



## Kent Public Service Matters

Problems can be tough. Customers can be frustrating; the work demanding; money tight; schedules unrealistic; weather conditions bad and gratitude rare.

So why do it?

That's a question each person and the organization has to answer together. It is this "Why" that guides us through good times and bad. It's our shared values.

The work can pull us in thousands of directions but our values keep us heading due north. Values connect us to one another and to the community we serve. It's our higher purpose that unites us no matter how different our uniforms, work hours or duties.

Daily aggravations and sacrifices grow smaller when we remember our "Why." When we remember that we build and repair sewer and water lines because before we did more people died from dysentery than anything else. We remember that when roads aren't safe, more mothers and children will die in car accidents. When storms rage, homebound grandmothers need help and Public Services crews makes sure it gets there.

Public Services is a profession of people with such strong values that they are willing to put themselves into extreme situations because they care about people and put community needs first.

There's a special pride knowing you're the "line in the sand" between safety and harm for 27,000 people that call Kent home.

That's why they do it.

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# Your Kent Public Services...

1. Reach - All across Kent dogs are walked, buses arrive at school, moms and dads go to work, and visiting grandparents count on City streets, sidewalks, and bridges to get them safely to their destination. From the morning shower, to the bedtime cup of water, Kent's public services are depended upon to keep up with the busy routines of our lives.

In the course of each day, Kent's Public Service employees "reach out and touch" Kent residents hundreds of times with little notice or fanfare. With hundreds of miles of streets, sidewalks, and water and sewer pipes, it is hard to grasp the extent of the reach of public services – but when something goes wrong we are quickly reminded just how deeply these services reach into our lives.

2. Timeless -

Deterioration happens. And with millions of dollars invested in Kent's infrastructure, repairs also have to happen. The good news is that they do, every day, by Public Service employees. Infrastructure waits for no one and when it fails, we all lose. Public Services is there to make sure Kent wins.

The ability of time to turn assets into liabilities is one of greatest challenges for ensuring the fitness of the City's infrastructure. Unfortunately time will not slow down because of busy work schedules or revenue shortfalls so infrastructure maintenance has to be equally relentless through good times and bad.

It's like painting the Golden Gate bridge – by the time you finish one coat its time to start all over again. But when its done right, the results can be timeless.

3. Balance - A fine line exists between a community that stays out in front of its problems and one that is buried beneath them. That one-degree of separation between success and failure actually has more to do with balance than it does about resources.

Balance is about how resources are used. Throwing resources at a problem is a knee-jerk reaction, not a solution. Balance is a focus on resolution. It is about being so well grounded that you are prepared to act quickly, step aside, or sit tight depending upon the needs of the situation.

Public Services crews go toe-to-toe with today's infrastructure challenges, combining brain and brawn to know when to duck and weave and when to throw a punch. Talent and effort are important but in the end there is no substitute for good balance to deliver results.

4. Connect - Public Services is in the business of building community, both literally and figuratively. Public Services crews construct and maintain the roads, sidewalks and bridges that allow Kent residents to get from point A to point B safely, quickly and conveniently.

But more importantly this same infrastructure provides opportunities to connect Kent residents with one another. City sidewalks and parks have become one of the few remaining public spaces that create opportunities for face-to-face contact and social interaction. Our sidewalks host our families, old and new friends, and even budding entrepreneurs.

After all, people are what make a City block a neighborhood and not just a collection of buildings.

#### 5. Dedicated

When we were young people asked us, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" As adults we ask ourselves, "Have I become what I wanted? Does my work matter? Have I made a difference?"

In this context, our work is judged less by job titles and words in job descriptions than by our contributions to the community and to the people that live there.

It is unlikely that many children list ditch digger, street sweeper, or sewer cleaner on their job wish list – yet every child in Kent has had a better place to live because of those people that made these jobs their profession.

There is nothing easy about the work. These dedicated employees make personal sacrifices because they believe that one person can make a difference in the lives of many. Each person and every job counts, and in the end that's what matters.

#### 6. Reflective -

Success requires not just working harder, but working smarter. Henry Ford said thinking is hard work, that's why so few people do it – but Public Services has a reputation for doing the hard work that few people like to do.

Getting smarter is not a "nicety" – it's a necessity that takes time and intellectual capital to make sure the little things get done right every time.

Today's fast-paced world demands quick and decisive action but the demand for speed is never an excuse to not think – it just means you have to be better focused and think faster. There are no short-cuts to fixing potholes and there is no room for compromises in thinking.

7. Responsive –

Being responsive is a full time job and Public Services crews are on-duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. There are no time-outs in managing infrastructure and when things break – even in the middle of the night – response times are measured in minutes, not hours.

Public Services crews are on the front-line of emergency response. Through wind and snow storms, floods and homeland security, Public Services play a critical role in protecting public health and safety, and restoring “normalcy” following catastrophic incidents. In this role, Public Services crews deliver one more product – peace of mind.

8. Versatile -

The rule of thumb in Public Services is to expect the unexpected.

With thousands of customers and miles of infrastructure, every day brings new surprises. And because no two situations are exactly the same, Public Services crews have had to learn to bend without breaking – to stretch limits, test capabilities and operate at the edge of competencies.

Ironically, in a field dominated by engineering precision, perhaps the most compelling Public Services trait is the ability to work in ambiguity and accept uncertainty. The analytical discipline of engineering when combined with an open mind is the compass that supports successful navigation of today’s ever-changing seas.

9. Stewards –

In Public Service, taking care of business is all about taking care of the people and the place that Kent residents call home. Kent is blessed with wonderful natural resources and local beauty. Preserving this beauty and adding to it is one of the fundamental tasks of Public Services.

Every day Public Service crews sweep debris from streets, remove litter from roadsides, clean wastewater and monitor the quality of the City’s air and watershed to protect the region’s human and natural resources.

If quality of life is measured by the availability of urban conveniences in a natural setting, then Kent has raised the bar thanks to the hard work of its Public Service employees.

10. Catalyst

The City’s location may attract interest in Kent but it is the City’s infrastructure that is the deal maker. The availability of reliable, high quality, and low cost roads, sewer and water services is the engine that drives economic development opportunities.

Proving everyday that well managed infrastructure is not just good for marketing, its good for business period.

### 11. Transform

Public Services plays a critical role in preserving Kent's historical legacy. Maintaining the charm, character and home-town heritage is a central design theme for all of the City's infrastructure projects.

From historic light fixtures, brick streets and bridge railings, Kent Public Service crews try to ensure a link to the past while affording City residents all the modern conveniences expected of a progressive City.

### 12. Possibilities –

Understanding your core business is critical to long-term success. Walt Disney understood that he was in the happiness business and every project he did, from theme parks to movies, was built around the production of smiles and lasting memories.

From its inception, Public Services has been in the “possibilities” business. Public Services makes it possible for people to live healthier lives through safe drinking water and sanitary waste treatment. Public Services builds infrastructure that makes it possible for businesses to thrive in Kent. Public Services makes it possible for residents to enjoy a high quality of life.

Public Services doesn't make quality of life or economic development – it opens doors that make quality of life and economic development possible.

### 13. Opportunities

Public Services subscribes to the theory that if you look hard enough you should be able to find an opportunity hidden beneath your problems. From a pothole complaint to construction surprises there are always lessons to be learned that lead to insights that were otherwise unseen.

Sometimes its like looking for a needle in a haystack but turning a problem inside out has proven to be time well spent as it has yielded successes that in the end far exceeded the extent of the problem that started it all.

### 14. Serving

Public Services has built a reputation for service – literally on the backs of its hard working employees for over 100 years. Every day Public Service employees go to work for Kent, providing hundreds of services to thousands of people.

At a time when the human touch seems to be in short supply, Public Service employees still make house calls. These are every day people doing extraordinary things every day.

### 15. Solutions

Every day Public Service employees are busy working to improve the way we live in Kent. From the quality of the water we drink, to the streets we drive on and the sidewalks we stroll along, Public Service crews are continually trying to find solutions to infrastructure problems – past, present and future.

If there is a formula for producing solutions it starts with sound engineering, a little inspiration, and a lot of hard work. The goal of “solutioneering” is to shake things up enough to allow new ideas to bubble up to the surface. And every once and awhile a bubble or two lifts off and takes Kent to new heights.

### 16. Harness

Public Services has a long history of harnessing technological advances to improve services. In a profession dominated by asphalt, concrete, and steel, the introduction of hydraulics and heavy machinery was a quantum leap from back-breaking and time consuming hand labor.

Likewise, today’s revolution in computerization has supported equal gains in information and knowledge management. Leveraging technology doesn’t replace people, it just allows them to do what they do best.

### 17. Innovative

Public Services unleashes innovation by challenging employees to not only invent new ways of doing old things – but also to invent new things that have not necessarily been done before. Part of the Public Service creed is to challenge assumptions, to risk failure and to travel where there is no path.

Advancements may be made possible by technology but they are always made profound by people. And meaningful advances are less often achieved through bold acts of the few, than they are from everyday acts of many.

### 18. Lead

It may sound cliché but if you’re not leading you’re following – and in today’s competitive environment Kent cannot afford to fall behind. So Public Services continues to push limits and stretch capabilities to make certain that Kent is in the best position to succeed today and tomorrow.

Managing public services is like managing in a fishbowl with crews and services on display everyday. Routine human mistakes can make headlines that discourage risk taking behavior. Yet true leadership is still evident in public service by those employees that have the courage to jump out of the “fishbowl” in the face of potential skepticism to find bigger ponds and fresh sources of water. Public Services is all about leading by example.