

COMMUNITY SURVEY '24

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The survey was conducted to gather feedback about how the City is meeting community needs as well as help guide future decisions by City leaders. *The survey captured responses from a total of 500 citizens.*

Key Takeaways

1 Consistent, High-Quality Service:

From 2022-2024, our performance has remained steady despite ongoing growth and change. We're especially proud to have received our first 90%+ rating in customer service, with 92% of residents satisfied with how courteous and polite our staff is. This reaffirms that even as we expand, we continue to provide the same (or better) small-town level of service that defines our community.

2 Outperforming National & Regional Averages:

De Soto's satisfaction scores are significantly higher than both the national and Plains region averages in two-thirds (23/34) of service categories:

Service	De Soto	U.S.	U.S. Difference	Plains Region	Plains Difference	Category
Overall quality of City customer service	73%	39%	-33%	42%	-31%	City Services
As a place to live ★	81%	49%	-33%	49%	-32%	Overall Ratings of the City
Overall quality of public education	79%	48%	-32%	47%	-32%	Perceptions of the City
Overall quality of street maintenance	70%	41%	-29%	35%	-35%	City Services
Snow removal on city streets	80%	58%	-22%	62%	-18%	Street Maintenance
City social media	61%	39%	-22%	38%	-23%	Communication
Overall effectiveness of City communication	59%	37%	-22%	37%	-21%	City Services
Overall quality of services provided by City	70%	49%	-21%	52%	-19%	Perceptions of the City
As a place to raise children ★	82%	61%	-21%	58%	-25%	Overall Ratings of the City
Cleanliness of streets and public areas	74%	53%	-21%	51%	-23%	Street Maintenance
Overall City Parks & Rec programs/facilities	70%	49%	-21%	52%	-18%	City Services
Mowing and tree trimming along streets and public areas	72%	55%	-17%	55%	-17%	Street Maintenance
Availability of info about services/programs	62%	46%	-16%	40%	-23%	Communication
Stormwater management and flood control	64%	50%	-15%	46%	-18%	Street Maintenance
Efforts by gov. to keep you informed about local issues	57%	43%	-14%	42%	-15%	Communication
Overall quality of law enforcement	66%	53%	-13%	57%	-9%	City Services
Overall feeling of safety in City	78%	66%	-12%	65%	-14%	Perceptions of the City
Quality of city website	53%	42%	-11%	33%	-20%	Communication
Condition of sidewalks	56%	47%	-9%	40%	-16%	Street Maintenance
Overall value that you receive for your city taxes and fees	41%	33%	-8%	33%	-8%	Perceptions of the City
Overall quality of water utility services	60%	52%	-8%	44%	-16%	City Services
Leadership provided by the local elected officials	43%	38%	-5%	32%	-11%	City Leadership
Overall effectiveness of the City Admin. & appointed staff	43%	38%	-5%	26%	-17%	City Leadership

3 Opportunities for Improvement Exist and are Underway:

Some of the areas where residents are least satisfied are ones we're already addressing.

Service	De Soto	U.S.	U.S. Difference	Plains Region	Plains Difference	What We're Doing
Access to Quality Childcare	16%	N/A		N/A		Working with State and County officials to help address childcare, including doing our own feasibility study on a Community Center that would have childcare
Access to Jobs that offer a living wage	25%	N/A		N/A		Encouraging economic development that brings high-paying manufacturing jobs to De Soto
As a place to work	43%	57%	+14%	53%	+10%	Encouraging economic development that will make De Soto a jobs hub once again
Quality of drinking water	45%	59%	+14%	59%	-14%	Building a new water treatment plant

Top Satisfaction Ratings

Top items rated "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" for each category - *compared to the national average, if available:*

City Leadership

- Leadership provided by City Council: 44% *(11% higher than US avg.)*
- Effectiveness of City Administrator and Staff: 43% *(17% higher than US avg.)*

Code Enforcement

- Enforcing exterior maint. of business property: 44% *(3% lower than US avg.)*
- Enforcing mowing and cutting of weeds on private property: 34% *(12% lower than US avg.)*

Communication

- Quality of newsletter (in utility bills): 69%
- Quality of City's email newsletter: 63%
- Availability of information about City programs, services, & events: 62% *(16% higher than US avg.)*

Community Development

- City efforts to promote economic development: 54%
- Overall quality of new development: 47%

Customer Service

- Always or usually courteous and polite: 92%
- Easiness of contacting the staff member resident needs to reach: 83%

Parks & Recreation

- Maintenance of City Parks: 86%
- Condition of park equipment: 77%
- Number of City Parks: 72%

Street Maintenance

- Snow removal on City Streets: 80% *(22% higher than US avg.)*
- Cleanliness of City streets and public areas: 74% *(21% higher than US avg.)*
- Mowing/trimming City streets: 72% *(17% higher than US avg.)*

Water & Wastewater

- How easy bill was to understand: 70%
- Quality of Water Utility Services: 60% *(8% higher than US avg.)*
- How well City keeps residents informed about water issues/disruptions: 54%

Community Priorities

Progress & What's Next

One of the most important aspects of the survey is identifying which City services the community wants us to prioritize. In 2022, the community pinpointed four key priorities; in 2024, the focus has narrowed to three as communication has moved off the priority list:

- 1 Planning and Community Development:**
 - 2022 Progress: Engaged the community in capital projects, though ongoing construction impacted satisfaction as expected. This remains our #1 priority moving forward!
 - 2024 What's next?: Focus on job accessibility (25% satisfaction) and child care availability (16% satisfaction), while ensuring continued strategic growth that aligns with resident needs; this includes the Southwest Growth Area Plan and updating the comprehensive plan.
- 2 Water and Wastewater Utility Services:**
 - 2022 Progress: Satisfaction with communication on water issues improved, and Water & Wastewater Treatment Plants are underway.
 - 2024 What's Next?: The new treatment plants are expected to improve water/wastewater value (43%) and drinking water quality (45%).
- 3 Street Maintenance:**
 - 2022 Progress: The Street Department saw satisfaction rise in six out of seven maintenance categories.
 - 2024 What's Next?: Prioritize pavement/pothole repair (56%) and sidewalk maintenance (56%) in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- 4 City Communication (2022 Only):**
 - 2022 Progress: Investment in new staff and communication platforms has paid off -- residents no longer flag communications as a top priority.
 - 2024 What's Next: While not on the top priority list, increased usage across all our platforms shows that residents still value and expect a high level of investment in communications. We will continue to maintain - and expand - efforts to sustain engagement and momentum.

Other Findings

- ✓ **Top 3 parks and rec programs desired:**
 1. Special events
 2. Nature-based education/activities
 3. Adult non-sport programs
- ✓ **Top 3 parks and rec amenities desired:**
 1. Walking paths/trails
 2. New indoor all-purpose recreation facility
 3. Community parks
- ✓ **Top 3 reasons why people live in De Soto:**
 1. Safety and security
 2. Quality of public schools
 3. Small-town feel
- ✓ **Top 2 types of businesses residents want to see:**
 1. Restaurants/bars/pubs (70%)
 2. Health and personal care stores (58%)
- ✓ **Communication Methods Desired**
 1. Texting communications (54%)
 2. Mobile app (33%)