



**CITY MANAGER
UNIVERSITY CITY, MISSOURI**

MGT

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THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The City Manager is in charge of the city's day-to-day operations, including budgets totaling approximately \$57 million. The City Manager oversees a workforce of approximately 265 employees in a financially stable organization. The City Council is looking for a forward-thinking, collaborative, and transparent professional with strong communication skills.

THE COMMUNITY

In the late 1800's, the area that is now University City was primarily farms and small farming communities. In 1902, Edward Gardner Lewis purchased 85 acres just northwest of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair Forest Park construction site. Lewis decided to develop the area as a model city, a real "City Beautiful." Other architecturally significant structures and developments were erected – an austere Egyptian temple, the Gates of Opportunity. He also founded the People's University and the Art Academy, as well as two daily newspapers and two banks.

The [City of University City](#) was formally incorporated in September 1906 and Lewis became the first mayor. The city's name reflected the community's proximity to Washington University, and Lewis' hope that it would become a center of learning and culture.

In 1947 University City voters adopted home rule charter and firmly established a new Council-Manager form of municipal government. The City expanded to its current boundaries by the 1960s. During the decades following a number of annexations, the City saw much population change, development and redevelopment. (Sources: University City Website, and its attributed sources.)



A significant influence in University City is its proximity to [Washington University in St. Louis](#). Founded in 1853, Washington University has a student population of approximately 15,000 and is one of the top universities in the nation. The City is proud of its appealing mix of college-town vibe and its eclectic blend of urban lifestyles. Although the main campus of Washington University does not rest in University City, the University's presence adds much to the cultural underpinnings of the community and contributes significantly to making University City a desirable place to live.

Most commercial development in University City is located on two major thoroughfares, Olive Boulevard and Delmar Boulevard. These two roadways run parallel to each other, traversing the city from east to west, with Olive Boulevard extending beyond the western city limits. Along with the nationally renowned Michigan Avenue in Chicago and St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans, [Delmar Boulevard in the University City Loop](#) was designated as one of the "Great Streets in America" by the American Planning Association. (Source: City and the Delmar Loop Websites.)

University City and its service clubs sponsor a robust variety of community events and programs throughout the year. An annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, U City in Bloom events, the Starlight Concert series and U City Summer Band concerts in Heman Park, Farmer's Market, Artist Installations like Mannequins in the Loop, and the annual University City Jazz Festival are just a few of the events enjoyed by many in the City and region.

Larger than New York City's Central Park, [Forest Park](#) is in University City's backyard, resting east of the border in the City of St. Louis. The park features a variety of attractions, including the St. Louis Zoo, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Missouri History Museum, and the St. Louis Science Center and Planetarium.

A SNAPSHOT OF UNIVERSITY CITY'S DEMOGRAPHICS TODAY:

2024 (est.) Population: 35,065

Median Age: 36.3

Land area: Six square miles

University City's diversity: 51% White, 41% African American, and 4% Asian. Hispanic or Latino of any race is 4% of the population.

Number of households: 17,328

Median Household Income: \$76,466

Median value of a University City home: \$340,000

Thirty-six percent of the housing stock was built before 1939.

CITY GOVERNMENT

University City is a home-rule community in accordance with Missouri's State Statutes, and under its charter adopted in 1947 operates under the City Council/ Manager form of government, with a City Manager providing day-to-day oversight of municipal operations. The Mayor and six Council members serve four-year terms. Council members are elected from three wards to serve staggered terms, and the Mayor is elected at-large.

University City is a full-service city providing a range of services including police, fire/EMS, public works, community development, and parks, recreation & forestry. Water and sanitary sewer utilities are provided by other agencies. The University City Public Library is a full-service library funded by a separate tax. There are approximately 265 full-time and 200 part-time and seasonal employees, with police, fire and public works comprising most of the full-time positions.

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

The [City Council](#) appoints the [City Manager](#) and City Clerk, and enact legislation to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the City. The City Manager directly supervises all City government agencies and departments, except the library, while also serving as chief advisor to the City Council. The City Manager since 2017, Gregory Rose, retired in February 2026.

There are two Deputy City Manager positions that report directly to the City Manager. The Deputy City Manager – Development, oversees Community Development, Public Works, Sanitation, Parks, Recreation and Public Areas Maintenance, and Planning and Zoning. The Deputy City Manager – Support Services position is responsible for the Human Resources department and three divisions including IT, Communications, and Facilities.

In addition to the two Deputy City Managers, the City Manager has the two public safety chiefs, the Finance Director and the City Attorney as direct reports.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the development of this profile, the Mayor, City Council members, City staff leadership, and community members attending an open forum, identified these issues and initiatives that will need the next City Manager's attention in the upcoming years. In addition, an on-line survey available on the City's website was also conducted for this recruitment, the results of which will be available soon.

Fiscal Management. The City is in a strong financial position, with its fund balance exceeding 35%. Like all Missouri municipalities, however, the City's finances are tested by various constraints guiding the generation of new sources of revenues. Similar to many older Midwestern cities, infrastructure and capital improvements are always at the forefront of attention, and in University City a robust list of projects is always under consideration. The next City Manager can expect to work closely with the elected and appointed officials on seeking out new sources of revenue as well as continuing to find ways to deliver City services most efficiently. He or she can also anticipate guiding the City to meet the City's infrastructure goals by forecasting how the City can keep on top of infrastructure and capital demands. [The latest City budget can be accessed here.](#)

Organizational Design and Service Delivery. The new City Manager is encouraged to assess the municipal organization and, over time, evaluate service delivery processes, procedures and methods. A fresh-eyed look at departmental and divisional organization, resource-sharing, and interactions with residents and the business community is welcomed, as the City is open to continuous improvement, new approaches, and a customer-focused philosophy.

City Personnel Matters. The City's classification and compensation plan is currently being re-examined, as it has been more than five years since it was last updated. Assuring the City's compensation package remains competitive is vitally important to the City Council.

The City has its own pension system with defined benefits and for uniformed employees there is also a 401 component in which they contribute 5% of their base salary. The non-uniformed pension system is 96.7% funded; but the uniformed pension system is 77% funded, which is below the 80% level Missouri law requires to increase benefits or provide COLAs. The new City Manager will be expected to work closely with all stakeholders to improve the uniformed pension funding level.

Recent turnover in some positions will allow the next City Manager to cultivate and mentor new departmental leadership. As of this writing, the City is seeking a new Finance Director following the last director's return to the private sector. In addition, a new Director of Planning and Zoning as well as a Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Area Maintenance will be coming on board in the next couple of months.



Community Engagement. Understanding and feeling comfortable working in a fast-paced environment, with community stakeholders that are exceptionally engaged and expect a high-level of service will be an important ingredient for this position's success. University City citizens are proud of their community's socio-economic and racial diversity. They are actively engaged in their local government and stay abreast of civic matters. Diversity of opinions is also cultivated and informs the dialogue with and among elected officials and community stakeholders.

Residents readily talk about many of the City's strengths, opportunities and challenges as it relates to the richness of their hometown's diversity. Residents find the City an enviously desirable place to live and they are proud of University City's eclecticism, its progressiveness, its tolerance for differences and the depth in which residents care deeply for their community.

Residents possess a pragmatic view of their community, steeped in an understanding of the economic and social propositions that issues of equity, social justice and diversity present, as well as the dichotomies at hand in University City. For instance, some areas of the community are highly affluent, and those neighborhoods are some of the most desirable ones in greater St. Louis. Other parts of the community are punctuated with a vulnerable housing stock where values are depressed or homes are vacant, and neighborhood stabilization is a concern.

As such, the next City Manager joins a team of highly engaged elected officials and community stakeholders who are comfortable addressing challenging issues and embrace the City's multiplicity. Consequently, the new City Manager should welcome working with a variety of stakeholders and opinions. As well, the City Manager should be comfortable having a visible, active and embedded role in the City and the organization and the community.





Redevelopment. As an inner-ring suburb, most of University City's development efforts are focused on redevelopment. [The Market at Olive development](#), located on the western edge of University City at the intersection of Olive Boulevard and I-170 in the City's less-affluent Third Ward area, is a prominent project consisting of approximately 50-acres. The estimated \$211-million Market at Olive development is designed as a major commercial corridor hub, featuring major retailers, including Costco, Target and Dierbergs Markets, and additional retailers and restaurants. This development includes the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to help pay project costs including land acquisition, site work, and infrastructure improvements to improve the quality of housing, streets, landscaping, lighting, safety and enhance the overall quality of life in the designated area. The anchor, Costco, opened in October 2022, and the project area will be fully developed when Target and Dierbergs Markets open later this year.

In conjunction with this commercial investment to rejuvenate and re-spark interest in the Third Ward, the City adopted in late 2024 the [Third Ward Housing and Revitalization Plan](#). According to the Plan, "The 3rd Ward – the [area] located primarily north of Olive Boulevard - has distinct demographics among the [the City's] three wards: The widest diversity of household income; the lowest assessed property value; the highest percentage of renters; [and] the only Ward that is majority minority demographically. Residents talk openly of the 'Olive Divide' between the more affluent and predominantly white Wards to the south and the working class, predominantly Black 3rd Ward to the north."

The purpose of the Housing and Revitalization Plan "is to provide strategies for investing the TIF funds in a way that increases housing values, promotes economic diversity, encourages homeownership, and revitalizes the 3rd Ward. To help pay part of the redevelopment, including land acquisition, site work, and infrastructure improvements, 'Market at Olive' used tax increment financing (TIF). The adopted TIF redevelopment plan included three Redevelopment Project Areas (RPAs): 1. Market at Olive (RPA1); 2. Third Ward Residential Neighborhoods (RPA2); and 3. Olive Boulevard Commercial Corridor (RPA3). The TIF districts have been set up so that 'Market at Olive' will generate \$15 million in funds that will be used to incentivize investment in the other two RPAs. Specifically, \$10 million for 3rd Ward residential neighborhoods and \$5 million for the Olive Boulevard Commercial Corridor." All told, the next City Manager can expect to work closely with the City Council and community stakeholders to assure the success of the revitalization plan.

As for University City's other commercial corridor, [Delmar Boulevard in the University City Loop](#) is, as previously mentioned, one of the "Great Streets in America" according to the American Planning Association. Like all iconic areas in an age of changing retail shopping habits, the Loop is challenged with increasing number of vacancies. Still, the City has recently updated its Comprehensive Plan, and a comprehensive Zoning Code revision is underway, so foundational pieces are in place for the next City Manager to work closely with the City Council, City staff and the business community to assure this legendary commercial corridor stays vital and relevant.

Town-Gown Relations. The City's relationship with the Washington University in St. Louis requires attention, communication and responsiveness. Not unusual in municipalities that host colleges, campus growth, student activities and the University's ongoing acquisition of properties in University City add challenges to municipal resources. The next City Manager is expected to cultivate a high level of communication and collaboration and to maintain strong ties with the University by working confidently, creatively and objectively with University officials.

Intergovernmental Relations. University City has been a regional leader in cultivating networks and strong working relationships with its municipal neighbors, communities in the greater St. Louis area, and state legislative connections, too. Continued strong intergovernmental relationships within the region are keenly important, and the next City Manager can expect to play a leading part that complements the City elected officials' role in developing close working alliances with state, county and municipal partners and neighbors.

Issues on the Minds of Residents – University City citizens are actively engaged in their local government and stay abreast of civic matters. Diversity of opinions is also cultivated and informs the dialogue with and among elected officials and community stakeholders. Community feedback sought in conjunction with this recruitment captured what was on the minds of some residents regarding the characteristics and traits the new City Manager should possess as well as the opportunities and challenges that he or she may be faced with as University City's next City Manager. Results of that survey will be shared with candidates upon request to MGT.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City is seeking proven, progressive and passionate-for-public-service candidates committed to excellence in the delivery of public services. Candidates should have an equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities, as outlined below:

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- A master's degree in public administration, business administration or other advanced executive level training such as ICMA Credentialed Manager is preferred. Membership in ICMA is essential.
- At least 10 years of increasingly responsible local government management experience as an administrator, assistant administrator or department head, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Proven leadership, managerial, and interpersonal skills to guide a dynamic organization with high customer-service expectations.
- Strong human resources and financial management skills.
- Excellent communication, diplomacy, and community engagement skills.
- A team-oriented, strategic-thinking approach toward staff leadership with supervisory skills compatible with a high-functioning team.
- Have management experience in creating an environment of trust, integrity, and mentorship where employees respect one another and where the City's departments consistently function at a high level of customer service.
- Have a demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership and long-range planning practices.
- Excellent communication skills and significant career success in building collaborative, effective relationships across departments.





MANAGEMENT STYLE AND PERSONAL TRAITS

- Have a background of professional and personal integrity, honesty and of leading/motivating personnel by example.
- Have the maturity, self-confidence, and strength of professional convictions to provide administrative insights and administrative counsel to the City Council and staff, being able to diplomatically present professional views and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, professional, and impartial manner.
- Be politically astute, yet politically neutral. Be able to “read the Council,” providing guidance, advice and counsel in a manner that is impeccably objective and based on facts.
- Be a proactive communicator with the City Council, reporting at least weekly to the Council through a variety of means, and seeking ways to interact with Council members one-on-one.
- Be someone who is comfortable listening to and talking with a wide spectrum of people; someone who can clearly and concisely present written and oral information to decision makers; willingly share information as appropriate.
- Be a creative thinker.
- Be a strong administrative leader and be able to help City staff to identify, analyze, prioritize, and thoroughly deliberate and address administrative and management issues which are critical toward meeting both current and longer-range needs of the overall community.
- Possess well developed organizational skills and have the ability to balance numerous projects and issues while keeping on task. Know when to drill into the details and critically assess issues without losing sight of the city’s bigger, strategic direction.
- Be a “people person,” sincerely personable, patient, calm and accessible. Have a sense of humor.
- Be one who can establish trust quickly with others and one who can relate to all constituencies of the community.
- Promote a strong, service-oriented, “customer relations” approach by all employees in dealing with citizenry. Lead with “Yes....”
- Possess an open mind in dealing with the City’s complex and challenging issues that sometimes compete with one another.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City Manager is appointed by and reports to the City Council. The starting salary range is \$210,000 - \$240,000 + DOQ, plus an excellent benefit package. Per the City Charter, residency is required.

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by April 4, 2026. Send a resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to www.GovHRjobs.com to the attention of Lee Szymborski, Senior Consultant, MGT, Northfield, IL. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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