

"We Have  
Tomorrow —  
Bright Before  
Us, Like A  
Flame."

Langston Hughes



# City of Lawrence

The Flame | June 2020

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

In late 2019, the City partnered with ETC Institute, a leading market research and survey company, to administer a community survey to collect feedback and assess resident satisfaction with the quality of City programs and services.

One of the purposes of the 2019 Community Survey is to receive results before the City Commission adopts the City's next strategic plan, so that insights can be incorporated into the plan. It is currently anticipated that the 2020 Strategic Plan will be completed later this year, but due to COVID-19, the timeline has been indefinitely delayed until in-person activities can be resumed.

The 2019 Community Survey is the fourth community survey administered by the City of Lawrence, with similar surveys completed in 2007, 2011 and 2015. In their analysis, ETC Institute compared the 2019 results to 2011 and 2015 to analyze short- and long-term trends.

Surveys were mailed to randomly selected households throughout Lawrence. In total, the City received survey responses from 867 households. We would like to thank all those who completed the survey after receiving an invitation to participate.

ETC Institute created an in-depth report on the survey findings, which is available in its entirety online. The report was also presented to the Lawrence City Commission on March 3, 2020.

We've outlined some of the report takeaways on the right. If you're interested, you can read the entire report online: <https://lawks.us/2L9mHzC>

### RESIDENTS HAVE A POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF THE CITY

84% of respondents indicated they are satisfied with the City as a place to live, only 5% were not.

77% indicated they are satisfied with the quality of services provided by the City.

### CITY RATINGS ARE TRENDING UPWARD

The City saw an increase in positive ratings in 47 of the 99 areas assessed in both 2015 and 2019 (47%).

The City saw an increase in positive ratings in 51 of the 84 areas assessed in both 2011 and 2019 (61%).

### PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Maintenance of City streets and utilities
- Flow of motor vehicle traffic and congestion management
- Quality of planning and code enforcement
- Effectiveness of City communication with the public
- Economic growth and affordability issues

### LAWRENCE RATED SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN 80% OF THE AREAS ASSESSED IN THE 2019 COMMUNITY SURVEY.

#### TRANSPORTATION

The services with the highest level of satisfaction were ease of north/south travel and the availability of pedestrian (walking) paths.

Over the next two years, residents think the City needs to pay the most attention to improving traffic signal coordination on major City streets.

#### POLICE SERVICES

The services with the highest level of satisfaction were professionalism and how quickly police respond to emergencies.

#### WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

The services with the highest level of satisfaction were the reliability of water services, water pressure in homes and the quality of drinking water.

Over the next two years, residents think the City needs to pay the most attention to the overall quality of drinking water and the overall value received for water and wastewater utility rates.

#### PARKS AND RECREATION

The services with the highest level of satisfaction were the appearance and cleanliness of City parks and the City's landscaping.

Residents think the City needs to pay the most attention to the number of walking and biking trails.

#### FIRE AND MEDICAL

The services with the highest level of satisfaction were the overall quality of fire services, the professionalism of fire and emergency medical personnel and how quickly emergency medical services personnel respond.



# SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

Safety tips considering COVID-19 from Douglas County Emergency Management

As severe weather season ramps up, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised questions about how we can safely react to severe weather.

While we understand the importance of social distancing, the National Weather Service and Emergency Management agree that during a Tornado Warning, the first priority should be protection from a potential tornado, even if this means temporarily breaking social distancing.

We understand that many of our community members utilize public buildings during severe weather, most of which are now closed to the public due to COVID-19. Specifically, with the current health precautions in place, **LMH Health is not available for sheltering.**

The following buildings in Lawrence will be open for shelter (during the specified times only) should a Tornado Warning be issued:

- Sports Pavilion Lawrence  
100 Rock Chalk Lane  
Open: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon to Fri
- Community Building  
115 W. Eleventh St.  
Open: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon to Fri
- Douglas County Fairgrounds Building 21  
2120 Harper St.  
Open: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Mon to Fri

If in the past you have taken shelter during severe weather in a location not listed above, call ahead before a severe weather event. Do not assume that location will be open because many are closed or are not allowing entry at this time.

If you do take shelter in a public location, please take these precautions:

- Wear a mask or cloth face covering
- Practice social distancing (staying six feet away from others) as much as the situation allows
- Bring your own hand sanitizer
- Do not bring pets
- As soon as possible upon returning home, wash your clothes and shoes to limit potential sources of COVID-19

## Special sheltering considerations

Identify your best shelter, which will be an interior room with no windows on the lowest level of a building.

If you are under quarantine (exposed but not showing symptoms), go to your designated shelter. Follow social distancing practices as much as possible and wear a mask.

If you are self-isolating with family (symptomatic), it is recommended you have a separate location for the isolated person to take shelter. This space should be cleaned after use. If no such space is available, follow social distancing guidelines and wear a mask.

If you are in a shelter, please be mindful that everyone is encouraged to wear a mask, follow social distancing measures (as possible), wash your hands/use hand sanitizer and clean your space after use.

## Preparedness actions everyone can take

You can be prepared in advance of severe weather by following the below steps:

- Be alert to the forecast for severe weather and pay attention to changing weather conditions
- Develop an emergency plan that includes both how to get alerts (identify more than one method) and where to take shelter (lowest level of a building, in an interior room with no windows).
- In developing plans for shelter, connect and communicate with neighbors via phone, texting or apps, including using Nextdoor. Follow for information from your neighborhood, City of Lawrence or Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health.
- Build a preparedness kit with basic items to keep in your shelter or to take if you leave

We are all in this together and have a responsibility to each other as we navigate the COVID-19 challenge. Thank you for including these safety measures into your preparation for severe weather season.

# City Delaying Utility Block Rate Increase

As adopted at the April 21 City Commission meeting, the City of Lawrence will delay the implementation of inclining block rates for water usage and continue using the current method for calculating water bills.

The City recognizes that the stay-at-home order for the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic will likely cause residents to use more water than they normally would. This increased water usage could potentially cause residents to go into the higher Block 2 and 3 rates with the inclining rate structure, something the City wants to avoid for its residents during this time of financial uncertainty.

The inclining block rate structure was originally scheduled to be put in place on May 1, 2020. That implementation date is now pushed to 2021.

# City Hall in Blue

The City of Lawrence is thankful to all the essential workers in our community. As a show of our appreciation, our Parks & Recreation Department has installed repurposed blue holiday lights surrounding the exterior of City Hall. They light up nightly in honor of those essential workers. Thank you!



It is very likely that Independence Day celebrations are going to look different this year. Regardless of how you celebrate, please remember:

**Lawrence is a Firework-Free Zone!**

o u r m i s s i o n :

Insert: #284

Committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community