

STUDY SESSION
Residential Survey Findings and Public Safety Technology Proposal
CITY HALL, Fifth Floor
6801 Delmar Blvd., University City, Missouri 63130
Monday, January 26, 2026
5:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held on Monday, January 26, 2026, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Councilmember Stacy Clay
Councilmember John Tieman
Councilmember Steven McMahon (*excused*)
Councilmember Lisa Brenner
Councilmember Dennis Fuller
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were City Manager Gregory Rose; City Attorney John F. Mulligan, Jr., Deputy City Manager Crabel, Police Chief Larry Hampton, and Ryan Murray of ETC Institute.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

Mr. Rose asked that Item K (2), TIPS Contract #23010402, Specialized Preconstruction and Construction Services for Recreational Facility Improvements, be removed from the Consent Agenda and added to the City Manager's Report.

3. 2025 COMMUNITY SURVEY FINDINGS (ETC INSTITUTE)

Mr. Rose stated that Council has authorized staff to conduct a biennial survey of the community to ask how they rate the services provided by the City, and tonight, Deputy City Manager Chris Crabel will present the results of that survey.

Mr. Crabel stated that they have been working on this over the last few months, and it is nice to finally have everything summarized in this presentation, which will be presented by Brian Murray of the ETC Institute.

Mr. Murray stated that he has had the pleasure of conducting all of the City's surveys, and this year is no different; it's exciting news, and a lot of good stuff.

Who We Are

- ETC is based in Olathe, Kansas
- It is the Nation's leading provider of market research for local governments
- Their goal is to provide an objective assessment that community leaders can depend on to make data-driven decisions to improve the lives of residents

2025 Survey

Purpose

- To objectively assess resident satisfaction with the delivery of City services
 - Perceptions

- To gather input from residents to help City leaders set priorities for the City
 - Trends
 - To track the City's performance against itself and other communities over time
 - Benchmarks
 - Opportunities
- ✚ ***ETC will look at the important satisfaction analysis, but even if 100% of respondents were satisfied with everything on the survey, they still develop priorities for improvement based on the survey design itself.***

Methodology

- Like prior surveys by ETC Institute, the last survey was conducted in 2023
 - Every time ETC conducts a survey, they make sure that the City's boundaries have not changed and purchase a new updated list of every residential address within those boundaries
 - To ensure that the survey is statistically valid, ETC will randomly select each residential household to receive the mailed version of the survey
 - Administered by mail, phone, and online, with follow-ups by text, email, and social media
 - Sample designed to ensure results are statistically valid for the City's population
 - Follow-ups are conducted within the City until they reach a specific number of surveys that will usually be set with the contractual goal, which in this instance is 600
 - As the total number of surveys increase the overall reliability of the results increase and the margin of error (MOE) decreases.
 - 604 completed surveys were collected, MOE: +/-4% at 95% level of confidence
- ✚ ***U City's lift on the number of completed surveys is pretty high because the community is relatively engaged, ETC has never had much of a problem reaching their 600 goal.***

Mr. Murray stated that the great thing about U City is that it has been doing this for a few years now, and what they are seeing is that staff seems to be incorporating the results into their decision-making, and they are seeing some outputs from the results through that method.

Location of Survey Respondents

- Good representation of responses throughout the City
- Home addresses of all respondents are geocoded to the block level to ensure anonymity
- In addition to geographic representation, ETC Institute also achieved a good demographic representation in the results, including ethnicity/race, age, and gender.

Once the mail hits, ETC wants to make sure that they are balancing not only the geographic distribution in the responses, but also the demographic distribution, to make sure they have a wide breadth of respondents. What they are looking for is to make sure they are aligning the City's survey results with the most recently available census and American Community Survey (ACS) data.

What to Know

+/-4.0%: Is the margin of error at the 95% level of confidence, which is minimal for a community of this size. This means that if ETC were to go out and randomly select community members and complete 604 surveys that were demographically and geographically representative of the City's population, they would receive these same results, plus or minus 4%. So, there is some reliability in the results, but as researchers, they want to let their audience understand that they know there is some volatility.

83%: Is the percentage of respondents who provided an “excellent” or “good” response when rating the overall quality of life in the City. This is up 6 points from 2023.

The City Sets the Standard for Services

- 76% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the City – compared to the National Average of 43% and the Regional Average of 52%. University City rates 24 pts or more above both comparisons!
- Perceptions of the City Remain High
- Of the 13 Perception items that were comparable from 2023 to 2025, the City saw increases in positive responses in all but two areas. Neither area saw a significant decrease in satisfaction, with minimal differences of less than 1 percentage point.

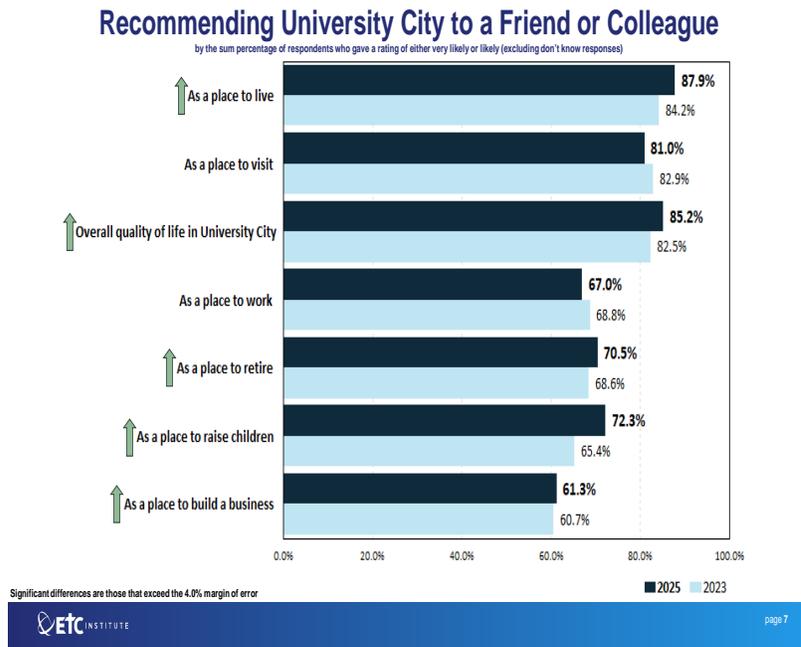
Opportunities for Improvement

The survey instrument is designed to drive opportunities for improvement. In 2025, three areas were identified as opportunities:

1. Maintenance of City streets
2. Enforcement of City codes and ordinances
3. Parks and recreation programs, and facilities

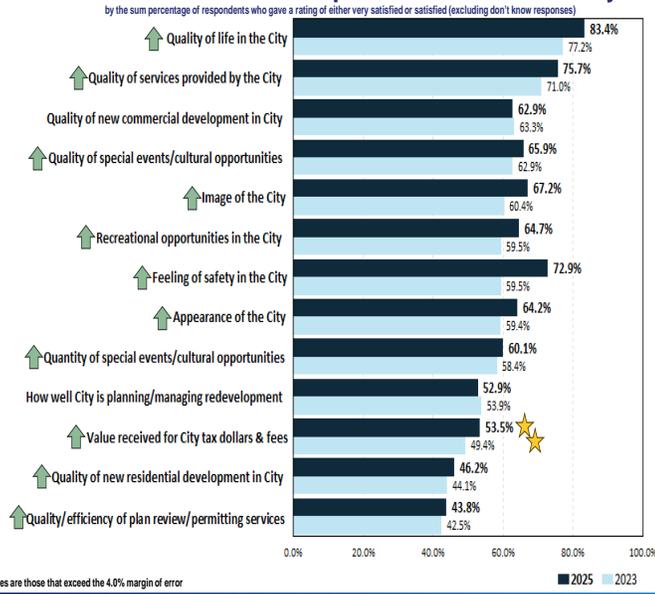
Both parks and recreation and public safety services are extremely important to respondents. It was not highlighted as an opportunity to increase levels of service, but as an opportunity to refocus investment areas.

Perceptions



- **The green arrows** represent significant differences. Over time, you may see more significant differences in terms of longer trend stories, but what they are illustrating here is the overall change in perceptions, the real and actual change in perceptions based on the statistical relevance of the results.
- The only areas where they did not see a significant increase were **"a place to work, and "a place to visit"**. But there was a massive increase in overall satisfaction, specifically in **"a place to raise children"**.

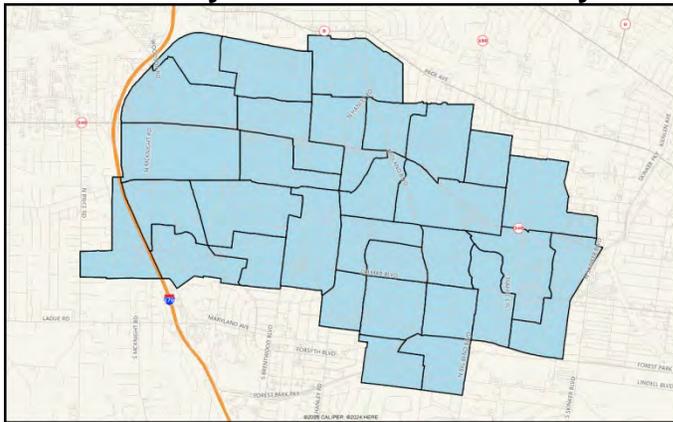
Satisfaction With Perceptions of the Community



In the prior slide, residents said that U City was a great place, and they feel great living here. In this slide, they're saying that they are seeing the results, and they are significantly more satisfied with the value of their tax dollars than they were two years ago, which is why there is a double star ** for **"Value received for City tax dollars & fees"**.

- **"Feeling of safety in the City,"** is spiking up
- **"Overall quality of life"** has significantly increased

Overall Quality of Services Provided by the City



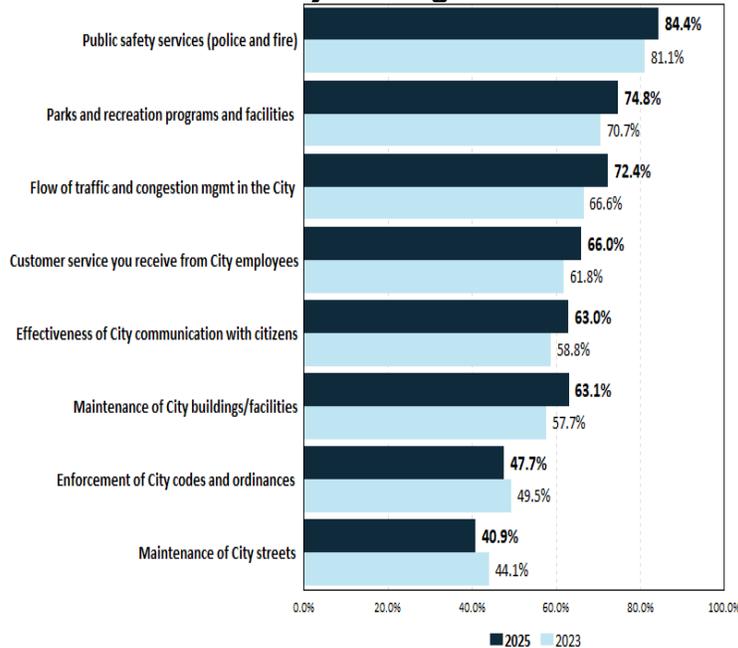
Each small area is called a Census Block Group, which has a handful of surveys within it. They are great indicators of problem areas, i.e., are we not equitably distributing services to all areas of the community?

The map shows that the City of University City is equitably providing services to residents throughout the City based on the mean rating within each Census Block Group.

- Shades of **blue** generally indicate satisfaction with a service, ratings of very satisfied, satisfied, excellent, good, very safe, or safe

- Shades of **off-white/yellow** indicate neutral ratings
- Shades of **orange or red** indicate negative ratings where general dissatisfaction is higher

Satisfaction with Major Categories of Service



"Enforcement of City Codes and Ordinances" and **"Maintenance of City Streets"** saw slight decreases in satisfaction. However, there is no significant decreases and they are well within ETC's margin of error, so there is no actual difference in the population in terms of how they are perceiving these services.

- The remaining services all received significant changes in overall satisfaction.

Trends

Staff has done a great job of focusing on keeping some high-level historical trends.

Comparing the 2025 Results to 2023

- A total of 118 questions were asked on a 5-point positive to negative scale between 2023 and 2025
- Of the areas that were directly comparable, the City saw an increase in positive responses in 75 of the 118 areas (64%)
- Of the areas that saw increases, 38 of the areas saw significant increases that exceeded the survey's margin of error of +/-4% at the 95% level of confidence (32%)

✚ ETC has seen a massive decrease in overall satisfaction for most suburban communities like U City since 2020. Most of them have not been able to dig their way out of that and are still seeing the downward slope in satisfaction, whereas U City and one other community in Colorado are on an upward trajectory.

Largest **INCREASES** in Positive Responses Since 2023

1. Feeling of safety in the City, **(+13.4%)**
2. The City's efforts to prevent crime, **(+12.5%)**
3. How quickly police respond to emergencies, **(+12%)**
4. Frequency of street cleaning services, **(+9.7%)**
5. Quality of yard waste collection services, **(+9.4%)**

6. Quality of Trash, Recycling, and Yard Waste Collection, (+7.9%)
7. Quality of the Centennial Commons, (+7.5%)
8. Quality of the City's adult fitness programs, (+7.5%)
9. Quality of the Heman Park Community Center, (+7.1%)
10. Recommending the City as a place to raise children, (+6.9%)
11. Image of the City, (+6.8%)
12. Police Dept. engagement within the community, (+6.8%)
13. Competency of University City Police Department, (+6.5%)
14. Width of sidewalks in business districts, (+6.5%)

✚ *118 areas were comparable between the 2023 and 2025 surveys. 75 of the 118 areas (64%) saw a positive increase in satisfaction.*

Largest **DECREASES** in Positive Responses Since 2023

1. Quality of snow removal on City streets, (-11.2%)
2. Quality of snow removal services, (-11%)
3. Quality of the Ruth Park Golf Course, (-9%)
4. Number of outdoor athletic fields, (-7.3%)
5. Quality of street cleaning services, (-5.1%)
6. Availability of bicycle lanes, (-4.6%)
7. Condition of County roads in the City, (-4.4%)
8. How courteously you were treated by City staff, (-4.2%)

✚ *This survey was taken before the City's most recent snow event.*

✚ *Only 8 of the areas assessed between 2025 and 2023 saw a decrease in satisfaction between 2023 and 2025. Most of the declines were associated with the effectiveness of various communication channels.*

✚ *The City of University City has done an exceptional job of increasing satisfaction with some of the most important services to respondents.*

Benchmarks - National & Regional

In 2025, University City's results were compared to two different sources:

- **National Average:** a national survey administered during the summer of 2025
- **Regional Survey:** a survey administered during the summer of 2025 to residents in the Plains regional states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska

✚ *A total of 41 items were directly comparable to National and Regional Averages.*

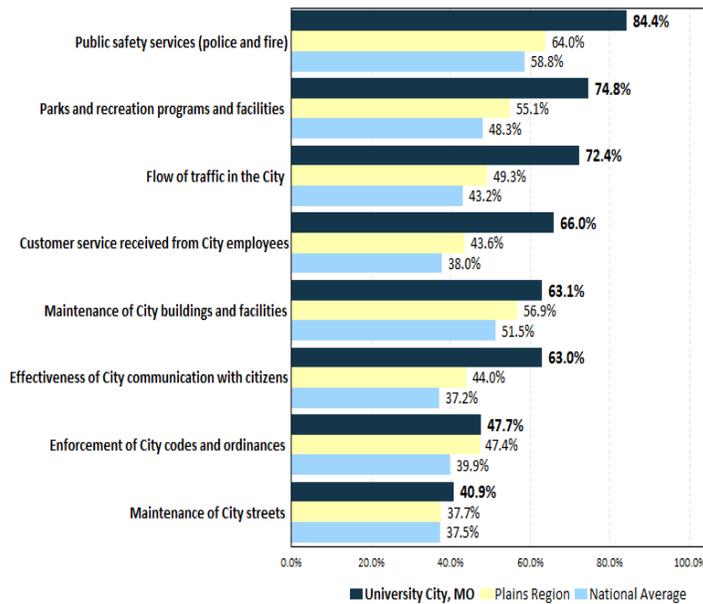
✚ *University City rated **ABOVE** the National Average in 36 of the 41 areas assessed (88%) – 32 items were significantly higher (78%)*

✚ *University City rated **ABOVE** the Plains Regional Average in 32 of the 41 areas assessed (78%) – 29 items were significantly higher (71%)*

U City performed extremely well in areas that are not determined to be higher opportunities for improvement. Both the National and Regional averages are very close to our true and actual differences here in 2025 for "**Enforcement of City Codes and Ordinances**", as well as the "**Maintenance of City Streets**".

When you see "**Flow of traffic in the City**" at 72%, and you compare it to the National average, which is about 50% or under 40%, those are pretty good remarks. This is one of those areas that folks will commonly tell us is a problem area in their community, but you're not seeing that here.

Folks are really focused on the maintenance of City streets and not allowing the perception to float to other areas of that particular section within the survey results.



National Benchmarking

Areas University City Rated 20 pts. Or Higher Above National Average

- Quality of services provided by the City, **(+32.8%)**
- Quality of yard waste collection services, **(+30.9%)**
- Curbside recycling, **(+30.3%)**
- Flow of traffic in the City, **(+29.2%)**
- How quickly police respond to emergencies, **(+28.1%)**
- Customer service received from City employees, **(+28%)**
- Quality of residential trash collection services, **(+27.1%)**
- Parks and recreation programs and facilities, **(+26.5%)**
- Effectiveness of City communication with citizens, **(+25.8%)**
- Public safety services (police and fire), **(+25.6%)**
- Drop-off recycling location, **(+25.6%)**
- Image of the City, **(+22.6%)**
- Value received for your City taxes & fees, **(+20.8%)**

Areas Where University City Rated Significantly Below the National Average

- Overall snow removal on City streets, **(-10.5%)**
- Condition of City sidewalks, **(-8.2%)**

Plains Regional Benchmarking

Areas University City Rated 20 pts. Or Higher Above Regional Average

- Curbside recycling, **(+30.3%)**
- Quality of yard waste collection services, **(+30%)**
- Quality of residential trash collection services, **(+26.9%)**
- Drop-off recycling location, **(+25.6%)**
- Quality of services provided by the City, **(+24.2%)**
- How quickly police respond to emergencies, **(+24.2%)**
- Flow of traffic in the City, **(+23.1%)**
- Customer service received from City employees, **(+22.4%)**

- Public safety services (police and fire), (+20.4%)
- Image of the City, (+20.4%)
- Parks and recreation programs and facilities, (+19.7%)

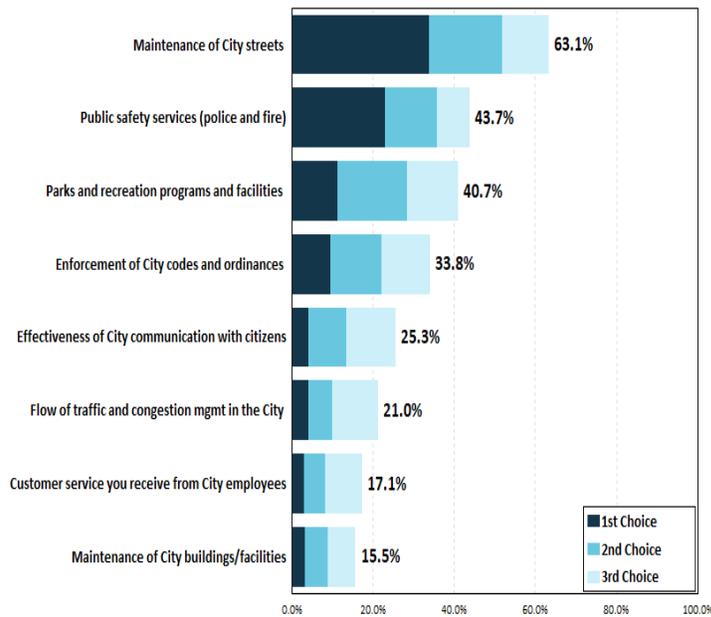
✚ *These represent a wide variety of City services that, if they were to go below the average ratings, could have massive implications on the perceptions of safety, and of this being a great community to raise children.*

Areas Where University City Rated Significantly Below the Regional Average

- Snow removal on City streets, (-16.4%)
- Condition of City sidewalks, (-9.6%)
- Adequacy of residential street lighting, (-5%)
- Enforcing the cleanup of litter and debris on private property, (-4.8%)
- Enforcing the maintenance of commercial property, (-4.7%)

Opportunities

City Services That Should Receive the Most Emphasis over the Next Two Years

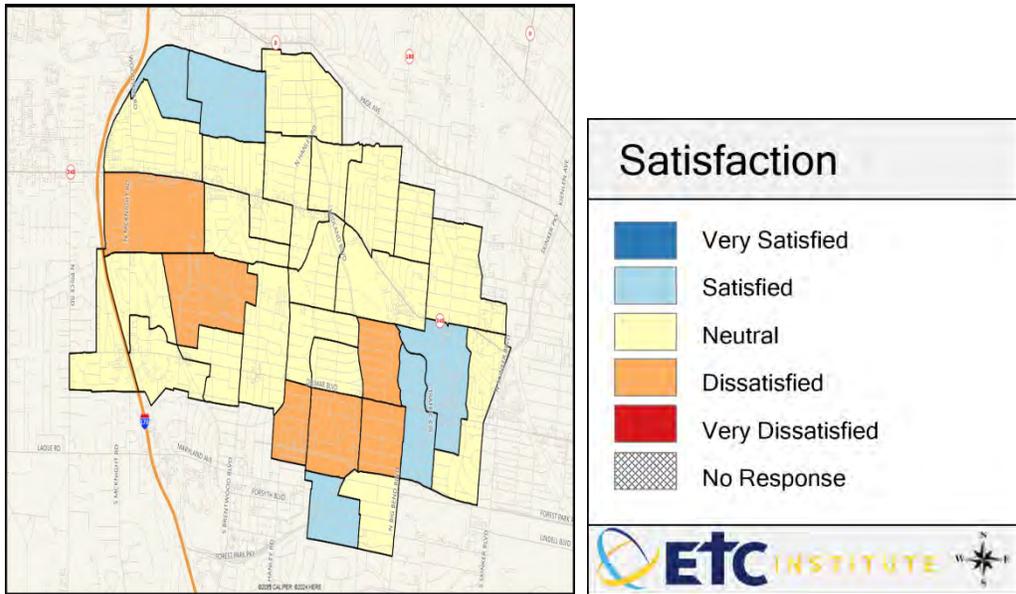


The I-S Analysis pinpoints items with lower than average levels of satisfaction and higher than average levels of emphasis

Mr. Murray stated that it seems like the City is investing properly in these areas, and based on the overall results, none of them necessarily need an influx or massive change in investments.

The highest opportunities are code enforcement and the maintenance of City streets, followed by public safety services and parks and recreation.

Overall Quality of the Maintenance of City Streets

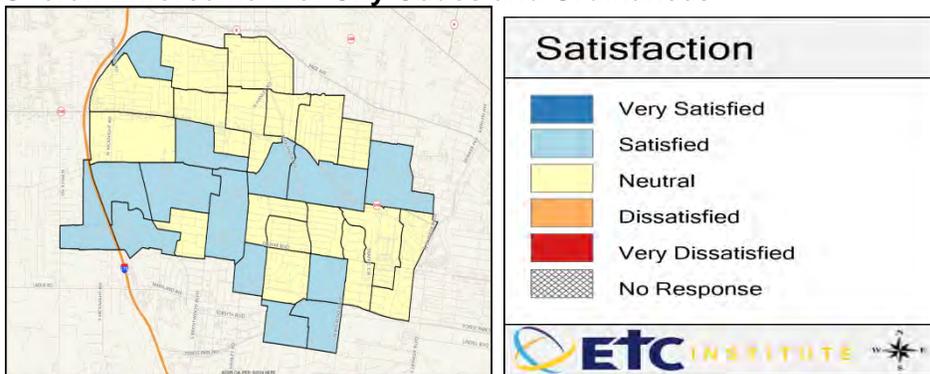


This area was determined to be the top opportunity for improvement based on the Importance-Satisfaction Analysis.

- Shades of **blue** generally indicate satisfaction with a service, ratings of very satisfied, satisfied, excellent, good, very safe, or safe
- Shades of **off-white/yellow** indicate neutral ratings
- Shades of **orange or red** indicate negative ratings where general dissatisfaction is higher

Mr. Murray stated that this can be an opportunity where U City begins to pinpoint certain areas of the community that might have slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction. ETC works with staff in every community within the region to try to focus on County streets vs. City streets. County streets seem to have a massive impact on the perceptions that respondents have of streets generally in the area.

Overall Enforcement of City Codes and Ordinances

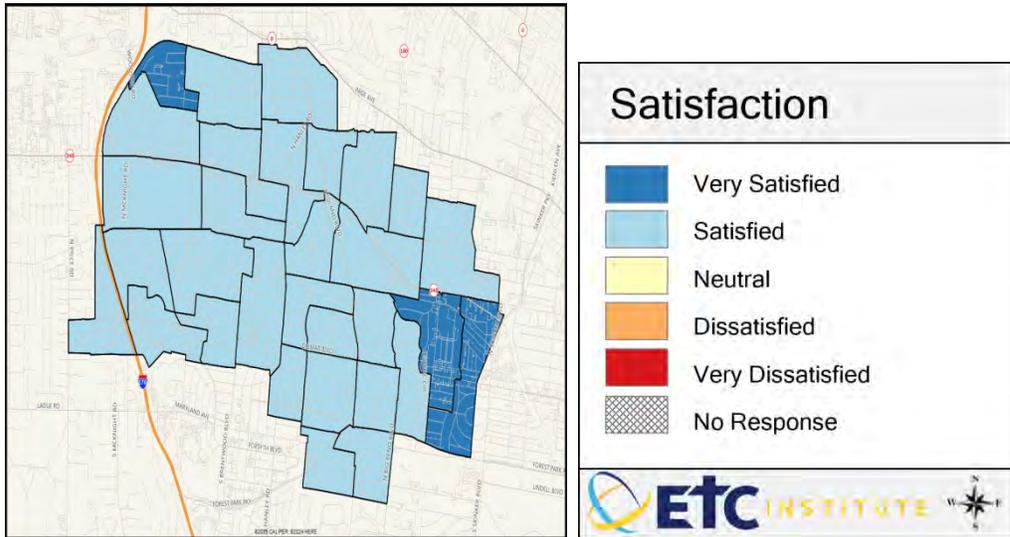


This area was determined to be the second-highest opportunity for improvement based on the Importance-Satisfaction Analysis.

- Shades of **blue** generally indicate satisfaction with a service, ratings of very satisfied, satisfied, excellent, good, very safe, or safe
- Shades of **off-white/yellow** indicate neutral ratings
- Shades of **orange or red** indicate negative ratings where general dissatisfaction is higher

✚ *Most folks are generally satisfied with neutral.*

Overall Quality of Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

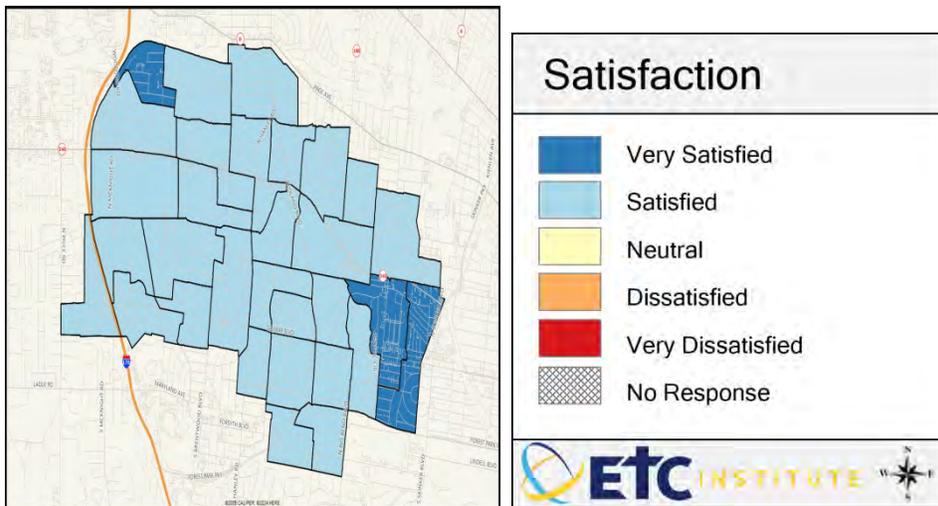


This area was determined to be the third highest opportunity for improvement based on the Importance-Satisfaction Analysis.

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- Shades of **off-white/yellow** indicate neutral ratings
- Shades of **orange or red** indicate negative ratings where general dissatisfaction is higher

✚ *Overall satisfaction is extremely high City-wide.*

Overall Quality of Public Safety Services



This area was not identified as an opportunity for improvement, but had a high level of emphasis placed on it by respondents.

- Shades of **blue** generally indicate satisfaction with a service, ratings of very satisfied, satisfied, excellent, good, very safe, or safe

- Shades of **off-white/yellow** indicate neutral ratings
- Shades of **orange or red** indicate negative ratings where general dissatisfaction is higher

✚ **Overall, U City is deeply distributing these services, and generally, respondents are very satisfied.**

However, while respondents rated public safety services and parks and recreation as two really important services, this slide on **Overall Satisfaction with Major City Services** illustrates that their relative satisfaction is really high in these areas.

2025 City of University City Community Survey
Importance-Satisfaction Analysis Ratings
Overall Satisfaction with Major City Services
University City, Missouri

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rank
Maintenance of City streets	63%	1	41%	8	0.3729	1
Enforcement of City codes and ordinances	34%	4	48%	7	0.1768	2
Parks and recreation programs and facilities	41%	3	75%	2	0.1026	3
Effectiveness of City communication with citizens	25%	5	63%	6	0.0936	4
Public safety services (police and fire)	44%	2	84%	1	0.0682	5
Customer service you receive from City employees	17%	7	66%	4	0.0581	6
Flow of traffic and congestion management in the City	21%	6	72%	3	0.0580	7
Maintenance of City buildings/facilities	16%	8	63%	5	0.0572	8

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The item at the top of this list, **"Maintenance of City streets"**, stands alone because it has the highest important satisfaction rating. So, if you were able to make massive improvements, you should see a ripple effect through the other areas of the survey, specifically perceptions or value for taxes.

✚ **ETC suggests that the City continue the good work, not adjusting for survey results.**

Highlighted in yellow is **"Effectiveness of communication with citizens"**. Satisfaction is towards the bottom half when you look at the overall satisfaction rating, and it's slightly lower in overall importance, but it holds steady in the middle. It's one of those areas that the City should continue to maintain and focus on, but as you continue to address some of your highest priorities, communication and the availability of information to the public will have massive implications in other areas.

- How can U City continue to tell its story?
- How can we continue to reiterate the work that we are doing?
- Where do we want to make sure that we're placing the most investments?

Additional Findings

Ratings and Customer Satisfaction

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
How easy the department was to contact	33%	38%	11%
How courteously you were treated	38%	34%	9%
Technical competence & knowledge of City employees who assisted you	31%	34%	10%

Overall responsiveness of City employees to your request or concern

30%

29%

19%

About 43% of respondents have actually had contact with the City, but the overall trend suggests that the customer service response is still very strong. This is an area where ETC saw a slight decrease in overall satisfaction from year to year, but when respondents were asked specific questions, over 50% were either very satisfied or satisfied.

Importance of Parks and Recreation Initiatives

Although Parks and Recreation items were technically an opportunity, it was more about emphasis than satisfaction, but some priorities are emerging in that area.

There is a small increase in overall playground improvements and park maintenance.

How supportive would you be of a 1/4-cent increase to the current 0.25% sales tax used for Fire Services for paramedic healthcare services that will help the City expand paramedic services?

- About 68.7% of the population said that they are generally supportive
- About 31.3% of the population said that they were not supportive or neutral

 *This is a random sampling of the entire community and not likely voters.*

Mr. Murray stated that this question was asked two years ago in a more rural community in Wyoming, where 71.4% were supportive, and it passed 71% to 29%. But even though ETC has done a lot of tax-type questions and their results are generally very close to the overall averages, to be sure, they would suggest that the City hire a political consultant to potentially do a phone poll of likely voters.

Summary

- Overall satisfaction with City services and quality of life remains exceptionally strong.
- University City significantly outperforms national and regional benchmarks, which is likely one of the reasons why the City's perceptions remain high.
 - In addition, the City is likely serving residents equitably throughout the community, which helps ensure that city-wide there are high perceptions of the community.
- Satisfaction has increased across most services since 2023.
- Public safety and Parks & Recreation continue to be a core strength, a top resident priority, and satisfaction remains very high.
- Maintenance of City streets is the top opportunity for improvement, but code enforcement and park investments also remain a key focus area.
 - These are difficult items to get high marks on, especially as you continually try to improve streets. Folks will be running into construction, which creates difficulty in perceptions. Was the construction worth the fix, or was I more dissatisfied or more satisfied after that fix? This can be a difficult thing during the time of construction, as well as post-construction.
- The overall trajectory is positive, with data showing both high satisfaction and clear, actionable areas for strategic investment.
 - Based on these results, leadership has really utilized them in their decision-making, and with the leadership of a good Mayor, Council, and City Manager, U City should see continued success in the future.

Mr. Murray stated that he would be happy to answer any questions he can, and if there is something he can't provide a full answer for tonight, he will get a written response back to staff tomorrow.

Mayor Crow thanked Mr. Murray for his presentation.

Councilmember Clay stated that these seem to be very encouraging results, but in the spirit of looking at areas of improvement, streets are something that Council has talked a lot about, and it's a question they all get from the community. The assumption is that fixing and maintaining streets is kind of the foundational thing you need to do to be successful. But beyond that, what are communities that score high in this area doing? Are there communications to citizens about the rating process or what's happening with their streets? Mr. Murray stated that the community of Olathe, Kansas, is an extremely high performer. A lot of the things they've done are in resident investments; bond issues, sales tax increases, and things of that nature, that promoted and pushed this idea that together, we are going to increase the overall quality of our city streets. Along with that, you've hit the nail on the head; it is communication. What Olathe has done a great job with is not getting into the weeds in terms of those rating scales or processes, but rather, they seem to just sign everything. *"Hey, here's a sign coming up next fall, your tax dollars at work"*. It seems like folks really begin to understand the kind of carrot and the stick analogy; we didn't want the taxes, but here's the reward. So, to get the results they all want to see, they always kind of push this idea that hey, *"This is our 2024 bond increase fixing your road right now. This is the fruits of our labor."*

Beyond that, the City of Olathe does a great job of generally communicating. There are numerous E-Newsletters that receive a lot of sign-ups, and another thing they've done is kind of embedded themselves into NextDoor, which, for most communities, seems to be one of the more negative areas of social media. But they've created these community liaisons that work within neighborhood groups, and before something evolves into a lot of complaining, they work to help drive a more positive tone. They also conduct a quarterly survey to really monitor that particular aspect of things. So, he thinks all of those things in concert have done a lot for them.

Mr. Murray stated that he thinks based on some of these results and trends from prior years; you can see that the maintenance of street signs and traffic signals went up almost 15 percentage points; landscaping and the appearance of public areas along streets went up, and the City is well above national and regional averages on these items. So, there are a lot of positives, which is why he likes to mention at the beginning that regardless of the satisfaction levels, he would have found some priorities, and streets would have likely been important as an opportunity. Mr. Murray stated that he really appreciated this question because it's a fantastic question for staff, especially when trying to figure out what the sweet spots are in terms of communication. He always thinks that it's kind of, here's what you've told us, and here's what we're doing, because that communication feedback is important.

Mayor Crow posed the following questions and comments to Mr. Murray:

Q. The topic of communication, whether it is a strength or weakness, has been discussed for as many years as he's been on the Council. So, he is curious as to the meaning of this sentence on page 14, "Most of the declines were associated with the effectiveness of various communication channels."?

A. *Between 2023 and 2025, there were some areas within the results that suggested that some of the City's communication channels may not be as effective as they once were. However, when you look at communication under benchmarking, the City is performing very well. So, that might be something that he can break down a little bit further for staff.*

Q. I think we've continued to struggle for many, many years with trying to determine what a better communication strategy for citizens is. And I think most of us have spent far more time on NextDoor than we would like to admit, as far as the communications that goes on there. So the idea of having some outreach for members of staff may be a good idea, as well as other areas for improvement.

A. *The ROARS Newsletter was rated at 77% by respondents in 2023, who said it was either effective or somewhat effective. That dropped to 73% in 2025. The Parks & Recreation Guide went down in its overall effectiveness, which may have been the reason for some of the satisfaction scores. The City's website saw a slight decline, which he is having a little difficulty saying why, but then, when you get to NextDoor, there was a 19 percentage point decrease in the overall effectiveness of communication.*

So, while there are some areas here to suggest that the City could potentially be doing a better job, there are other results around these that might suggest that they are not being used as much as you think they are.

Q. On code enforcement, I assume we've got issues where some folks are complaining that we're too strict, and others who believe we're too lax?

A. I'm hopeful that staff can help us out with that, but that's what I hear most frequently from code enforcement. From police chiefs, I often hear that the visibility of police in neighborhoods is not a great mark for actual public safety, and for code enforcement, it can be really difficult to understand if it's too much or not enough. We ask that question quite frequently, and when I did a follow-up a couple of weeks ago in a Colorado community, it seems as though folks may be fearful of being subject to enforcement. But oftentimes it's a situation where you've made a complaint about a neighbor and are dissatisfied with the results, or that compliance is being forced upon them. So, you're correct, Mayor, it's that double-edged sword.

Q. It looks to me like on the southern end, the quality of maintaining city streets is related to everybody who has to travel down Pershing, which we've known about and are working on. Then out west, it looks like it may be the traffic from the construction and the success of Costco. So, it's kind of interesting to see these two neighborhoods pop up where there seems to be at least some practical reality for why they are unsatisfied.

A. Exactly. Typically, we would suggest that one of those areas in orange was also near a kind of highway interchange that is close to some County streets. So that could be a really frustrating thing for morning commutes. As I mentioned, unfortunately, I think sometimes residents are unable to draw that line in their heads when completing a survey. We as researchers understand that, and your staff does a great job of compartmentalizing some of those responses to make sure we are not overreacting in some of those areas.

Councilmember Clay stated that the feedback he's received about code enforcement, even from his wife, is consistency of the inspections. Whether it is done this way or that way, he thinks people would be fine with it, but just pick one and do it every time.

Mr. Murray stated that he appreciated this opportunity and thanked the Council for their time.

4. UNIVERSITY CITY ROBOTICS 2026

Mr. Rose stated as you know, staff continues to look at ways to improve public safety, specifically with respect to ways that make people feel safe within the City. He stated that they have recognized that they will likely not be able to recruit all of the officers needed, so they are looking at other options. As a result, Police Chief Hampton will present some of his findings from his robotics research.

Chief Hampton stated that there are not a lot of robotic manufacturers in this region, so they've had to use case studies, demonstrations, meetings, and collaborative efforts to gain more knowledge about this technology. There are numerous styles and types of robots in the modern technology world, but only a handful have tackled the demand for public safety components.

Robotics in Public Safety

Bomb Handling Robots can detect bombs and incendiary devices.



Today's Bomb Handling Robots look totally different than this old school version.

With over 33 religious institutions here in U City, public safety measures are always on high alert. Robots that aid in efforts for vetting, tracking, curbing, and dismantling threats would be a welcome addition.

Search and Rescue Capabilities

Technology that can be leveraged with drones, aerial devices, and surveillance mechanisms is what the department is looking to make small investments in for its business patrols.

Many businesses like Dierbergs, Target, COSTCO, etc., have partnered with technology companies that specialize in robots for their respective industries.

Robots can look for spills, clean floors, check inventory, direct customers, or be used for surveillance, but no robot can do more than one or two of these things. This community's outcome with robotics will be a result of its outlook regarding this technology.

In public safety, search & rescue is a high priority. Robots and drones provide numerous benefits for disaster response because they can often fit into places humans can't, can operate in environments humans can't, can operate nonstop without sleep, can outperform humans in certain tasks, and most importantly, they are replaceable.

More Benefits of Public Safety Robotics

This Knightscope device was first deployed on the East and West Coasts.



This device can be utilized on level ground and sidewalks in business districts or leveraged with the department's business patrols because it cannot be vandalized or tipped over.

- Robots save workers from performing dangerous tasks.
- Robots work in hazardous conditions, such as poor lighting, toxic chemicals, or tight spaces.
- Robots are capable of lifting heavy loads.
- Robots increase worker safety by preventing accidents.

Today, robots are being used in approximately 15% of the public safety profession; however, their growth is expected to jump to approximately 43% in a matter of single-digit years. About 82% of respondents in a recent survey support using robots for high-risk jobs like public safety.

These are not cheap devices, and companies will only provide a leasing program that gives them the opportunity to help clients troubleshoot and enhance their product when needed.

Different Types of Robots for L. E.



Future Planning

Today's policing agencies are using robots in a variety of ways: to act as first responders, assist in pursuits, and even to conduct patrols. Drones and robots undoubtedly can have real public safety value.

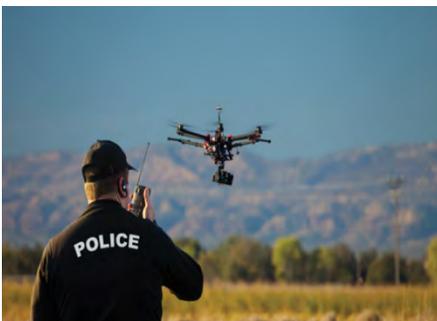


Identify problems within our Technology Uses



Strategic Planning on the technology

Not everybody can be an operator of this type of technology. It can be remotely or virtually controlled, but the public safety aspect of this technology will be controlled from within the department.



Fuse the current technology with the new

Aerial drones can provide facial recognition, and body-worn cameras can provide AI information that complies with governing state and regional policies. County and State prosecutors do not accept AI-generated police reports.



Budget – Pinpoint feasible options

Robocop-type devices would not be considered a feasible option for U City because of their cost.



Upskill and Re-skill with great training

Not only the operators, but officers, employees, Fire, and EMS will be infused into this technology, to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what assistance the device can or cannot provide.



Communicate and engage

Chief Hampton stated that he thinks they have done a decent job introducing their technology to the community and explaining how it is used in public safety.

Options for Exploration into Robotics

UCPD has secured approximately \$135,000 in grant funding for 2025 to aid in procuring new technology.

Chief Hampton stated that the need is there to leverage this type of technology, and the right time to invest is now. While it's true that some of these devices are still being enhanced, they are being used in larger communities, and those models can be referenced and copied in smaller communities.

Mr. Rose thanked Chief Hampton for his presentation and stated that the information presented tonight was intended to introduce the Council to robotics. Certainly, there will be more research conducted on each of the areas that have been highlighted, but staff will ensure that any device selected elevates and easily integrates with the current Police Department's operations before it is brought before Council for consideration.

Councilmember Clay posed the following questions to Chief Hampton:

Q. You mentioned the department's current use of facial recognition software, and I just wanted to confirm whether you have policies in place to ensure that any information obtained through these devices is being used appropriately?

A. *U City's drones and body or surveillance cameras do not have facial recognition software, but some of our neighboring communities do.*

Q. I must have misunderstood you. Are you saying that we don't use facial recognition software?

A. *Correct, we don't have any, but we collaborate with other departments that do have that technology.*

Q. So, we don't have that software on any of our own equipment?

A. *That's correct.*

Mr. Rose asked if the Throwbot was an addition to standard items such as license plate readers? Chief Hampton stated that is correct and their radios can be infused with the body-worn cameras.

Councilmember Brenner posed the following questions to Chief Hampton:

Q. I'm assuming that we do have drones?

A. *Yes, ma'am.*

Q. Are we using any other technology right now that is more advanced?

A. *Yes, the surveillance trailers as well as the Throwbot are considered advanced devices. The Throwbot is made of titanium and is used as a spy robot that transmits audio and video when thrown into a building to give officers eyes and ears to determine what is going on, and helps speed up response times.*

Q. Has the department given consideration to collaborating with larger agencies in the St. Louis County region to buy or use some of the more expensive pieces, like the Bomb Handling Robot, or other devices that you probably wouldn't use as often?

A. *U City has over 33 documented religious institutions, and they often get calls to vet those properties for intruders or bomb threats. So yes, the department has Mutual Aid Agreements with all of its partners in the St. Louis County region.*

Councilmember Fuller posed the following questions to Chief Hampton:

Q. I was very impressed when an infrared drone was used in the lost child incident, and was wondering if some of these robotics could be shared between the Fire and Police Departments?

A. *No, it's not just for police use. All of the City's public safety components will be infused with any current or new technology.*

Q. Some of us have had experience in the so-called green machine, so will there be any interface with some of the bomb and arson concepts that the military is using?

A. *The department has a very elaborate collaboration with the Bomb and Arson units for St. Louis County, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Bomb and arson training is held at the same facility where our officers take their annual firearms qualification test, and there are some courses that we send our first responders to on an annual basis. While they cannot be considered bomb techs, the information they receive is very helpful when the department gets a call about a mysterious package that's been left somewhere.*

Councilmember Smotherson asked the Chief if he saw robotics playing any role at the Market at Olive development, and if so, what type of devices? Chief Hampton stated that in the near future, he foresees devices like the ones seen in grocery stores and retail shops advancing to outside areas, like parking lots and garages.

There are a lot of different devices, and some of the ones he's highlighted tonight are what's currently available. Unfortunately, most of these companies don't offer pilot programs because they want you to invest, and that's why Dierbergs and Schnucks established a collaborative to invest in this technology.

Mayor Crow stated that moments ago, Council learned that the Police Department received an 84% satisfaction rating on the survey, so it looks like luck and timing for making this presentation tonight were on your side. Thank you very much for a job well done.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow thanked everyone and adjourned the Study Session at 6:26 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk, MRCC

