JOPLIN CITY MANAGER'S

Listening Tour Survey



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What is the Listening Tour?

It is an honor to serve the Joplin community as City Manager. Joplin is my hometown and it is a special and unique experience for me to serve such a wonderful and promising community. I know Joplin has the opportunity to thrive and to be a special place that offers a high quality of life. To turn this opportunity into a reality, it is important to me, and my coworkers to hear your thoughts as to how Joplin can improve. For this reason, it was important for me to embark on a "Listening Tour" so that I could hear your ideas and concerns about the future of our community. With your feedback, the City of Joplin can make plans that will address your specific concerns and position the community to have a bright future.

As part of the "Listening Tour", five questions were asked:

What makes Joplin special?

What can Joplin do better?

What do you see as opportunities for Joplin?

What is the biggest threat facing our community?

What do you see for the future of Joplin in the next 5, 10, 15 years?

I am so thankful for the thoughtful responses that you provided to those questions. With nearly 1,400 people responding to the survey, across 5 questions, gives me approximately 7,000 responses. Many respondents had multiple thoughts to answer each question, so I believe the survey yielded 15,000 data points to consider as we make Joplin thrive.

As you will see in the following report, I have provided an executive summary to communicate what your responses tell me, and what that could mean for future planning efforts. Following the summary for each question, you will see a chart that categorizes the individual responses and then a more specific definition of those categories.

The feedback provided is powerful, you may question or disagree with responses but to build a community where all can thrive, all concerns and ideas should be part of a broader conversation about our community's trajectory. I look forward to making this information actionable and translating it to change. Please continue to follow the City's communication streams through social media, public meetings, or news outlets. Your voice and encouragement will sustain and provide the force necessary to see results.



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QUESTION 1 "What makes Joplin Special?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What makes Joplin special? That is an easy question but one with many answers! Joplin is a cohesive community that enjoys a small-town atmosphere. It is easy to see how cohesive we are as a community when reflecting not only on the recovery efforts following the 2011 tornado but to see the community support efforts such as building the new school on Dover Hill, Prop B, the Harry M. Cornell arts complex, and many non-profits. Did you know that as a community, we are the most chari-table city in the state of Missouri? As of 2015, according to philanthropy.com, on average the Joplin community gave approximately 4.73% of personal income to charitable organizations. As a community, we take care of others, we give to others, we assist, and we support. Yes, we are cohesive, and it is a value statement, and our strength.

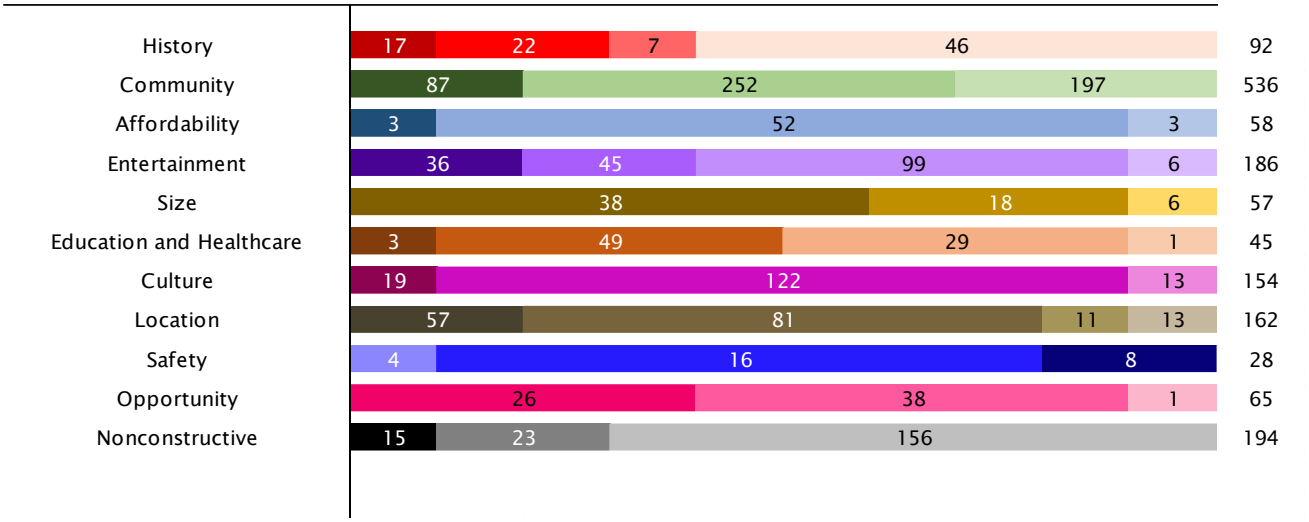
A strength is a positive quality, or for a city, something that can be leveraged to improve the community. I can't think of a better strength for a city to have than to be a cohesive community. If we are cohesive, we have the ability to achieve any outcome that we set our collective minds on. Joplin can rally together as it has done before to build a better community for future generations.

A strength must also be maintained, just like a muscle, Joplin should continue to use it's cohesiveness, friendly atmosphere, and other strengths to maintain our character. If we don't maintain our strength, we risk losing the city's identity and the ability to improve the community.

As an organization, the City of Joplin, should encourage and support activities that build cohesiveness. This can take many forms but in essence, the City of Joplin should prioritize plans that improve quality of life initiatives that bring us together collectively around shared values and ideas and provide the ability to strengthen relationships. This could mean enhancing community events like Third Thursday, or to a greater degree, strengthening citizen engagement using models similar to previous efforts such as the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team (CART). On a neighborhood level, the North Heights neighborhood gives great examples such as Porchfest that provides the opportunity to build bonds and enrich our quality of life. The options and ideas that can bring us together are endless and exciting.

QUESTION #1 GRAPH

What makes Joplin Special?



Common Themes

Architecture	Route 66	Mining	History (general)
Family-Oriented	Cohesiveness	Friendliness	
Affordable Housing	Cost of Living	Affordability (general)	
Events and Arts	Parks and Trails	Shopping and Restaurants	Entertainment (general)
Population	Sq. Mileage	Size (general)	
Variety	Quality	Accessibility	Education and Healthcare
Politics	Small Town Atmosphere	Religion	
Proximity	Centrally Located	Topography	Location (general)
Low Crime Rate	Good Police Force	Safety (general)	
Entr. & Small Business Opps	Potential for Growth	Opportunity (general)	
Anti-mask/COVID Comments	Political Comments	Nonconstructive (general)	

Top Bar

Bottom Bar

DETAILED SUMMARY

COMMON THEMES

- HISTORY
- COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE
- COST OF LIVING
- ENTERNTAINMENT AND RESTAURANTS
- CULTURE
- NON-CONSTRUCTIVE
- LOCATION
- SAFETY
- TRAILS AND PARKS
- POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITY
- SIZE

HISTORY

Many citizens enjoy the history behind Route 66, Bonnie and Clyde and their time in Joplin, the only mining days, Joplin's bootlegging and jazz roles. Recent history includes the tornado and post-recovery efforts.

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

People appreciate how the community came together after the tornado and in other tragedies such as COVID-19. They commonly mention how friendly the people in the community are. Everyone pitches in when they see someone in need. There are many ways to get involved in the community whether through leadership or groups/activities/volunteering. There is a sense of pride in Joplin. People here are hard-working with strong values. Some people were born and raised here, others find it an easy community to raise their families in, and some have come back after being away because they enjoy the community. For those not born and raised here they find the friendliness of the people and strong sense of community appealing.

COST OF LIVING

Affordable for families, retirees, budding entrepreneurs. Low cost of living but a high quality of life is still to be had. There is affordable entertainment for everyone.

ENTERTAINMENT AND RESTAURANTS

Joplin is a hub for shopping and local retail. The city has many major amenities and an abundance of restaurants both local and chains. There are always downtown events in the summer with Third Thursday being the biggest draw and appeal. Prior to COVID-19 there were always shows and entertainment being brought in. Many people enjoy the arts community as well as the freedom to host events such as pride fests, cruises, car shows, etc.

CULTURE

The conservative values of the area (a few of answers say it's the progressive values). The community has a strong religious/spiritual base. The entire community enjoys the "small town feel"

and atmosphere. There are many citizens here from a variety of backgrounds.

NON-CONSTRUCTIVE

Non-constructive statements consist of mask mandate complaints, City Council complaints or other derogatory and non-constructive statements/remarks.

LOCATION

Joplin is at the crossroads of America. It's a hub for surrounding cities for entertainment, food and events. It has a close proximity to other cities such as Northwest Arkansas, Springfield and Kansas City, which makes it a convenient location to live in. Joplin is the metropolitan area of the region. People enjoy Joplin's topography and it's mix of cityscape and rural areas. Due to its central location many people travel through the area from all walks of life statements/remarks.

SAFETY

Many appreciate Joplin's relatively low crime rate compared to surrounding areas, as well as that it feels like safe place to raise their families.

TRAILS AND PARKS

Joplin has many beautiful parks. There are areas of natural beauty, such as the Grand Falls and areas near the trails and parks. Our parks are clean and safe. Lately we have had an abundance of growth for trails and places to walk/ride bikes. They are good family areas.

POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITY

Joplin has great opportunities for small businesses, and there are quite a few in the city. The Chamber and growing entrepreneur population have the ability to grow Joplin and bring in other young professionals and major companies. There has been an uprising in growth since the tornado and a constant desire for improvement. There is plenty of potential in the city, as many feel. People enjoy the job/work opportunities. With continued investment in schools and higher wages Joplin could grow immensely, along with nurturing cultural growth. Optimal place for businesses to grow due to location.

"It's a city filled with potential..."



SIZE

Joplin is a small town with a "larger city" feeling. The population is small and a mix of rural and city living. People enjoy that while smaller in size it has everything they feel they need.

QUESTION 2

"What is something Joplin could do better?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The question, 'what can Joplin do better?' provides the most difficult responses to address because the answers challenge the community to confront barriers that keep the city from thriving. These are the issues, that left unaddressed, can in some way negate other efforts to improve the community. The most meaningful and impactful improvement comes from recognizing, accepting, and resolving weaknesses. The feedback provided to this response presents an opportunity for the community to make the greatest stride possible towards improvement.

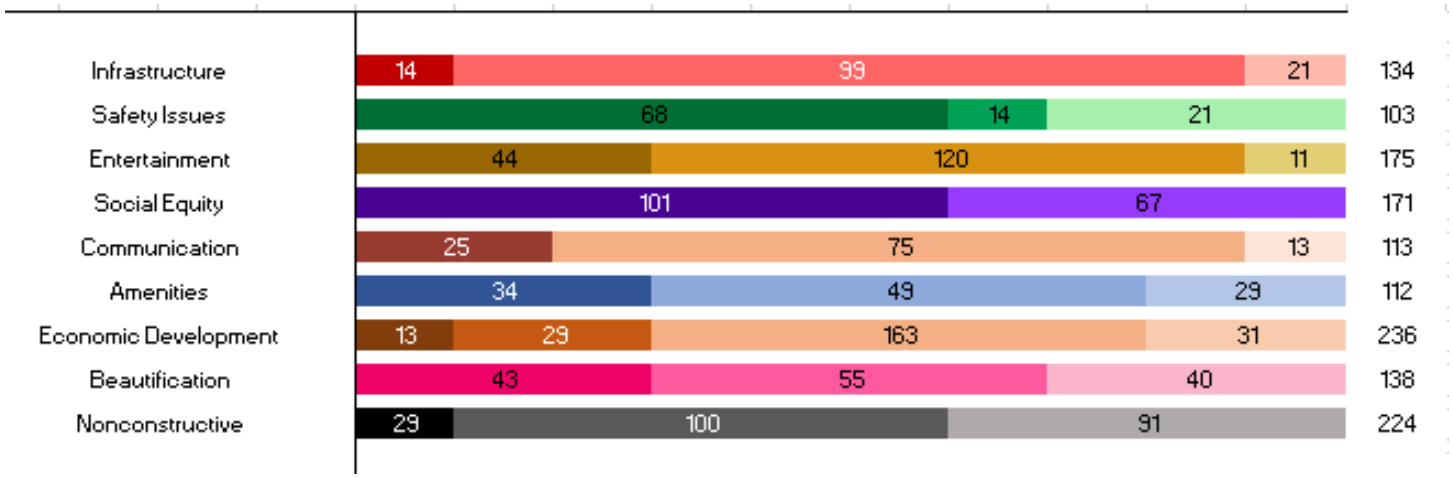
Like many other cities around the country, Joplin faces a need to address societal and community issues related to homelessness, diversity, and inclusion. In regards to homelessness, responses to the survey show that Joplin is a community that aids those in need, while also indicating homelessness issues are an area of concern. This suggests that the City may need to balance the aid provided by the community with efforts that limit the opportunity for those in need to take advantage of the existing systems, processes, organizations, generosity, and support provided by the community. Did you know that 42% of all structure fires within the City can be attributed to the vandalism of vacant and empty structures? Because Joplin is a giving and supportive community, the community becomes an attractive environment for those in need. Without community supported efforts to balance and deter those that harm, vandalize, and threaten the safety and viability of the community, it will hamper the City's ability to grow and thrive.

The bright future that Joplin can have as a community, and all the benefits that come with calling Joplin home, should be available, in equal measure, to all citizens and businesses regardless of age, religion, income, race, gender, or any other demographic characteristic. The community's strength is the cohesiveness that allows for problem solving, improvement, aid, and support. Not including everyone in the community diminishes that cohesiveness which threatens to mire the ability to enhance our City.

The City of Joplin will soon celebrate its sesquicentennial, its 150th birthday, which marks a long period of the community's life. The community's collective age is starting to show in the form of deteriorating and inadequate infrastructure. The community will need to provide resources that will allow for the City to improve our existing infrastructure such as streets, sewers, curbs, and facilities. Additionally, the community will need to provide resources that will allow for new infrastructure such as fiber connectivity, parks, trails, schools, streets, so that the next 150 years will be as bright as the last 150 years.

QUESTION #2 GRAPH

What is something Joplin could do better?





DETAILED SUMMARY

COMMON THEMES

- INFRASTRUCTURE
- SAFETY
- ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS
- SOCIAL EQUITY
- COMMUNICATION
- AMENITIES
- NONCONSTRUCTIVE
- BEAUTIFICATION

INFRASTRUCTURE

Joplin residents see a great need for infrastructure planning and repair. Many feel that too many of the same roads are redone too often while street and sidewalk repairs on the North side of town are ignored. Many would like to see sidewalk repair and expansion done all over town for improved walkability to contribute to placemaking in the community. This addition would include more path/trail options near MSSU for students to enjoy better access to the rest of town and commute easily if they are primarily walking or biking. These improvements would also include alley repairs and parking expansions, specifically downtown. There is a mixed opinion on upgrading some roads (not specified) to four lane options vs. creating road diets. The respondents seem to wish for road diets to lead to further bike paths/walkability. Flooding and stormwater infrastructure is another concern for residents, especially near the Murphy low-water bridge.

There is also a call for improved technology infrastructure and upgrading what we have for the future to attract technology based industry, remote and youth. This is believed to also improve the quality of life for current residents. Technology infrastructure upgrades would include smart city initiatives such as improved street lighting, streetlight tempos and access to better connectivity. Residents currently feel the traffic light tempos are inconsistent all over town and would like to see improvements on perceived slow lights. Subsequently they hope that these changes would improve traffic flows on the arterial roadways such as Range Line. Roadways are perceived to be slow and congested.

Improving and expanding Joplin's public transportation network is a large concern amongst citizens. These would include adding more routes and expanding the hours. These changes would allow working and single families to confidently work jobs that may not be during day time hours, such night shifts in the industrial park. Residents also wish to see more travel outside of the city of Joplin such as to Webb City, Carthage, and Carl Junction. It's believed more routes would allow greater quality of life to low income families and those seeking healthcare outside of the allotted routes.

SAFETY

The reduction of crime rates, specifically drug related rates, is recognized and largely important to residents. Improved public safety would not only improve current quality of life for residents but would encourage and promote new families / businesses to come to Joplin. They believe more policing in neighborhoods and near vacant housing could contribute to the reduction, as well as increased monitoring in parks. There is also a great concern for traffic violations, specifically speeding, and it's believed greater monitoring on traffic infractions should be done. In addition to more monitoring / policing, there is a desire for harsher sentences for crimes committed, as well as harsher crimes for repeat offenders in any criminal regard. Similar to infrastructure upgrades there is a consensus that improved street / neighborhood lighting would decrease criminal activity, both downtown and in residential areas.

Residents would like to see an improvement in support for Joplin PD and Fire Dept. in both community support and funding. The desire is to ensure that the City can attract and retain public safety professionals. Respondents also indicate a desire to ensure adequate staffing for public safety.

Neighborhood watches / training.
Residents currently do not feel there is enough PD on patrol at one time. There is also a desire to see improved training amongst JPD. These would include diversity / racial training, mental health training to recognize those who are dangerous versus those who require mental healthcare. Some believe police are not thorough enough during routine stops or that "bullying" occurs during routine stops and not enough attention is given to serious crimes.

ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS

Residents have a strong desire to see more recreation for all ages. There were asks for more entertainment for retirees and the elderly, adults, young professionals, college students, teenagers and children. There is also a consensus that Joplin needs more activities for families to do together whether it be outdoor recreation or bringing in some sort of kids museum or science center. There were many ideas for events, activities and attractions that could be brought in to solve this concern and draw in people from surrounding areas, but a few of them are as follows: an aquarium, zoo, amusement park, science center, splash pads, go-karts, a greater farmer's market, and a wall / rock climbing facility.

Increasing Joplin's outdoor recreation, cultural events and festivals is another request of residents. People enjoy events like Third Thursday but want to see a wider array of events. Affordable activities for families to attend and participate is important to residents, as is expanding and further promoting our arts community and up and coming artists. Residents see this as an opportunity to boost the economy, especially if the city can host larger scale events such as concerts or professional plays. Boosting attractions would also incentivize youth professionals to stay in the area, as well as allow current residents to spend their money here rather than travel to surrounding hubs for entertainment. There is also a note of a lack of nightlife.

Another large sector of individuals would like to see an increase in sporting events of all varieties. This would include more league options for kids and youth, and those who cannot participate in school sports if they are from a low-income family. They would also like to see an expansion of youth sports and greater

support for the MSSU teams. Lastly, bringing in a ball team or sporting event to use the Joe Becker Stadium.

SOCIAL EQUITY

The growing homeless and panhandling population in Joplin is a great concern to many residents. They fear the image it brings to the community and would like to see a reduction of panhandling at intersections. People are no longer willing to walk downtown due to feeling uncomfortable/unsafe. They are also concerned with the trash and litter panhandlers leave, making the city look dirty. Residents would like to see more enforcement and deterrence of panhandling and the subsequent littering. They also see a greater educational need on outreach channels and organizations that better provide for homeless individuals.

Additionally, getting the homeless off of Main St. is important as it currently depletes the value of downtown businesses. Another concern is that not only are there not only enough services for the homeless population, but that there is also a lack of affordable services for low-income families and individuals seeking to gain better access to health and wellness services for food, mental health and overall quality of life improvements.

Joplin residents believe the community could do better to promote diversity and inclusion both culturally and for the LGBT+ community.

Responses have noted perceived racism in the community in which many people of color do not feel welcome or safe. There is also a desire to see a more diverse population in which this concern is no longer an issue and the City has made an active effort to promote inclusion and expand events that bring the community together and educate them.

COMMUNICATION

Residents believe there could be better communication from the City on internal processes like budgeting and spending, as well as smaller forms of communication on events taking a place around the City. Many have stated that they often don't find out about events until after they've taken place and would like to see a central hub of what's going on around town. They have also stated that they often do not feel heard by local government and that the municipality has an agenda for what is to be done rather than go by the will of the people. Residents also see a need for education for the community on ongoing issues and City operations, as misinformation and lack of education on issues contributes to tension within the community. There is also a desire to see the city develop more community and unity after political issues have created a divide. Residents would also like to see the City be bold in decision making that will move the community forward and create a more forward thinking and innovative society that embraces growth.

AMENITIES

Residents believe Joplin could do better in creating or bringing in public gathering places, venues or convention centers for large events and shows. There is not a place where events could be held to both give the community something to do and bring an economic boost if large shows/events could be brought into the City. There are also not enough casual places for youth to hang out and be safe outside of restaurants and shopping places. Another thing Joplin could do better is adding and promoting bike trails and paths. This would not only contribute to connectivity but would also expand the City's outdoor recreation. In

addition to bike trails, often drawing from a desire to be more like NW AR, is the improvement and expansion of city parks. This expansion would include more dog parks, splash pads and additional recreational tools and outdoor exercise equipment to promote physical activity.

Another perceived issue that respondents believe Joplin could do better in is building and supporting the downtown community. Residents crave a robust and thriving downtown and Main St. in regards to nightlife, upkeep of the buildings, new business and supporting old businesses and restaurants and creating a hub for events and activities.

NONCONSTRUCTIVE

Nonconstructive statements consist of comments such as "None", "Everything", etc. These comments are either non specific or derogatory and do not contribute directly to the question. Other statements include derogatory comments regarding the Chamber, City Council, and politically motivated remarks that do not contribute to the question. Many of the comments are not constructive in that they relate to COVID-19 and the mask mandate and not directly to the future of Joplin. There are many comments for and against the mask mandate as this survey was released at the time the mandate was put into place.

BEAUTIFICATION

Residents feel that Joplin could do better addressing blight in residential and commercial areas by reducing the amount of vacant and abandoned buildings and creating stricter code enforcement for absentee property owners and "slum lords" as well as enacting harsher citations for those who disregard ordinances. They would also like to see property owners currently residing in blighted homes or run-down properties held to a higher standard and become responsible for clean-up, mowing, and other forms of property maintenance. Many feel the abandoned buildings downtown ward off new business and families looking to move to Joplin and that they create a negative perception of the city.

The cleanliness of Joplin streets, parks and other areas of the city is also a rising concern. Residents have noticed an increase in trash, littering and neglect on both public and private properties, especially near panhandling and high traffic areas. They want to take pride in these areas and have safe, clean gathering places and recreational spaces for themselves and visitors. There is also a desire to give the city a fresh landscaped look in public spaces and restore many of the trees that were lost after the tornado.

WHAT COULD JOPLIN DO BETTER?

- Improve public safety
- Improve public health
- Address homelessness
- Economic development
- Progressiveness
- Improved infrastructure
- More entertainment
- City beautification
- Improved communication
- Education improvement

QUESTION 3

"What do you see as opportunities for Joplin?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An opportunity is a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. Joplin has a unique environment that is conducive to allow for many positive possibilities. Pursuing the opportunities present in the community will allow the city to transition from status quo to a brighter future. Without judgement as to which opportunity is the most important to pursue, there is a circular formula for a community to thrive. The "quality of place" or the City's "live-ability" which is defined in part by the strength of public safety services, strength of education providers, access and presence of desired amenities, unique and fulfilling life experiences, robust entertainment options, and a positive community image can provide the opportunity to attract people. People attract jobs and jobs create opportunity for economic mobility and prosperity. Please reflect on this formula as it is critical to understand where resources should be invested that will allow the community to take advantage of its available opportunities.

An overwhelming amount of survey respondents would like the city to pursue opportunities related to economic development, enhanced amenities such as parks / trails and a vibrant downtown, and expanding entertainment options. Investing in these opportunities has the potential to positively change the trajectory of the community.

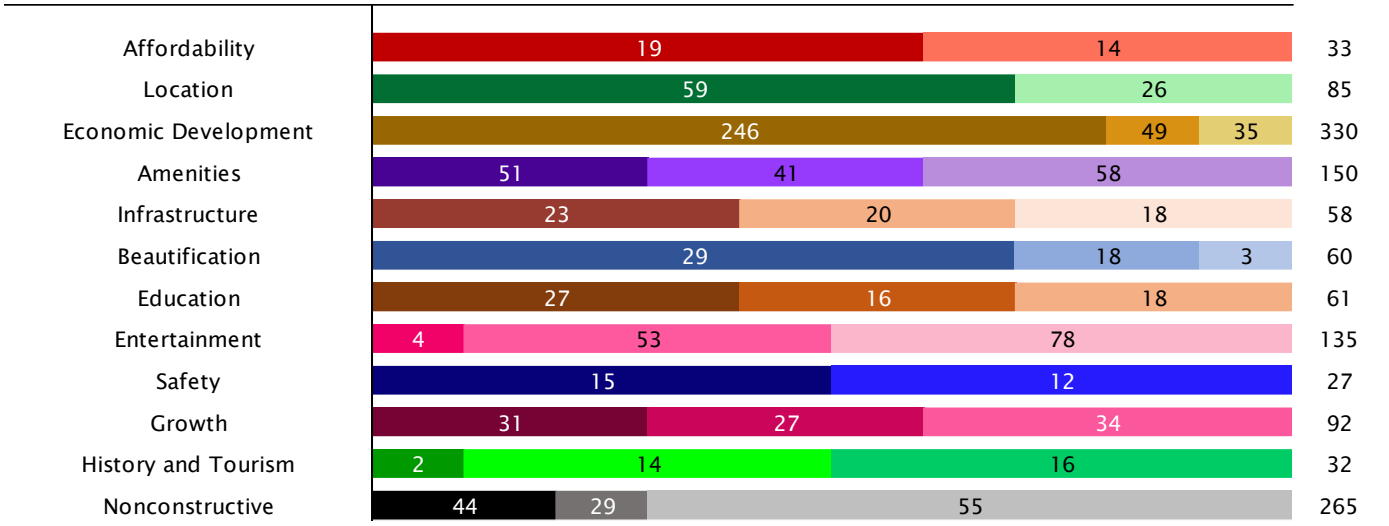
Through partnerships with the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Joplin Alliance, the City has a strong foundation and structure to improve economic development efforts. Did you know Joplin is ranked #14 in the country for working in the manufacturing industry? As a community, we should thank the leaders that have contributed to Joplin's growth and celebrate our economic development success. As we look forward to new opportunities, the City would be bolstered and strengthened by pursuing knowledge-based employers, serving the underserved entrepreneurs and small business owners, and creating a diverse environment of additional employment options.

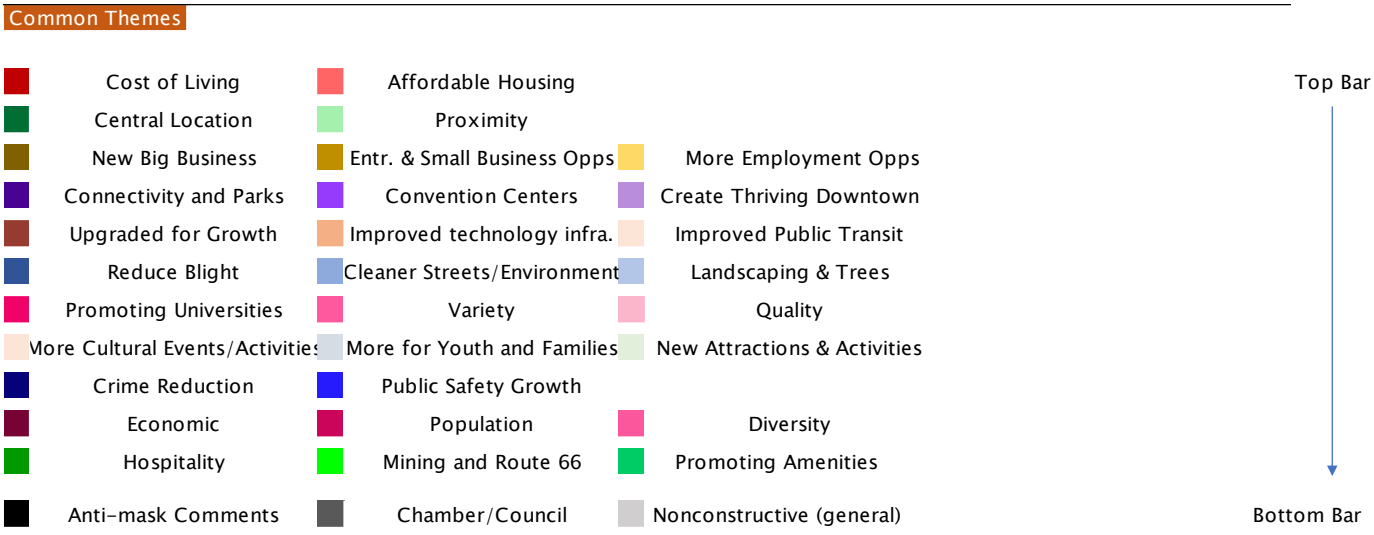
Amenities and entertainment options provide places or experiences that can help improve the community's "live-ability". The community has passionately engaged in future planning for Ewert Park, Memorial Hall, and the Parks Master Plan. Through these efforts the City will have a roadmap to pursue community supported projects that will enhance the City's amenities and entertainment resources. The community supported projects will require citizens to financially support delivery of these projects by approving additional funding.

Place attracts people, people attract jobs, jobs create opportunity for prosperity, and this will change the trajectory of the community by moving past the status quo to a brighter future.

QUESTION #3 GRAPH

What do you see as opportunities for Joplin?





DETAILED SUMMARY

COMMON THEMES

- DRAW OF AFFORDABILITY
- DRAW OF LOCATION
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- AMENITIES
- EXPANDING/UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE
- BEAUTIFICATION
- NONCONSTRUCTIVE
- EDUCATION
- EXPANDING ENTERTAINMENT
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- GROWTH
- HISTORY/TOURISM

DRAW OF AFFORDABILITY

Joplin residents enjoy the current low cost of living and see opportunity for higher income earning individuals to spur the local economy. There is also a consensus on the affordable housing in the community and expanding on it for middle class to lower income families. Some feel there is also an opportunity, due to the lost cost of living, to attract retirees. Joplin activities, entertainment and recreation is cheap and accessible. A few residents also see our low tax rates as a positive

DRAW OF LOCATION

The central location of Joplin creates an opportunity in various ways. The first opportunity is the traffic that comes through Joplin as it is the crossroads of the U.S. This could be an easy attraction for frequent travelers, as well as a promotional tool for businesses with high transportation or distribution traffic. Its central location also allows for easy travel to almost anywhere in the U.S. This is also due to the city's proximity to highways and ease of access to travel near and far. Not only is the central location ideal, but an overall location in close proximity to other popular hubs and destinations could be used to draw in consumers and new residents from surrounding areas to live, work and play. Many believe Joplin should become a destination for entertainment, food, and events.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Many residents note that Joplin has the opportunity to bring in new business to the city, both big and small. For a large portion of the population, manufacturing and industry jobs feel very important to expand on due to the skillsets they already have. Another portion wish to see the city utilize the land the community has for development purposes to bring in newer big business that they often travel out of town to visit, such a larger variety of entertainment and retail. Specifically, many residents wish to see a new Hy-vee grocery store. Residents see the low cost of living, open land, vacant

buildings, and proximity to new graduates from our schools as incentives for new businesses (both manufacturing and technology) to build here. They also see this as a way to increase employment opportunities. While some residents note there are good opportunities already, a large portion desire to see a boom in opportunities, as well as the quality of employment and higher paying opportunities.

Alongside big business, residents see great opportunities from small business owners and entrepreneurs, whether this be in retail or the food or tech. industries. They would like to see greater cooperation with the City of Joplin municipality to make start-ups easier and provide more incentives for small business owners to move here. This ideology goes directly hand in hand in hand with the opportunity residents see for thriving downtown culture and economy.

AMENITIES

There is a large desire to see an expansion of community bike trails. To residents, Joplin has an opportunity to draw in young families and professionals with a healthier initiative from the trails and the addition of any recreational activities they bring. Many compare the opportunity to expand on trails similar to how NW AR created and promoted their trail systems. In addition to this recreational activity, residents wish to see greater care and growth of community parks for families and entertainment.

Residents heavily noted the wish for venues, namely a community convention center, to draw in events, entertainers and people/economic boosts from surrounding hubs. Economic boosts would also be an asset to the community as the city grows its downtown and Main Street areas to draw in new business and attractions. Many wish to see a growth in night life, activities for youth and a promotion of downtown culture similar to the hubs in the surrounding region.

EXPANDING/UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE

Expanding and upgrading city infrastructure for the purpose of growth resonates with respondents. They see an opportunity to stay ahead of repairs and needs as the population grows and hope to see changes where necessary such as road diets on walkable streets and 4-lane roads for more congested ones. Along with these changes they hope to see greater traffic control and streetlight capabilities on streets such as 32nd or Range Line. In relation to traffic control infrastructure, residents wish to see an expansion and upgrade of the local transportation system, such as the airport, trolleys and expanded walkability for those who wish to reduce car usage or cannot drive. Residents also desire to see improved internet capabilities and technology infrastructure in correlation with the hope to bring in modern business and technology related start-ups.

BEAUTIFICATION

Residents see a need to clean up the city. That means landscaping and public green spaces, as well as the continued addition of trees in the tornado zone. It also means a reduction of littering, specifically near high traffic or panhandling areas, on streets or in parks, a reduction of neighborhood blight and dilapidated or vacant buildings downtown.

Beautification campaigns provide an opportunity for residents to take pride in their community and neighborhoods, as well as entice visitors and potential businesses.

NONCONSTRUCTIVE

Nonconstructive statements consist of comments such as "None", "Everything", etc. These comments are either non specific or derogatory and do not contribute directly to the question. Other statements include derogatory comments regarding the Chamber, City Council, and politically motivated remarks that do not contribute to the question. Many of the comments are not constructive in that they relate to COVID-19 and the mask mandate and not directly to the future of Joplin. There are many comments for and against the mask mandate as this survey was released at the time the mandate was put into place.

EDUCATION

Promotion and support of the education system in Joplin is considered another opportunity for the community. Residents believe a combination of the variety, accessibility, and affordability of this system should be an incentive for families to move here and young adults to seek further education here. The city has multiple universities that also act as economic boosters in the way they bring students in. Residents would also like to see a rally around the college atmosphere for MSSU, as well as create a culture that we are a "college town". An improvement citizens see that could be made to the current educational system is creating more opportunities for young children to receive quality education. A subset of individuals see opportunities to educate the community on current social equity issues such as diversity or homelessness.

EXPANDING ENTERTAINMENT

Post pandemic residents hope to see an increase in events such as Third Thursday, cultural events, an encouragement of the arts community and uptake of adult entertainment outside of bars and restaurants. They see an opportunity to be a hub of entertainment for concerts, shows, increased entertainment for families and youth such as children's museums or science centers, and safe places for teenagers to attend and spend their free time. Attractions such as a new theatre, farmer's market, sporting events, etc., could be used to spur the local economy and draw in families and young professionals.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Residents believe a reduction in crime and drug rates could incentivize more people to not only come to the city but to stay or tour. They also see an opportunity to support public safety and increase police presence, including additional staffing.

GROWTH

As the community has developed out of recovery from the 2011 tornado, residents see an opportunity to keep propelling towards innovation and progressive ideals that move the community forward. They see many opportunities for a population growth and the subsequent economic growth that would bring, as well as an economic development as big retail companies that could be brought into the city. Embracing progressive ideals gives the community an, increase

diversity and inclusion, grow it's resources and become a hub to the region.

The proximity to our highways and central location could be used to promote Joplin. Many citizens responded without specification that they saw a potential for the growth of the community.

HISTORY/TOURISM

Once again residents see an opportunity to use Joplin's proximity to the highways and central location to catch tourists as they pass through and incentivize them to spend money here. To do this, residents hope to see greater promotion of the amenities Joplin does have, as well as it's rich history based on Route 66, Bonnie and Clyde, mining, our parks, restaurant culture, etc. With an addition of other attractions and new events, this effort would continue and contribute to growth, economic development and entertainment. Residents see an up and coming arts community and wish to see encouragement for this sector. Continuing to utilize the community's hospitable culture also encourages those visiting for healthcare purposes to visit from surrounding hubs and encourage economic development.



QUESTION 4

"What is the biggest threat facing our community?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

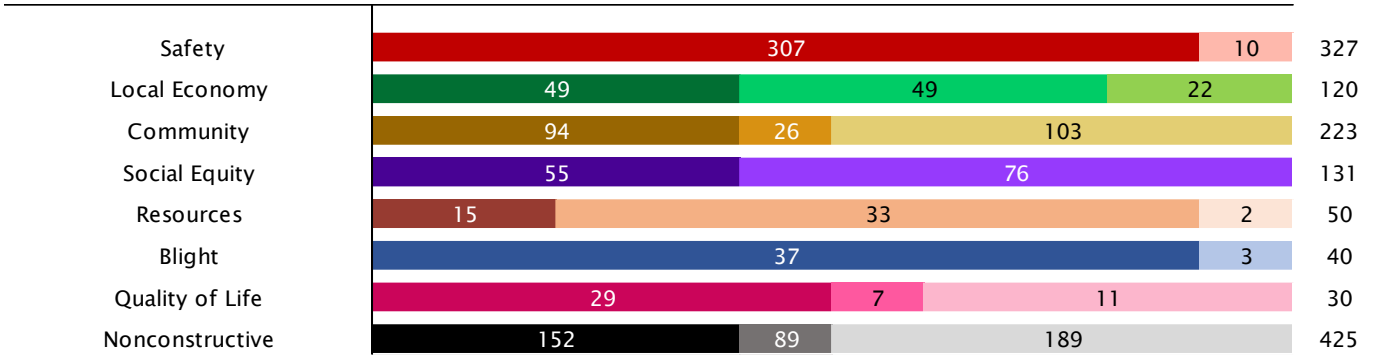
Like the question about the community's weaknesses, the answer to the question, 'what is the biggest threat facing our community?', can yield responses that are difficult to accept. A threat alludes to the possibility of something that could negatively impact the community into the future. A weakness is a known challenge to address today whereas a threat identifies what could be a future weakness.

A fundamental need for the entire community is the need for safety. Without a safe and secure community, our businesses, schools, and institutions cannot flourish. This value is best described by psychologist Abraham Maslow and his research that translated into Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. For a community, the need for safety requires that we prioritize investments and resources that keep us safe. As the community grows, there will be a need to expand city provided Police, Fire, and Health Department services. Additionally, more communities are embracing concepts that incorporate safety considerations into the design of physical environments. This is evident as communities embrace Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts and through the adoption of more modern building and design codes. These are only a few examples of what the City will have to proactively prioritize with future investments and resources.

Aside from physical and tangible threats to our safety there are other threats related to attitudes and behaviors that threaten quality of place. Those that responded to the listening tour survey pointed out the need to address an overall lack of vision, apathy, resistance to change, and division that will plague the future of our community. These responses suggest that the community would like to see bold leadership to address the problems that exist now and to better position the community for the future. As a community, if we can set aside our differences, and rally together as it has done before, the community can conquer the challenges. Maintaining the status quo (in practice) results in decline as the community doesn't respond to the constant environmental change. These responses should provide a galvanizing moment for all in the community to be bold in their encouragement and support for efforts that will allow for a better future.

QUESTION #4 GRAPH

What is the biggest threat facing our community?



Common Themes

- Increasing Drugs and Crime
- Losing Small Businesses
- Division
- Racism
- Funding
- Neighborhoods & Buildings
- Lack of Entertainment
- Anti-mask and COVID
- Public Safety Growth
- Lack of New Businesses
- Apathy and Negativity
- Homelessness
- Brain Drain
- Infrastructure
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Chamber and Council
- Low Wage Jobs
- Lack of Vision
- Low-Income Resouces
- Lack of Health Initiatives
- Nonconstructive (general)

Top Bar

Bottom Bar

DETAILED SUMMARY

COMMON THEMES

- PUBLIC SAFETY
- LOCAL ECONOMY
- COMMUNITY
- RESOURCES
- NONCONSTRUCTIVE
- SOCIAL EQUITY
- BLIGHT
- QUALITY OF LIFE

PUBLIC SAFETY

In regards to public safety the public feels that the community and municipality can do better to support public safety services. Residents also see a great concern and growing threat to the community is increasing crime rates, specifically drug/ meth usage. Along with increasing drug rates they are also concerned with human trafficking, abuse, arson, violent crimes and petty theft.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Many people are concerned as a community they are traveling outside of the city to shop and find entertainment. They are concerned that their money isn't flowing back into the local economy and they would like to see a business boom that encourages people to stay here and that there are the necessary resources here to satisfy their needs. They are also concerned that it is not easy enough for new businesses to come to Joplin and that more incentives should be offered and less restrictions from the City. Some residents also feel that Joplin already has too many large businesses chains and that their presence creates a challenge for small business owners and entrepreneurs. They feel too many small businesses are closing or have closed and desire to see greater support for them. Residents feel the current job market does not offer enough positions with livable wages and that Joplin needs higher paying job opportunities. The lack of these high quality jobs are causing young professionals to leave the community to find a greater variety of job opportunities and businesses.

COMMUNITY

Residents have expressed concern with "small town thinking" and fear that Joplin will become stagnant if the mold isn't broken. They would like to see a city with a bold vision and ability to be innovative and

continue building off of the tornado recovery process. They are concerned that not enough of the community is involved in creating a better city and that there is a sense of apathy and negativity following strong divisive topics that have occurred. Another common concern is the division that recent political and health topics have raised in the community. To respondents it has caused "selfishness" and fear.

There is a desire from residents for more transparency from the City and more education outreach on hot topics that would allow decisions to be made proactively rather than reactively. They feel there needs to be a coordinated effort to mend distrust between citizens and the City, as well as a coordinated effort to mend the community as a whole.

RESOURCES

The largest concern residents have concern the "brain drain" occurring in Joplin. The community both lacks the resources to entice young families and professionals to visit or move to Joplin, but also that they are losing these families and professionals as a resource to grow the community. Residents also feel there is a general lack of funding and/or wise spending across the community. They feel the City does not prioritize proper use of tax dollars and that emergency services are under funded, as are child services funding, school programs and local support for low-income families and individuals.

NONCONSTRUCTIVE

Nonconstructive statements consist of comments such as "None", "Everything", etc. These comments are either non specific or derogatory and do not contribute directly to the question. Other statements include derogatory comments regarding the Chamber, City Council, and politically motivated remarks that do not contribute to the question. Many of the comments are not constructive in that they relate to COVID-19 and the mask mandate and not directly to the future of Joplin. There are many comments for and against the mask mandate as this survey was released at the time the mandate was put into place. Some residents would respond with "see previous answers".

SOCIAL EQUITY

Like previous responses, residents see a great threat from the growing homeless and panhandling populations and fear the perception they give the community. They feel this issue deters people from moving to Joplin and staying here. They do not feel safe walking in high traffic areas due to these concerns and are "embarrassed" of how it makes the city look. They would like to see a growth in mental healthcare and an education to the public on how to contribute to non-profits that are addressing homelessness and drug recovery versus giving handouts to panhandlers. As with other social equity concerns in previous questions many residents see a growing threat of racism and lack of inclusion in the community. They would like to see more education and encouragement for inclusion to make Joplin and the community more diverse and allow for people of color and people in the LGBTQ+ community to feel safe.

BLIGHT

Residents see increasing neighborhood blight as a threat in that there are many dangerous

structures, a lack of pride in the community and the perception of the community based on the neighborhoods' appearances. They would like to see increased code enforcement and harsher punishments for absentee landlords and noncompliant homeowners. Many people would also like to see an education process for homeowners on current ordinances to keep neighborhoods clean. There is a call for vacant and dangerous structures in the area to be torn down or revitalized. Additionally, there is a subset of people that fear there is too much being torn down and that the community is losing valuable historical pieces in this process. They believe there is an opportunity to improve and modernize these structures and monuments.

QUALITY OF LIFE

There is a distinct lack of entertainment for youth and families in the area that residents feel contributes to the brain drain of the area. They feel there should be more family oriented entertainment businesses, such as a children's museum, or a greater variety of outdoor recreation. Increased outdoor recreation would also tie into the need for more health initiatives and walkability in the city. Increased means of walkability for residents would support not only healthier means of travel and reduce car pollution but would provide activities to do for people of any socioeconomic status. These infrastructure improvements could contribute to a health initiative education and contribute to trail expansions and increased healthier ways of transportation and provide safe activities for all ages.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QUESTION 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"What would you like to see change in Joplin over the next 5, 10, and 15 years?"

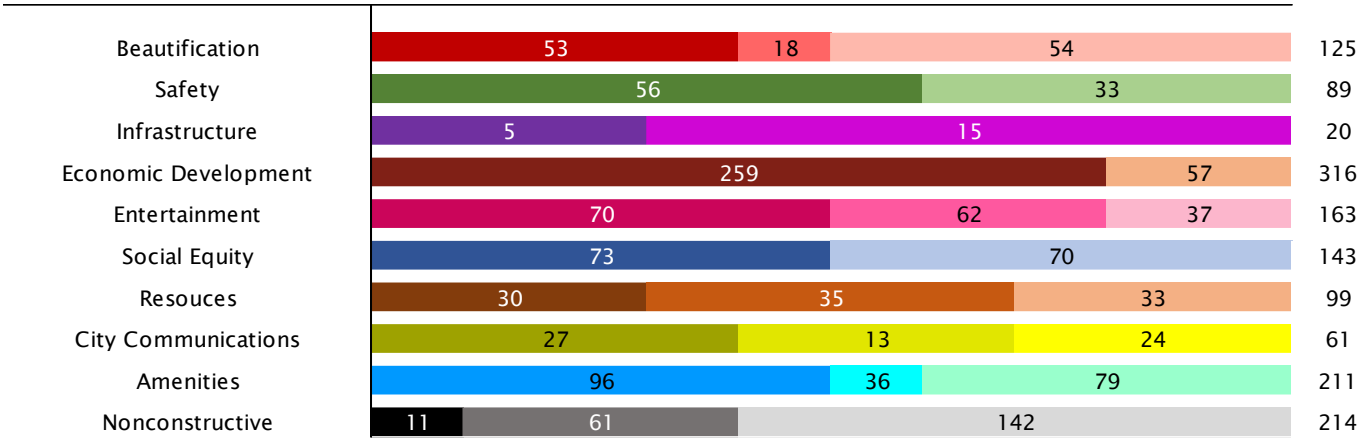
Different than the earlier questions asking about current challenges, this question was asked to elicit responses about the future of Joplin. The earlier questions provided a tremendous response with feedback that directed the community to improve economic development, invest in amenities, deliver entertainment options, pay attention to crime and maintenance, protect our cohesiveness and many other helpful responses.

In addition to those responses, this question yielded responses that were present in the other questions but not yet addressed. There is a desire to see a "beautification" of Joplin. Improving the outward presentation of our community can make a statement to future residents and investors that Joplin is a community of opportunity and not decline. Community beautification can take many forms such as cleaning up our streets and parks, enhancing landscaping and green spaces, but also removing blight. Beautification is also possible if it is embraced by residential and commercial developers. Cities can require higher standards for new building and landscape designs through improved ordinances. Partnerships with existing residents and businesses should be pursued to create an implied community standard. Improving standards provides encouragement and accountability to the community as a whole.

Arts and cultural activities will amplify beautification efforts. Joplin is fortunate for the visionaries that made an investment into the community through the development of the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment complex. Beautiful scenes and extraordinary experiences will enhance the 'quality of place' and attract new residents or even those who felt it necessary to leave because of the absence of those amenities. Did you know that nationally, according to the Americans for the Arts organization, that the nonprofit arts and culture industry generated $166.3 billion of economic activity during 2015? This activity also supported 4.6 million jobs and $27.5 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments. Supporting arts and cultural activities must be one of the many strategies for Joplin to continue to pursue in the future.

QUESTION #5 GRAPH

What would you like to see change in Joplin over the next 5, 10, and 15 years?



Common Themes

Reduced Blight	Landscaping and Trees	Cleaner Streets and Parks
Reduced Crime and Drugs	Public Safety Support	
Improved Public Transit	Improved Streets/Sidewalks	
More Businesseses	Higher Paying/Quality Jobs	
More Community Events	Family & Youth Entertainment	Arts & Young Adult Entertainment
Increased Diversity & Inclusion	Decreased Homelessness	
Talent Retention	More for Low-Income Asst.	Education
Branding and Promotion	Tourism	Communication
More Parks and Trails	Convention Centers	Thriving Downtown
Anti-mask and COVID	Chamber and Council	Nonconstructive

Top Bar

Bottom Bar

DETAILED SUMMARY

COMMON THEMES

- BEAUTIFICATION
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- ENTERTAINMENT
- SOCIAL EQUITY
- NONCONSTRUCTIVE
- RESOURCES
- CITY RELATIONSHIP
- AMENITIES

BEAUTIFICATION

Residents would commonly like to see a reduction blight in both commercial and residential areas. There is a desire to see increased value and pride in neighborhoods that will encourage growth in the community and provide a sense of pride. Decreased blight would contribute to promoting Joplin and excite the next generations to move to the city and begin businesses and families. Respondents would also like to see increased landscaping and greenery in public places such as parks, walkways and green spaces near public facilities to improve the look and feel of the community. Not only do residents wish to see landscaped public spaces, but they wish to see clean ones as well. There is a common theme that Joplin streets and parks are dirty and littered. People would like to promote a beautification campaign that gives the city a cleaner and greener look that makes Joplin more appealing to live, work and play.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In coming years residents see a decreased crime and drug rate in which they feel safe to raise their families. In contribution to decreasing rates there are some groups that wish to see neighborhood watches grow and receive increased training and education to provide support for the police force as well as their neighbors. It is commonly noted that the community should support and uplift the police department in order to encourage increased training and safety externally, but also that providing this support could lead to a greater police force that continues to grow in size.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There is a desire for expanded and increased public transit. Residents hope to see more routes that run for longer periods of time in our trolley and MAP systems. For residents that work overnight shifts or in Joplin's industrial park there is no public transit that allows drop-off and pick-up times during these hours, which means that even if they are qualified for that position but do not currently have their own vehicle or means of transport that these positions go unfilled. The

need for overnight public transportation applies to the community as a whole and not only the industrial park. There is also a desire to see improved city infrastructure moving forward with repairs and maintenance of roads and sidewalks. Infrastructure repairs and maintenance contribute to the placemaking effect Joplin residents currently desire.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Joplin residents hope the future brings a major growth for economic development by bringing in new big business, creating an environment for small business and entrepreneurs. There is an overall desire to see many of the major retail and entertainment businesses that surrounding cities have. This includes Hy-vee and other grocery stores, Menard's, Dillard's, etc. Residents currently leave town to shop their favorite places and for those who believe in the future of Joplin, they would rather see their money spent in town and contribute towards the economy. With business growth people also hope to see more small businesses and start-ups that encourage innovation and bring in young professionals and families. This business growth would create more quality jobs with higher pay opportunities. Many residents state that while there are currently plenty of job opportunities in Joplin, they do not always suit the skill sets of the workers available to fill them. There is especially a desire to create an environment for new graduates from Missouri Southern State University so that they stay in town rather than leaving to up and coming areas like Northwest Arkansas.

ENTERTAINMENT

In the next 5, 10 and 15 years residents want to see an increase in community activities and events for people of all ages. It is also important to them that these events be available for all income levels. They want to see more festivals, fairs, cultural events, arts and entertainment for children, families, teens, and adults both young and old. They acknowledge that the arts community is growing and hope that the community continues to encourage this sector and support local artists and entertainers.

SOCIAL EQUITY

Residents hope the future of Joplin holds a more open and inclusive community for everyone. Specifically many people wish to see a reduction in racist ideology and a more diverse population, as well as support for minority owned businesses. There is also a desire to see more inclusion the LGBTQ+ community and an expansion on pride and education to youth on inclusion. Along with increased diversity, residents hope to see decreased homeless rates and panhandling. They believe the community needs educated on resources available for the homeless. With a decrease in homelessness and panhandling in high traffic areas, people believe families will be more prone to considering Joplin as a place to live and work and feel safe raising their families.

NONCONSTRUCTIVE

Nonconstructive statements consist of comments such as "None", "Everything", etc. These comments are either non specific or derogatory and do not contribute directly to the question. Other statements include derogatory comments regarding the Chamber, City

Council, and politically motivated remarks that do not contribute to the question. Many of the comments are not constructive in that they relate to COVID-19 and the mask mandate and not directly to the future of Joplin. There are many comments for and against the mask mandate as this survey was released at the time the mandate was put into place. Some residents would respond with "see previous answers".

RESOURCES

Residents are hungry for ways to maintain talent retention in the area and hope that the future holds more resources to do so. These resources are an overlap of upgraded infrastructure, amenities, quality education opportunities, a variety of entertainment and affordable housing and healthcare. On the flip side, they also hope to see more resources for low-income families before they fall into a cycle of poverty. These resources would help train individuals in basic skill sets with computers and hard skills that allow them to be eligible for higher income earning positions. These resources would also help provide food, safe childcare for those working to make life improvements and higher education opportunities. Joplin citizens see a large need for various education sources in current city issues, diversity and inclusion resources, education in social equity, funding for more school programs to get youth prepared for college, technology related skills and job preparation, and more diverse curriculums in the schools. These resources would require across the board collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors.

CITY RELATIONSHIP

There is a belief that in the future the community and City could do a better job branding and marketing itself as not only a place to live, work and play but to visit and enjoy time off with family and friends. Whether people visit during cross-country treks and make a stop off of the highways or are traveling into Joplin from surrounding hubs, residents want to see Joplin promoted as an attraction with various things to do and see. Many people currently travel out of town to regions like Kansas City, Branson or Northwest Arkansas and want Joplin to be seen as a competitive market and entertainment hub. An increase in tourism from this effort would also boost the local economy and further provide reasons for new families and young professionals to look at Joplin when choosing a place to grow.

People would like to better understand processes and decision making that occurs at the City level. Many feel there needs to be more transparency from the City to the public, improved education on ongoing issues, more outreach similar to the Listening Tour results and a great presence online to keep updated on events that are going to occur. Some residents feel they only find out things that happen at the City or events in the community after they occur and miss out understanding issues, making their voices heard and participating in community events. This greater education would allow them to take more interest in current issues and spread awareness on what is really happening at the City level.

AMENITIES

Residents want to see Joplin have a convention center and other gathering places and venues that can host all of the shows and events they hope to see in the future. Many express their sadness regarding Memorial Hall and hope to see

something in its place large enough to entice big name entertainers and encourage events that bring the community together to begin to heal from adversity and division the community has faced.

For the purpose of retaining talent and keeping families in the community, residents would like to see an expansive trail network in Joplin. These trails could contribute towards recreation and entertainment, health initiatives, transportation and overall placemaking and quality of life. Parks are another parallel amenity that residents wish to improve and expand upon for the purpose of recreation, entertainment and beautification. Growth of both of these amenities would position Joplin to be more competitive in the future and allow the city to be more innovative and modernized so that it does not get left behind. A thriving downtown and Main Street is also an amenity that residents see as a tool for economic growth, placemaking and another incentive to draw in youth families and professionals while giving current residents more to do . Downtown culture would include more nightlife in the future, interesting restaurants and food trucks, boutiques and shopping opportunities and places to host events and entertainers for shows.



THANK YOU!

In addition to those who completed the survey, I was able to meet the following people over coffee, in a meeting, or out and about!

Senator Bill White	Kelli Perigo	Kelli Norris – Airport Board
Representative Billy Long	Ashley Micklethwaite - OneJoplin	David Layne – Board of Adjustment
Barbie Huff – COAD	Jeff Haney	Dr. Enrico Esguerra – Board of Health
Ron Richard	Bill Scearce	Rylee Hartwell – Building Board of Appeals
Adam Parker	Justin Jahanshire	Ryan Jackson – Capital Improvement Oversight
Mary Ann Palmer	Rebecca Keller	Samuel Wimsett – City Tree Board
Rick Palmer	Jack Ryan-Feldman	Kevin Greim – Convention and Visitors Bureau Board
Vanessa Vigneaux	American Legion	Jill Sullivan – Historic Preservation Committee
Darrius Adams – Jasper County Commission	Joe Craigmile	Edith Triplett – Housing Authority
Clifford Wert - Connect2Culture	Kiwanis Club	Gil Stevens – Industrial Development Authority
Sharon Beshore – Connect2Culture	Morris Glaze	David Sweeney – Joplin Re-development Corporation
Dr. Dean Van Galen – Missouri Southern State University	Newsmakers Show	Taylor Green
Dr. Brad Hodson – Missouri Southern State University	Faith in our Hometown	Mary Gaarder – Library Board
Richard Russell	Joplin Globe	Pete Ramsour – Planning and Zoning Commission
Ryan Melton	John Donaldson – Liberty Utilities	Police and Fireman's Pension Board
Jimmer Pinjuv	Chad Evans – Arvest Bank	Patty Overman – Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Ron Richard	Jeff and Carolina Neal	Mike Mayer – Traffic Commission
North Heights Neighborhood Group	Jane Cage	Joplin Youth Council
Rotary Club of Joplin	Susan Hickam – Lafayette House	Mayor Ryan Stanley
Soroptomist	Jeffrey Sims	Mayor Pro Tem Keenan Cortez Sr.
Josh Shackles	Kyle Long	Council Member Gary Shaw
TJ Britton	Brian Eggleston	Council Member Diane Reid Adams
Dr. Melinda Moss – Joplin School District	Tony Dugger	Council Member Doug Lawson
Dr. Kerry Sachetta – Joplin School District	Jim Foley	Council Member Anthony Monteleone
Lori Haun – Downtown Joplin Alliance	Duane Dreiling	Council Member Charles Copple
Paula Baker – Freeman Hospital	Randy Moore	Council Member Phil Stinnett
Jack Schaller – Olsson	Larry Kenimore	Council Member Christina Williams
Clayton Cristy - Olsson	Jenny Hocker –Carlin Team	Former Mayor and Council Member Melodee Colbert-Keen
Jarrod Hogan – Anderson Engineering	Brit Hale – Carlin Team	Former Council Member Jim West
Jack Belden	Tom Franz	Former Council Member Taylor Brown
Jeremy Drinkwitz – Mercy Hospital	Russ Alcorn	Former Chief of Police – Matthew Stewart
Mike Seibert	James Whitford - Watered Gardens	City of Joplin Staff
Chris Jones	James Ledford – ADA Accessibility Committee	

Conclusion

I want to thank you again for your participation and feedback to the survey. The survey was intended to provide Joplin residents and business owners the opportunity to tell their local government officials their thoughts about the community. The next part is the most exciting. This information will be presented to Joplin's elected leadership for discussion at an upcoming Council workshop. With their leadership, we can begin to turn feedback into plans and programs that will deliver results. I encourage everyone to follow the planning process. Through the winter and early spring, City staff and community partners will begin drafting action plans based on our Mayor and Council's goals and priorities.

With feedback from the Listening Tour and the other community planning efforts like the Memorial Hall Study, Ewert Park Study, the Stormwater Master Plan Study, and the Parks Master Plan Study, you have provided the information necessary to deliver phenomenal improvements. Taking your feedback from information to actual tangible results will require much more. For these plans to become reality, as a community, we need to unite, support each other, communicate, and collaborate. After the tornado, the community didn't just talk about rebuilding, the community united, supported each other, communicated, and collaborated. Following through on these plans will require the same amount of effort and dedication.

The feedback you provided and then translated into plans and programs have the potential to positively change the trajectory of the community. Going from potential to real results will require the community to approve new funding and resources for the City of Joplin. We will need resources as we grow so we can provide a high level of service and so we can take on the new challenges that you identified. The community will need to invest in both physical infrastructure and public service personnel. Without additional resources for the city, our trajectory is only aspirational and results in the status quo. I know additional resources are possible because you have graciously provided the City resources in the past to get us to this point. Let's join together and do something special for the future of our community!

With your feedback, the City will begin planning initiatives aimed at resolving the responses.

