Olathe Top in KC Metro Citizen Satisfaction, Among Nation’s Highest

The City of Olathe is among top national leaders in citizen satisfaction with City services, according to responses in citizen surveys during 2015. The satisfaction with value for tax dollars is the highest for any city with more than 100,000 residents at 81 percent. National satisfaction is 46 percent, and the Kansas City area’s satisfaction is 44 percent.

“Olathe has set a new standard for cities we survey when we look at overall value received for tax dollars,” says Chris Tatham of ETC Institute. ETC conducts the DirectionFinder surveys in more than 800 city and county governments in 49 states.

Olathe also leads Kansas City metro cities and is significantly above national satisfaction ratings in several noteworthy areas:

- Police, fire, and ambulance services, 96 percent — compared to 80 percent KC metro/81 percent nation
- Quality of City’s solid waste system, 94 percent — compared to 79 percent KC metro/75 percent nation
- Overall customer service, 90 percent — compared to 57 percent KC metro/55 percent nation
- City water and sewer utilities, 90 percent — compared to 67 percent KC metro/74 percent nation
- Effectiveness of communication with the public — 85 percent compared to 52 percent KC metro/50 percent nation
- City stormwater runoff system, 84 percent — compared to 55 percent KC metro/61 percent nation.

“This level of satisfaction is possible because residents are willing to share their thoughts about City priorities through citizen surveys, and we can direct resources to their priorities,” says

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Mayor’s Message

Good News Keeps Coming

During the past year, the City of Olathe’s excellence and exceptional sense of community were apparent in many ways. Among our greatest strengths are the safety and security of living in a community that values safe streets, neighborhoods, and schools. This is largely possible because of Olathe’s exemplary public safety personnel and concerned citizens. You play a large role in keeping our city safe through your involvement in more than 70 active Neighborhood Watch programs and by using technology, such as Nextdoor, to keep our neighborhoods safe. Technology has also allowed us to contact you immediately through NotifyJoCo.org about any imminent public safety issues.

The announcement that the Insurance Services Office (ISO) has given Olathe a Public Protection Classification of 1 is wonderful news for our city. There are more than 48,000 fire districts in the country, and only 132 have this rating. This affirms that our community has one of the safest fire suppression levels.

Our strong focus on health continues with Mobile Integrated Healthcare and partners like Olathe Medical Center, the Health Partnership Clinic, and Johnson County Mental Health. Last year, our Healthy Communities initiatives received an Innovation Award recognizing our “Get Active” program, Olathe Community Gardens, and the Communities That Care Coalition. Olathe Medical Center, a cornerstone of our community’s health care, is undergoing their largest expansion in history. Our award-winning hospital is vital in providing quality health care and is an integral part of Olathe’s success.

Looking ahead, preserving our community assets continues to be a top priority, with maintenance underway on our streets, water treatment plant, and water lines. During 2016, important street improvements include 159th Street, 56 Highway to I-35, and College Boulevard, Woodland to Lone Elm.

The recent opening of the Embassy Suites Hotel & Olathe Conference Center, near K-10 and Ridgeview, will bring larger conventions to Olathe. This beautiful new facility can accommodate up to 1,000 people at the conference center, and the hotel offers 200 suites.

We can look forward to a great future because we are in good hands. Once again, Olathe’s youngest residents demonstrated their great compassion and love for our city by participating in the Mayor’s Christmas Tree Fund. Our amazing students raised more than $30,000 for the 2015 Pennies for Shoes Campaign – that’s up from $22,000 in 2014. Overall, our community exceeded the Mayor’s Christmas Tree Fund goal, giving a total of $160,262 to support charities providing essential services for children and families in need.

Olathe is a national leader in providing quality services and in citizen satisfaction with value for tax dollars, according to 2015 citizen surveys. In most areas, we are the highest-rated provider of quality services in our region.

Sincerely,

Michael Copeland
Mayor
Master plans are expected to be finalized this year with initial construction phases identified in 2016. Construction of phase one could begin in late 2016. Cedar Lake and Lake Olathe park improvements will be multi-year projects, funded in part by the voter-approved Olathe Park Sales Tax.

See renderings of the lake plans at OlatheKS.org/ParksRec/Park-Trail-Projects

Meadow Lane Trail Coming Soon

The new Meadow Lane bicycle-pedestrian trail will begin just south of the Kansas State University Bioscience Center on College Boulevard and extend approximately 4.6 miles north and east to the Gary Haller Trail. Users also have access to the Gary Haller Trail off of Ridgeview Road. Construction on the Meadow Lane Trail will occur late 2016 through 2017.

See a map of the planned Meadow Lane Trail at http://bit.ly/MeadowLaneTrail

Please direct questions about the lake and trail improvements to Michael Latka, 913-971-8659, or mlatka@olatheks.org.
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Mayor Michael Copeland. “We are listening.”

Since 2012, almost every area of City service received improved satisfaction marks. The areas residents say need most attention are traffic flow/congestion management, and maintenance of City streets, facilities, and buildings.

Residents continue to say Olathe is a great place to live, raise children, and buy a house. During the past three years, more residents identified Olathe as a great place to work, increasing from 78 percent to 89 percent, one of the nation’s highest ratings. The survey shows consistently high satisfaction levels throughout the city with no locations showing significantly lower satisfaction.

City Manager Michael Wilkes credited the City Council for visionary leadership and City employees for achieving sound results.

The 2015 DirectionFinder citizen survey is available at OlatheKS.org/Finance/StrategyandPerformance/DirectionFinder

**Students Show “Love Illuminates Life”**

The 2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration featured moving performances and presentations of top King student contest entries. This year, 4,272 Olathe middle school and high school students submitted entries in the categories of writing, visual arts, and multi-media related to the theme “Love Illuminates Life.”

Contest winners earned cash prizes and the high school winners in each category will receive a trip to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn., courtesy of Bott Radio Network.

This year’s Best of Show student winner was Kali Ray, 10th grade, Olathe South High School. She was recognized for her writing and oration of *Black and White*. Visit OlatheSchools.com, in the news section, to see the complete list of student winners.

The new Olathe Embassy Suites and Conference Center hosted the celebration on Jan. 17.

**Olathe Recognized as One of America’s Safest Cities**

Olathe was named the fourth safest city among the top 25 safest cities in 24/7 Wall St.’s annual America’s Safest Cities. The rating is based on low violent crime rates. All of the 25 safest cities have populations between 100,000 and 250,000. 24/7 Wall St. is an online financial news and opinion company.

**Be Alert During Highway Work**

I-35 Pavement Reconstruction to Resume

This spring, KDOT will begin the second phase of pavement reconstruction on northbound I-35 from approximately Santa Fe Street to 151st Street. By the last week of March, KDOT expects to move northbound traffic to the southbound lanes behind the barrier. Both northbound and southbound I-35 will be reduced to two lanes. During this entire phase, the southbound I-35 ramp from Santa Fe will be closed. The northbound ramp to I-35 from Old 56 Highway, and the northbound exit to Santa Fe will also close. Drivers should expect delays. The schedule is weather dependent.

For more information contact, Kimberly Qualls, 785-640-9340, kqualls@ksdot.org, or Joshua Welge, field engineering administrator, 913-764-4525, joshua@ksdot.org.

**Johnson County Gateway Project**

Get the latest updates about travel in the I-435, I-35, K-10 area at JoCoGateway.com. Sign up to get text alerts about the project.

All ramps to and from 95th Street & I-35, and 95th Street over I-35 are closed through the end of August 2016 for new interchange construction and accompanying improvements. If you’d like to receive updated traffic information specifically for the 95th Street & I-35 diverging diamond interchange project, email jocogateway@hntb.com. Or, questions may be directed to the project office, 913-577-0000.

**Overall Satisfaction With City Services Provided by Cities in the Kansas City Area in 2015 by percentage of respondents who rated the items as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Olathe KS</th>
<th>1ST</th>
<th>1ST</th>
<th>1ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and recreation</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of City’s solid waste system</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police, Fire, and Ambulance Services</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall quality of customer service</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of streets/buildings</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City water and sewer utilities</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of communication w/ the public</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City stormwater runoff system</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enforcement of City Codes</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic flow/congestion management</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ETC Institute (2015)

Kali Ray won the King student contest Best of Show award. Pictured with her are Olathe Human Relations Commissioners Vernon Avant, left, and Darnell Hunt, right.
Olathe Recognized as Healthiest Employer

The City of Olathe is a winner of the 2016 Healthiest Employers for the second year in a row. The awards program is presented by the Kansas City Business Journal. Select employers from Kansas City were named winners at the awards program Feb. 9. Winning organizations were honored for their commitment to employee health, with exceptional corporate wellness programming.

What’s Being Built in Olathe

Embassy Suites and Olathe Conference Center is now open at K-10 and Ridgeview Road. The new hotel features 200 guest suites, and the attached conference center has a 16,800 square foot ballroom with seated food service for up to 1,000 people.

QuikTrip will build a new convenience store and gas station on the northwest corner of Santa Fe and Ridgeview, relocating their current location on the southeast corner of that intersection. This will involve tearing down the vacant bank building and the adjacent retail building for the new location. Following completion of the new store, QuikTrip will repurpose the existing building on the southeast corner and remove the fuel canopy and underground storage tanks.

Kids R Kids daycare had a rezoning approved for a location on Mahaffie Circle across the street from the Garmin campus. This location will replace the existing center they operate on Mahaffie Street, south of 151st Street.

Cathedral Builder Awards Recognize Parker, Sims

The Olathe Cathedral Builder Award honors extraordinary people and leaders whose service, vision, and lasting contributions have helped build our great community. Mayor Michael Copeland presented two awards at the March 4 State of the City event.

Harlan Parker

A tireless champion for quality education and children, Harlan Parker served Olathe youth for 16 years as a member of the Olathe Board of Education.

As a charter member of the Mayor’s Christmas Tree Fund Board and chairman of KidsTLC’s “For the Children” Annual Campaign, Parker has positively impacted countless children suffering from hardship, abuse, and neglect.

“I would be challenged to find a community leader with more heart and deeper passion for helping our most vulnerable,” says Mayor Copeland.

Wayne Sims

The transformed lives of tens of thousands of foster children and families are the legacy of Wayne Sims, retired CEO of KVC Health Systems.

Headquartered in Olathe, KVC is leading the way in innovative best practices that are revolutionizing child welfare and behavioral health care services here and around the world.

“Our high quality of life starts with a fundamental commitment to our children, and I can’t think of anyone who has done more to fulfill that commitment,” says Mayor Copeland about Sims.
Olathe’s Waste Diversion Hits Record High

Olathe residents set a new record by diverting 43.88 percent of waste from the landfill during 2015. This is up from 41.10 percent of waste diverted in 2014 and 38.29 percent in 2013. The national waste diversion average is 34.50 percent.

“Olathe residents are making greater efforts to keep recyclable waste out of landfills,” says Kent Seyfried, City of Olathe Solid Waste Manager. “This allows us to keep trash and recycling rates at a reasonable price for our customers. When we increase our waste diversion rate, we spend less on the cost of waste disposal.”

Recycling Tips

- **Reduce** by using only things that are necessary. Buy products that are reusable or in bulk to consume less packaging.
- **Reuse** by donating items to thrift stores or charitable organizations, or sell them online. Donate leftover cleaners, paint, and oil through Olathe’s Household Hazardous Waste program—[OlatheKS.org/Content/Household-Hazardous–Waste](http://OlatheKS.org/Content/Household-Hazardous–Waste).
- **Recycle** household items such as newspapers, cardboard, aluminum, and plastic. Look for the symbol on plastics indicating items are recyclable.

Set up a recycling program at work. First, check with your management to get approval for waste reduction efforts.

What Goes Where?

If you are wondering where to dispose an item, download the free Trash Day app or visit [OlatheKS.org/OMS/Recycling](http://OlatheKS.org/OMS/Recycling) to search your options.

Sign Up for Free Electronic Billing

City of Olathe water, wastewater and solid waste customers are encouraged to sign up for free electronic billing. E-billing customers receive an e-mail link to their online account login page when the bill is generated each month. Customers have the option to pay their bill online or mail their payment through the postal service.

Sign up at [OlatheKS.org/CCS/ElectronicBilling](http://OlatheKS.org/CCS/ElectronicBilling). Once an online account is set up, customers can track water and sewer usage and account balances.
Trash Truck Fuel Moving to Compressed Natural Gas

The City of Olathe is transitioning to compressed natural gas (CNG) fueled solid waste vehicles, providing a cleaner burning and less expensive alternative to diesel fuel. The CNG transition is occurring for replacement vehicles. Currently, the City has seven CNG trash trucks, and plans to add 11 more this year.

CNG is a domestically-produced natural gas compressed in pressurized tanks. Natural gas fueled vehicles produce lower levels of emissions such as hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide compared to vehicles using diesel and gasoline. Since CNG burns cleaner, it also reduces vehicle maintenance costs.

The City of Olathe is working with Johnson County Government to build a CNG fueling facility, which would also serve Johnson County Transit.

Time to Test Irrigation Systems

With spring around the corner, many property owners may be making arrangements to activate lawn irrigation systems. Letters will be mailed soon reminding those with irrigation systems to have their backflow prevention assemblies tested. If you are not planning to use your system this year, the test is still required.

There is potential for contaminants such as lawn fertilizers, chemicals, and pesticides to enter the City’s water supply through cross connections to irrigation systems. This required testing ensures safe water for all water customers by eliminating potential water contamination through cross connections. For more information about backflow prevention testing, visit OlatheKS.org/OMS/Water/Backflow/CrossConnection or call 913-971-9055.

Taking It to the Streets

The coming construction season will be another active one for street maintenance throughout Olathe, with work planned on 124 lane miles. Find out if streets near you are scheduled for maintenance by viewing the interactive Project and Construction map at OlatheKS.org/maps/projects. For specific project details, click on Street Maintenance Sales Tax Projects and then on the map area that interests you.

The City of Olathe mails notices to property owners prior to paving work on residential streets, and contractors are required to leave notices at front doors before street work begins.
Text to 9•1•1
Now Available in Olathe, Kansas City Region

Deaf and hard of hearing residents or those who have difficulty speaking can now text to 9-1-1 in emergency situations in Olathe and throughout the nine county Kansas City area. Individuals can also text to 9-1-1 in situations when they cannot speak safely, such as during home invasions or active shooter incidents.

Public safety officials say that voice calls are still the best way to contact 9-1-1, but having a text option could be the difference that saves a life.

“This is a step forward in safety for our residents here in Olathe, especially since we have a significant deaf and hard of hearing population,” says Olathe Fire Chief Jeff DeGraffenreid.

An estimated 10 percent of Olathe's population has a hearing disability, according to the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

All four major cell phone companies in the region — AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon — offer text to 9-1-1 service to their wireless customers. In order to text to 9-1-1, a person must have a text plan, and a phone or device capable of sending a text.

How to Send Texts to 9-1-1

- Enter the phone number 9-1-1, with no dashes.
- Give an accurate address or location as quickly as possible.
- Identify the type of help you need — police, fire or ambulance.
- Be brief, but don't use abbreviations or slang.
- Text in English. Translation services are not yet available.
- Do not copy other people on texts to 9-1-1. Group messages will not go through.
- Do not use emoticons or attach photos or videos. Texts with any images or multimedia will not go through.
- Texts sent to 9-1-1 have the same 160-character limit as other text messages.

“We want residents to call if they can in emergencies,” says Chief DeGraffenreid. “Voice calls allow dispatchers to gather more information more quickly in an emergency.”

Unlike phone calls, text messages do not provide the sender's exact location, and the service is not available when roaming. The text to 9-1-1 service is not yet available in other parts of Kansas.