

Overland Park Survey Verifies Long-Held Community Priorities

By the Numbers

Survey Results

72%

of respondents said, for city services received, the level of city taxes paid are “about right”

11%

recognize their city property taxes are less than neighboring cities

86%

support renewal of the 1/8-cent sales tax for neighborhood and city street reconstruction

82%

would pay higher taxes to improve K-12 education through lower class size and all-day kindergarten

64%

favor expanding higher education offerings to include more trade and tech certifications, bachelor's, master's, and PhD programming

63%

willing to pay more taxes for Johnson County Community College to expand its offerings

Results of a community scan of Overland Park voters, conducted jointly by the Overland Park Chamber Foundation and [Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City](#) (KCHBA), indicate community priorities are largely unchanged from when a similar survey of Johnson County voters was conducted in 2012.

Will Ruder, executive vice president of the KCHBA, said, “The KCHBA and Chamber Foundation initiated the survey project earlier this year, raising the money to support this from the business community. We believed it important to determine if the changing demographics, sustained growth and current pandemic have changed the community’s long-standing quality of life priorities and views on taxation. This information provides meaningful data for our organizations’ strategic planning and for community leaders as we contemplate the city’s comprehensive plan.”

“Overland Park residents are overwhelmingly optimistic about their city, their governance and their quality of life. Few communities I’ve polled are as positive as Overland Park.”

– Neil Newhouse
Public Opinion Strategies

Major themes emerged from the survey, indicating that despite the uncertainty created by the pandemic over the past 18 months, Overland Park voters still believe quality of life issues are important to the community's success. Retaining top-priority status is pre-K-12 schools, followed by crime and public safety. Closely ranked and rounding out the top five priorities are improving access to mental health care, economic development and job growth, and improving access to quality health care. Interestingly, “keeping the mill levy low” fell toward the bottom of the list of priorities.

The survey of 500 Overland Park registered voters was conducted by Neil Newhouse, partner and co-founder of Alexandria, Virginia-based Public Opinion Strategies. Public Opinion Strategies conducted a similar Johnson County community scan in 2012.

(continued on page 5)





Poll says OP's heading in the right direction

On November 2, Overland Park will elect a new mayor for the first time in 16 years. Voters will choose at least one new city council member, and new members for school boards, the [JCCC](#) Board of Trustees, and [WaterOne](#) Board. The decisions of these bodies impact us daily so we shouldn't allow them to be selected by a small minority of people. Just under 14% of registered voters turned out in the August primary. Better than 2019, but we can do so much better.

This election is a critical juncture for our community. The political divides we've seen nationally are manifesting locally in our non-partisan elections. The divisive style that paralyzes progress in Washington, D.C., will surely not be successful at home. Scare tactics and misinformation about issues proliferate in elections. It's easy to fall prey to what "everyone" seems to believe. Do your homework.

So many issues are at stake in the coming years for the leaders we will elect in a few weeks. In September the Chamber's Foundation and the [Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City](#) released results of a community poll which indicates community priorities are largely unchanged from the last poll conducted in 2012. The goal of the project was to determine if the growth in Overland Park, combined with changing demographics and the ongoing Covid pandemic, had altered opinions about quality of life and taxation issues. Largely, the answer was "no".

The project's pollster, Neil Newhouse of Alexandria-based Public Opinion Strategies, said one of the key messages of the results is "Don't screw it up." In a time when approval ratings are hard to come by across the country, retiring Mayor Carl Gerlach earned a 6-1 approval margin in this poll, with 75% of respondents saying the city is heading in the right direction. While acknowledging growth is an issue, 74% judged Overland Park to be growing at the right speed.

Not surprisingly, pre-K-12 schools and public safety top the list of quality of life priorities voters rate as critical to our success (as they did in 2012), followed by access to mental health care, economic development and job growth, and access to quality health care. Providing mental health education and services topped the list of priorities for which voters would pay higher taxes, though there were others, including pre-K thru 12, higher ed and infrastructure to name a few. Voters nixed higher taxes to replace the much-discussed chip-seal method of resurfacing streets as well as paying more for a new city hall.

What do these results mean to you? It's data, not votes, but it does indicate the statistically valid opinions of real voters who say they like our community, believe it's governed well and are even willing to pay more for quality of life amenities to make it better. They identified new issues including mental health and housing variety as priorities we must work on. Oh, and they LOVE JCCC. So take a look at the poll results at www.opchamber.org. Check out the candidates at votejoco.com. Match your issues with the candidates who will make your business prosper and build your quality of life. And make it happen by **VOTING**.



Tracey Osborne Oltjen
President & CEO
[@traceylosborne](#)

Upcoming events

Wednesday Wake-up

Wednesday, October 13 – 8:00-9:00 a.m.

American Legion Dwight Cowles Post 370, 7500 West 75th Street

Co-Hosted by Foulston Siefkin LLP

At this monthly networking event, make connections, develop lasting business relationships and create new opportunities while learning about the event venue opportunities available at the newly remodeled American Legion Hall.

To register, [click here](#).

2021 Series Sponsor: [Fortune Financial Advisors](#)



SERIES SPONSOR



Good Morning, Overland Park!

Friday, October 15 – 7:30-9:00 a.m.

Marriott Kansas City Overland Park, 10800 Metcalf Avenue

Our annual breakfast program where you learn about exciting developments happening around the city. Emcees Greg Musil, **Rouse Frets White Goss Gentile Rhodes, P.C.**; and Aaron Attebery, **Black & Veatch**; will keep you entertained!

Attend in person or virtually.

Promotional opportunities available! Learn about sponsorships from Celia at cfritzwatson@opchamber.org. Or, provide a door prize (minimum value of \$25). Contact Alex at acook@opchamber.org to coordinate.

To register, [click here](#).

Presenting Sponsor: [Humana](#)



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Executive Leadership Series

Featuring Brenda Sharpe, REACH Healthcare Foundation

Thursday, October 21 – 7:30-9:00 a.m.

DoubleTree by Hilton Kansas City-Overland Park, 10100 College Boulevard

Brenda Sharpe will share her journey through a 30-year career in the nonprofit sector, where she has often found herself a voice on the front lines of critical public policy issues that impact how people work, live and thrive. She will reflect on the importance of civic engagement, seeking allies, and cultivating the capacity of networks and leaders to advance sustainable change.

To register, [click here](#).

2021 Series Sponsor: [FNBO](#)



SERIES SPONSOR



Fireside Chats Series

Tuesday, October 5 – 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Chamber office or virtual attendance

Mayor Carl Gerlach chats with Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen in this hybrid program offered in person or virtually.

To register, [click here](#).

Series Sponsor: [BHC](#)



SERIES SPONSOR



Ribbon cutting celebrations

October 4 – 4:00 p.m.

OPRMC Transport Helicopter, 10500 Quivira Road

October 6 – 11:00 a.m.

Johnson County Museum Store, 8788 Metcalf Avenue

October 7 – 8:00 a.m.

Health Partnership Clinic at Shawnee Mission West High School, 8800 West 85th Street

October 7 – 4:30 p.m.

Ascentist Plastic Surgery, 14340 Metcalf Avenue

October 9 – 10:00 a.m.

Chiefs Fit, 9290 Metcalf Avenue

October 19 – 4:00 p.m.

International Accreditation Council for Business Education, 11960 Quivira Road

October 21 – 4:00 p.m.

Cross Law Firm, 8001 Conser Street

October 26 – 4:00 p.m.

SHC Roofing, 23764 West 82nd Terrace, Shawnee

October 27 – 4:00 p.m.

Budget Blinds of Overland Park, 7250 West 151st Street

SAVE THE DATE!

2021 Annual Meeting

Friday, December 3 – 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Featuring Mary C. Kelly, Ph.D., U.S. Navy (Retired)

Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Boulevard

Presenting Sponsor: [Netsmart](#)

We are pleased to have Mary C. Kelly as our keynote speaker. She will present:

- The 6 Stages of Any Crisis, Challenge or Change
- The 5 Steps to P.I.V.O.T for Success
- The 7 Business Growth Reminders

Promote your company as an event sponsor! For sponsorship opportunities, contact Celia at cfritzwatson@opchamber.org.



PRESENTING SPONSOR





Vote on November 2!

Be an Informed Voter!

Visit www.VoteJoCo.com for candidate profiles and videos of candidate forums hosted by the Johnson County Public Policy Council.

General Election Calendar

October 12 - Last day to register to vote
October 13 - Advance voting by mail begins
October 23 - Advance voting in person begins
October 26 - Advance ballot application deadline
November 2 - General Election – 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Upcoming Candidate Forums

October 5 – 4-5:00 p.m. at the Overland Park Chamber
City Council Ward 4 – Stacie Gram and Scott Mosher
[Register here](#)

October 6 – 4-5:00 p.m. at the Overland Park Chamber
City Council Ward 5 – Sam Passer and Sheila Rodriguez
[Register here](#)

October 7 – 2-3:00 p.m. at REACH Healthcare Foundation,
8131 Metcalf Avenue

City Council Ward 2 – Melissa Cheatham and Roger Tarbutton
[Register here](#)

October 12 – 4-5:00 p.m. at the Overland Park Chamber
City Council Ward 3 – Amanda Vega-Mavec and Jim Kite
[Register here](#)

October 13 – 2:00-3:00 p.m. at the Overland Park Chamber
City Council Ward 1 – Logan Heley and Ryan Spencer
[Register here](#)

October 13 – 4-5:00 p.m. at the Overland Park Chamber
City Council Ward 6 – Chris Newlin and Jeffrey Cox
[Register here](#)



Overland Park mayoral candidates Mike Czinege and Curt Skoog participated in a candidate forum last month. View the recording at www.VoteJoCo.com.



City Council Member Stacie Gram and Chamber Senior Vice President Beth Johnson helped Mark Parman, Senior Vice President & Market President of Kansas City, and other company leaders celebrate a ribbon cutting for **Equity Bank**'s newest location at 7035 College Boulevard.

For more information: www.equitybank.com.



City Council Member Tom Carignan and Chamber Senior Vice President Beth Johnson helped Dr. Dan Lee and his team celebrate the one-year anniversary of **Focus Eye Care**, 6930 West 105th Street. Dr. Lee has more than 20 years of experience providing eye care and treatment and management of ocular conditions such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy.

For more information: www.focuseyecarellc.com.



City Council President Curt Skoog and Chamber Senior Vice President Kevin Walker helped Nate Thurman, Producing Area Manager; and other company representatives celebrate a ribbon cutting for **Bell Bank Mortgage**'s first Kansas location at 11095 Metcalf Avenue.

For more information: (913) 804-4082 or www.bell.bank.

Welcome to the Chamber!

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Aaron Claar Agency, LLC

Aaron Claar, Agency Owner
1423 Martway Circle, Unit A
Olathe KS 66061
(913) 353-4774
aclar@farmersagent.com
agents.farmers.com/ks/leawood/aaron-claar

Insurance
Referred by Amie Walter, Academy Bank

Aspiria

Kathy Brown, Community Event Planner
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Overland Park KS 66211
(913) 285-5800
occidental@occmgmt.com
www.occmgmt.com
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Gerald Lee Cross Jr., Attorney
8001 Conser Street
Overland Park KS 66207
(816) 454-5297
lcross@gmolaw.com
www.GMOLaw.com
Attorneys

Daylight Donuts Overland Park

– Opening Soon!
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(913) 748-6944
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www.DaylightDonutOP.com
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www.encompassonehome.com
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www.mclainskc.com/overland-park
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www.meridianbusiness.com
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www.staffvirtual.com
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We welcome new connections!

Contact Stacey at scowan@opchamber.org or (913) 766-7604.

Community Scan continued from page 1 ...

Voters overwhelmingly expressed confidence in local leaders; with 75% saying the city is heading in the right direction and giving retiring Overland Park Mayor Carl Gerlach a 65% approval rating. Overland Park's city government was judged responsive to its citizens' needs by 76% of respondents, with 74% agreeing the community is growing at the right speed.

There is division of opinion on whether housing options are limited, with 56% believing an appropriate variety of housing options exist. Voter opinion is also divided on whether too many apartment complexes are being built (45% too many apartments/50% more needed). This issue is divided by partisanship and length of residency. However, there is significant support (64%) for policies to ensure smaller, lower-cost residences can be built throughout the city.

Questions about taxes revealed:

- Providing mental health education and services, at 84%, topped the list of priorities for which voters would be willing to pay higher taxes;
- 77% of voters favored paying higher taxes to increase teacher salaries in local schools;

SquadBuilders Medical Staffing

Ryan Vaughan, General Manager
8400 West 110th Street, Suite 180
Overland Park KS 66210
(833) 467-7823
info@squadbuilders.com
www.squadbuilders.com
Medical Staffing Specialists, Employment Agencies & Services

- Infrastructure improvements also rated highly with voters – 76% would pay more to maintain and improve city thoroughfares and neighborhood streets and 72% would pay to improve highway infrastructure, although 55% were not willing to pay higher taxes specifically to eliminate chip seal as the method to maintain neighborhood streets;
- Expanding higher education offerings in Johnson County to include more trade and tech certifications, bachelor's, master's, and PhD programming resonated with 64% willing to pay more taxes;

Johnson County Community College (JCCC) has an overwhelmingly favorable image in the community (94%), with 77% of voters agreeing the college is critical for economic development and 86% saying JCCC is preparing a workforce that is ready for the jobs and careers of today and in the future. **The University of Kansas Edwards Campus** is similarly held in high regard with a 74% favorability rating and 67% assessment on preparing the workforce.

To read more, visit www.opchamber.org.

Thanks for reinvesting!

SEPTEMBER MEMBER RENEWALS INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

50+ Years

Bear & Bear Associates

20-39 Years

High Touch of Kansas City
Hy-Vee Food & Drug Store #1
Parris Communications Inc.
State Farm Insurance -
Penny Hardesty
TranSystems

10-19 Years

BHC
KeyBank
OMNI Human Resource
Management

5-9 Years

Bambou Salons & Spas-
Downtown Overland Park
Capstone Insurance
Agency
Garver, LLC
APEX Career Services
Pinstripes, Inc.

1-4 Years

Andy's Frozen Custard
Hadel Financial
Bambou Salons & Spas-
Antioch & College
Brookridge Day School
Delmar Gardens of
Overland Park
BIOMIN America Inc.
My Place Hotel
Snyder Law Firm LLC
Wally & Co.

**Please support these businesses that are
investing in our community!**

Member news

Congratulations to the **Kansas City Monarchs** on its American Association championship win.

Health Partnership Clinic and **Shawnee Mission School District** have opened a [health clinic](#) at Shawnee Mission West High School.

Turner Construction Company and **McCarthy Building Companies** are among general contractors organizing [Construction Inclusion Week](#), October 18-22.

WaterOne has been judged the "Best Tasting Water In Kansas."

Johnson County Community College appointed Elisa Waldman to Vice President of Workforce Development and Continuing Education.

Pat Owings, CMP, DMCP, has joined **Agenda: USA** as Director of Business Development.

More than a dozen local **Foulston Siefkin LLP** attorneys were recognized in the 2022 edition of The Best Lawyers® in America and Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch.

Congratulations to Steve Baysinger on retiring after 13 years as executive director at **Blue Valley Recreation**.

The **Blue Valley School District** Board of Education appointed Darren Dupriest to the **Blue Valley Recreation Commission** Board.

AdventHealth Mid-America region announced the promotion of Bill Heinrich to CFO.

To submit news, events or promotions, visit your Info Hub through your Member Login at www.opchamber.org.

Click advertisement below for more information.




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bakerU.edu/entrepreneur



Last month, Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen joined the U.S. Chamber's Neil Bradley and the Topeka Chamber's Curtis Sneden in a virtual press conference to encourage Senators Moran and Marshall to support a scaled down, bi-partisan infrastructure bill.

Kansas Gas strives to create a better tomorrow

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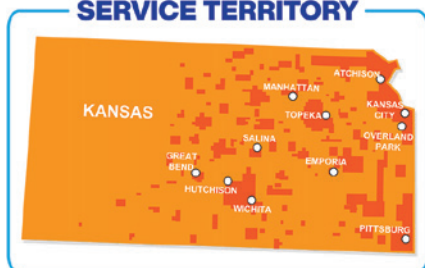
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Unemployment

	Aug. 2021	July 2021	Aug. 2020
Overland Park	3.4%	3.9%	5.5%
Johnson County	3.4%	3.8%	5.4%
Kansas City Metro MSA	N/A	4.4%	6.3%
State of Kansas	3.8%	3.8%	6.2%

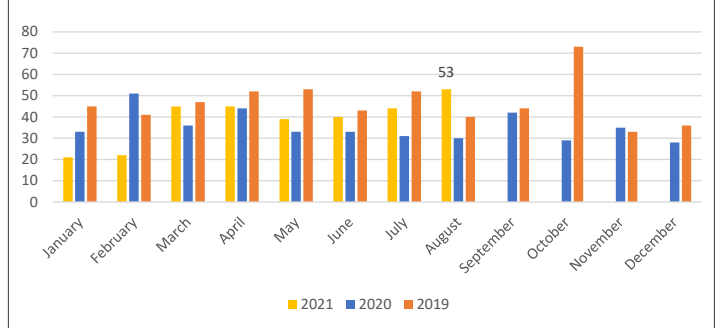
(These percentages are not seasonally adjusted)
– Kansas Labor Information Center (KLIC)
– U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Building Permits

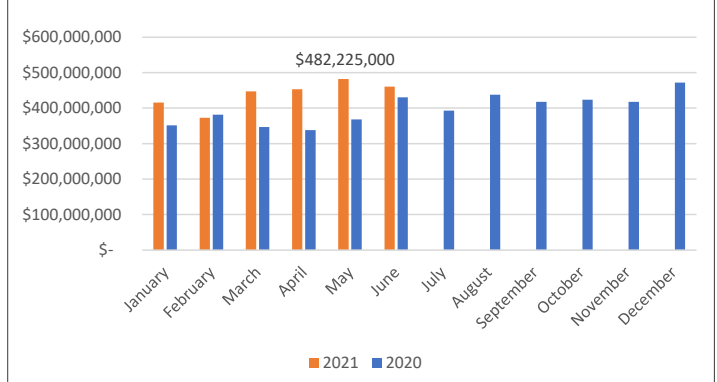
	New Commercial	Institutional, Schools, etc.	Other Commercial	Totals
Aug. 2021	4	0	49	53
Sq. Feet	21,883	0	8,800	30,683
Value	\$2,862,127	N/A	\$11,932,404	\$14,794,531

– City of Overland Park

Commercial Permits – June 2021



Retail Sales – June 2021



This newsletter is distributed monthly by the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, 9001 West 110th Street, Suite 150, Overland Park, KS 66210.

(913) 491-3600 | Fax: (913) 491-0393

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To add your name to this list,
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Affinis employees work every day to move communities forward

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Affinis is a civil engineering firm based in Overland Park. But more than that, it is a company that believes it has a responsibility to advance the quality of life in our local communities. That's a privilege Affinis employees enjoy and take very seriously. They believe in the company's vision – to Move Communities Forward.

As civil engineers and land surveyors, Affinis employees impact a wide variety of communities through expertise in infrastructure. The firm provides quality professional services that include roadway, stormwater, structural, railroad, traffic, and construction engineering, and land surveying.



Affinis' 43 professionals engage in communities both personally and professionally by building long-lasting relationships with co-workers, clients, and colleagues by knowing their needs and proactively fulfilling their expectations. They strive to make life easier for their clients and co-workers. It's a phrase you'll hear them use many times. They strive for the highest level of service and satisfaction with daily practice of their values - balance, collaboration, excellence, servant leadership and trustworthiness.

For more information, visit
www.affinis.us.



Advertising Opportunity!

Limited advertising space is available in the Chamber's **2022 Membership Directory & Community Profile**.

Our **primary annual publication** is distributed to all Chamber member companies and is included by the Chamber when sending relocation packets. It also is available throughout the year at the Chamber office and at events.

For ad information: Kathy Moore, MetroMedia, Inc., at (913) 951-8441 or kmoore@metromediapublishers.com.

Chamber Board

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