



UNIVERSITY CITY, MISSOURI

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

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**EXECUTIVE  
RECRUITMENT**





## UNIVERSITY CITY, MO DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

### The Position in Brief

This key management position is responsible for leading a department of 26 full-time employees. The Director of Public Works directs a broad range of services including engineering, sanitation, storm water management, facilities and fleet maintenance. The position reports to the City Manager.

### 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.)

### DEMOGRAPHICS SNAPSHOT

2020 POPULATION  
**35,172**

LAND AREA  
**6** 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.

### HOUSEHOLDS

**17,328**



### MEDIAN AGE

**36.3**



### MEDIAN INCOME

**\$57,546**



### MEDIAN HOME VALUE

**\$276,300**



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 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, Taste of U City, Movies in the Park, the Starlight Concert series and U City Summer Band concerts in Heman Park, and the annual Fair U City/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.

## 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.

The [Mayor and City Council](#) appoint 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. Gregory Rose has been the City Manager since 2017, having previously served the city in the late 1990s as the Deputy City Manager.

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 263 full-time and 200 part-time and seasonal employees, with police, fire and public works comprising most of those positions.

The Director of Public Works will join a talented group of department heads who work collaboratively in the planning and delivery of City services. The tenure of the City's management team varies, with some being recent additions to the team, while others having been on staff for more than 20 years. The City is also assisted in its policy development by a number of Boards and Commissions.

## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Public Works Department provides the physical facilities (infrastructure) and services that meet the public's needs. The major infrastructure facilities and properties include 80 center-line miles of street, 110 miles of sidewalk, 160 vehicles, 408 city-owned street lights, and 5,300 regulatory and street name signs.

The Director is responsible for leading a department of about 26 full-time employees, as well as managing a \$3.5 million operating budget and \$ 50 million in five-year capital improvement programming.

Under general administrative direction, the Director of Public Works plans, directs, manages and oversees the activities and operations of the Public Works Department including sanitation, maintenance, and engineering; the position is also responsible for recommending changes to the City Code when appropriate, coordinates assigned activities with other City departments and outside agencies; and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the City Manager.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Director of Public Works is a key member of the City's management team, so developing and maintaining relationships with the City Manager, elected officials, department heads, and community stakeholders is paramount. Proven communication, interpersonal and human relations skills, and the ability to interact with a wide variety of people possessing various attitudes and positions are all important and desirable qualities for the next Director. The Director can expect to be involved in the following:

**The storm of 2022 and flooding aftermath.** The St. Louis area, and especially University City, was seriously affected by rainstorms this summer that flooded parts of the city with nine inches of rain in a four-hour period, followed by days of additional rain. A number of city facilities and equipment were underwater by more than four feet, and over 300 homes in the city were also affected, many of which needed to be condemned.

While the immediate recovery has been underway, including equipment replacement, it is expected that the long-term effects will require the new Director's attention on several fronts, including a more intense look at stormwater management. The new Director can also expect to be involved with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the City's planning department, and the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District, as these agencies work in concert to determine the future of damaged properties, both private and public buildings.

**The Markets at Olive** development is located on the western edge of University City at the intersection of Olive Boulevard and I-170. The entire development consists of approximately 50-acres along both the south and north sides of Olive Boulevard, bordered by I-170 on the west and McKnight/Woodson Road on the east. The estimated \$211-million Markets at Olive development is designed to accommodate a potential mix of retail, restaurants, apartments, offices and hospitality. The effect new development will have on city services and infrastructure will require a new Director's keen eye for how best to plan and anticipate service needs.

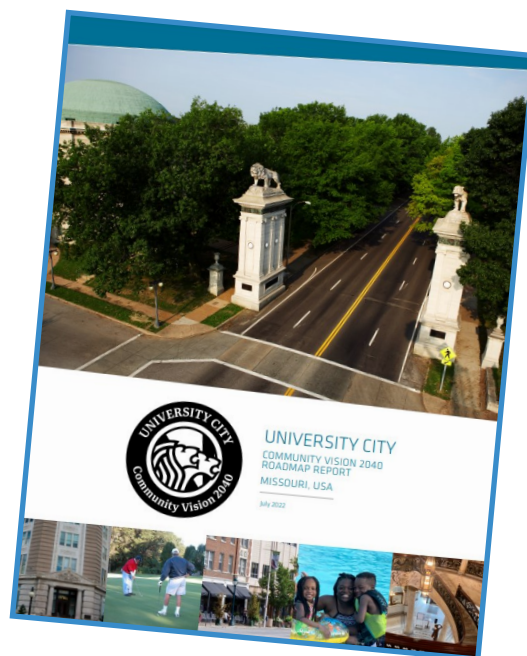


The City adopted its first **Comprehensive Plan** in 1922. Since then, subsequent comprehensive plans or updates were prepared in 1931, 1958, 1986 and 1999. The Comprehensive Plan Update of 2005 represents the latest iteration of the City's long range planning efforts. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated, and the next Director can expect to work with other City staff in the plan's renewal. In conjunction with that update, University City embarked on a visioning process to produce a future-oriented and inclusive **Community Vision** extending into 2040. The shared vision is intended to be strategic, actionable, and sustainable. University City's new Community Vision identifies future opportunities and aligns resources for development and other City resources. The Vision was adopted in August 2022, [and can be accessed with this link](#).

In the course of developing the Community Vision's roadmap, the City conducted two community-wide surveys. The response rate was hearty, and provides insight into residents' thoughts about a variety of issues; many of them focused on community development, infrastructure, and city services.

**Staff management and leadership.** University City's diverse set of Public Works services is its strength and its challenge, requiring a broad set of knowledge and adeptness from its next Director. In a fast-paced, high-volume workload, staff works hard to keep each other informed and maintains a collegial atmosphere that will welcome a Director who is well-rounded and knowledgeable in the disciplines of the department, one who will lead and hold their work accountable and demand a high level of customer service.

The Director's job is demanding and each day typically includes fielding requests from a variety of sources, participating on the development team and managing the many and varied divisions of the department. The next Director will need to be skilled in multi-tasking and have the ability to develop a strong working relationship with the City Manager, the elected officials and senior staff.



The department would benefit from the development of its own strategic plan. With a robust set of infrastructure needs, as well as a five-year capital improvement plan amounting to more than \$50 million in projects, the new Director will need to possess a directed focus, including an ability to keep the larger picture in a spotlight shared with the City's broader strategic vision.

In a similar vein, the City's management team is a solid, energetic group that is keenly in-tune with the City Council's and the community's expectations. There is a high degree of respect between the management team and the City Council. Within this framework of an amiable work environment and a close-knit executive group where daily contact among the management team can be anticipated, the new Director can expect this assembly of management leaders to be a resource, welcoming the Director with the tools he/she may need to be an inclusive and responsive leader in the department, and the overall organization.

**Infrastructure.** Like many older Midwestern municipalities, University City has a long list of demands on its aging infrastructure, as evidenced in its latest [five-year Capital Improvement Plan](#). Coupled with financial challenges to raise revenues – and exasperated by the pandemic which pressed on sales tax receipts – the next Director of Public Works can expect to be part of a City team challenged with addressing significant infrastructure needs and limited resources. Consequently, adeptness at addressing a robust list of needs and demands in a fiscal environment of competing demands is required.

**Departmental organization.** The new Director will step into the organization at a time that provides an opportunity for re-examining the delivery of the department's services. Some of the department's divisions have been restructured, particularly with the streets division now coming under the umbrella of the Director of Parks and Recreation (with a dotted-line relationship to Public Works). However, all agree, that the fluidity of the organizational lines may ultimately rests with the talent of the new Director. In other words, the City Manager welcomes a fresh set of eyes on how Public Works services can be delivered.



# THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

## Must Haves

The City is seeking proven, progressive and passionate-for-public-service candidates committed to excellence in the delivery of public works 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 Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, drafting, public administration, or closely related field. A related Master's degree and/or registration as a professional engineer (or ability to attain a P.E. in the state of Missouri) are a plus. Five - seven years of progressively responsible positions in municipal public works, including supervisory experience.

Candidates with predominately city management experience, yet significant work in public works, are also encouraged to apply.

Have management experience in creating an environment of trust, integrity and mentorship where employees respect one another and where the Department consistently functions at a high level of customer service.

Have experience in preparing and presenting complex department, complemented with an understanding of the principles of government budgeting, recognizing the long-term cost implications of proposed new programs.

Have a demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership and long-range planning practices.

Have a history of assessing the skills and abilities of existing personnel in an effort to maximize their talent and expertise, including opportunities for employees to take on new challenges as professionals.

Have proven verbal communication and listening skills, both one-on-one and in a public speaking venue, treating everyone in a professional and respectful manner.

Have the ability to make effective presentations before the City Council; possess strong public relations experience, and have excellent writing skills.

Have an appreciation for working in a setting where customer service expectations are high.

### Management Style and Personal Traits

Have complete personal and professional integrity, gaining respect and inspiring the trust and confidence of subordinates, co-workers, and elected and appointed officials, as well as the general public.

Be a clear and concise communicator. Be able to present complex technical information to any audience in a manner that is understandable and jargon-free.

Have a genuine passion for public service from both an internal, department standpoint and for service to the community; be devoted to customer, community and departmental service.

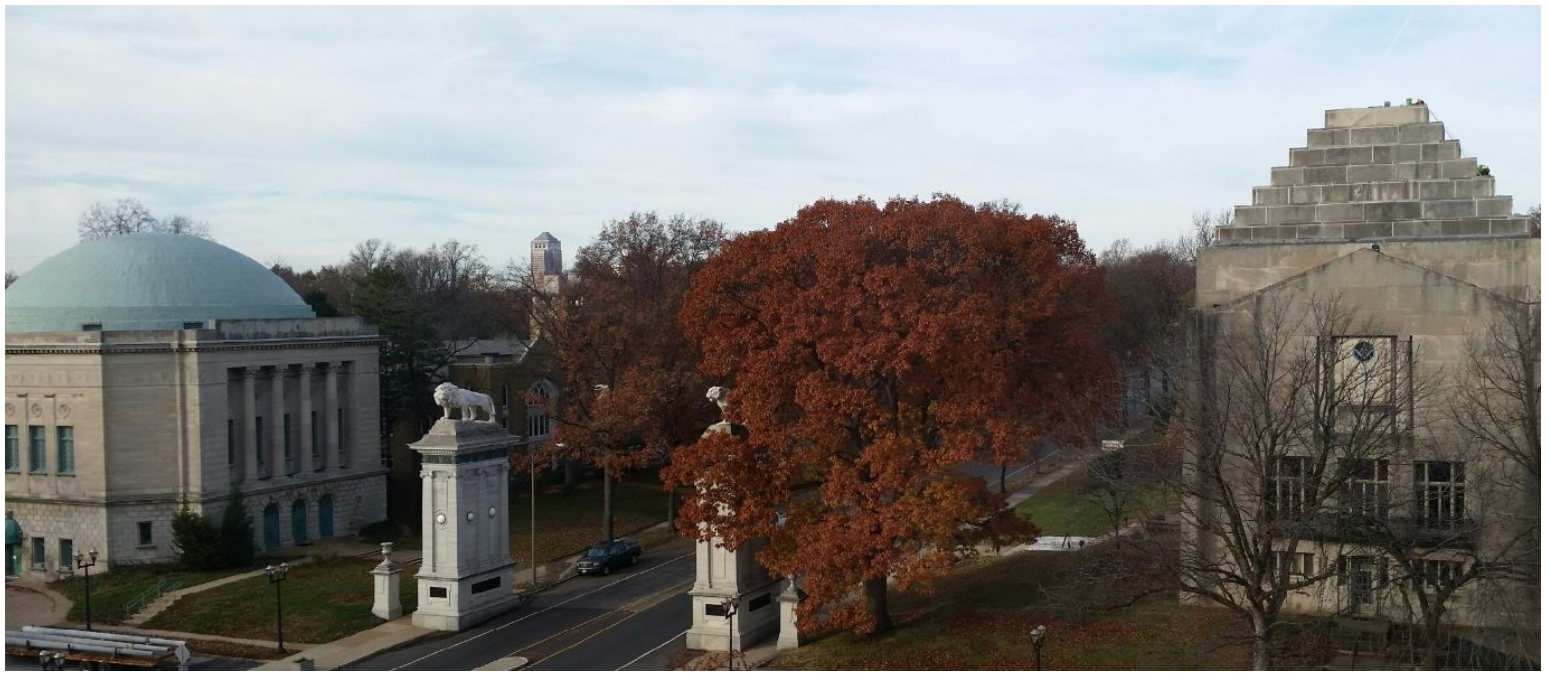
Be a highly motivated, organized, goal-oriented leader with a proven ability to quickly earn respect, gain cooperation and communicate clear direction.

Be a positive and flexible team builder who is committed to the well-being of the staff, one who works with staff to identify departmental needs and find solutions which meet those challenges. Be a manager who both defends his/her staff when appropriate, and holds the team accountable. Be proactive, anticipatory and innovative; be someone who can make difficult decisions and stand behind those decisions.

Have an open, friendly personality and communication style and a calm demeanor; be one who can establish trust quickly with others. Have a sense of humor when appropriate to the circumstances.

Be skilled at keeping the City Manager and City Council apprised of major activities and operations of the Department in a consistent and timely manner, passing on both "good news and bad news" in a tactful, self-confident and professional manner.





### Compensation and Benefits

A starting salary range is \$100,000 – 125,000 +/- DOQ, and an excellent benefit package, is offered.

### How to Apply

Candidates should apply by September 26, 2022 with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) to the attention of Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



[www.GovHRUSA.com](http://www.GovHRUSA.com)