

**STUDY SESSION  
OF THE UNIVERSITY CITY COUNCIL**  
5th Floor of City Hall  
6801 Delmar  
**January 13, 2020**

**AGENDA**

Requested by the City Manager

**1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The City Council Study Session was held in Council Chambers on the fifth floor of City Hall, on Monday, January 13, 2020. Mayor Terry Crow called the Study Session to order at 5:33 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Steven McMahon; (*Excused*)  
Councilmember Paulette Carr; (*Arrived at 5:31 p.m.*)  
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales  
Councilmember Tim Cusick  
Councilmember Stacy Clay  
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan Jr., Director of Communications, Allison Bamberger, and Ryan Murray, Director of Community Research, ETC Institute.

**2. CHANGES TO REGULAR COUNCIL AGENDA**

Hearing no changes to the agenda, Mayor Crow turned the discussion over to City Manager, Rose.

**3. COMMUNITY SURVEY**

Mr. Rose reminded everyone that in the calendar year 2019, Council authorized the hiring of ETC Institute to conduct a citizen satisfaction survey of the community to determine what they thought about the services being provided by the City. Ms. Allison Bamberger, Director of Communication was the point person who helped to coordinate this project with ETC, who will present their findings tonight.

Ms. Bamberger stated this was a major initiative approved by Council and since it was her first year with the City, she was very happy to lead the process. It was an opportunity to ask folks "*What we are doing well and where they would like to see us do a little bit more?*"

Ms. Bamberger stated she was extremely impressed with the level of support received from ETC and the in-depth summary of detailed data provided in the survey. Tonight, Ryan Murray from ETC is here to run through some of the major findings and provide a review on some of the areas where the City can improve going forward.

Overall, she thinks this is a good benchmark of where we are today and where we hope to go in the future.

Ryan Murray thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity. Allison was a pleasure to work with and it was nice to have someone who was really vested in the results and excited about helping to improve the community through these survey results.

Mr. Murray stated he is the Assistant Director of Community Research with ETC Institute; a Company he has been employed with for most of his professional career. ETC Institute is the national leader in market research for local governmental organizations and delivers this type of survey annually in about 250 communities; which also includes some parks and recreation work, as well as business and employee surveys.

The purpose of these surveys is to be objective and gather information from a random group of respondents throughout the city. You also want to ensure that randomness is represented in your sample, so there's a lot of tracking; which you will see later in the presentation. The survey development accounted for like questions; questions that were asked in peer or like communities to set up good comparisons that looked at some of the City's strengths and weaknesses from a regional/national benchmarking standpoint. Something the Company's owners helped develop was a priority investment tool and that's the bulk of the analysis, along with some of the GIS maps, drill-downs and cross tabs tools designed to show where you should be prioritizing funding, and which items will have the greatest impact on the overall livability for the community in the future.

This is the first survey administered by ETC for University City; which is typically administered every two years. And although some communities conduct them every five to ten years, what they've found is that conducting a survey every two years gives communities the opportunity to test initiatives that modify items and receive feedback.

U City's survey was mailed to a random sampling of the roughly 15,000 households within the community. A total of 600 surveys or 4% were completed, which is a pretty good representation of responses from throughout the City. The margin of error was +/- 4% at the 95% level of confidence. The results were geocoded to the block level to ensure that no one group or neighborhood was responding more than another group. Although some areas are less populated than others due to parks or a lower number of homes.

The results were really good; three out of four respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the overall quality of life and City services. That's a 3:1 ratio of positive to negative responses. However overall, what you'll see is that 3:1 really turns into a 7:1 ratio when you look at respondents who gave satisfied responses versus those who gave dissatisfied responses.

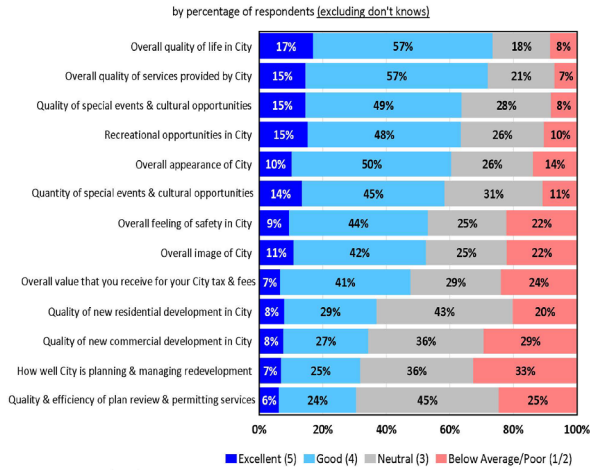
The comparative analysis showed that in almost 60% of the items compared to the national average; U City rated above the national average and for about 50% of those items the City rated significantly above the national average. In about 30% of the areas, there were significant increases. And against the Missouri-Kansas average; which is an average of communities in this general region from Kansas City to St. Louis, U City rated significantly above 52% of the areas compared.

Priorities for Improvement are priorities that ETC has found in healthier thriving communities. Some of these priorities that will be discussed when he goes through the important satisfaction analysis are priorities that ETC would be shocked not to see in a community that is doing well.

**General Perceptions:** There is about a 7:1 ratio of respondents who gave satisfied responses versus those who gave dissatisfied responses for the overall City services and quality of life; i.e., folks giving excellent responses as opposed to those who gave below average or poor responses.

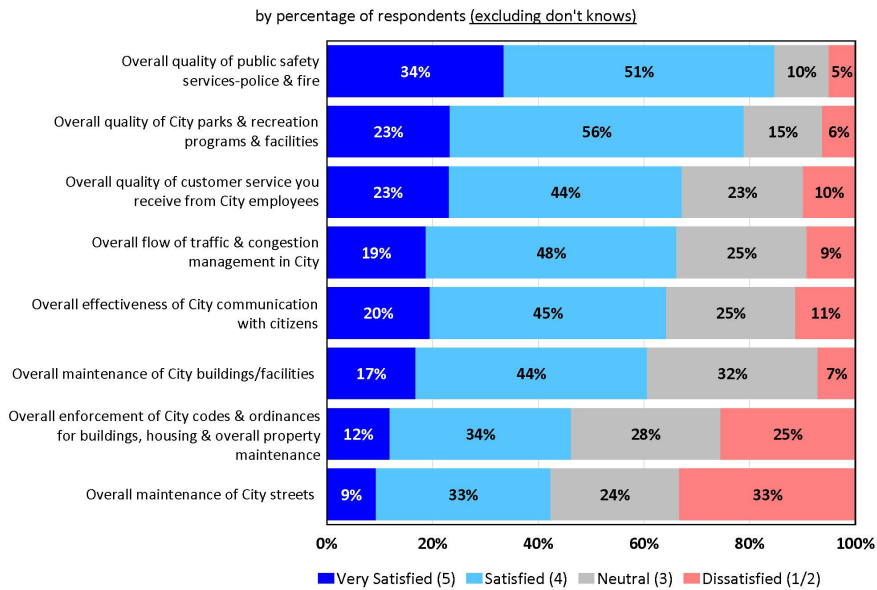
- Blue represents services where folks are satisfied
  - *Overall satisfaction with City services received very high ratings. Red represents services where folks are less satisfied*
  - *The two areas with more negative responses are code enforcement and City street maintenance, which is true with most communities of the same size and stature. Most of the neutral responses are likely folks that have minimal or no interaction with City staff.*

### Q3. Perceptions

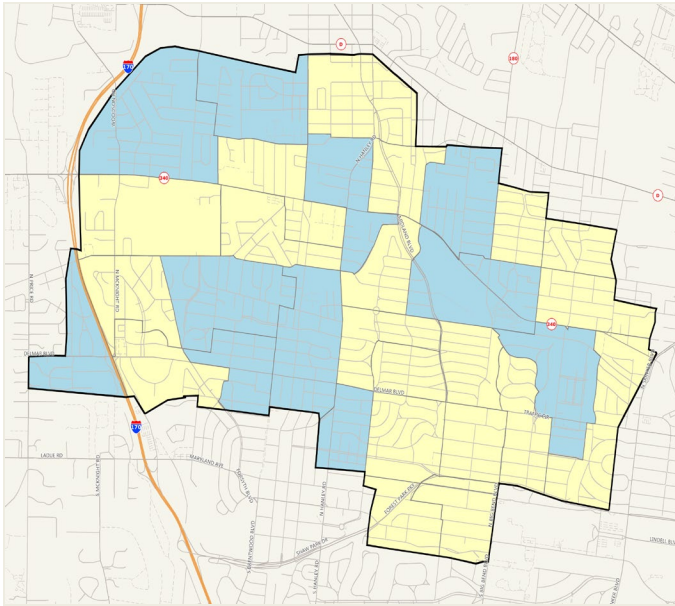


72% of Residents Rated the Quality of Services Provided by the City as "Excellent" or "Good;" only 7% Gave a "Below Average" or "Poor" Rating

### Q1. Overall Satisfaction with City Services



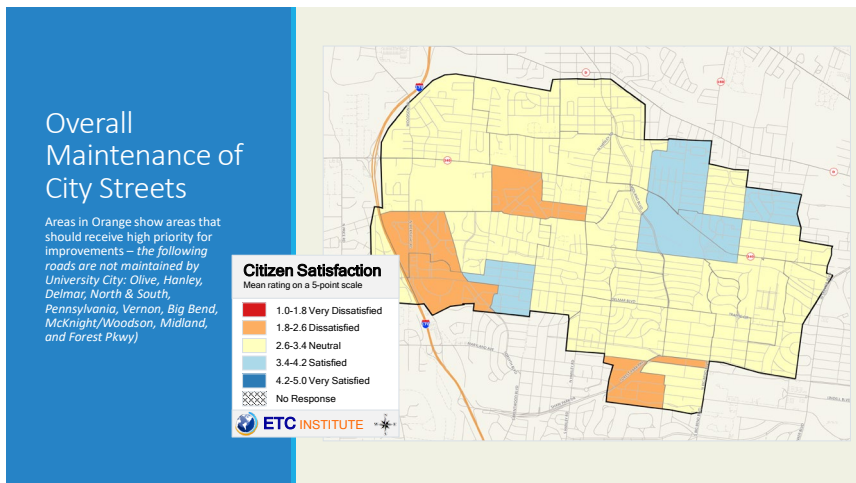
**Overall Quality of Public Safety:** Public Safety scored very high. The average response in block groups was very satisfied or satisfied; which indicates that the City equitably provides services throughout its entire community.



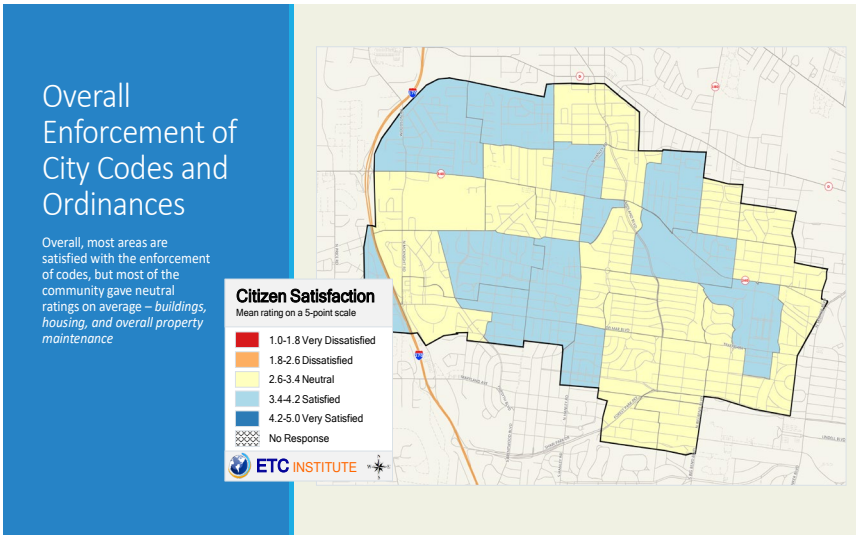
**Overall Maintenance of Streets:** One of the top priorities for improvement is the management of city streets; this is an area that should receive high priority.

- Areas shaded in orange on the map indicate respondents were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.
- The vast majority of respondents in yellow were neutral; meaning there's a need for more improvement.
- Areas shaded in blue indicate respondents are satisfied.

GIS maps have been created for several areas within the survey and may be useful to assist Public Works or the administration team in determining where to focus their efforts especially; when construction season comes around.



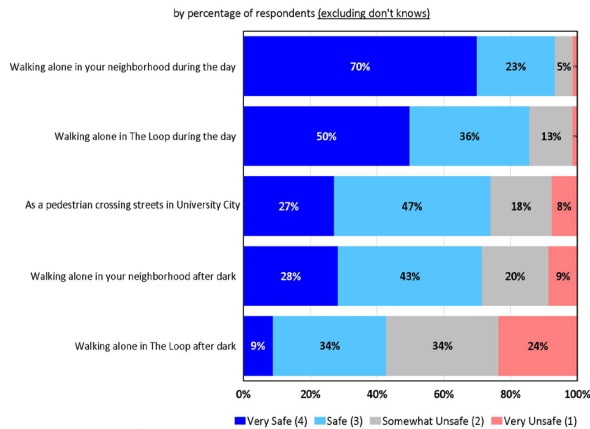
**Overall Enforcement of City Codes and Ordinances:** This was the second-highest priority for improvement. This is a tough area where respondents could be thinking that a neighbor is violating a Code when technically, they are not, or they are the violator that needs to fix what they've been doing. Overall, this is actually a sign of a community that is performing well.



Councilmember Carr asked what the two red marks on Olive represented? Mr. Murray stated they were street indicators or highway markers.

**Feeling of Safety in Various Situations:** Although most residents feel safe in the City, the one thing to note is that some people indicated they feel very unsafe when they are alone in the downtown Loop area at night. However, this is pretty common because most people would feel unsafe walking alone in a retail area at night. When it comes to safety, sometimes communication can be the root cause of uneasiness. In larger cities, the influence of television can have a big impact, so while this is an area you should be mindful of, it's not one to be overly concerned about.

#### Q4. Feeling of Safety in Various Situations



Most Residents Feel Safe in University City Regardless of the Situation

Councilmember Cusick stated if you factor in the "Neutrals" and "Don't knows," safety seems to be pretty significant towards the bottom. Mr. Murray stated that there is no neutral for this question, and the gray area represents "somewhat unsafe". He stated this question is always on a 4-point scale, so while it is correct that over half of the folks indicated that they feel somewhat unsafe alone in The Loop at night, most of the ratings are very good.

**Benchmarks:** U City rates significantly higher than in other communities.

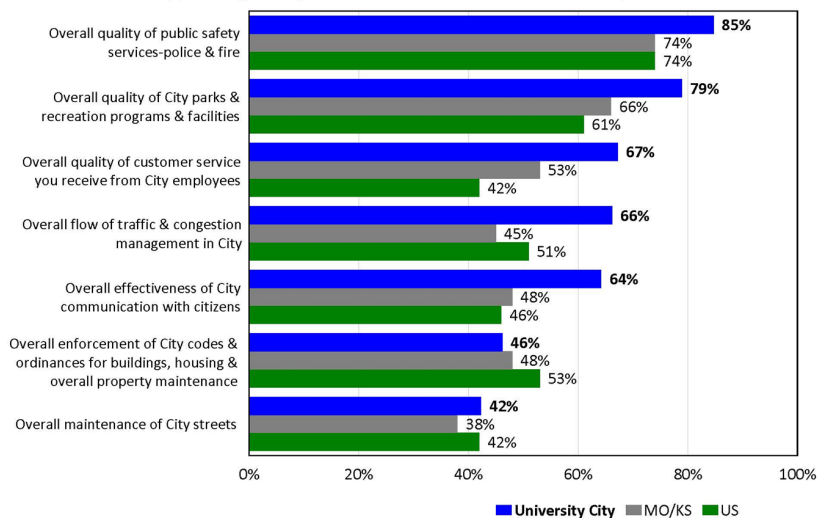
- Green illustrates that U City is significantly above the U.S. average for every rating on the table.

- The two top areas for improvement; where U City is closest to the other averages, are City streets and code enforcement.
- When you factor in the margin of error, the City is not that far off from the average.
  - *While some might think 46% is below 50%, so it's a failing grade. But other like communities in the same region also rate in that same percentile range, and how the City compares to other Cities in this particular area is more important than the overall rating.*
- In overall maintenance of City streets, U City meets the U.S. average and is above the regional average.
  - *Last year yielded some of the lowest regional averages in this area due to the bad weather that lasted from fall into spring. It was a tough year for all communities. And while 42% is pretty good, some investments should be made in the continued maintenance of City streets.*

## Q1. Overall Satisfaction with City Services

University City vs. MO/KS vs. U.S.

by percentage of respondents who rated the item as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale



Source: ETC Institute (2019)

**Benchmarks – U.S. and Missouri/Kansas Average:** Indicated below are three of the key service areas where the City rated above the U.S. average; which are key result indicators. U City is setting the standard for delivering customer service provided by City employees and is significantly higher than both the national and local averages. So kudos to every employee.

- One area of weakness was quality of the City's website. The City fell below both the U.S. and Missouri/Kansas average. Hopefully, this will be fixed with the new website scheduled to launch next week.
- Other areas of weakness were related to managing redevelopment and new commercial development; these ratings were significantly lower than the average. Again, this is more about perception. A strong communication plan and ensuring that the City is the main point of contact for communications can really help redirect people's perception around a project.

## Benchmarks – U.S. Average

### COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

- ➔ Customer service provided by employees
- Quality of yard waste collection services
- ➔ Effectiveness of communication with public
- Landscaping/appearance of public areas
- Quality of City parks/rec programs/facilities
- Quality of residential trash collection services
- Quality of recycling collection services
- ➔ How quickly police respond to emergencies

### COMPARATIVE WEAKNESSES

- City's youth fitness programs
- Quality of City's website
- How well the City is managing redevelopment
- Overall feeling of safety in the City
- Adequacy of residential street lighting
- Overall image of the City
- Maintenance of commercial property
- Quality of outdoor athletic fields

University City Is Performing Significantly Better than the US Average in Key Service Areas

## Benchmarks – Missouri/Kansas Average

### COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

- ➔ Overall quality of services provided by the City
- Quality of yard waste collection services
- Landscaping/appearance of public areas
- ➔ Overall flow of traffic and congestion mgmt.
- Quality of residential trash collection services
- ➔ How quickly police respond to emergencies
- ➔ Effectiveness of communication with public
- ➔ Customer service provided by employees

### COMPARATIVE WEAKNESSES

- Quality of the City's website
- City's youth fitness programs
- Overall feeling of safety in the City
- Quality of outdoor athletic fields
- Maintenance of commercial property
- Overall image of the City
- How well the City is managing redevelopment
- Efforts to keep you informed about local issues

University City Is Performing Significantly Better than the MO/KS Average in Key Service Areas

Mayor Crow stated given the fact that the City has spent a lot of time and resources in the area of managing redevelopment, he was curious to know whether the survey provided any indication of where those perceptions are coming from? Mr. Murray stated you can look at the map or they could meet with Allison to run some cross-tabs to see if it's age or Ward-related.

Mr. Rose stated sometimes this question encompasses how the City looks. For example, someone could look at Olive and say that the area is ripe for redevelopment and then question why things aren't happening there. So it may be more global rather than a situation with one specific project.

Mr. Murray stated Shawnee, Kansas conducts a survey every year and this year they received dismal ratings in this category primarily because they are redeveloping their downtown area, which is a mess. U City's survey; which was taken around September or October of last year, reflects an individual's perception of time which can differ significantly depending on the circumstances. So if you conduct this survey again in a couple of years it will give you an idea of whether your new development made any difference.

**Priorities for Investment:** ETC has found that folks can either be on the neutral side or overstating their satisfaction or dissatisfaction within a category.

Here, respondents are asked to kind of put their money where their mouth is by indicating which services are most important or which ones should receive the highest priority for investment. ETC then brings those responses back down to earth by asking the importance and melting those two views together to get the priority investment or satisfaction ratings.



- **Overall Satisfaction With City Services**

- Pink represents high priorities for improvement; services that will have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the delivery of City services over the next couple of years
- Yellow represents services that should continue to receive attention, but will not have a great impact unless you start to see significantly lower satisfaction levels.
  - ✓ *If you completely cut funding for one of these services, i.e., the effectiveness of City communications with citizens, you will see this item at the top of the list in two years.*
  - ✓ *If you continue to maintain the website and keep the newsletter flowing, this item should stay below the .1 threshold for high priority for improvement.*
- Green represents services that are very important to respondents and received very high satisfaction ratings. These services will not have a great impact on the overall perception of the City even if their satisfaction ratings greatly increase.

**2019 Importance-Satisfaction Rating**  
 University City, Missouri  
 Overall Satisfaction with City Services

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Overall maintenance of City streets	61%	1	42%	8	0.3514	1
Overall enforcement of City codes & ordinances for buildings, housing & overall property maintenance	34%	3	46%	7	0.1824	2
Overall quality of public safety services-police & fire	48%	2	85%	1	0.0731	3
Overall flow of traffic & congestion management in City	22%	5	66%	4	0.0727	4
Overall effectiveness of City communication with citizens	20%	6	64%	5	0.0705	5
Overall quality of City parks & recreation programs & facilities	33%	4	79%	2	0.0692	6
Overall maintenance of City buildings/facilities	14%	8	61%	6	0.0540	7
Overall quality of customer service you receive from City employees	16%	7	67%	3	0.0531	8

I-S Ratings .1000 or Greater Are Considered a High Priority for Investment Over the Next Two Years

- **Importance-Satisfaction Assessment Matrix**

This chart accompanies each one of the tables and was designed for folks who prefer visuals.

- Items in the lower right hand represent opportunities for improvement in order to increase satisfaction.
- Items in the top right hand represent areas that should receive continued emphasis; typically public safety. These items received really good ratings but are also super important to respondents.

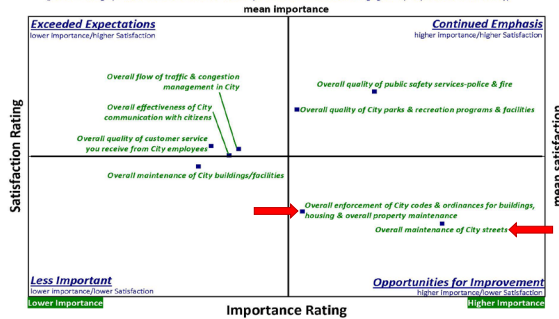
Mr. Murray stated there is a whole section in the report on methodology, how to read these tables, and an Appendix of GIS Maps for every 5. scale question on the survey.



**City of University City Community Survey  
Importance-Satisfaction Assessment Matrix**

**-Overall Satisfaction with City Services-**

(points on the graph show deviations from the mean importance and satisfaction ratings given by respondents to the survey)



Source: ETC Institute (2019)

Items Located in the Lower Right-Hand Quadrant Should be Considered for Additional Investments

- Public Safety Services**

- High Priorities:

- ✓ Efforts to prevent crime. Again, this is a communications issue. Most citizens do not understand what the City is doing on a daily basis to prevent crime, so increased communications about what and how you're doing things can really be fruitful.
    - ✓ Visibility of police in neighborhoods and retail areas
    - ✓ Police Department engagement within the community

- Low Priorities:

- ✓ Police services and public safety services

**2019 Importance-Satisfaction Rating  
University City, Missouri  
Public Safety Services**

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
City's efforts to prevent crime	50%	1	53%	13	0.2375	1
Police Department engagement within the community	23%	4	54%	12	0.1074	2
Visibility of police in retail areas	24%	3	58%	9	0.1019	3
Visibility of police in my neighborhood	30%	2	69%	7	0.0923	4
Treatment/fairness of City's municipal court	14%	7	46%	14	0.0757	5
Overall treatment of citizens by University City Police Department	18%	6	72%	6	0.0500	6
Fairness of Police Department's practices in enforcing local traffic laws	11%	9	58%	10	0.0478	7
Overall competency of University City Police Department	18%	5	76%	5	0.0447	8
Responsiveness of Police Dept. in enforcing local traffic laws	9%	10	55%	11	0.0391	9
How quickly police respond to emergencies	13%	8	78%	3	0.0276	10
Effectiveness of fire prevention/safety programs	4%	13	66%	8	0.0142	11
How quickly Fire Department responds	6%	12	78%	4	0.0123	12
Overall quality of University City Fire Department	6%	11	80%	1	0.0121	13
Overall competency of University City Fire Department	4%	14	79%	2	0.0080	14

I-S Ratings .1000 or Greater Are Considered a High Priority for Investment Over the Next Two Years

- City Maintenance and Public Works**

- High Priorities:

- ✓ Condition of sidewalks
    - ✓ Adequacy of residential street lighting
    - ✓ Snow removal on major City streets
    - ✓ Tree trimming/replacement program; unique to U City and likely a communications issue

**2019 Importance-Satisfaction Rating**  
**University City, Missouri**  
**City Maintenance and Public Works**

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Condition of City sidewalks	45%	1	39%	10	0.2756	1
Adequacy of residential street lighting	43%	2	46%	9	0.2287	2
Snow removal on City streets	31%	3	60%	7	0.1235	3
Satisfaction with tree trimming/replacement program	24%	4	50%	8	0.1185	4
Maintenance of street signs & traffic signals	23%	5	73%	3	0.0608	5
Maintenance of City buildings	16%	8	64%	6	0.0573	6
Landscaping/appearance of public areas along City streets	19%	6	70%	4	0.0551	7
Adequacy of City street lighting in business districts	17%	7	68%	5	0.0547	8
Curbside recycling	14%	9	85%	1	0.0211	9
Drop-off recycling location	7%	10	78%	2	0.0161	10

I-S Ratings .1000 or Greater Are Considered a High Priority for Investment Over the Next Two Years

- **Parks and Recreation Services**
  - High Priorities:
    - ✓ Maintenance
    - ✓ Quality of walking/biking trails
    - ✓ Youth fitness programs

If the City does not continue to emphasize the number of walking & biking trails in parks, eventually this will likely be in the red group. It's not necessarily the number of trails in a community; it's more about their connectivity to communities and retail areas.

**2019 Importance-Satisfaction Rating**  
**University City, Missouri**  
**Parks and Recreation Services**

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Maintenance of City parks	44%	1	74%	2	0.1170	1
Quality of walking & biking trails in parks	25%	2	58%	10	0.1063	2
City's youth fitness programs	19%	5	45%	13	0.1030	3
Number of walking & biking trails in parks	22%	3	60%	9	0.0876	4
City's adult fitness programs	17%	6	55%	12	0.0766	5
Centennial Commons	20%	4	67%	4	0.0660	6
Heman Park Pool	16%	7	60%	8	0.0653	7
Heman Park Community Center	15%	8	61%	7	0.0575	8
Availability of information about City parks recreation programs	14%	9	67%	3	0.0476	9
Quality of outdoor athletic fields	10%	10	57%	11	0.0414	10
Ruth Park Golf Course	5%	12	65%	6	0.0185	11
Number of outdoor athletic fields	4%	13	65%	5	0.0125	12
How close neighborhood parks are to your home	6%	11	83%	1	0.0096	13

I-S Ratings .1000 or Greater Are Considered a High Priority for Investment Over the Next Two Years

- **Communication**

The City's newsletter was the most common method of communication used to receive information about the City. ETC has found that communities who do not utilize a newsletter or frequent social media sites have lower levels of satisfaction throughout their surveys.

  - When asked about the effectiveness of those methods, once again, it was the newsletter, followed by NextDoor, the Parks & Recreation Guide, and the City's website.
  - The City's newsletter was also the most preferred method of communication, which indicates that additional investments in this mode of communication would be rewarding.

- Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they preferred to get information about the City from a centralized source that the City curates for them, i.e., the website.

**Summary:** Overall, U City is performing very well and every resident should be proud of the job that their management and leadership teams continue to do. What's important to understand is that nobody ever gets a perfect score because no matter how good you're doing, you will never please everybody. So, to send out 2,500 surveys and receive 600 back with this type of perception is really positive.

Councilmember Clay asked whether his assumption that the dots on these maps represented more than just one single household, was correct? Mr. Murray stated the results are geocoded to the general area. For example, if you're at 123 Main Street, then you're going to be recorded to 100 Main Street.

Councilmember Clay stated even though the 3rd Ward is denser than the other Wards, the dispersion of dots actually does not appear to be significantly less. However, in the back of his mind, he is always thinking about how to increase the participation coming out of this area.

Mr. Murray stated for this survey they did a sample by City boundaries only, but next time they could do a sampling by Wards versus the City.

Councilmember Clay asked Mr. Rose if there was a plan for how frequently these surveys would be conducted? Mr. Rose stated normally he would recommend that Council include funding for a survey every two years because it gives staff an opportunity to make recommendations to address findings in the survey, and for any initiatives to have an impact.

Councilmember Clay stated he thinks this is a tremendous first step, which he appreciates. So, going forward, he would be interested in learning the perception of individuals who are more frequent users of the City's services. For example, contractors or residents who may have had a more complicated issue that they had to work through with staff or one of our departments. Because he thinks that type of information would provide a piece of data that might be even more instructive.

Mr. Murray stated ETC performed a contractor survey with the City of Austin where they provide them with a list of every contractor who had worked with the City in the last two years. Allison's thought was that this first survey should be more of a benchmark; where are we today and where should we be headed. But these points are great because they will help structure the next survey; which should also include a few yes/no questions; have you used; have you been a part of; when is the last time you frequented a meeting. Having those simple yes/no questions can help ETC break the results out by those types of users.

Mr. Rose stated the opportunity to survey contractors, stakeholders, developers, or individuals that have had a unique experience with a specific department are all possibilities. So this is by no means the end of these kinds of surveys. And to further their development, his intent is to start providing comment cards at the front desk that folks can fill-out to keep him and staff abreast of any concerns.

Councilmember Cusick questioned whether the survey identified specific areas of concern with respect to folks who were dissatisfied with the overall satisfaction of City services for streets, maintenance or codes and ordinances? Mr. Murray stated this survey really did not get too in-depth. And although there was a Code, Street Maintenance, and Public Works subsection that asked more detailed questions, they were general in nature and geared towards determining a resident's overall satisfaction. But again, it's nice to see a Council that is more engaged in this process than what they typically see, so these suggestions will become a planning tool for the ensuing survey. Next time they can create a more robust section for some of the top priorities and perhaps, do a gap analysis to understand the root cause of a resident's dissatisfaction in a specific area.

Councilmember Smotherson asked Mr. Rose if any thought had been given to identifying the crime statistics for each area designated in the survey under Overall Quality of Public Safety Services? Mr. Rose stated he believes they can certainly figure out how to do an overlay that identifies the crime statistics in a particular area and compare that to the survey results.

Mr. Murray stated that particular section addressed both police and fire. And since you would be hard-pressed to find a community that rates fire on the low end, something to think about next time is to break those two out into separate categories because from his experience, the ability to make the kinds of comparisons being suggested can be really helpful.

Mr. Rose stated he wanted to remind Council that steps are already underway to address some of the issues identified as areas for improvement. The addition of two new employees in Code Enforcement will strengthen this area; a large number of resources and funds are being invested in redevelopment, and as a part of the budget process he will be recommending additional funding to address street maintenance.

4. Roll-Call vote to go into a Closed Council Session according to RSMo 610-021: (1) Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys.

Councilmember Smotherson moved to go into a Closed Session, it was seconded by Councilmember Carr.

Roll Call Vote Was:

**Ayes:** Councilmember Carr, Councilmember Smotherson, Councilmember Hales, Councilmember Clay, Councilmember Cusick, and Mayor Crow.

**Nays:** None.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Crow thanked Mr. Murray for his presentation and closed the Study Session at 6:08 p.m. to go into a Closed Session on the second floor. The Closed Session was adjourned at 6:29 p.m. and Council reconvened in an open session at 6:29 p.m.

LaRette Reese  
City Clerk