

Office of the City Auditor
Kansas City, Missouri

Highlights

Why We Did This Audit

The city's Traffic Management Center is a fairly new facility and cost about \$2.2 million in federal grant and city funds to build. The general purpose of the center is to improve how traffic is managed, however, the Traffic Management Center is staffed only by a part-time employee.

Our work focused on Public Works' use of the Traffic Management Center to manage traffic.

Background

Improving traffic signal operations can have a significant impact on the efficiency of the city's roadway transportation system and the quality of the public's travel experience.

A traffic management center collects traffic information, monitors traffic flow and equipment, and allows real-time adjustments to traffic signals from a central location.

Traffic management centers can help the public reach their destinations safely and efficiently when road construction, traffic accidents, and other events disrupt normal traffic flow.



For more information, please contact the City Auditor's Office at 816-513-3300 or auditor@kcmo.org.

To view the complete report, go to www.kcmo.org/auditor and click on Audits and Memos.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Traffic Management Center

What We Found

Public Works is not using the Traffic Management Center effectively to manage traffic. The department's current efforts are focused on traffic control and signal coordination. However, because only one part-time technician is assigned to the center, the city cannot control traffic or signal coordination in real-time.

The Traffic Management Center is not being used to its full potential. Denver, Minneapolis, Olathe, and Overland Park reported having staffing to monitor traffic and street conditions, actively balance traffic flows, and adjust traffic signal timing in response to special events, street closures or other incidents, either in real-time or by activating specific signal timing plans. The city's center has the capability to perform these types of functions and meet the department's other goals of monitoring traffic, optimizing traffic flow, and managing traffic proactively.



Public Works Traffic Management Center

However, because Public Works did not develop an operating plan to address funding and staffing for the Traffic Management Center when it was built and does not assign an adequate number of staff, the department is unable to take advantage of the capabilities of the center to actively monitor and manage traffic.

The effectiveness of the Traffic Management Center is also affected when fiber optic cables connecting traffic control equipment to the center are damaged. As of August 22, 2013, six fiber optic cables damaged by Water Services when its crews were repairing water and sewer lines were not repaired timely due to a lack of communication between Public Works and Water Services and lack of procedures for reporting and repairing the damage.

What We Recommend

Our recommendations include:

- Evaluating the goals of the Traffic Management Center and staffing the center to meet the goals.
- Ensuring that operating funds are identified and available before capital improvement projects are built or expanded.
- Developing a procedure for reporting, repairing, and paying for fiber optic cable damaged by Water Services.

Management mostly agreed with the recommendations.