



# STATE OF THE CITY

April 15, 2025





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# Mayor's Message

## Dear Residents, City Council, and City Staff,

Each year, I have the honor of reflecting on all that we have accomplished together—and this year was no exception.

In November, we came together to dedicate the Parade Memorial at Grede Park. While the tragedy that inspired it will always weigh on our hearts, the way our community united to create this meaningful space is truly inspiring. The Memorial now stands as an open public place for reflection and remembrance.

This year, we also introduced a new Strategic Plan to guide the City's progress over the next five years. I look forward to seeing the impact of this plan and am proud of the strides we have already made this past year that you see reflected in this book.

Of course, challenges lie ahead. Just as household expenses have risen, so have the costs of providing municipal services. We remain committed to using tax dollars efficiently, but we must navigate these rising costs carefully. By working closely with the County, State, and other partners, we plan to continue working to address these financial challenges.

It is a privilege to serve as Mayor of Waukesha, and I take great pride in what we have accomplished together. I hope you take a moment to reflect on our shared progress this past year.



**Shawn N. Reilly**

Mayor







# Mission Statement

## WHERE WE'RE HEADED

We are dedicated to fostering a high quality of life in Waukesha through efficient, effective, and engaging government.

# Vision Statement

## OUR SHARED IDEA OF THE FUTURE

Waukesha is an accessible, vibrant, and desirable community where diversity is celebrated, and sustainably sound and innovative practices are prioritized.

# Core Values

## EXPECTATIONS FOR CITY DECISION MAKING & SERVICE DELIVERY

**Be of Service** to each other by enhancing, innovating, and providing high levels of customer service to the community.

**Be Open** by connecting, listening, responding, and engaging.

**Be Accepting** by supporting change, showing consideration, and being inclusive.

**Be Responsible** by forward-thinking, owning the work, and showing accountability and integrity.

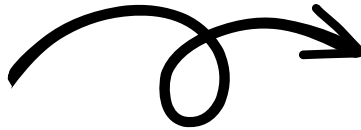
**Above All** be focused on ensuring the community is safe and secure.



# By the Numbers



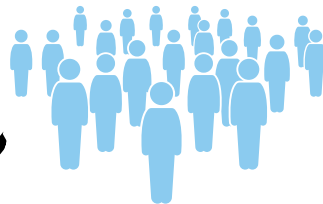
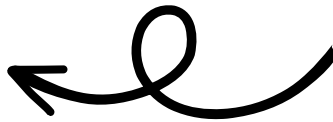
Incorporated  
**FEBRUARY 4, 1896**



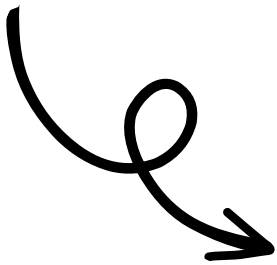
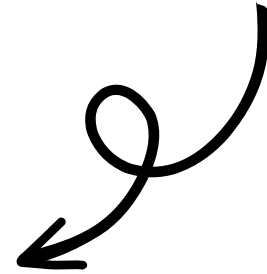
City Area  
**25 SQUARE MILES**



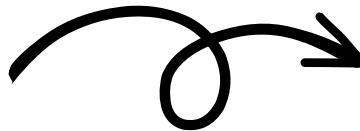
Number of Households  
**30,092**



Population  
**70,446**



Median Household Income  
**\$81,651**



Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units  
**\$286,600**





# Top Achievements





# *Dedicated* Parade Memorial at Grede Park

## What Happened?

On November 21, 2024 the Community gathered together on the third anniversary of the tragedy to dedicate the Parade Memorial at Grede Park.

As written in stone at the Memorial:

*"We dedicate this memorial to the six lives tragically lost in the Waukesha Christmas Parade, the nearly 70 others who sustained physical injuries, and the countless individuals deeply impacted by the events on November 21, 2021. This memorial also honors the first responders, health care workers, and bystanders whose bravery and quick response were crucial in providing aid and support that day.*

*May this memorial stand as a testament to the strength and unity of our community, symbolizing how we come together in support and solidarity through times of profound loss and tragedy."*

## Why it Matters

Following the tragedy that occurred at the Christmas Parade on November 21, 2021, a Parade Memorial Commission was formed to work on a permanent memorial that would thoughtfully honor the victims of the Waukesha Christmas Parade tragedy, provide an opportunity for reflection, and represent healing as a community. The Parade Memorial at Grede Park is a testament to their dedication and the collective efforts of the Waukesha community.

The project was truly a community endeavor, supported by nearly 1,000 donors who contributed financially and over 20 businesses that generously provided time, materials or discounted services.

Under the guidance of artist Carmen De La Paz, community members also came together to create and engrave 6" x 6" clay tiles, which were thoughtfully placed within a commemorative wall at the Memorial. The result is a stunning collection of over 1,100 tiles, each inscribed with heartfelt messages of hope and resilience.

The Memorial will serve as a lasting public space for reflection and remembrance.





# Completed The National Community Survey

## What Happened?

In early 2024, the City participated in The National Community Survey which is a nationwide, statistically valid survey that allows the City gain feedback from residents on ten central facets:

- Economy
- Mobility
- Community Design
- Utilities
- Safety
- Natural Environment
- Parks and Recreation
- Health and Wellness
- Educations, Arts, and Culture
- Inclusivity and Engagement

A random sample of residents received postcards and mailed surveys. All residents were invited to participate in the online survey.

This was second time the City has completed the National Community Survey, after having first completed it in 2022.

## Why it Matters

The quality of life in Waukesha continues to receive strong support from residents, with 84% rating the overall quality of life as either "Excellent" or "Good." An impressive 90% of respondents indicated they would recommend living in Waukesha to others, and 84% plan to remain in the city for the next five years — a reflection of the community's appeal and stability.

Waukesha's economic strength remains a point of pride for the community. Residents rated the variety of businesses and service establishments, the vibrancy of downtown and commercial areas, shopping opportunities, and employment options higher than national benchmark averages.

However, while overall satisfaction remains strong, affordable housing has emerged as a growing concern among residents.

Results from this survey are helping to shape the City's strategic planning and other future planning efforts. [View the complete survey results on the City's website.](#)





# Adopted New City Strategic Plan

## What Happened?

In 2024, the Common Council adopted a new City Strategic Plan. The plan will guide the City's efforts for the next five years.

The plan came about after work that began in 2023 and included interviews of community members and groups, community forums, an online feedback platform, and sessions held with City Leadership.

Through the process, the City established a new Vision, Mission, and strategic priorities which include:

- Financial Sustainability
- Service in Excellence
- People-Centered Development
- Engaged Community

Each of these priorities have specific goals and objectives for implementation, as well as metrics for measuring progress.

## Why it Matters

The strategic plan is intended to serve as a catalyst for positive change in Waukesha, improving the quality of life for residents.

With the plan now finalized, the City is focused on its implementation. As the the plan will guide the City for the next five-years, the initial focus is on achieving short-term objectives and laying the foundation for longer-term initiatives.

To ensure steady progress, employee work groups have been established for each strategic priority. These employee groups meet regularly to review goals and objectives. They also provide updates to department heads during quarterly meetings. Additionally, a quarterly report will be shared with the Common Council and the community, offering transparent updates on the Strategic Plan's progress.

[View the City's Strategic Plan on the City's website.](#)





*Installed*

# New Playgrounds at Waukesha Springs and Bethesda Parks

## What Happened?

In the Fall of 2024, new playgrounds were installed at Waukesha Springs Park and Bethesda Park.

The new playground designs were finalized after a series of neighborhood public information meetings to incorporate desired elements in the designs.

Community Build groups, made up of community volunteers helped install the new playgrounds over a period of several days.

## Why it Matters

The Waukesha Springs and Bethesda Park playground equipment was some of the oldest in the park system. The equipment and installed amenities were showing significant wear and tear due to use and the age of the equipment.

The City's Community Build Program for park playgrounds has been in place since 2007. Not only does it save the City on costs, by relying on volunteers, it also helps the community build pride and ownership in our City parks.

[You can learn more about our City parks and facilities on the City's website.](#)







# *Implemented* Leaf Collection Changes

## What Happened?

The City implemented a number of changes to the fall leaf collection process. This included:

- Modifying the collection so that the collections were dictated by the leaves, and not scheduled days.
- Utilizing technology through a GIS map to provide estimated collection dates to residents.
- Placing new buckets on all loaders which allowed for loading the leaves from the rear of the dump truck. More leaves were able to be loaded into each truck.
- Reducing the crews on leaf collection by 6-10 people each week. This allowed additional work to be completed outside of leaf collection.

## Why it Matters

The new leaf collection process saved the City time and money with roughly the same amount of leaves collected as in previous years.

- 5,434 tons of leaves were collected (similar to previous years)
- \$140,338 in cost savings for the City due to fuel savings, rental savings, and labor savings.
- 1,932 fewer labor hours devoted to leaf collection than previous years.

The leaf collection process will continue to be tailored based on resident feedback. For the next fall leaf collection the City is looking to provide residents more details on the week of their collection, to allow them to more easily plan for when crews will arrive. Those interested would then also still be able to track daily progress on the map for more detailed information.

[You can learn more about the City's leaf collection process on the City's website.](#)







# Enhanced Commercial Motor Vehicle Traffic Enforcement

## What Happened?

In 2025, the Waukesha Police Department received a federal grant of \$768,326 to fund a project to enhance traffic enforcement involving commercial motor vehicles.

With the funding, a new unit has been created which consists of two Police Officers who are designated as Traffic Specialists, and two fully equipped police vehicles specifically designed for traffic enforcement.

The Traffic Specialists are responsible for traffic enforcement within the City, with a focus on commercial motor vehicle violations and safety inspections.

The two traffic specialists received specialized training through the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) which certifies them for commercial motor vehicle inspections.

## Why it Matters

The City of Waukesha has seen consistent increases in major traffic accidents relating to commercial motor vehicles. Since 2020, there has been a steady increase each year of traffic accidents resulting in a total rise of 48% since 2020.

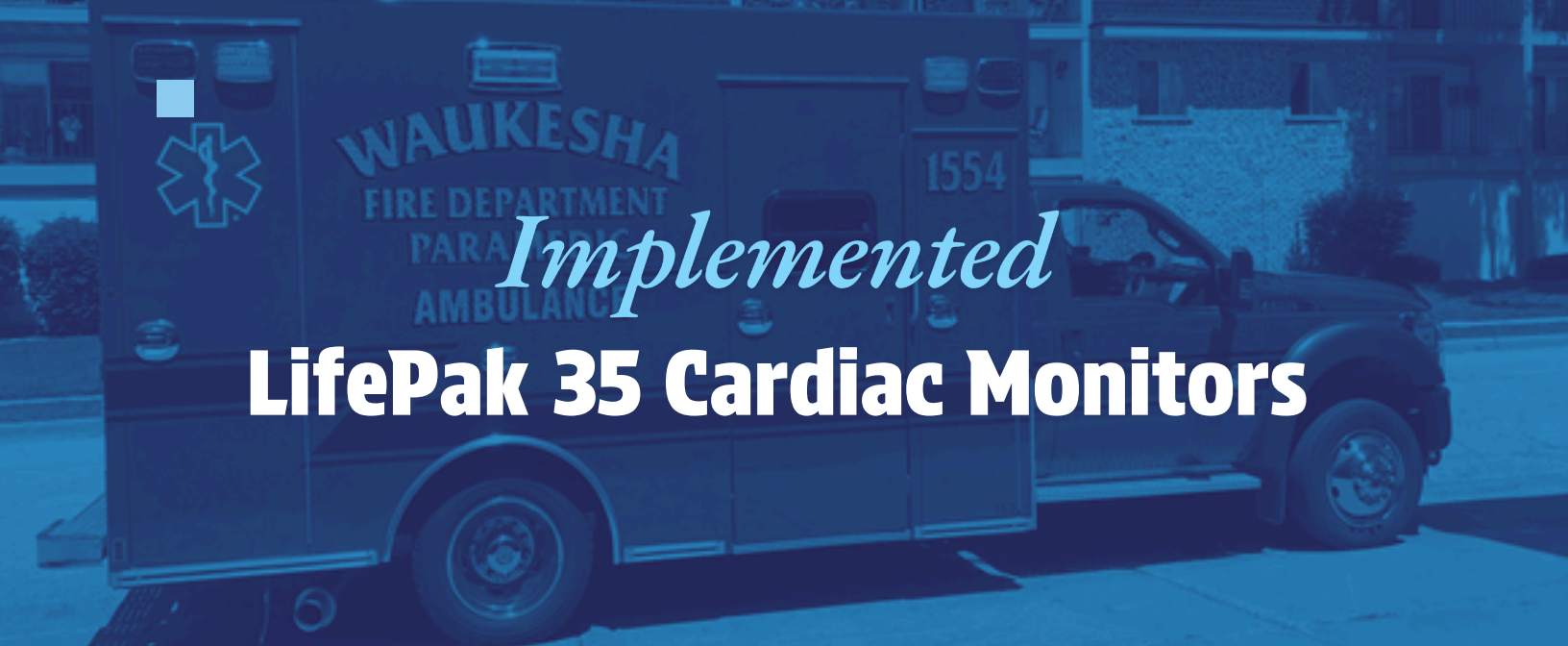
Previously, the Waukesha Police Department allocated only one part-time police officer to commercial motor vehicle traffic enforcement.

With the grant funding, the City is now able to devote two officers to traffic enforcement with the goal of helping to ensure safer roadways for the community.

[You can learn more about the Waukesha Police Department on the City's website.](#)







# Implemented LifePak 35 Cardiac Monitors

## What Happened?

Through the City's Community Investment Program (CIP), the Fire Department was able to secure funding to procure state-of-the-art LifePak 35 cardiac monitors, enhancing their ability to provide advanced life-saving care during emergencies.

These monitors have now been installed and are actively in use by Fire Department personnel. With improved technology and enhanced features, the new equipment will help first responders deliver more efficient and effective medical assistance to residents in need.



## Why it Matters

The Fire Department's previous heart monitors, which were approximately 13 years old, had reached the end of their anticipated service life, necessitating an upgrade to ensure the highest standard of emergency care.

The newly acquired LifePak 35 Cardiac Monitors equip the department with cutting-edge technology, significantly enhancing the level of care provided to our community.

These advanced monitors offer a more comprehensive analysis of heart activity. This real-time information allows first responders to make informed, rapid decisions regarding treatment strategies and pre-hospital interventions.

By integrating this state-of-the-art equipment into daily operations, the Fire Department strengthens its ability to respond effectively to cardiac emergencies — ultimately increasing the likelihood of positive patient outcomes and saving lives.

[You can learn more about the Waukesha Fire Department on the City's website.](#)





# Transitioned Garbage and Recycling Collection

## What Happened?

In 2024, the City issued a request for proposals from contractors to provide garbage and recycling collection services, as the existing contract was set to expire. After a thorough evaluation, Johns Disposal was selected as the most advantageous option and the City entered into a six-year agreement with them.

As part of the transition to the new contract, it was necessary to replace the garbage and recycling carts for all residents utilizing automated pickup. The City purchased new carts that were distributed to properties. Since the previous carts were owned by the former contractor, they were collected prior to the start of the new service.

## Why it Matters

The new garbage and recycling contract will provide garbage and recycling services for the City for the next six years.

The new contract does include some changes, including changes to bulky item pickup. The City has now transitioned to an on-demand model for bulky item pick-up where only those who use the service, pay for it. Had the City continued with bulky item pickup at regular intervals for everyone, it would have added substantial costs to the contract for the entire City.

The City now also owns the garbage and recycling carts which means that even if contractors are changed in the future, the City does not anticipate needing to do a city-wide cart exchange again.

[You can learn more about the City's recycling and solid waste collection services on the City's website.](#)





# Other Noteworthy Achievements



## Placemaking Plans for Friedman Alley and Williams Street

The Community Development Department coordinated new placemaking plans for Friedman Alley and Williams Street in Downtown Waukesha. The plans will be implemented over several years and include new streetscaping elements, branding, public art, lighting enhancements, and signage.

You can view the plans here: [Friedman Alley](#); [Williams Street](#)



## Traffic Signal Control Replacement

The Public Works Department recently completed a full replacement of all the traffic signal controllers. In addition, the controllers now have connectivity back to City Hall so they can be more easily monitored and programmed.

[You can learn more about the roles of the Public Works Department here.](#)



## Election Administration

The City's Clerk's office effectively managed the November 2024 Presidential Election which saw a 93.05% voter turnout in the City. There were 40,343 ballots cast with 5,321 voter registrations.

In addition, to the Clerk's office staff, there were 410 poll workers serving on Election Day.

[You can learn more about the Clerk's office and how to become a poll worker here.](#)



## New Water Utility Website

In December of 2024, the Waukesha Water Utility launched a new and improved website. The new website features easier navigation, translation options, and expanded resources to better serve the community.

The website also offers easy ways to sign up for the new paperless billing option.

[You can visit the website at waukesha-water.com.](#)



## Prairie Home Cemetery Digital Walking Tour

Prairie Home Cemetery enjoys a unique position in the community as both a wealth of Waukesha history and an active cemetery. This past year, the Cemetery staff and GIS staff put together a digital walking tour to allow you to explore the history. Access the walking tour page from your phone and learn about some of the historical markers as you move through the Cemetery.

[View the walking tour.](#)



# Other Noteworthy Achievements



## Battery Fire Suppression Equipment

The Fire Department recently procured Lithium battery fire suppression equipment.

This improves the Fire Departments ability to respond to incidents involving e-battery vehicles and electric vehicles.

[You can learn more about the Fire Department here.](#)



## Growth of Memory Cafe

The Waukesha Public Library's Memory Cafe program has continued to grow in the number of people it serves. The Memory Cafe is a social gathering for those who are experiencing early-stage dementia, mild memory loss or mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and for their families, friends, or care partners. The Waukesha Memory Café meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

[You can learn more about the program here.](#)



## Upgrades to Priedeman Park Baseball/Softball

The youth baseball /softball field at Priedeman Park was significantly upgraded. The field is regularly utilized by our youth sports leagues throughout the spring and summer and was in need of renovation and improved accessibility.

[You can learn more about our City parks and facilities here.](#)



## New Fire Engine

The Fire Department welcomed a brand-new fire engine to Station 4. This engine replaced the previous Engine 4 which will now transition to a reserve unit. This ensures continued reliability and readiness for our community.

The new fire engine means more effective emergency response - because when seconds count, having the right tools matters.

[You can learn more about the Fire Department here.](#)



## Contract for Commercial Appraisal Work

The City of Waukesha was able to execute a contract with Accurate Appraisal for the City's Commercial Appraisal work.

Due to City staffing shortages in this area, Accurate Appraisal offers knowledge, reliability and a streamlined process for work on commercial appraisals.

[You can learn more about the City Assessor's office here.](#)





# 2024 Service in Excellence

We will encourage an organizational culture that embraces diversity, learning, and innovation in service delivery.

**Police Calls for Service**



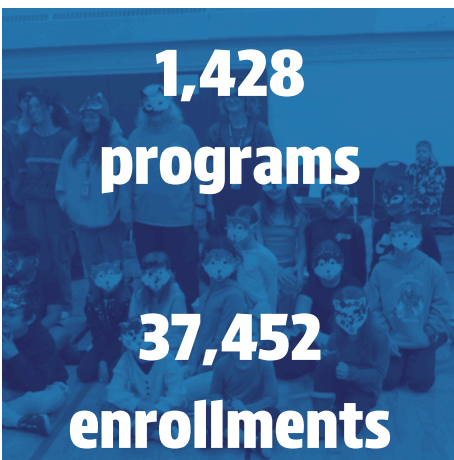
**Fire Calls for Service**



**Tons of Leaves Collected**



**Park, Rec., & Forestry Programs & Classes**



**Permits Issued**



**Library Programs**





# 2024 Honors & Awards

## **Tree City USA**

Arbor Day Foundation

## **National Accreditation Parks, Recreation, & Forestry**

National Recreation & Park Association

## **Gold Level Learn to Swim Provider, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department**

American Red Cross

## **Program Excellence Award - "Swim and Park Play Program"**

WI Park & Recreation Association

## **Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) Award**

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

## **Partnering for Purpose Award: Waukesha Public Library**

Literary Services of Wisconsin

## **2024 CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Officer of the Year Award: Specialist Sunny Schneider**

NAMI Wisconsin

## **Gold Tier Connect Community**

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

## **Creative Community Champion: City of Waukesha Public Art Advisory Committee**

Create Wisconsin & The League of Wisconsin Municipalities

## **Rookie K-9 Handler of the Year Award, Officer Dan Riess and K-9 Lambo**

Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handler Association

