



CITY OF  
**JACKSON**  
MICHIGAN



ANNUAL REPORT  
**2019**



## A Message from the CITY MANAGER

Welcome to the City of Jackson, Michigan! It is my pleasure to present to you the 2019 City of Jackson Annual Report. As you will see, City officials are committed to providing outstanding services for our residents and making sure Jackson is a great place to prosper and grow.

In keeping with the established goals of enhancing the quality of life for Jacksonians, strengthening the City's economy, sustaining City finances, and insuring the public health, safety, and welfare of our neighbors, City staff dedicated their efforts to further accomplishing these goals again in 2019.

After a decade of efforts to revitalize our City, we're beginning to see the fruits of our labor. New housing developments are reaching the sky, storefronts continue to fill up, and neighborhoods are benefiting from a rising housing market and new infrastructure.

Numbers help paint the picture of our progress. Investment data shows that since 2015, Downtown Jackson has seen more than \$100 million in private and public investment, with an estimated yearly tax benefit to the City of more than \$538,000. Governmental investment in downtown developments from federal, state and local funds amounted to \$3.5 million, with \$1.1 million coming directly from the City of Jackson. This shows that immense opportunities arise when local governments work with partners to invest in the community.

The same investment data shows that the City has been pouring millions of dollars into our neighborhoods. Since 2015, the City has spent more than \$42 million on City infrastructure (roads, street lighting, parking lots) and public park improvements. The vast majority of those funds have been going directly into neighborhoods all over Jackson. Our neighborhoods are also being bolstered by a hot housing market, with rising property values and higher home sale prices.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of the past decade, we're also looking to the future. City staff continue to innovate and improve services for residents and businesses, along with meeting our challenges in a cost effective manner. With Jackson's outlook getting brighter every day, we look forward to another decade of progress.

*Patrick H. Burtch*

**Patrick Burtch, PhD**  
City Manager

# TREASURER & INCOME TAX OFFICE

The **TREASURER & INCOME TAX OFFICE** is located on the first floor of City Hall. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and open during lunch hours. Martin Griffin serves as both the City Treasurer and Income Tax Administrator.

Payments for property taxes, income taxes, water bills, special assessments and parking violations can be made in person, through the mail, or online at [www.cityofjackson.org](http://www.cityofjackson.org). All credit/debit card payments are subject to a credit card fee. Income taxes cannot be paid online.

The City of Jackson has had an income tax since 1970. All residents with an income of \$600 or more are required to file a tax return each year. The tax rate for residents on all income is 1%. All non-residents working in the City are responsible for .5% income tax on all wages earned in Jackson.

In conjunction with the Michigan Department of Treasury, the Income Tax Department Compliance Section has been notifying taxpayers that filed State of Michigan returns, but not with Jackson, of their need to file with the City. Letters went out for tax years 2014 through 2017 letting residents know they neglected to file. The most common reason for not filing is the assumption that they e-filed. Jackson did not have e-filing until 2018 and that is only with professionally filed returns. A listing of all income tax forms is available on our website.

## CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

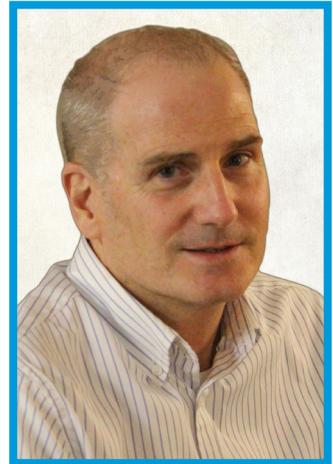
The **CITY CLERK'S OFFICE** maintains the records of more than 22,000 registered voters, and with the help of many election inspectors, conducted two elections in 2019. City Clerk Andrea Muray and staff registered over 200 new voters in 2019, along with implementing new State of Michigan voting rules, and working with the Secretary of State to improve voter turnout.

Along with elections, this office issued annual business licenses and received payments for Administrative Hearings Bureau cases and invoices issued by all City departments. Monthly and daily parking lot permits are maintained in this office, which is also responsible for accepting claims, certifying resolutions and codifying ordinances.

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The **ASSESSOR'S OFFICE** is responsible for appraising and assessing all real and personal property in the City of Jackson. The City Assessor Jason Yoakam and staff answer inquiries from residents, property owners, mortgage companies, prospective buyers, business owners, appraisers and government agencies.

It provides information on assessment procedures, amount of taxes, lot sizes, lot splits, legal descriptions, owners of land and qualifications for filling of state exemptions. Additionally, the Assessor's Office tracks and verifies principle residential exemptions, updates property ownership information, creates special assessment rolls, maintains property tax maps, collects and analyzes sale data, defends assessments before the Michigan Tax Tribunal, and maintains a computerized appraisal system.



**Martin Griffin**  
City Treasurer



**Andrea Muray**  
City Clerk



**Jason Yoakam**  
City Assessor

# CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The **CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE** is a full service law office, delivering a complete range of legal services to the City's elected and appointed officials and departments.

The City's legal department consists of the City Attorney, a Senior Assistant City Attorney, an Assistant City Attorney, and two legal support professionals. In December 2019, Matthew Hagerty was hired as the new City Attorney.

The department's duties include:

- Defending the City, its officials, and employees against lawsuits.
- Addressing citizen complaints.
- Administering the insurance programs of the City.
- Handling the defense of real and personal property tax cases in the State Tax Tribunal.
- Handling approximately 1,500 District Court criminal prosecutions annually.
- Prosecuting zoning, housing, and other blight-related ordinance violations in the City's Administrative Hearings Bureau.



**Matthew Hagerty**  
City Attorney

- Responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.
- Tracking legislation affecting the City and advocating for the protection of the City and its residents in new legislation.
- Collecting accounts receivable.

In addition, all resolutions, ordinances, and contracts involving the City are written or reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.



## HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

The **HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION** serves the City's workforce and the job-seeking public.

The division is responsible for customer service, recruitment, benefits administration, compensation, unemployment and workers' compensation, employee law compliance, and employee and labor relations for the City's four unions and the non-union workforce. More than 700 phone calls were answered, and staff assisted with more than 500 walk-ins.

In 2019, Human Resources posted a number of existing and new jobs within the City of Jackson and hired 29 full-time and three part-time employees. Seven employees retired in 2019.

The division continues to provide counsel and compliance to the City of Jackson, which is required by federal health care reform mandates and laws.

# DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD & ECONOMIC OPERATIONS

The **DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD and ECONOMIC OPERATIONS**, also known as **NEO**, is responsible for implementing and enforcing City programs promoting the vision and goals of the City Council. NEO is instrumental in executing Jackson's Overall Economic Stabilization Program, which includes administration of building permits, dangerous building enforcement, building and housing inspections, planning and zoning administration, homeowner rehabilitation, housing code enforcement, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds, economic development, Brownfield redevelopment, and blight ordinance enforcement. NEO also provides staffing for various boards and commissions, including the Historic District Commission, Jackson Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, Administrative Hearings Bureau, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Building Code Board of Examiners and Appeals.

The Building Division is responsible for enforcing the State Construction Code. Inspectors also investigate and prosecute instances of work done without permits or improperly licensed persons performing work. Staff reviews building and site plans, issues permits, conducts inspections, issues certificates of occupancy, enforces the sign and zoning ordinances, and condemns dangerous properties throughout the City. During calendar year 2019, NEO issued 627 building permits with an estimated construction value of \$54.2 million, 348% above 2018. In addition, 598 electrical permits, 374 plumbing permits, and 574 mechanical permits were issued and inspected. NEO staff also oversaw the demolition of 22 residential structures, 12 garages and four commercial buildings.

NEO provided over \$443,550 in rehabilitation loans to complete two full rehabilitation and 12 emergency hazard projects for low-to-moderate income homeowners. In an effort to keep neighborhoods clean and livable, inspectors wrote 783



**Homes on Crescent Road in Jackson.**

garbage violation citations, 249 inoperable/unlicensed vehicle citations, 72 tree/noxious weed violation citations, 160 instances of working without a permit, and 213 zoning violation citations. Over 2,400 non-owner housing units were inspected by NEO, as well as investigating 49 individual complaints reported by tenants.

NEO maintains two residential property registries: the Non-Owner Occupied Residential Property Registry (NOORPR) and the Foreclosed, Vacant or Abandoned Residential Property Registry (FVARPR). During calendar year 2019, 5,257 housing units were actively registered under NOORPR, while as of Dec. 31, 2019, the owners of 314 units had yet to register their properties. 102 newly foreclosed, vacant, or abandoned residential buildings were registered in 2019.



**The 200 mixed-use development under construction on N. Jackson Street.**

# POLICE DEPARTMENT

The **JACKSON POLICE DEPARTMENT (JPD)** responded to approximately 25,500 calls for service in 2019. In addition to the calls for service, officers conducted over 10,000 self-initiated activities. Some of these activities included: traffic stops, field contacts, property security checks, and liquor inspections. This volume of activity equates to far more contacts with members of the community. Professional and respectful interactions between officers and the public continue to be a priority and are displayed on a daily basis.



JPD has continued its efforts towards reducing gun violence. In late 2018, a temporary Violent Crime Unit (VCU) was organized. The VCU continued into 2019 and has now been established as a full-time unit. The VCU is a multi-jurisdictional unit led by a JPD Sergeant. Other members of the unit include a Michigan State Police Trooper, Jackson County Sheriff Deputy and a Blackman-Leoni Township Public Safety Officer.

In addition to the VCU, police have been part of the discussions and planning for the implementation of Cure Violence. Cure Violence is an anti-violence program aimed at detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms.

The men and women of JPD continue their steadfast commitment to providing quality service to the community. It takes community collaboration for Jackson to become a safer place for everyone.

# FIRE DEPARTMENT



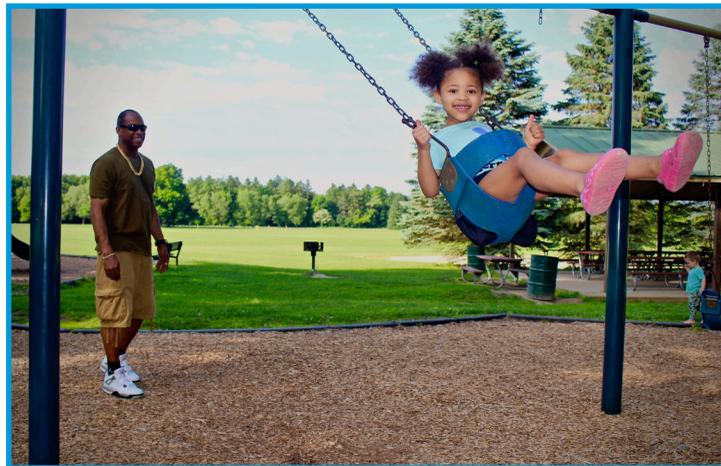
In 2019, the **JACKSON FIRE DEPARTMENT (JFD)** welcomed its first female employee. Firefighter Annie Wallen joined the department in January. This historic milestone was followed by the department's goal of getting new equipment to better serve the community. A new water pumper truck joined JFD in the spring. Getting a used, but well-cared for truck, saved firefighters time and money in getting a new truck for the City. JFD also purchased new protective gear for firefighters, along with a new washer to clean gear after fires.

Throughout the year, JFD continued training efforts with the Active Assailant Team. Firefighters are now prepared to work alongside local law enforcement in the event of an active assailant situation.

A federal grant that assists fire departments maintain staffing levels expired in the fall. JFD was able to retain three firefighters paid for by the grant following intervention from the City Council.

# PARKS, RECREATION & CEMETERIES DEPARTMENT

The **PARKS, RECREATION AND CEMETERIES DEPARTMENT** consists of 26 parks, two cemeteries, three recreation facilities, the oldest public golf course in the county, and several miles of multi-trail systems.



**PARKS:** 2019 was a busy year for the City Parks Department. Several projects took shape:

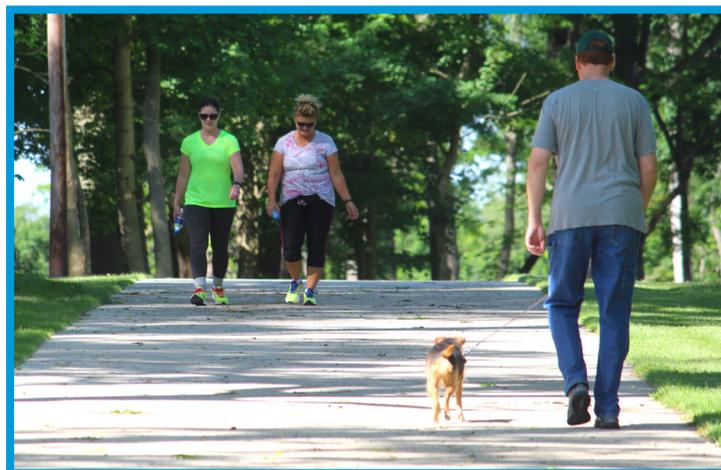
- Playground equipment at Horace Blackman Park
- New sledding hill, landscape work and lighting at Loomis Park
- Lighting improvements at Exchange Park
- Fire pit and public bathrooms constructed at Bucky Harris Park

**RECREATION:** The Jackson Recreation Department believes in providing a variety of athletic, enrichment and special event programs throughout the year for all ages. Residents can pursue a variety of leisure activities. Many of them are free and within walking distance of neighborhoods.



**CEMETERIES:** The City of Jackson owns and operates Mt. Evergreen Cemetery and Woodland Cemetery. Both are considered historic landmarks. In 2019, Mt. Evergreen was listed on the National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and received a State of Michigan Historical Marker. These honors came after it was uncovered that seven people buried in the cemetery were involved in the Underground Railroad, including an escaped slave who found freedom in Jackson. Both cemeteries are fully operational and typically perform around 100 funerals annually.

**TRAILS:** A major trail project was completed in 2019. The City of Jackson finalized a new 1 mile long pedestrian and bicycle trail that runs through Ella Sharp Park near Park Road to New Leaf Park on Fourth Street.



**JACKSON**  
Founded 1829

# FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The City's **FINANCE DEPARTMENT** handles all centralized accounting and finance functions of the City.

These include responsibilities relating to the preparation of budgets, financial statements and audit schedules on a monthly and annual basis. In addition, the Finance Department processes payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable on a regularly scheduled basis.

The department also serves as administrative staff for the City's three pension plans whose net assets currently approximate \$89 million. The Finance Department also acts in an administrative oversight capacity for the City's Management Information Systems Division, as well as the water and sewer billing and Public Works fiscal staff. The Finance Director also acts as the City's Purchasing Agent.

## **A summary of activity during 2019 includes:**

- Issued nearly 3,400 payroll checks to approximately 560 different employees (200 full time and 360 part-time) for a total payroll of approximately \$15.5 million.
- Maintained records for approximately 385 pensioners with benefit payments of nearly \$10 million.
- Issued over 5,200 accounts payable checks to vendors totaling nearly \$81 million.
- Processed approximately 770 invoices for various City charges totaling approximately \$1.2 million.

The City of Jackson recently received the "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018. This Certificate of Achievement is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government financial reports. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report, whose contents conform to program standards. The City has received this award for 27 straight years.

In December 2012, Standard & Poor's affirmed the City's "A-" rating on the City's general obligation bonds and upgraded the City's outlook from "stable" to "positive". In February 2013, the City was again upgraded to "A+" with a "stable" outlook on all of its general obligation debt. This more recent upgrade was largely the result of the City's commitment to financial stability through the adoption of a fund balance policy in late 2012 and the City's commitment to reduce health and pension costs.

This ratings upgrade, along with improved market rate conditions, has allowed the City to save over \$3 million in interest in bond issues and refinancings since that time.

# FISCAL YEAR

## ENDING JUNE 30, 2019

### GENERAL FUND

#### Special Revenue Funds:

	Revenues	Expenditures
	<b>\$26,230,785</b>	<b>\$26,951,695</b>
Major Street	9,149,810	7,155,753
Local Street Fund	4,437,550	2,394,822
Ella W. Sharp Park Operating Fund	770,126	784,177
Public Improvement Fund	1,146,195	1,140,597
Building Department Fund	587,924	426,478
Housing Code Enforcement Fund	1,184,989	1,181,857
Building Demolitions Fund	1,035,753	705,855
Blight Elimination Grant	440,161	440,161
Drug Law Enforcement Fund	30,795	17,946
Police/Fire Grant Funds-Variou	35,989	35,989
Community Development Block Grant Funds	1,246,165	1,246,165
Lead Hazard Control Grant	100,819	100,819
SAFER Grant Fund	593,757	593,757
Recreation Activity Fund	263,375	250,553
Recreation Millage Program Fund	588,714	558,515
	<b>\$26,612,122</b>	<b>\$17,033,444</b>

#### Debt Service Funds:

City Hall Refunding Debt Service Fund	798,436	805,800
Building Authority Debt Service Fund	48,366	51,312
2016 Capital Improvement Bond Debt Service Fund	1,577,025	1,577,025
2017 Michigan Transportation Bond Debt Service Fund	762,681	762,681
DDA TIF Debt Service Funds	2,448,325	2,448,325
BRA TIF Debt Service Funds (excl. refunding)	739,369	739,369
	<b>\$6,374,202</b>	<b>\$6,384,512</b>

#### Capital Project Funds:

Capital Projects Fund	247,371	200,887
Downtown Development Authority Project Fund	2,814,378	2,448,325
2018 Capital Improvement Bonds Construction	360,979	4,543,565
2017 Michigan Transportation Bonds Construction	59,695	2,051,246
Special Assessment Capital Project Fund	1,437,574	3,762,979
	<b>\$4,919,997</b>	<b>\$13,007,002</b>

#### Enterprise Funds

Ella W. Sharp Park Golf Practice Center Fund	51,111	55,647
Automobile Parking System Fund	655,712	253,209
Parking Assessment Fund	284,270	220,307
Parking Deck Fund	18,011	250,841
Sewage Fund	8,016,596	3,911,991
Water Fund	12,267,956	8,468,166
	<b>\$21,293,656</b>	<b>\$13,160,161</b>

### TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS

<b>\$80,430,762</b>	<b>\$76,536,814</b>
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-Operating Funds do not include Internal Service or Trust & Agency Funds.  
 -Above amounts include transfers to and from other funds.

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)** handles the City's streets, sewers, and catch basins year-round. During autumn, the department provides a leaf collection program. In winter, snow and ice removal is the priority.

**ACCOUNTING, UTILITY BILLING & WATER METER SERVICES:** The Public Works Fiscal Services and Utility Billing staff sent out 69,877 bills in 2019 for water and sanitary sewer service for a total amount of \$13,468,568.17.

**TREATMENT PLANTS:** The City of Jackson Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants are operated 24 hours per day, 7 days per week by certified operators and maintenance staff.

The Water Treatment Plant treats and softens the drinking water that is supplied to over 50,000 residents and businesses of the City of Jackson and Blackman Township. In 2018-2019, the water treatment plant produced and delivered 2.69 billion gallons of safe drinking water to our customers. The water is tested daily in the City's certified testing laboratory according to Environmental Protection Agency and State of Michigan regulations.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant provides service to over 85,000 residents and businesses in the City of Jackson, as well as parts of Blackman, Napoleon, Spring Arbor, Sandstone, Rives, and Summit townships, as well as the State Prison of Southern Michigan.

The wastewater coming to the plant in fiscal year 2018-2019 averaged approximately 11.2 million

gallons per day, or 4.1 billion gallons of water treated during the year. Pollutants are removed from the wastewater as it passes through the treatment process, with the clean water being returned to the environment through a regulated outfall to the Grand River.

**STREETS, SANITARY SEWERS, WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, FORESTRY & MOTOR POOL:** The Public Works maintenance crews are responsible for maintaining 100 miles of local streets, 54 miles of major streets and 8 miles of state highways in the City. Maintenance activities include street maintenance and repairs, including over 2,500 tons of asphalt patching, snow and ice removal, forestry activities that include tree trimming and removal, street sign repair and replacements, storm sewer maintenance and repairs, as well as sanitary sewer collection system repair and maintenance.

The water distribution system staff is responsible for maintaining 244 miles of water main, 1,670 hydrants and 2,412 valves. This past year crews repaired 37 water main breaks, exercised 804 water main valves, replaced five water main valves, repaired 188 hydrants, replaced 10 hydrants, installed three new water services, repaired 25 water service line leaks, replaced 59 curb stop valves and retired three water mains and water service lines. Personnel also completed over 8,000 calls for service related to water metering and delivery.



New leaf vacuum equipment in use by the DPW for fall leaf collection on S. West Avenue.

# ENGINEERING DIVISION



Crews pave the redesigned intersection of Fourth Street, Horton Road and Stonewall Road.

The **ENGINEERING DIVISION** bid and managed 16 projects in fiscal year 2018-2019 totaling over \$12.4 million.

Construction projects included:

- Roundabout rebuilt at Fourth Street and West Avenue along with the mill and resurfacing of Fourth Street from Hickory Avenue to Audubon Boulevard.
- Realigned the intersection of Fourth Street, Horton Road and Stonewall Road and installed new mast arm traffic signal.
- Water main replacement on Crescent Road: West Avenue to Fourth Street; Edgewood Street: Michigan Avenue to North Street; West Avenue: Crescent Road to Bloomfield Boulevard; Oakridge Drive: Grovedale Avenue to West Avenue; Broadcrest Road: Oakridge Drive to south end; Grovedale Avenue: Glen Drive to Oakridge Drive; Glen Drive: Kibby Road to Grovedale Avenue; Essex Lane: Glen Drive to south end; and Second Street: Washington Avenue to Wildwood Avenue.
- Started the West Side Local Street Resurfacing Project with Grinnell Street from Gettysburg Avenue to Michigan Avenue.
- Installed lighting along Cooper Street: Ganson Street to I-94; and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive: Ganson Street to Cooper Street.

Design projects included:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Drive: Morrell Street to Mason Street, with a roundabout design at Morrell Street to replace the traffic signal.
- Lighting on Morrell Street and Adrian Street.
- Water main design for a number of upcoming projects.

Engineering staff also participated in the Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study Technical and Policy Committees and the University Region Bridge Council. Also in 2019, the division received the Quality of Life Award from the local chapter of American Society of Civil Engineers for the successful two-way conversion of Louis Glick Highway and Washington Avenue in downtown Jackson.

# MAYOR & COUNCILMEMBERS



Laura Dwyer Schlecte  
Ward 4



Kelsey Heck  
Ward 5



Jeremy Alexander  
Ward 3



Freddie Dancy  
Ward 2



Will Forgrave  
Ward 6



Arlene Robinson  
Ward 1



Derek Dobies  
Mayor