an urban area.



Then we wanted to look at median household income and we pulled in a few other places besides folks in Johnson County, and again, the yellow in this slide is not positive.



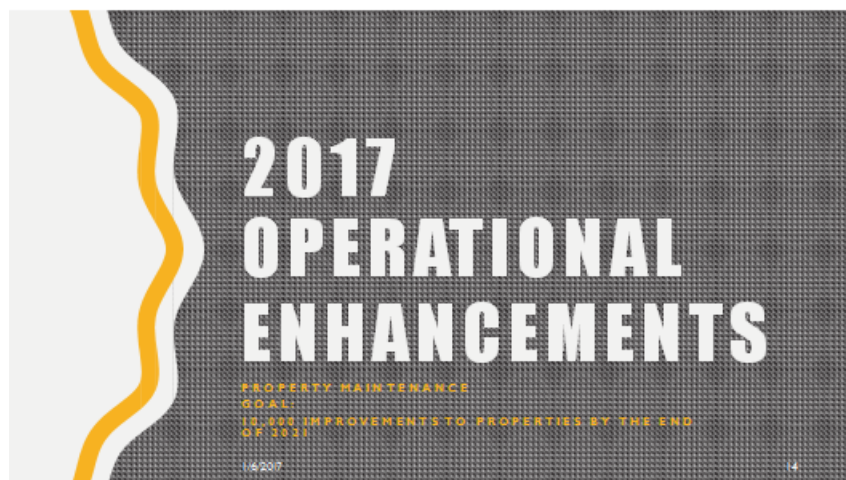
Poverty really jumps out.



What are we going to try to do? This is where we transition into our conversation about 2017 and any of these folks here can jump in and help me out whenever they would like. I'm only—like I said before emphasize a few of these as we move forward because there are many if you start looking at the sheet, but what's critical here is that these are listed in order of priority that

January 5, 2017

we will be hitting them as we move through 2017. Everything has a date and we're going to work rigorously to meet those and come and report back to you.



Operational Enhancements, that's one of the major things that we figured out. In order to be successful we have a lot of operational enhancements to make.



Starting in the area of Property Maintenance and Zoning, there are two on this slide that I will highlight. One of the things that came up over and over again since I started working here and as we were doing this work is that it's just taking too long to get things mowed, up to eight weeks at

one point last summer. We would like to get that down to 16 days and we're currently working collaboratively across several departments to figure out how to get from eight weeks to 16 days and we firmly believe if we try hard enough we can get there. That is a 2017 goal so let's see what we can do, but that's a big one.

The other one is to implement a Resolution Based Code Program. As we were talking about we may be pushing back harder on some folks, on others we're going to try to find them help and resolution based code is just that. It looks at the situation on a very individual level and determines what's the best application to fix the problem and that may not be ticketing our way out of it. As several commissioners have told me over the last two years, you cannot ticket your way out of this and our research concludes that is true.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND ZONING, cont.

- Develop a recognition program for individual property owners that improve the appearance of their property in a significant way
- Develop a plan to strategically enforce the community that will to increase property maintenance index rankings in areas that are considered at risk or poorly maintained and promote continued efforts in areas that are considered to be well maintained
- Establish baseline for zoning enforcement by type, notice to resolution, resolution to citation, and results

1/6/2017 16

The other thing that Property Maintenance and Zoning is going to be looking at is what it is that we need to do to be more strategic in our code enforcement. We will have a group working on how do we work toward that property maintenance index that we've created and start moving back the areas we know we're having problems and stopping it from spreading further. We have all the entities, we have all the indicators and we have all the data now. We can actually start thinking more strategically about how we're going to tackle property maintenance issues in the community because we know that one bad apple in a bunch starts to affect the whole rest of the bunch. We may need to start with just one instead of where there is ten to be more impactful over the long-term.



**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

VACANT STRUCTURES

- Establish vacant housing team for the UG
- Formalize the vacant structure reporting process.
- **Develop and implement management plan for vacant properties owned by the UG and those that are privately held.**
- **Design and implement a vacancy registry to assist in tracking and management of vacant properties**
- Develop structure security standards for vacant structures
- Identify and develop plan to attack zombie mortgages

1/6/2017 17

The area of vacant structures, again, this is probably our most critical path this year that we're going to focus the hardest on is on the vacant structures because, again, they are that rotten apple in the bunch.

We want to implement a management plan for the vacant properties that we currently have responsibility for so those 2,406 that are Land Bank and those other 813 that we are also aware of that have no one taking care of them and aren't paying their taxes. We need a management plan for those. Instead of waiting until someone calls or we drive by, we know where they're at now, we can go after them.

We need to implement a vacancy registry to assist in tracking and management of vacant properties. This is a policy thing that we will be bringing back to the Commission and asking you to approve over the course of the next six months. You can see on there the kind of time schedule we will have to bring that to you. The concept here is that you make it uncomfortable for folks out there to allow a structure to be vacant and if we can't figure out who owns it, that tells us something too and it's another path. Again, that whole resolution based concept as opposed to trying to get our way through it.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

**UNFIT STRUCTURES**

- Reaffirm process to “flag” historical landmarks to prevent demolition, prevent building in floodplains, and share commercial code enforcement activities
- Develop a plan to remove previously burnt structures, both commercial and residential and recommend budget for 2018.
- Develop a legal means for boarding houses immediately after a fire
- **Develop a demolition and unfit structures review committee that will rank priorities for structures to assist with Resolutions Based Codes.**
- Develop a system to denote historic structures to move them through a fast tracked separate system

1/6/2017 18

Unfit Structures, not always vacant—could be vacant, not always vacant. We need to look at those and things on our demolition list with our review committee which we’ve seen demonstrated in several other communities and it’s very successful and it works with the Resolutions Based Codes concept. We will be pulling in different departments on this to actually help us prioritize and reprioritize the demos and unfits and sort of how we want to look at those. Police may be a different issue than perhaps NRC might with something so we want to make sure that we have that group conversation and if we need to pull people in from the outside, that this group is able to do that as well.



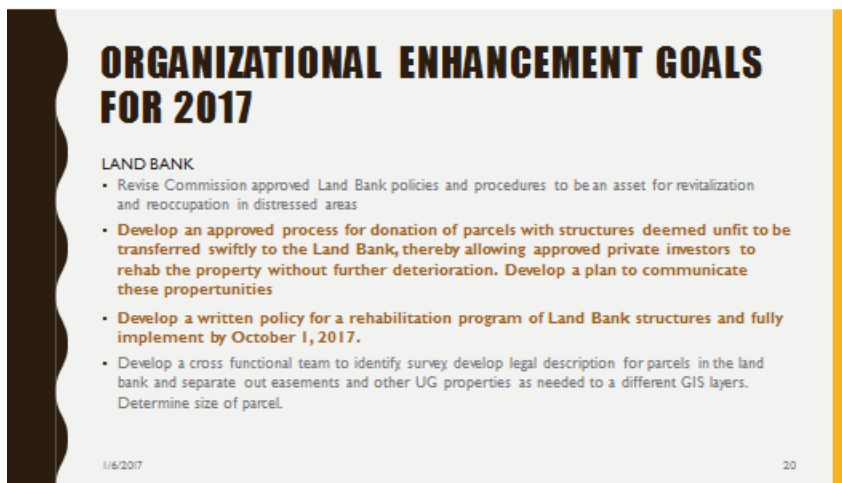
**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

**DELINQUENT TAXES**

- In 2017, place into a tax sale the 813 structures that are vacant and more than 3 years tax delinquent
- Reduce tax sale eligible properties in 2017 from 6,826 to 5,800

1/6/2017 19

In the area of delinquent taxes we want to try to move those 813 vacant structures through the system in 2017. This is a huge lift but if we can do something to act on those we can make some major changes in our neighborhoods.



**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

**LAND BANK**

- Revise Commission approved Land Bank policies and procedures to be an asset for revitalization and reoccupation in distressed areas
- Develop an approved process for donation of parcels with structures deemed unfit to be transferred swiftly to the Land Bank, thereby allowing approved private investors to rehab the property without further deterioration. Develop a plan to communicate these opportunities
- Develop a written policy for a rehabilitation program of Land Bank structures and fully implement by October 1, 2017.
- Develop a cross functional team to identify survey develop legal description for parcels in the land bank and separate out easements and other UG properties as needed to a different GIS layers. Determine size of parcel.

1/6/2017 20

With the Land Bank who would be receiving a lot of those and is now taking in structures, we want to look at a donation process for parcels so that folks who maybe are in one of these situations and they don't want to pay our vacancy registry fees, maybe they want to donate it to

us. The idea is to move it through the pipeline faster so it doesn't deteriorate longer so we're trying to give some options there and also a written policy for our rehabilitation program. Chris and his staff has already started working on that but we need to get that formalized and through to you all for adoption.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

RENTERS AND LANDLORDS

- Develop and implement self-inspection guide for renters to return to NRC
- Enact affidavit for landlord compliant codes including fire alarm and fire alarm maintenance
- Work to formalize a process that ensures that a landlord of an unrepaired fire-damaged rental property is not able to get another rental license until the damaged property is repaired or demolished. Establish a formalized way of coordinating with Livable Neighborhoods, Human Services and Rental Licensing related to violations and share that at Standing Committee.
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1/6/2017 21

We have more on renters here.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

RENTERS AND LANDLORDS

- Transition rental inspections software entry to input detailed information in form fields, not in the comments section so we can capture detailed violations in 2018.
- Establish baseline in 2017 of registered landlords that are meeting threshold for new landlord recognition program. Award the first ever landlord recognitions for positive rentals in the 1st quarter of 2018.
- **Develop a rental recognition program with supporting criteria for registered landlords in 2017 and introduce to Standing Committee and implement recognition in April 2018 renewal program.**
- Formalize collection of data for rental houses that have fires.

1/6/2017 22

One of the other things that we talk about quite a bit in our group is rentals, landlords and issues with that, but we thought there are some pretty darn good landlords out there and a recognition

January 5, 2017

program and something that people could visibly see on our website to know that they're getting in with a landlord that we think is doing all the right things. Since the State changed things on us we need to change things on the State and be able to show them that we can do some stuff to help our renters and our landlords to provide good quality spaces for our residents. A lot of work back there, but Rachel Miskec I know is going to be on it and she is excited to make some changes too.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Research and develop a process between the Appraisers Office and Community Development to let them know about completed improvements
- **Develop a process to ensure that those flipping homes are removing lead based paint**
- Examine UG development process in advance of the Zoning Code rewrite, include stakeholders from the public in review of development process.
- **Explore and report to Standing Committee regarding the development of a Community Based Development Organization or CBDO to allow for use of CDBG funds**
- Pursue DOE grants for energy efficiency for older homes as they become available

1/6/2017 23

We've kind of lumped Planning and Community Development together here but a couple of different things going on. We want to ensure that the homes that are being flipped don't have lead-based paint so we're going to be looking at some grants and things of that nature. We also want to look at the development of some CBDOS for the community and that is the end of the Operational Enhancements for Appearance.



We're going to talk about measures.

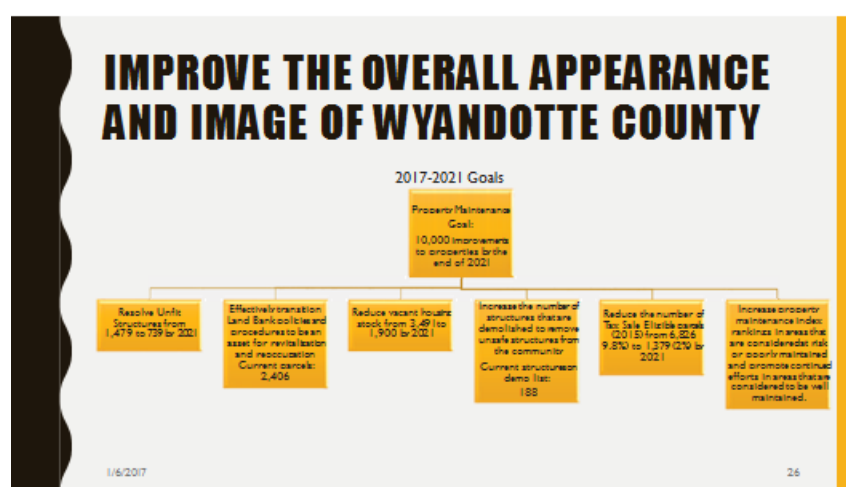


I know this is really a lot to take in. What we want to measure in the area of appearance for 2017 which is the more granular level than our five-year goal for 2021. We want to try to get 50% of those vacant properties on our registry. We want to get it up and running and we want to have some success with trying to move those to occupied units. This year our goal is to try to reduce the delinquency rate from 10.4% to 9% heading towards a goal that you will see in a minute, which is pretty aggressive, but exciting.

January 5, 2017

We want to transition the Land Bank site to do automated updates. Right now Chris has to manually enter things every time we do something.

We want to get a lead-based paint grant application in here in the first quarter and we are partnering with the University of Kansas Master Students to help us do an NRSA and so we're having them look at the whole community. We didn't tell them one area. We're telling them come back, where should we be doing this. This is going to be really exciting to see that and you will be having that information back to you as well.



So, here we are. Here are the big goals for appearance for 2021. Our group firmly believes that we can touch 10,000 individual improvements to properties by the end of 2021. We want to see this goal met and to do that these items underneath here are what we intend to be able to do to make a visible appearance change in our community. Reducing our unfit list in half, effectively transitioning our Land Bank, reducing our vacant housing stock by approximately half, trying to reduce the number of structures needing to be demoed so the goal isn't to create a bigger list but to reduce the list over time, and also to take our tax sale eligible parcels down to 2% which is about the state average.

We know that most of these are ones that have just been sitting out there aging so we can come in line and to increase our property index ratings across the board.

**Commissioner Murguia** said I just wanted to say—if you go back to the slide before this, you said there were 3,000 and some delinquencies—reduce vacant housing stock from 3,491 to 1,900 by 2021. The number of housing is increasing every year and so are you going to take care of that also to meet your goal of 1,900 by 2021? **Ms. Mundt** said of course. **Commissioner Murguia** said that's impressive.

**Tib Laughlin, Director of General Services**, said these are all net figures, not the gross figure; it has to be an actual change. If we cut the tax sale eligible parcels by moving 2,000 as we've promised in the coming year, but a thousand new ones roll on at the end of the year, we've only pulled ahead by 1,000. This calculates keeping up with that new inflow and still pulling ahead. **Ms. Mundt** said this is real reduction. **Commissioner Murguia** said just from my perspective, I don't know how the other commissioners feel, but you're really not giving yourself enough credit with that statement then because you're going to take care of a lot more than the difference between 3,000, whatever that number was, and the 1,900. You're going to take care of a lot more than that and so you might just want to make the measure we're going to get to 1,900 by this year and then on the backside you report however often the number that you've taken care of which is going to far exceed what you've just presented. **Ms. Mundt** said what we're seeing though is most of these are static. It will be interesting to see, but we will be calculating all of that and we will be giving you updates and this time next year we will be back before you with what is 2018 and what happened in 2017.

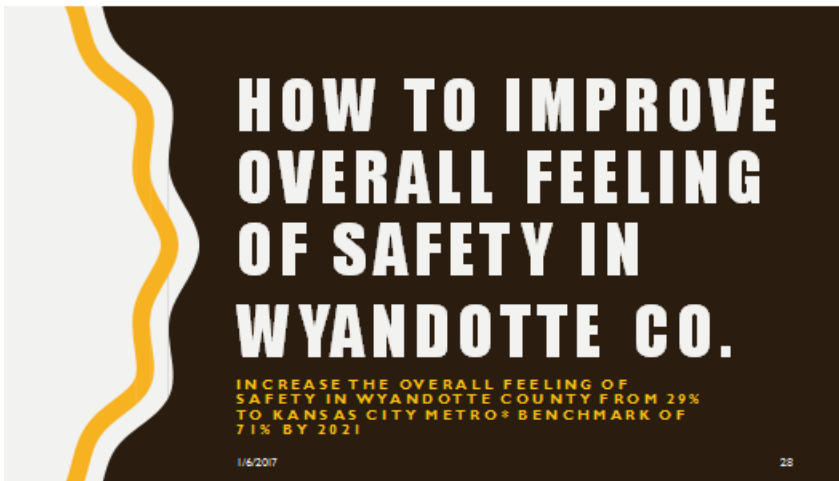
**10,000 INDIVIDUAL IMPROVEMENTS TO PROPERTIES BY THE END OF 2021**

What counts as an improvement for:

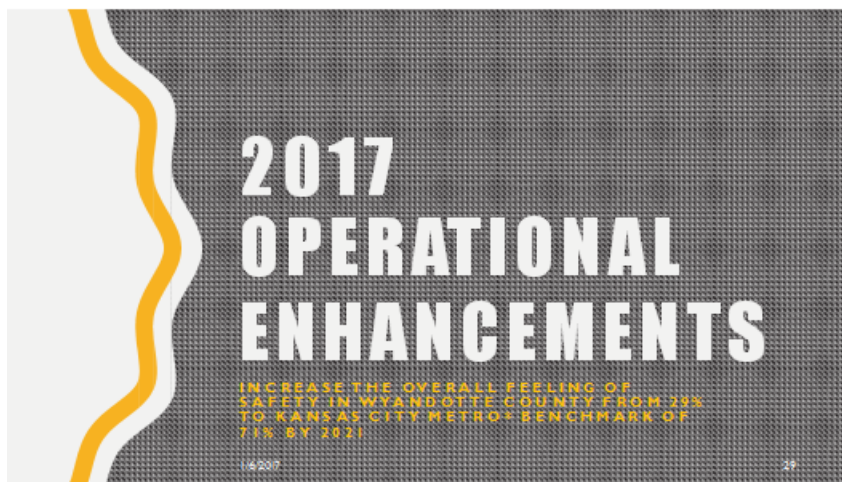
- Vacant lot without structure to lot with structure
- Unfit structure to fit structure
- Vacant structure to occupied safe structure
- Unfit structure demoed
- Vacant structure demoed
- Structure demoed due to safety issue, i.e. fire or weather issues
- Land Bank property to private ownership
- Tax Sale Eligible to not Tax Sale Eligible
- Increase in Neighborhood Revitalization Program use by parcel
- Reduction for repeat offenders for code violations

1/8/2017 27

I want to tell you our group spent a lot of time debating what was part of the 10,000 improvements to properties. It's not 10,000 properties, its 10,000 improvements. Most of these won't duplicate necessarily but there could be a property that has more than one thing occur to it and so we want to be transparent about that. This is ambitious because as the Mayor noted to us when we were talking about this with him just a few weeks ago is that we had basically 10,000 households leave the community so the number is somewhat significant over the course of the population loss we thought. Here we are and this is the exhaustive list of what will count toward the 10,000 properties.



The other area we talked about was safety and we're going to walk through what we're going to be doing in that area, again, operationally is a lot of the work.



January 5, 2017

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Continue efforts to formalize sidewalk and trail development, seeking grants and funding through the UG CMIP process
- Convert hard copy data records to digital for streets that are curbed and guttered vs unimproved roadway to share infrastructure differences throughout Wyandotte County
- Full integration of Lucity into Streets Division
- Full integration of Lucity into Facilities
- Develop and Implement an electronic UG Pavement Index Ranking system
- Formalize the collection of data regarding debris removal by Public Works

1/6/2017 30

In the infrastructure side of things we understand that safety is more than just policing and Sheriff's work and Fire is also our Public Works Division and other things that we do in the community including parks. Part of the operational enhancements is that we need to get our systems in place to help us fill a track measure and maintain our community. Two things we're highlighting here is our Lucity system which is our backbone software system for Public Works and Wastewater and now Parks.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017

### Mowing and Landscaping

- Develop processes and procedures for efficient and effective mowing practices within the Unified Government: Develop tiered mowing program to allocate resources to the highest priority mowing (such as residential lots with adjacent neighbors, parks and ROW); Fully integrate the mowing process into Lucity; Complete a GIS enabled dataset of all mowing by category (ROW/Parks, Land bank, etc.) and place in the data portal
- Develop and implement spraying programs for high priority (regional and local) parks in 2017
- Reassess watering program to increase beautification of UG Parks and Medians
- Develop a program to address large tree limbs and other related tree issues
- Strengthen parks beautification program through hiring of 2 new horticulturist to have a total of 4 FTEs in 2017
- Develop a tree maintenance program
- Document how something becomes the Unified Government's to mow
- Develop a public landscape maintenance plan
- Develop and implement plans to improve overall impression about maintenance of parks facilities

1/6/2017 31

January 5, 2017

The big one that I was talking about a little bit earlier is our mowing transition. These folks have bitten off a huge, huge chunk, but believe that we can develop processes and procedures to be much more efficient in the area of mowing our community and that's a conjunction between our actual staff and the contractor's that we use. We've learned some really great stuff about our Lucity Program and how it can actually help us manage work orders as it pertains to this and we will be able to track and actually have data. In a little bit I'll show you something that's more exciting that some of you folks will really like about what we're going to be doing with our mowing program.



**ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017**

**SAFETY**

- Implement a weekly review of data related to parks safety incidents, including criminal activity and vandalism by June 1, 2017
- Research and consider an ordinance to use civil actions against property owners, including Landlords, to control crime problems, based on the COPS model.
- Implement Improved Parks Ranger program in 2017 with hiring an 1 FTE and formalize the relationship with Sheriffs Department in support of efforts to reduce vandalism and increase the perception of safety in UG Parks
- Complete an assessment of safety exposures in UG parks in conjunction with the Sheriffs Department, with recommendations for the future and utilize the Law Enforcement Study by studying historical data that the UG has in its data
- Start tracking and mapping intentionally set fires in 2015, 2016 and 2017

1/6/2017 32

In the area of safety we want to research and consider using civil actions against property owners including landlords to control crime. We don't really know what that looks like but we're going to work with Police and the Sheriff's office to see what we can do in that area. It's something that we're aware of now and we want to see what that looks like.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017

### ANIMAL SERVICES

- Fully implement a volunteer program to assist at the animal services facility by June 1, 2017 with two volunteers serving each day to socialize animals
- Implement new animal services policies
- Research how other municipalities are address packs of wild dogs and develop a comprehensive strategy to address the problem for the community

1/6/2017 33

Animal Services, there are several things that they are looking to do and one of the big things that doesn't show up on here is they are going to be actually doing their animal facilities study analysis and that's going to be a pretty big lift for them. They've got some great communication stuff we'll talk about towards the end.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT GOALS FOR 2017

### GRAFFITI and VANDALISM

- Develop standard operating procedures and response time to abate graffiti
- Document in Lucity cost to repair vandalism and graffiti incidents
- Track the number of graffiti or defacing of street signs, with the intension of using data for implementation of a proactive street sign program in 2019.
- Formalize process to collect data pertaining costs and incidents of graffiti and vandalism to be able to report for 2017

1/6/2017 34

In the area of graffiti and vandalism, we really want to get a handle on how much of that we're working on and dealing with because we don't have the data right now and so we're going to be

January 5, 2017

getting that so we can actually talk about a more comprehensive strategy for managing that going forward including the communications that we may need to do with that.



SOAR measures for the area of safety.



January 5, 2017

## MEASURES 2017 – OVERALL SAFETY

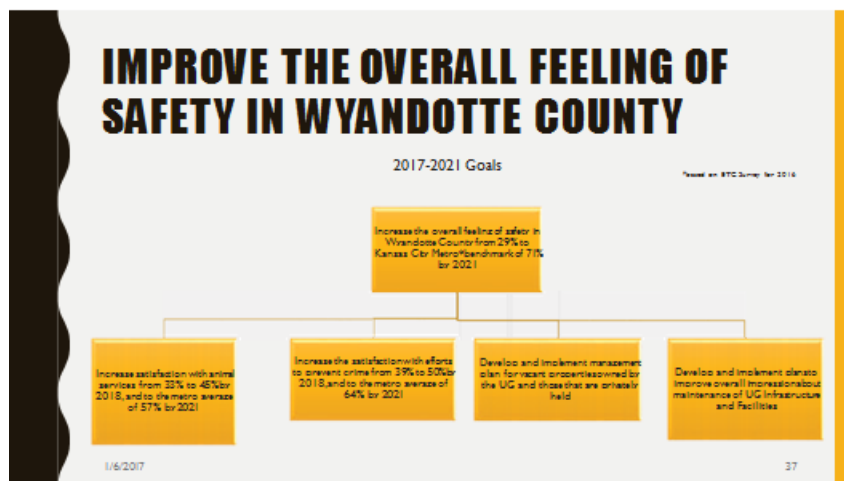
- Increase the satisfaction of overall cleanliness of streets and other public areas from 31% to 45% by 2018
- Track and report the number and locations of street light maintenance work orders generated
- 1,623 of ADA compliant ramps as of 12/31/16 to 1,952, out of 5,570 that need to be completed
- Improve the quality of parks and recreation facilities from 50% in 2016 to 65% in 2018
- Improve overall all appearance of Wyandotte County from 27% in 2016 to 45% in 2018
- Increase the perception of safety from 29% to 40% by 2018
- Increase the satisfaction with efforts to prevent crime by 2018 to 50%

1/6/2017 36

We're looking at trying to increase our satisfaction with our citizens about the cleanliness of our streets and other public areas. I don't have the benchmarks in here but this is where we're trying to move from 31% to 45% by 2018. 2018 is when we should do our next survey so early next year. This tracking and reporting of the number and locations of street light orders generated so we want to actually start calculating that because you know we say we've had a lot of them. What's a lot?

We're looking at our ADA ramps as part of the health and vibrancy of the community and really focusing on that moving forward.

Improving the quality of our parks and recreation facilities, that's a measure we want to move in. These are Citizen Survey's. All the rest of them all the way down because everybody wanted to be part of this. They all wanted, as departments, to get involved.



Here are big overarching goals to try to move ourselves from being last in the metro for overall feeling of safety to be as average. That's huge, but a lot of us in our group believe we have some communication things that if we did those better the feeling of safety would go up. But also the other things about getting our mowing done and how we're handling our vacant structures and so on and so forth are all going to play into this. They may not be under the area of safety, but they are going to feed into how people feel about the community.

Down below you just see sort of where we want to move with the Animal Services to the metro average, prevention of crime the same thing, also the implementation of management plans for our vacant properties and improving the overall impression of maintenance by us of our facilities which we've all talked about we don't want to be the worse person next to you and so we recognize that.



The last area we're going to cover tonight before we take questions is communications and what we intend to do because we also heard the Commission say during a retreat we need to do better at communicating. We took that to heart and we realize most of the work we're doing if we weren't communicating well, we weren't going to be able to get people to come along with us or to help us do our jobs better. Instead of repeating everything that's in here I just want to recognize that as we go through communications we've challenged every department that we're working with on this is to enhance their website presence as we move into our new website this year, to provide at least one or several articles for the Citizens Newsletter and we will have three of those this year. Mike Taylor and Edwin Birch are working on the first edition already and E-Newsletters, Facebook and any other method including direct communication with residents. We want to track, log and understand how that's all working for us this year.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

COMMUNICATION – Property Maintenance

- Develop an articles on property maintenance, junked vehicles
- Develop a proactive sign compliance letter
- Provide articles related to Planning and Zoning for Citizen Newsletter and ENEWS, including development process, zoning enforcement, and ENCODE
- Transition NRC webpages to new UG website and enhance information by providing examples to help residents and business understand their responsibilities for the overall appearance of Wyandotte County. Provide 24 hour a day online reporting of violations to NRC. Provide a prominent link to information on code violations so that the community can see what is happening in their neighborhood.

1/6/2017 39

Just some highlights in here and I'm going to skip through some of these pages.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

COMMUNICATION – Vacant Structures

- Look at developing a vacant house signage program for people to report issues with the structure. Develop a brochure for neighbors to help them manage the property
- **Broadly advertise and promote new policies regarding vacancy to the community through news letters, fliers, public meetings and webpage and door to door communication**
- Provide UG Communications two Citizens Newsletters articles on fire safety related to vacant housing.
- Develop ongoing communication plan related to vacant housing to increase safety in neighborhoods
- Develop public service announcements related to vacant and blighted structures to air on UG TV

1/6/2017 40

We need to broadly advertise and promote our new policies regarding vacancy in the community so we can get that two-way communication going with residents. A lot of times they know

January 5, 2017

things are going on at that vacant house that they're not telling us and we need to open that door for that two-way communication.

**COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017**

COMMUNICATION – Delinquent Taxes and Land Bank

- Development of a parcel specific communications plan for those that are delinquent 1 to 2 years, and include any codes violation reminders.
- Produce two communication pieces annual for distribution through the UG Communications Division that educates property owners about the requirement to pay taxes annually and the consequences
- Develop a communication piece on the Land Bank to be published in the Citizen Newsletter to inform residents and businesses about this UG function.
- Communicate individual land bank success stories with each home rehabbed to be featured in UG Enews and other UG publications.

1/6/2017 41

In the area of delinquent tax we have decided amongst the group with Treasury, the Appraiser's Office and the Delinquent Tax Office that we need to get communication out to individuals year one and year two to remind them that they are behind before they become that statistic of 94.6%. Also, remind them if they have any code violations at the same time and we can cross that all now.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

COMMUNICATION - Rentals

- Develop a rental rights brochure and or materials to be distributed to renters
- Develop and provide an education brochure to landlords at their annual renew or new sign up for the rental registry
- Educate renters about their rights for property maintenance by doing one direct mailing to renters
- Provide at least one article for the Citizen Newsletter on rental licensing outlining benefits for tenants
- Update Rental Licensing webpage information for role out of new UG website and link it to Human Services landlord and tenant disputes webpage

1/6/2017 42

In the area of rentals, we didn't talk about it as much before, but the communication side kind of updating and beefing up our rental rights for sure, the materials to be distributed to renters; developing an educational brochure to give to our landlords as they sign up for the registry and then educating renters directly about their rights for property maintenance to their address, one this year. We also have some other ideas about how they can engage that we're going to be trying to promote and implement and you will learn more about this as we move through.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

COMMUNICATION – Community Development

- Develop and implement a publicity strategy for ENCODE
- Transition Planning webpages to new UG website and enhance website presence by adding ENCODE, integrate maps to help customers, and a request feature that will help to report zoning code violations.
- Transition Community Development webpages to new UG website and enhance website and integrate features to help customers interact online with programs
- Provide information on programs to assist property owners in the removal of lead based paint through Citizen Newsletter and on the website.
- Report to Standing Committee and or Full Commission on the work to implement the City-wide Master Plan, Rosedale Master Plan, and Downtown Master Plan
- Develop targeted communications tools (such as Next-door, Facebook, and or regular US mail) to use with the NRSA program by December 31, 2017

1/6/2017 43

January 5, 2017

The other thing that we also want to do is really work hard to target the folks in the area that got selected for the NRSA so that they can have multiple means to engage with us.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

### COMMUNICATION - Infrastructure

- Transition Public Works webpages to new UG website and enhance website presence, integrate maps to help customers, and a request feature that will help to report infrastructure issues
- Provide strategies and projects related to SOAR services on Public Works webpages on new UG website
- Develop a communication plan to promote side walk maintenance cost sharing program at least once annually

1/6/2017 44

This is the fun one that I was referring to earlier. We will have like our own version of a snowplow map but instead it will be a mowing map. We might be the first for this so we're pretty excited about it. It will be public, live and visible and you will be able to see when we've been there and in theory when we're scheduled to come back.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

### COMMUNICATION - Mowing and Landscaping

- Communicate new UG mowing program to community through the Enews, Facebook and other methods as determined appropriate by the UG Communications Division
- **Create a publicly visible live map or application of UG mowing operations and status in ARCGIS**
- Transition Parks and Recreation webpages to new UG website and enhance website presence by adding pictures of facilities, integrate maps to help customers, providing integrated online registration link, and a maintenance request feature that will help to report tall grass and/or vandalism.
- Provide three articles about Parks and Recreation Department, including volunteer partnerships such as Trail Nerds and Kaw Point Park, how to report an issue with a Park, and more for the Citizens Newsletter

1/6/2017 45

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

**COMMUNICATION - Safety**

- Communicate success stories against crime with the community through the Citizen Newsletter, Enews and social media.
- Share all of the programs to fight crime that Police Department provides on the new UG website. Additionally share annual Police Department report with the public with coordination of the UG Communications Division
- Transition Police webpages to new UG website and enhance website presence, integrate maps to help customers, and a request feature that will help to report neighborhood crime issues
- Transition Fire webpages to new UG website and enhance website presence, integrate maps to help customers, and a request feature that will help to report fire safety issues

1/6/2017 46

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

**COMMUNICATION – Animal Services**

- Enhance Animal Services webpage to include numbers about adoption rates and programs provide by the UG Animal Services division. Coordinate links to Animal Services with UG Communications Division to ensure visibility on the UG website.
- Communicate via the Citizen Newsletter about various pet adoption programs, registration requirements and options, and the new the Pet Detective program. Newsletter/Enews/Social Media
- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote compliance with pet registration. Move from 10% registration of cats and dogs in 2016 to 70% compliance by 2021- Joint between Animal Services and PIO

1/6/2017 47

Our Animal Services folks are going to share all the good things they are doing because the perception in the community isn't always positive and we believe they need to be sharing some of the really awesome things that they're starting to do. Our Pet Adoption Program, things we have with registration and then our new Pet Detective Program because not have everybody has pet detective.

January 5, 2017

## COMMUNICATIONS GOALS FOR 2017

COMMUNICATION – Data Sharing

- Develop information for webpage on new UG website that addresses how to apply for Neighborhood Revitalization Areas, qualifications for Homestead Exemption, as well as information on the impact of code violations on appraisal values to a property and neighborhood. Link to NRC, Treasury and Delinquent Tax webpages
- Provide market value analysis on the UG website
- Continue data tracking for other departments including % of bank owned properties, # of parcels delinquent, # of payers not escrowed, # of those in homestead, # of special assessments, and # of NRAs
- Develop and maintain online datasets to communicate with the public the number of parks maintained, the acres of the parks, the number of miles of trails and changes or improvements to City/County parks

1/6/2017 48

The last thing that we talked about earlier and will talk about again is that we want to continue to have an impact by opening up our data.

## QUESTIONS?

Uniquely Wyandotte --  
A vibrant intersection of  
diversity opportunity &  
distinctive neighborhoods.  
An engaged community:  
healthy fulfilled and inspired.

The diagram consists of a central yellow circle labeled 'Quality of Life'. Surrounding it are three other circles: a dark grey circle at the top labeled 'Appearance', a blue circle at the bottom right labeled 'Safety', and a green circle at the bottom left labeled 'Communication'. These four circles are connected by a thick, curved line that forms a circle around the central 'Quality of Life' circle.

1/6/2017 49

With that we're excited to improve the quality of life in Wyandotte County in 2017.

**Mayor Holland** said I would like to start by all of us giving a hand to the comprehensive team of employees who have been doing this. I also want to give a big shout out to Commissioners McKiernan and Markley who have been working on this for five or six years. They have really

January 5, 2017

made this a passion of theirs and asked a lot of the questions that we're starting to get structure on for this group. These two commissioners have made this a passion of theirs, have worked on it collectively and really in the last year it has taken off in a way that it never has. I just want to thank Commissioner Markley and Commissioner McKiernan for your commitment to this over time and for your support of it. I want to give you two the first bite at the apple and then we will open it up to all the commissioners.

**Commissioner Markley** said this is a great PowerPoint, but I don't think this PowerPoint can capture the magnitude of what you all have done. I've had a preview of this so I'm unlike most of the commissioners I actually got to read all of it word for word. This not only has the power to transform how we internally handle our problem structures, but if these goals are met, we will transform this community. This is amazing. It's amazing and when Brian and I came on the Commission there was a big push from all the commissioners to start Smart Goals and we did start doing that as a countywide measure and it has been great, but this is the combination of what Smart Goals should like. They're interactive, they cross between departments, they have appropriate measures, they're based on real data or they're getting us real data in the cases where we don't have it. It's just amazing work and I'm just so happy to have seen it taken on by staff and move forward to quickly. Thank you, amazing.

**Commissioner McKiernan** said I just want to echo everything that she has said. Although we may have a passion for it, you have the power to actually make it happen and you are making it happen through all the work that you have started and that you continue to do. You are raising our collective expectations, you are ensuring that we stop settling for second best and second-class, you are ensuring that this will be a community that people that not only around the metro, but around the entire Midwest and maybe even the country, will choose to want to come to because it's such a great place to live. It's already a great place to live, you're going to make it even better and so I can't thank you enough for what you have done.

**Mayor Holland** said I think the 10,000 structures I think is important touching, 10,000 improvements. I tell the story all the time between 1960 and 2000 we lost a net of 30,000 people which is about 10,000 vacant homes which have become the 6,000 vacant lots. Some with

structures, some without that we now have today and addressing this quantity of the challenge. A lot of our loss in population was based in white flight. We were the poster child on the Kansas side for white flight. I believe, well I know statistically it's true, and I know just talking to people of the new generation white flight is largely over in Wyandotte County, but economic flight continues. When people can afford to live somewhere else they sometimes will because we don't have the quality of housing stock in big areas of our community so we might do all of our workforce development work and get someone a job that doesn't have a job and the first thing they do with that first check is they move somewhere else into a structure or a neighborhood that is more conducive to what they want.

As long as we are losing our employed residents to other places, we're not getting the full benefit of the economic development throughout our city. We've got to give our property owners reason to invest in the community and there is no bigger morale killer in our community than living next door to a blighted structure that the absentee landlord will not address and so people finally give up and leave. They then rent their property out because they can't sell it for its value and so the cycle continues and so getting ahold of this is going to be a huge opportunity to give our great residents a reason to invest in their own community, to stay here and to improve the quality of life. Just as one blighted home can take down a whole block, one great house that has been redone can bring up a whole block as well and so I think that's what we're going to see is reversing this 50 year trend and start to see the changes that we can make. I'm very excited about it.

**Commissioner Walker** said I guess, Mayor, I've heard you make that statement a number of times and I think in all fairness to the people that have left I have no doubts that some of that was a result of white flight. I think we're being disingenuous to not include in the white flight the idea that a good many businesses which have taken jobs that people have followed and a good number of people may have had more reasons than simply that for leaving. I called it tax flight. The real estate taxes in this community have for as long as I've been associated with the city been high compared to the surrounding communities and I know a rather long list of people that didn't leave here because of the color of their neighbor, they left here because the taxes in relationship to the value of their home was out of kilter. I think we have to address that as part of this overall program. All these things are going to help but to bring people back here, to bring

them back into a diverse community, there has to be the economic component that appeals to them. **Mayor Holland** said I think you're absolutely right, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Walker** said I don't disagree that I'm sure that a good many people left here because of the demographic changes, but many also left because they simply just did not want to pay the taxes anymore for what the value of their home was. **Mayor Holland** said we can't say why people left. All we can do is look at the statistical data. We know 60,000 white people out of 185,000 moved out, that's a third of the population and 30,000 people of other ethnicities moved in. That transition happened for a variety of reasons. I think you're accurate to say that, but the 10,000 empty homes is the economics where supply and demand was so out of whack our property values plummeted and we ratcheted it up. The city and county over 30 years raised the mill levy a little bit each time to try to capture some of that value loss. A big part of this of eliminating blight is increasing the value of our community. When your median residential property is \$67,000, now that's not owner-occupied. Owner-occupied is around \$92,000 but when it's nearly a third of our properties are rentals and you add those back in our median residential property at \$67,000 turns out it costs the same amount to pave a street in front of a \$25,000 as it does to pave a street in front of a \$250,000 house. Only the one with \$250,000 houses on it generates more income for the city, more revenue for the city, than the smaller one does. We've been upside down in this tax issue for a long time and this blight reduction is one of the key components to turning that loss in value around.

This is one of the things we've talked about with our upside down values, you have a house that appraises at \$80,000, but they can't sell it for \$80,000 because there is a gutted structure next to them that is on our demo list for the last five years that no one wants to live next door to so they sell it for \$40,000. Then the comparable starts to bring down all of our values and the tax loss continues. Getting those blighted structures out of there, raising up our neighborhoods where people can actually sell their properties what they're appraised for is going to be huge. It's a big deal and I think this investment is exactly right. This is the key to turning around our upside down tax situation in Wyandotte County.

**Commissioner Walker** said obviously I haven't had time to read this. I've been glancing through it. I want to say about communication we hear that again the old guy giving the history lesson. When I first started here we had three commissioners and they met at 10:00 in the

morning on Tuesday and Thursday and they met for about 45 minutes and that was the extent of government. If you didn't show up at 10:00, you didn't know anything and I've seen that go to where—I mean I am amazed when I'm out in public and someone I know or knows me says I saw you on TV and either agrees or disagrees, probably disagrees more often, on something I said or something we've done, but nevertheless there are people watching us on TV. Every citizen can be on ENews. A lot of that information doesn't tell the full story but it's a good tool. I think the real key here for you, and maybe you've addressed that in there, is how do you engage the other side in the two-way communication. We can print a ton of documents, we can mail them to people and people will still come up and say I didn't know anything about it because most people are just trying to make ends meet, do what they do in the evening with their family, with their friends. The idea of reading the kind of materials we have to read for this job—you've got to find a way to get them engaged and interested because two-way means two-way. We can put it out there, but we still can't communicate if people are not interested in hearing the message until an item affects their part of the world. Maybe you've got in here and if you do, I'm sorry, but I think you've got to have a plan that engages a broader audience among our citizenry. You're never going to get them all, but we could get more and if we can engage more, the product that comes out of what we do would be better I think.

**Tib Laughlin, Director of General Services**, said I would like to comment. Commissioner Walker, part of our SOAR Program is we have two AmeriCorps Vista interns who are titled Outreach Coordinators. We brought them onboard because we knew with this project we were going to need to be going out into the community and meeting people where they live to talk about what we're doing because we can clean up a vacant lot, we can do something about a vacant house, but until we talk to the neighbors and until we talk to people about what we've done it may well just be that we've done nothing. We have to get out amongst people, see them where they live and talk about what we do, what we're doing. We have to get them telling us where the problems are and identifying them. This is a communitywide effort, not something the government can do, it has to be a partnership and that is built into the structure of SOAR.

**Commissioner Philbrook** said I also want to thank you for all your hard work. I would say that I am very surprised at some of the folks that come to me and tell me they've seen me on TV, Doc

we're watching you. You have your patients call you up and say I'm coming in to get my eyes examined because I want to talk about this and I'm like okay that will work for me. It's good for my business, but on the other hand it's the concept that there are so many people out there that we wouldn't even have thought would be watching us on TV that is so amazing. A lot of single household, single parent households, sitting there watching to see what their commissioners are up to so they can see what's going to happen for their children in the future. It's just amazing and I think we just need to keep on trucking on on this in any way we can get people to turn on their TVs and turn on YouTube and whatever, I'm all for it. It's amazing and the questions that they ask are a whole lot more astute and to the point than sometimes we even ask in here and we're living this. I think it's pretty amazing and I really appreciate all of the technology we have added since I've came on the ship so to speak and I would like the tides to stay up and not go out because all ships rise.

**Commissioner Bynum** said on one of your very first slides where you talked about the delinquent tax eligible parcels, could you go back to that? I'm really just curious, and I wasn't sure we saw it on the slide, is there a dollar amount associated with—**Mr. Laughlin** said \$29M. **Ms. Mundt** said that's just since 2000. **Commissioner Bynum** said the \$29M then, what you're saying is the total value of all delinquent parcels is worth \$29M or the total value in taxes. **Ms. Mundt** said total owed \$29M. **Commissioner Bynum** said as it was kind of commented here we won't probably collect \$29M. At least we know that's what is out there to be collected.

**Doug Bach, County Administrator**, said I think the point that we look at actively on an annual basis while it's 10.4% of the parcels, annually we calculate a delinquency rate of our taxes collected at 7% so that is the number that you work with. You figure other community's in the state operate on a number around 2% probably or less. It depends on where you're at and so that 5% difference of our tax base on an annual basis kind of gets to the point to where Commissioner Walker was mentioning by correcting this problem we add to our tax base with doing nothing more than improving what we already have here in our community.

**Commissioner Bynum** said that's exactly right which kind of wins the point that I was going to make which was on two sides. One side is are you working with Finance to put dollar figures to the costs that are associated with the plan, but then on the other side what we could gain. Does that make sense? **Mr. Laughlin** said we are now. **Commissioner Bynum** said I

mean you're going to balance out because there is going to be cost associated with some of the work you've laid out but to your point—**Mr. Laughlin** said oh yes, on a case-by-case basis when we identify a bottleneck, when we identify a place where the problem that keeps us from moving forward is we can quantify and will quantify and when we're back here in budget season saying this is what is keeping us from moving forward, we will be able to show you that very, very clearly. Our directive from the Administrator has been if the issue that is keeping us from moving forward is money, tell him and we will find the way to make it work.

**Mayor Holland** said I think this \$29M is a staggering number. If you divide it by 7,200 parcels it's an average delinquency of about \$4,100 per parcel. Some of those are going to be vacant lots with the buildings already burnt down and no one is going to buy a 25 ft. lot for \$4,106 and so the majority of this is probably upside down, but this is quantifiable. This is a number we can find but how much of that \$29M is uncollectable is most of it. I would say most of it.

**Ms. Mundt** said we were never, Commission, just to make clear looking at this as a revenue generator. We're looking at a culture and a shift in our community about how we value our public infrastructure, about how we value our neighbors and how we want to appear. When a neighborhood on this map has gone to yellow it's failed. Well, it's too late now in some instances to do a whole lot and the more research we dig into there is a tipping point and it's about 5% according to the city of Baltimore and John Hopkins work, 5% vacancy. We have a lot more of that in some of our neighborhoods so we have to not ever let that happen again. We have to figure out what method and means we would use to employ.

Just the other week we were contacted by John Hopkins, the city of Baltimore, and the city of New Orleans and Tib just confirmed, and we did get the email today, that we're moving forward on a study with them on blight reduction with the National Science Foundation. We're submitting for a grant on that so we're working with these folks hand-in-hand to try to figure out how to solve these issues and how to not let them happen. That's why we created the property maintenance index and that's part of your data [wycokck.org](http://wycokck.org) because we wanted to be able to see that we weren't losing ground and we want to be able to benchmark that we're gaining ground. That's why the strategic code enforcement conversation because we can't let it roll any further. We've got to start rolling back, back to wherever that is, but it's not going to work without us

tackling those very individual bases and not looking at as a revenue situation but rather as a beautification or appearance or ascetic issue.

**Commissioner Murguia** said I'm really just jumping on what everyone else is saying that the numbers that you have up there listed that from 2000 to current we have \$29M in delinquent taxes which represents specifically the 7,212 parcels. I'm sure everybody saw this, I just feel like we need to say it out loud since there are people watching that may not necessarily understand and Commissioner McKiernan has brought this up on several occasions. It's not just the loss of the \$29M and the 7,200 parcels, it's the affect that blight and dilapidation is having on the block in which those parcels sit that's keeping our valuations down. What sparked this for me is what the Mayor said is that we've got to increase the value of our community altogether and the way that we do that is—again, I think it was Commissioner McKiernan that said we have to stop the hemorrhaging and that's what happening. We're hemorrhaging with blight and you can just drive down a street anywhere in any neighborhood and particularly the urban core and you can see that you may have a house that has five foot tall weeds and needs to be painted and it's vacant and blighted and abandoned and then right next door you have this very committed Wyandotte Countian whose yard is immaculate and the paint job on their home is beautiful and they've even reinvested in their property. I think this is more about saying to those people that take really good care of their property and are diehard Wyandotte Countians that want to see this county do better that we're with you. We care about this county also and I think when we don't address those issues it starts to lose, I don't know if it's morale or what it is, the community morale; that starts to deteriorate when they think that their government isn't with them.

It also is a sign, I know this for a fact, because when I first started marketing my district for development, for economic development, I will never forget it wasn't even a year after I was elected I had a developer tell me you need to clean your house before you come knocking on my door asking me to do development in your district. I really, frankly, didn't like to hear that very much and I thought it was kind of rude, but it's very true. You know you can't ask people to come in and be in a place that doesn't look nice or that is not attractive. By doing things like graffiti abatement and clean ups and getting people to paint these structures, demolition is very important and getting these houses out there so that people can buy them and fix them up, it may

not be exactly perfect but if we can make those what I talked about before is those incremental improvements across the board it raises the valuations across the board.

Again, I know everyone said it, but accolades to all of you that worked on this. It's very hard to measure the impact of \$29M in delinquent taxes in the scheme of things because on a depressing side if its \$29M on 7,200 properties, I hate to see what that \$29M has done to the valuations to all the rest of our property. That's the hard thing to value. I get your benchmarks. I think they're fantastic. I agree with Commissioner Markley, but I just kind of wanted to lay that out for people that don't necessarily deal with this all the time so that they can kind of understand.

**Commissioner McKiernan** said I hinted at it, but I want to be explicit about it, I think one of the most exciting things that has happened in this is the interdepartmental communication, the interdepartmental collaboration, the interdepartmental problem solving that is taking place. I remember probably 1.5 years ago Commissioner Markley and I sit down with Joe, Gordon and Melissa and I of course was on a rant and I was going off about one thing or another and as I laid out all of these problems I was having, by the time we got done with the conversation Gordon had been keeping a tally sheet and he said I've counted up 30 different departments that play at least some role in resolving this particular problem. That is what has happened in this last year is those 30 some plus departments have come together in a really meaningful and very impactful way and for me I think that is one of the most exciting things that's happening here is that we are One Wyandotte or whatever we are up there. That to me is the most exciting because that is what is going to carry on past this set of goals. This set of goals will be accomplished and we will have a new set but the groundwork that is being laid will really carry us forward. Again, I just want to say I really appreciate the effort that is going into this.

**Mr. Laughlin** said, Commissioner, you're absolutely right and we make the mistake we have talked about this for a year and sometimes while being nagged, why haven't we seen more results yet and we said again and again, that we have to get our own house in order or we have to clean our house before we can start asking people to clean theirs. We've been working on that and a big part of what we've done is that communication. The key to what we've done is getting these people to talk and stop feeling like they were battling this alone in the dark. We have accomplished tremendous things. John Hopkins University reached out to us and said we

are working on a National Science Foundation Grant Application with the city of Baltimore, who they have worked with for decades, and we need two other cities that are serious about this; will you be one of them and then they told us the other one was New Orleans. We're keeping company with Baltimore and New Orleans and we're not doing this because a year ago I heard that there were these great meetings where we got to listen to a commissioner rant and I wanted part of that. Melissa, Joe, Gordon and I did not invent battling blight. We stand on the shoulders, the very wary shoulders of giants who have struggled with this since those 30,000 people left this community and we have been working hard for decades to combat this. What we're doing now is working smarter. We're fighting blight right using data to direct our efforts to get bigger results. Everything we've accomplished to date—because the new budget didn't start until January 1, everything that we've accomplished up until four days ago was done with the same resources that have always been there. We've just been using them smarter.

I want to thank everybody in this room who has worked so hard together, but you especially, Commissioner, for recognizing how hard that has been and the communication and the benefit we've had from that.

**Mayor Holland** said I think the best resources we've used smarter are our own people who are touching a piece of this who know they are part of it and communicating with the others. I think one of things this represents is a paradigm shift that's similar to Healthy Communities Wyandotte in that we discovered you know you don't just need to get more doctors, there are 30 some criteria that are impacting the poor outcomes in our community and we have to have strategies to address all of them and we have to coordinate those efforts. The doctor for blight forever was we need more code enforcement and I've been guilty of that. We need more code enforcement because this is terrible and code enforcement this and code enforcement that and code enforcement is out there pulling their hair out saying—in fact I think Greg Talkin had hair before he became the head of Code Enforcement. He's pulled it all out trying to stop this blight, but they got all the comments about blight were directed to one department. It's how many departments? **Ms. Mundt** said it well its well north of 17 actively working. We have about 40 departments—honestly if someone hasn't engaged in this, I don't know who they are. **Mayor Holland** said it's almost every department in this city. **Ms. Mundt** said and if not, they're thinking about it and they are being encouraged in our staff meetings to step up in whatever way.

As we move through these collaborations which is a lot of the operational enhancements that we're looking at, other folks are going to get brought into the fold because we need eyes and boots on the ground to help us.

When you talk about that community engagement component, Commissioner Walker, it's going to take more than just the group of us sitting here today to do that engagement and it's going to take other community partners. That's one of the things that What Works Cities really was pushing us on, but we held fast and firm to we have to figure out what we're trying to get our hands around before we went out and engaged the community because if they started asking all the questions you've been asking us and we couldn't answer them, it would have just repeated the cycle of disillusionment and we didn't want to do that. We can go out now and tell them we know X, we know Y, oh you want to see that; here is where you can find it and it's updated and it's dynamic and so on and so forth. We're in a much better position to start that engagement and collaboration moving forward than we were a year ago.

**Mayor Holland** said I'll just close with one statement that Melissa Mundt made to me the other day that said one of the things that's been a great motivating factor for all of our employees that have been working on this is this isn't just where you work, this is where we live. This isn't somebody else's city, this is our city, this is our community, this is our neighborhood and that ownership—you know all 2,200 of our employees live in Wyandotte County and I'm very proud of that and to see that community pride, not just that work pride, but that community pride from our employees getting engaged in this process says as much as anything. I think that is a very powerful statement. This is our community and to see that ownership and that community pride, that Wyandotte County pride really stepping up to say we want to make this a better place to live because we live here and everyone deserves to live in a neighborhood that they're proud to call home. That's ultimately what we're about so thank you all again, an outstanding job, and I can't wait for next year's progress report to see how we're doing, but also to keep us updated. We took this seriously in last years' budget. You had done enough work in six months to make a budget presentation and say here's areas in all these different departments that we could augment our spending—it's not all one thing and this Commission out of the new \$12M in STAR Bonds put \$1.7M in new funding to this multifaceted effort strategically targeted toward areas that we think are going to make the most impact. That kind of strategic investment we can make all day

long because if we just get a one or two percent increase in the value of our whole community and it's going to pay us back big dividends. Keep up the good work and thank you again.

**MAYOR HOLLAND ADJOURNED**  
**THE MEETING AT 6:06 p.m.**

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Carol Godsil  
Deputy Unified Government Clerk

January 5, 2017