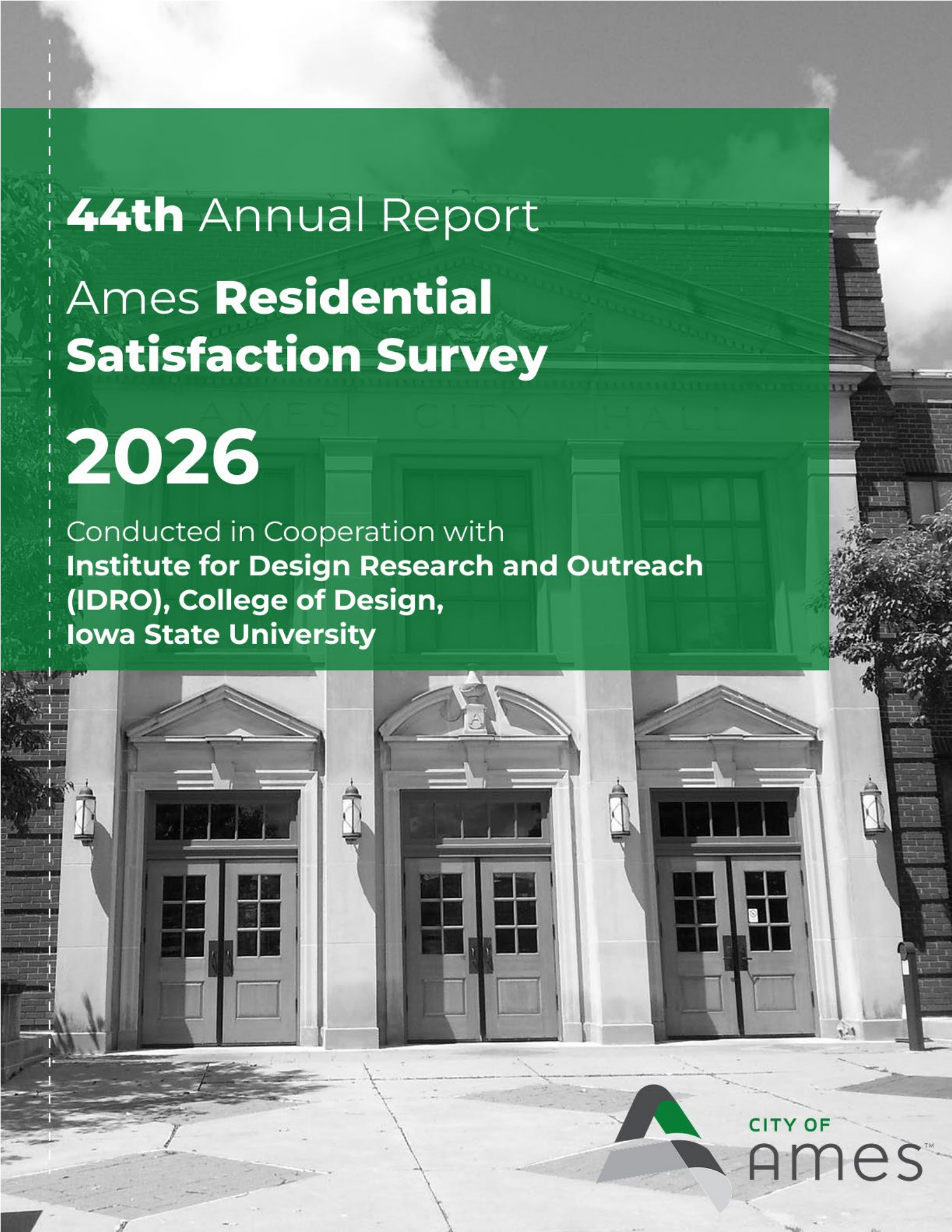


44th Annual Report

Ames Residential Satisfaction Survey

2026

Conducted in Cooperation with
Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO), College of Design, Iowa State University

CITY OF ames™

2026 Ames Residential Satisfaction Survey
44th Annual Statistical Report

Conducted in cooperation with the Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO), College of Design, Iowa State University

Every year, the City of Ames, Iowa conducts an annual satisfaction survey of residents. In April 2026, the City mailed surveys to 1,350 City residents whose names were randomly selected from the City of Ames utility customers list (a population of ~20,000). Additionally, 1,000 Iowa State University (ISU) students were randomly selected from a mailing list generated by the ISU Office of the Registrar. Stratified random sampling was used to have representation from the students based on classification (sophomore to graduate levels). First-year students were intentionally excluded from the ISU sample due to their minimal exposure to and use of the City of Ames' services.

Utility bill customers received a 12-page survey booklet via the U.S. mail. The booklet included the same standard benchmarking questions as presented in the 2025 survey. A link, via QR code, to the online survey was provided in the paper version of the survey. This link ensures that only randomly selected respondents have access to the survey. The online survey was available in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean. The selected ISU students received the same online survey via email developed using the Qualtrics Survey Software. The analysis was completed with assistance from Nora Ladjahasan, Laurel Waterman, and Srishti Malhotra from the Institute for Design Research and Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University.

The biggest change in this year's survey was the elimination of the section on "Sustainability." This was replaced by a section called "Energy Efficiency Improvements" about energy efficient home upgrades for homeowners. Another section was added called "Downtown and Campustown," which asked about various upgrades to each district that could increase visits. Lastly, a question was added that asked about unfair treatment due to the respondents' personal characteristics (age, race, religion, etc.).

The sample size needed to confidently generalize the findings was 382 total (95% confidence level and a confidence interval of 5). This statistical report summarizes 241 surveys from Ames' utility customers (referred to as non-students in this report) who returned usable surveys. Then, 241 returned surveys from ISU students (referred to as students in this report) were randomly selected to be analyzed, to have equal representation of both groups. This created a total of 482 surveys that were analyzed in this report, which is higher than the desired sample size. Therefore, the findings significantly reflect the total population. For more details on calculating sample size, refer to: Sample Size Calculator.

Note: The number of surveys distributed included an oversampling of students to come up with the desired sample size that reflects target populations. Everybody who received a paper copy of the survey was classified and analyzed as non-student residents. Incomplete surveys and those who had lived in Ames for a short period were excluded from the student samples.

The overall response rate this year was 34 percent, which is three percent higher than last year's 31 percent. The response rate for non-students was 18 percent and 50 percent for students. Seventeen

percent of non-students chose to take the online version of the survey, which was higher than last year's 12 percent. No one responded to the online survey using the alternative languages provided.

Respondents' personal and social characteristics

Tables 1a through 1g illustrate the personal and social characteristics of respondents who completed the survey. The first column lists the categories of characteristics asked for in the survey. The rest of the columns show personal and social characteristics of the individuals who completed surveys between the years 2022 and 2026.

When asked about their length of residence, the most common answer was over 10 years (38 percent), followed by one to three years (29 percent), four to six years (20 percent), seven to 10 years (nine percent), and less than one year (less than one percent). Over the past five years, long-term residents (over 10 years) have made up a higher percentage of respondents compared to the other ranges. However, this range slightly decreased this year, along with those living in Ames less than one year. One to three, four to six, and seven to 10 years all slightly increased this year. (Table 1a)

Over the past five years, the gender distribution of respondents has flipped every year. Last year, it was 38 percent female and 58 males; this year it was more females (57 percent) than males (40 percent). Less than 1 percent identified as non-binary or a third gender and 2 percent preferred not to answer. (Table 1b)

Average age of the respondents in this year's survey was 43.3 (27.7 years of age for ISU students, 58.2 for non-student residents). Only 19 percent were 18-24 years of age, which was half of last year's distribution. The range of 25-44 years of age increased significantly to 43 percent compared to last year's survey at 22 percent. This is the highest percentage of respondents aged 25-44 years over the last five years. (Table 1c)

Regarding race, 76 percent of respondents identified as White, 2 percent as Black or African American, .2 percent as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 14 percent as Asian. 4.2 percent identified as a different race and 4 percent preferred not to answer. This survey also asked if respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino. 6 percent said yes, 92 percent said no, and 2 percent preferred not to answer. (Table 1d)

For the educational attainment of respondents, less than 1 percent have had some high school education, 3 percent have a high school diploma, 14 percent have had some college education, 19 percent have a college degree, 21 percent have had some graduate education, and 42 percent have a graduate degree. Between 2022 and 2026, percentage distributions have varied, except for those with some graduate education or a graduate degree, which has consistently decreased. However, this year these have jumped back up, and those with a high school diploma, some college, or a college degree have decreased. (Table 1e)

In terms of employment, most of the respondents were employed (35 percent part-time and 37 percent full-time). Only 23 percent were retired, 1 percent were full-time homemakers, and 4 percent were unemployed. There were many more part-time workers this year compared with last year (9 percent in 2025). Unemployed and full-time homemakers slightly increased, and full-time and retirees decreased from last year. (Table 1f)

Twenty-four percent of respondents had a household income of less than $25,000, 26 percent had $25,000 to $49,000, 14 percent had $50,000 to $74,999, 8 percent had $75,000 to $99,999, and 28 percent

had over $100,000. Over the past five years, those with an income of under $25,000 has consistently decreased. 2026 was the first year with a higher percentage of respondents with an income over $100,000 than those with an income under $25,000. Those with an income between $25,000 and $49,999 had an 11 percent increase from last year. (Table 1g)

Table 1a. Length of Residence Distribution, 2022-2026

Length of Residence	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Less than 1 year	1	12	<1	5	<1
1-3 years	34	24	36	26	29
4-6 years	24	12	16	20	24
7-10 years	8	6	8	7	9
More than 10 years	34	46	41	42	38

Table 1b. Gender Distribution, 2022-2026

Gender	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Female	55	39	58	38	57
Male	42	58	39	58	40
Non-binary/3rd Gender	1	<1	<1	<1	1
Prefer not to answer	2	3	2	3	2

Table 1c. Age Distribution (18 and over), 2022-2026

Age (18 and over)	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
18-24	36	34	30	38	19
25-44	27	23	30	22	43
45-64	14	16	16	13	15
65-74	13	16	16	15	12
Over 75	10	10	8	12	11

Table 1d. Race and Ethnicity Distribution, 2022-2026

Race and Ethnicity	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
White	87	87	84	88	76
Asian	6	6	9	5	14
Black or African American	1	1	0	2	2

American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	N/A	N/A	<1	<1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Other	3	3	3	2	4
Prefer not to answer	3	3	4	3	4
Hispanic or Latino	6	6	4	5	6

Table 1e. Education Level Distribution, 2022-2026

Education Level	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Some HS	1	<1	<1	<1	<1
HS diploma	3	6	3	7	3
Some college	30	31	24	35	14
College degree	23	27	33	25	19
Some grad work	13	9	11	6	21
Graduate degree	30	27	28	25	42

Table 1f. Employment Status Distribution, 2022-2026

Employment Status	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Employed part-time	36	30	33	9	35
Employed full-time	30	31	34	42	37
Retired	23	28	24	47	23
Unemployed	10	9	7	1	4
Full-time homemaker	1	2	2	3	1

Table 1g. Household Income Distribution, 2022-2026

Household Income	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Less than $25,000	42	34	34	35	24
$25,000-$49,999	16	15	16	15	26
$50,000-$74,999	14	12	15	15	14
$75,000-$99,999	6	10	10	10	8
$100,000+	21	29	26	25	28

Shown in Table 2a, 2b, and 2c, respondents who rented their homes were slightly higher this year with 53 percent compared to 50 percent renters in 2025. Over the past five years, respondents who rent have usually held a slight majority, due to about half of respondents being students. Those who rent were asked their reasoning for renting; 68 percent said it's due to their short-term stay in Ames, 45 percent said they lack adequate income, 25 percent said that renting has little or no upkeep, and 7 percent said it's because of more security.

Table 2a. Housing Tenure Distribution, 2022-2026

Housing Tenure	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Rent	53	47	52	50	53
Own	47	53	48	50	47

Table 2b. Reason for Renting, 2022-2026

Reason for Renting	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Short-term stay in Ames	79	74	69	54	68
Lack of adequate income	44	45	39	27	45
Little or no upkeep	26	15	23	16	25
More security	7	8	6	2	7

Table 2c. Location of Residence Distribution, 2022-2026

Location of Residence	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Northwest Ames	40	50	41	49	46
Southwest Ames	34	25	33	27	30
Southeast Ames	15	12	14	13	14
Northeast Ames	11	12	12	11	10

Respondents who are homeowners differ from renters on several personal and social characteristics.

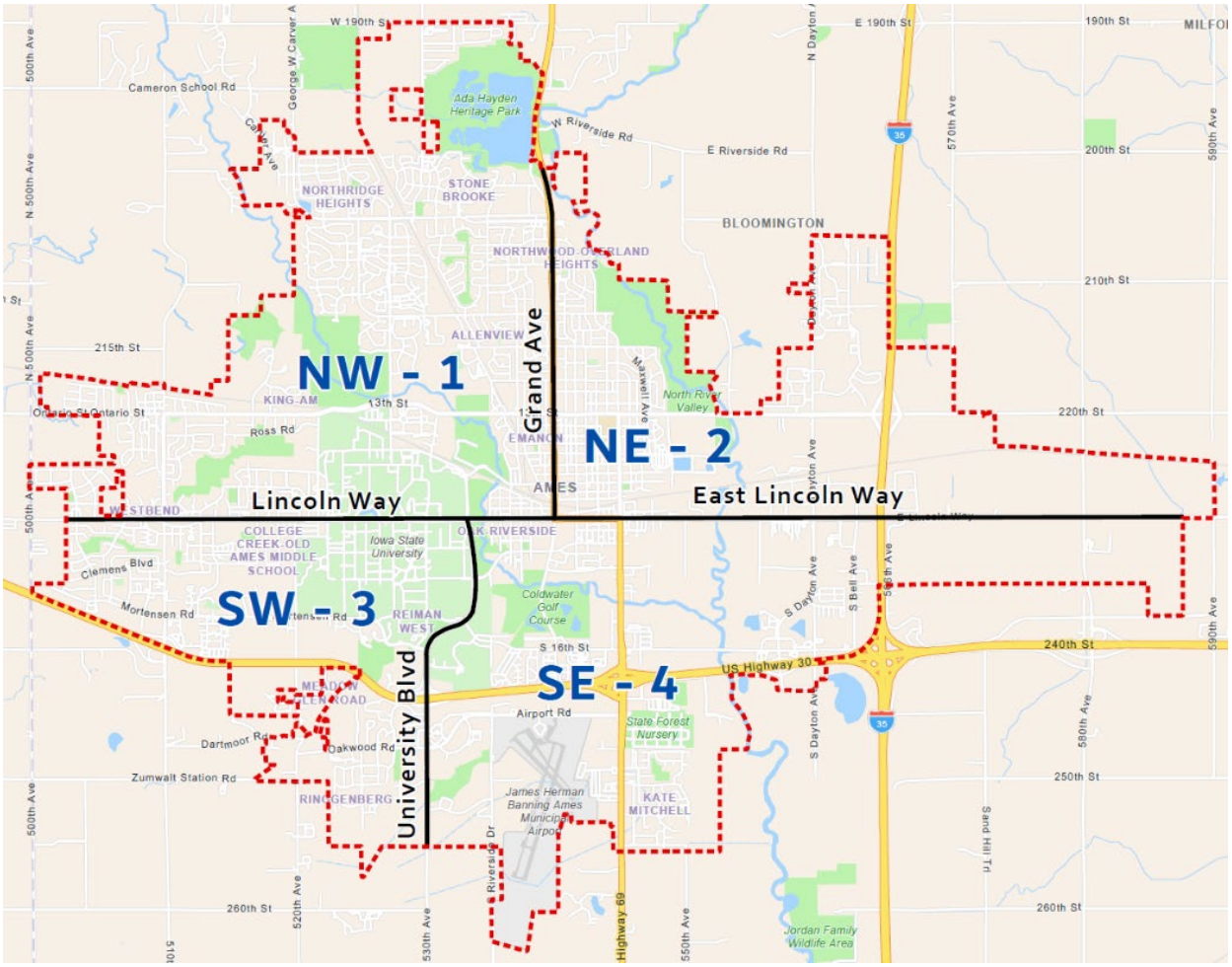
- Homeowners have lived in Ames longer than renters, with an average of 28.1 years compared to 5.3 years, respectively. Of those who have lived in Ames for more than 10 years, 92 percent are homeowners. On the other hand, 85 percent of renters have lived in Ames for less than 6 years.
- Not surprisingly, the average age of respondents who are homeowners, at 59 years old, tends to be older than the average renter, at 28 years old. Of those between 25 and 44 years old, 73 percent are renters, 27 percent are homeowners.
- 98 percent of those under 25 years of age are renters, and 92 percent of full-time college students rent. For those with a college degree or higher, 77 percent are homeowners, and 23 percent are renters.

- Finally, homeowners typically have higher household incomes than renters. Eighty-three percent of homeowners earn $50,000 or more, whereas only 20 percent of the renters earn more than $50,000.

Respondents were also asked to identify the location of their home in Ames, as seen in Figure 1 below. Forty-six percent of the respondents reside in northwest Ames (compared to 49 percent in 2025), 30 percent are from southwest (27 percent in 2025), 14 percent from southeast (13 percent in 2025), and 10 percent from northeast (11 percent in 2025). While slightly more respondents were from the south side of Ames and fewer from the north side compared to last year, most respondents still reside on the north side (56 percent). Comparing east to west, more respondents live on the west side (76 percent) compared to the east side (24 percent).

Figure 1. Geographic Sections

- 46% = Northwest
- 30% = Southwest
- 12% = Southeast
- 10% = Northeast
- 56% = North
- 42% = South
- 76% = East
- 24% = West



Priorities for ongoing programs and services

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their priorities for the upcoming City budget by indicating allocation levels (less, same, or more) on various services paid for by property or sales taxes, shown in Table 3. Budgeted funding amounts for each of the services were indicated. Most respondents reported that they would like the City of Ames to spend the same amount as the previous year on all 10 service priorities. Parks and amenities were the services that had the lowest percentage (three percent) of those who believed that the budget should decrease, while law enforcement had the highest percentage (22 percent) of people indicating that the budget should decrease.

On a scale of one to three, 1 being less spending, 2 being same spending, and 3 being more spending, the services with an average closest to 2 are those that show the strongest support to stay the same; this either means that many believe funding should stay the same, or a balanced number wanted an increase and decrease. The higher above 2.0 means the stronger the support for increasing the budget and the lower below 2.0 means stronger support for a lower budget.

Services with an average of 2.0 or above were parks and amenities, animal shelter and animal control, ASSET, recreational opportunities, CyRide, the public library, fire protection, arts programs, and land use planning. These priorities also had the strongest consensus for an increased budget. The only program under 2.0 was law enforcement. However, it only fell below 2.0 by .1. These findings are in Table 3.

Table 3. How Much the City Should Allocate to Ongoing Services*, 2026

Ongoing Service and Budgeted Amount	*n*	**Less** (%)	**Same** (%)	**More** (%)	**Average**
Parks and amenities ($1,830,762)	*451*	3	63	34	2.3
Ames Animal Shelter & Animal Control ($856,369)	*499*	7	61	32	2.3
Human service agency funding (ASSET) ($2,116,460)	*446*	7	62	31	2.3
Recreational opportunities ($1,533,130)	*451*	7	66	27	2.2
CyRide (public transit) ($2,227,370)	*451*	5	71	24	2.2
Ames Public Library ($5,633,022)	*451*	10	65	25	2.2
Arts programs (Public Art & COTA) ($306,567)	*447*	13	63	24	2.1
Fire protection ($7,174,604)	*451*	4	80	16	2.1
Land use planning (both current and long-term) ($1,012,513)	*446*	15	68	17	2.0
Law enforcement ($12,510,386)	*452*	22	65	13	1.9
Other (please specify)	*65*	5	71	24	2.2

*1 = less; 2 = same; 3 = more

Other responses for ongoing service allocation:

- “Better public restrooms”
- “Create indoor closed bus stations for winter”
- “Develop the area between Lincoln and Main”
- “Do not waste money on Flock subscriptions. Remove the cameras.”
- “EMS”
- “Improved traffic signals to better traffic flow”
- “Management of roads”
- “More pedestrian infrastructure!”
- “More water fountains”
- “MTB Bike Trails”
- “Plowing”
- “Pothole filling”
- “Redesigning South Duff roadways and access”
- “Road repair”
- “The Bridge Home

Table 4 shows the five-year trends of the "spend more" responses for ongoing City services. Since 2022, the most significant increases in "spend more" responses were for parks and amenities (8 percent increase from 2022), animal shelter and animal control, and arts programs (7 percent increase, respectively). The most significant decreases in "spend more" since 2022 have been for fire protection with an 8 percent decrease and law enforcement with a 7 percent decrease.

The biggest changes between 2024 and 2025 on "spend more" responses were a 7 percent increase for CyRide, 6 percent increase on human service agency funding (ASSET), and 4 percent increase for land use planning. Funding for animal shelter and animal control services remained the same for 2025 and 2026. There was a 2 percent decrease for arts programs.

Over the past five years, parks and amenities, animal shelter and animal control, and ASSET have had the highest average percentage in "spend more" responses (31 percent, 28 percent and 28 percent, respectively).

Table 4. Trends in "Spend More" Responses for Ongoing Services, 2022-2026

Ongoing Service	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Parks and amenities	26	29	35	33	34
Ames Animal Shelter & Animal Control	25	23	29	32	32
Human service agency funding (ASSET)	32	28	26	25	31
Recreational opportunities	25	24	27	28	27
Ames Public Library	23	15	17	22	25
Arts programs (Public Art & COTA)	17	18	20	26	24
CyRide (public transit)	25	23	23	17	24
Land use planning (both current and long-term)	12	10	16	13	17
Fire protection	24	27	21	13	16
Law enforcement	21	18	16	13	13

When comparing respondents' demographics with their support of certain services, some statistically significant differences have been identified. The demographic data examined included length of residence, age, gender, full-time student status, home ownership, education, employment status, household income, and geographic residence in town.

Below shows characteristics of respondents who tend to support **increased spending** on the following programs and services:

Arts programs	- Short-term residents - Younger residents - Renters - Female residents - Southwest Ames residents
Fire protection	- Non-students - Homeowners - Less than high school diploma
ASSET	- Non-students - Female residents - Homeowners
Law enforcement	- Non-students - Older residents - Long-term residents - Retirees - Less than high school diploma
Animal shelter/control	- Older residents
Ames Public Library	- Short-term residents - Older residents
Land use planning	- Younger residents - Short-term residents
Parks and amenities	- Younger residents - Students - Male residents - Employed part-time
Recreational opportunities	- Students
CyRide	- Renters - Students - Younger residents - Short-term residents - Graduate degree

Comments on Funding Allocation for Programs and Services

When asked for additional comments on funding allocation for programs and services, 51 respondents made comments. The only category with a high frequency response rate (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments) were those that said they were satisfied with current funding allocation.

- "Funding allocation for programs and services appears to be generally effective in supporting core community needs."
- "Seems like the mix is good now."
- "I think our City government is mostly run very well."

Response categories with a medium frequency rate (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were not knowing enough to comment on the topic, more arts funding, funding for homelessness/housing/social services, less police funding, stronger urban/land use planning policies, and bike/walkability.

- "I'm not knowledgeable enough about these programs and their spending to comment on if it's the proper budget or not."
- "It's so disappointing how low arts funding is. It should at minimum double if not triple."
- "Really need funding for homeless population, followed by youth services, domestic violence, & mental health."
- "Cut the police budget. It doesn't need to be that high."
- "Investments in urban planning are great for the longevity of Ames and for the sustainable improvement in the lived experience of ISU students and long-term residents."
- "Increasing walkability should be added to these goals, programs, and services."

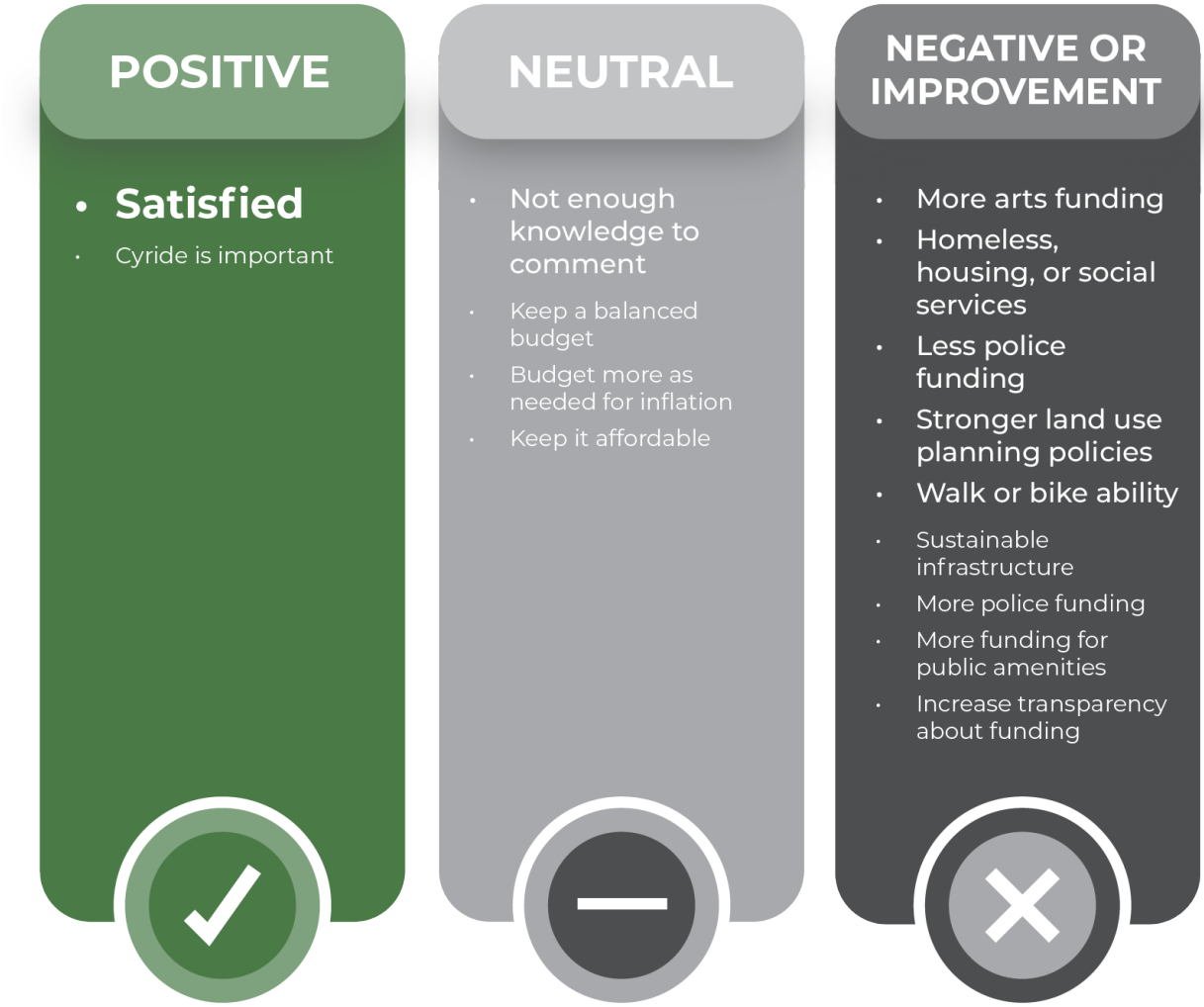
Various other comments were made at low frequencies (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments). Some example topics are sustainable infrastructure, more police funding, keeping a balanced budget, budgeting more as needed for inflation, keeping it affordable, increasing transparency/communication, etc.

- "More blue & green infrastructure! Especially nature-based solution."
- "More funding for police to enforce speed, etc."
- "Maintaining a balance across other services while improving efficiency would help ensure long-term sustainability and quality of life."
- "But with rising costs for everyone, maybe they should all be increased as well."
- "Reduce property taxes so we can afford to continue living in Ames."
- "Greater transparency in prioritization."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on funding allocation for programs and services. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 2. Visualization of Comments on Funding Allocation for Programs and Services



Capital improvement plan (CIP) priorities

Respondents were asked to prioritize seven Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) areas. Table 5 shows respondents' 2026 CIP priorities. This is based on a four-point scale (one = very unimportant two = somewhat unimportant, three = somewhat important, four = very important). This year, the six highest priorities were reconstruction of existing streets (3.3 average), traffic flow improvements (3.2 avg.), sustainable solutions to projects (3.3 avg.), stormwater drainage improvements (3.1 avg.), improvements to existing parks (3.1 avg.), and energy-efficient upgrades to municipal buildings (3.1 avg.). The least important priority was improvements to existing recreational facilities (2.9 avg.).

Table 5. Ratings of Capital Improvement Plan Priorities*, 2026

CIP Priority	*n*	**Somewhat or Very Unimportant** (%)	**Somewhat or Very Important** (%)	**Average Rating**
Sustainable solutions are incorporated into the above projects	*439*	15	85	3.3
Reconstructing existing streets	*444*	16	84	3.3
Traffic flow improvements	*441*	19	81	3.2
Stormwater drainage improvements	*419*	19	81	3.1
Energy-efficient upgrades to municipal buildings	*432*	20	80	3.1
Improvements to existing parks	*447*	18	82	3.1
Greenway trails (recreational) improvements	*423*	20	80	3.1
Off-street bike facilities (commuter) improvements	*429*	27	73	3.0
Improvements to existing recreational facilities	*431*	26	74	2.9
Other (please specify)	*18*	11	89	3.4

*1 = very unimportant; 2 = somewhat unimportant; 3 = somewhat important; 4 = very important. "Don't Know" was removed from analysis.

Other responses for Capital Improvement Plan priorities:

- "Bike signage (stop sign)"
- "Childcare is a must."
- "Dedicated women's locker room at ice arena"
- "Do not increase budget anymore."
- "Energy-efficient upgrades to 55+ housing"
- "Flock Surveillance Cameras"
- "I would rather a building be built to last for a long time, vs use less energy"
- "More funding for the CyRide"
- "Off-road bike trails"
- "Pavement markings!"
- "Pedestrian safety"
- "Please redo the intersection at 13th St and Grand with some turn lanes"

- "Safety of people"
- "The City should pave alleys"
- "South Duff please"

Table 6 shows trends in respondents' views of the importance of CIP priorities in the last five years. Incorporating sustainable solutions into projects, reconstructing existing streets, improvements to existing parks, traffic flow improvements, stormwater drainage improvements, greenway trail improvements and energy efficient upgrades to municipal buildings all had 80 percent or more respondents who reported it as very and somewhat important. Reconstructing existing streets and traffic flow improvements have consistently stayed at top priorities. Across all priorities, there has been an increase in the last five years in those identifying these as important. Some of the biggest increases in importance were stormwater drainage improvements and off-street bike facilities improvements, both with a 6 percent increase from 2022. Only two priority services decreased from 2022 to 2026 - traffic flow improvements and improvements to existing recreational facilities, which decreased by 2 percent.

Comparing the data from 2025 to 2026, eight out of 10 services decreased in importance; improvements to existing recreational facilities (6 percent), reconstructing existing streets (4 percent), traffic flow improvements (3 percent), and a 1-percent decrease for improvements to existing parks, stormwater drainage improvements, and off-street bike facilities (commuter) improvements. Greenway trails (recreational) improvements remained the same, and sustainable solutions increased in importance by one percent.

Table 6. Trends for "Somewhat and Very Important" in Capital Improvement Plan Priorities*, 2026

CIP Priority	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Sustainable solutions are incorporated into the above projects	N/A	N/A	N/A	84	85
Reconstructing existing streets	84	89	84	88	84
Improvements to existing parks	N/A	N/A	N/A	83	82
Traffic flow improvements	83	82	82	84	81
Stormwater drainage improvements	75	78	76	82	81
Greenway trails (recreational) improvements	77	76	79	80	80
Energy-efficient upgrades to municipal buildings	N/A	N/A	N/A	78	80
Improvements to existing recreational facilities	76	76	82	80	74
Off-street bike facilities (commuter) improvements	67	66	69	74	73
On-street bike facilities (commuter) improvements	65	62	69	N/A	N/A
Other (please specify)	68	81	61	74	89

*N/A means the question was not asked that year.

Survey respondents ranked their three highest CIP priorities. Table 7 shows the results of those rankings. The top three responses for each priority level are listed below:

Top first priorities
- Reconstructing existing streets (27 percent)
- Traffic flow improvements (17 percent)
- Sustainable solutions (17 percent)

Top second priorities
- Traffic flow improvements (20 percent)
- Reconstructing existing streets (16 percent)
- Improvements to existing parks (13 percent)

Top third priorities
- Sustainable solutions (15 percent)
- Traffic flow improvements (13 percent)
- Stormwater drainage improvements (12 percent)

Table 7. Ranking of Capital Improvement Priorities, 2026

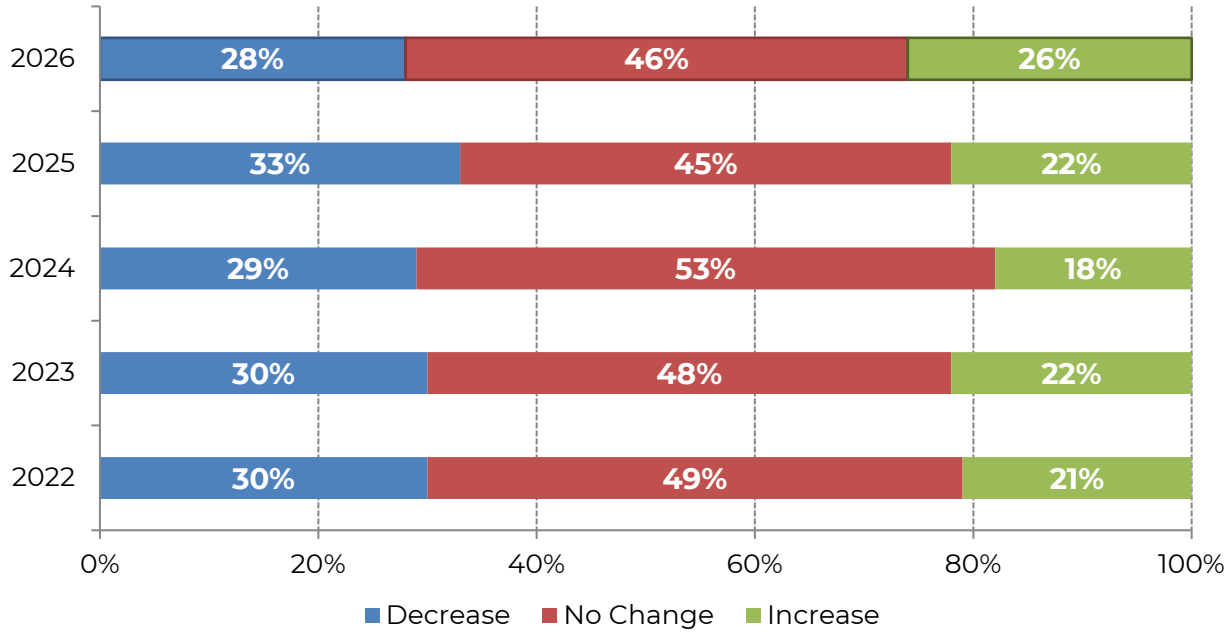
CIP Priority	**1st Priority** *(n=437) (%)*	**2nd Priority** *(n=431) (%)*	**3rd Priority** *(n=426) (%)*
Traffic flow improvements	**17**	**20**	**13**
Reconstructing existing streets	**27**	**16**	11
Sustainable solutions are incorporated in the above projects	**17**	10	**15**
Improvements to existing parks	8	**13**	11
Off-street bike facilities (commuter) improvements	10	9	9
Improvements to existing recreational facilities (e.g. aquatic center, auditorium, etc.)	5	8	11
Energy-efficient upgrades to municipal buildings	4	7	7
Greenway trails (recreational) improvements	4	7	10
Stormwater drainage improvements	6	12	**12**
Other (please specify)	<1	<1	<1

Property tax adjustment

The City levy for the next year is $10.27 per $1,000 of taxable valuation. This means that the City portion of the property tax on a $100,000 home in Ames is about $489 after rollback. When respondents were asked their view about adjusting property taxes next year, 46 percent indicated they would prefer no change, 28 percent suggested decreasing property taxes, and 26 percent suggested an increase in property taxes.

Figure 3 shows preferred property tax adjustments over the past five years. This year, the percentage of respondents indicating they would prefer a decrease in property tax decreased by 5 percent since last year (from 33 to 28 percent). Those who preferred an increase in property tax increased by 4 percent (from 22 to 26 percent). The percentage of those who preferred no change only increased by 1 percent (from 45 to 46 percent).

Figure 3. Trends in Preferred Property Tax Adjustments for Next Year, 2026



Residential satisfaction with City services

As shown in Table 8, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine services provided by the City of Ames, with results shown in Table 8. Responses were based on a scale of one to four, from very dissatisfied to very satisfied, as well as the option of "don't know." Overall, respondents are quite pleased with Ames City services, as eight out of nine services had over 90 percent of respondents stating they were somewhat or very satisfied with them. The only service falling below 90 percent was public nuisance enforcement, with 77 percent of respondents satisfied and 23 percent of respondents dissatisfied. Fire and rescue and the public library had the highest satisfaction with a 3.8 average rating out of four, and public nuisance enforcement was the lowest with a 3.1 average.

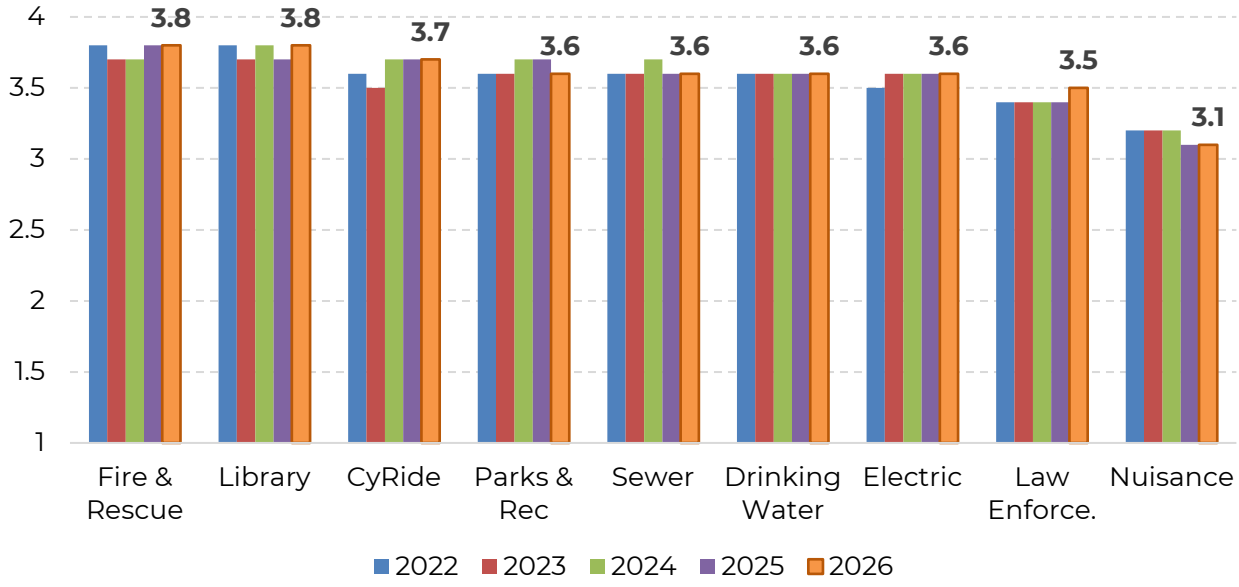
Table 8. Satisfaction with City Services*, 2026

City Services	*n*	**Somewhat and Very Dissatisfied** (%)	**Somewhat and Very Satisfied** (%)	**Average Rating**
Library services	*385*	2	98	3.8
Fire & rescue services	*338*	1	99	3.8
CyRide bus service	*352*	4	96	3.7
Electric services	*435*	3	97	3.6
Parks & recreation services	*440*	4	96	3.6
Drinking water system	*460*	7	93	3.6
Sewer system	*426*	5	95	3.6
Law enforcement services	*389*	7	93	3.5
Public nuisance enforcement	*339*	23	77	3.1

*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied. "Don't Know" was removed from analysis.

In the past five years, the level of satisfaction has stayed steady with only minimal changes. Since 2022, fire and rescue, the public library, parks and rec, sewer, and drinking water have kept the same satisfaction levels, with slight variation throughout the years. CyRide, electric, and law enforcement have all increased by 0.1. Public nuisance enforcement is the only service that has decreased in satisfaction since 2022, with a 0.1 decrease. This data is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Average Satisfaction Levels for Services*, 2022-2026



*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied

Comments on City of Ames Services

When asked for additional comments on City of Ames overall services, respondents most commonly said that they were satisfied or happy with City services. This was the only response category with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments) with 29 out of 56 respondents' comments.

- "Ames is fortunate to have high-quality services"
- "I love this City."
- "Overall, pretty good. Better than other places I've lived."
- "The City of Ames Services are very helpful for all its users - highly commendable services overall!"
- "We've lived in Ames for 4 years and have positive feelings about the City services."

Response categories with a medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were improving nuisance enforcement, sidewalk or trail maintenance, parks and recreation, transportation, or street maintenance.

- "Ames on the Go is a great tool to report issues in any given area, but more effort should go into actual remedies for reported issues."
- "Need to enforce business shoveling sidewalks"
- "We need a cover over the children's items at the front part of Inis Grove Park. There is no shade, and the play items get too hot for children on sunny days- which is when you want to go there"
- "I have an issue with the use of salt and other chemicals for snow and ice conditions in the city. This is harmful to the environment and contributes to rust on cars. Can you find alternatives to this treatment during winter conditions?"
- "Higher frequency on CyRide please"

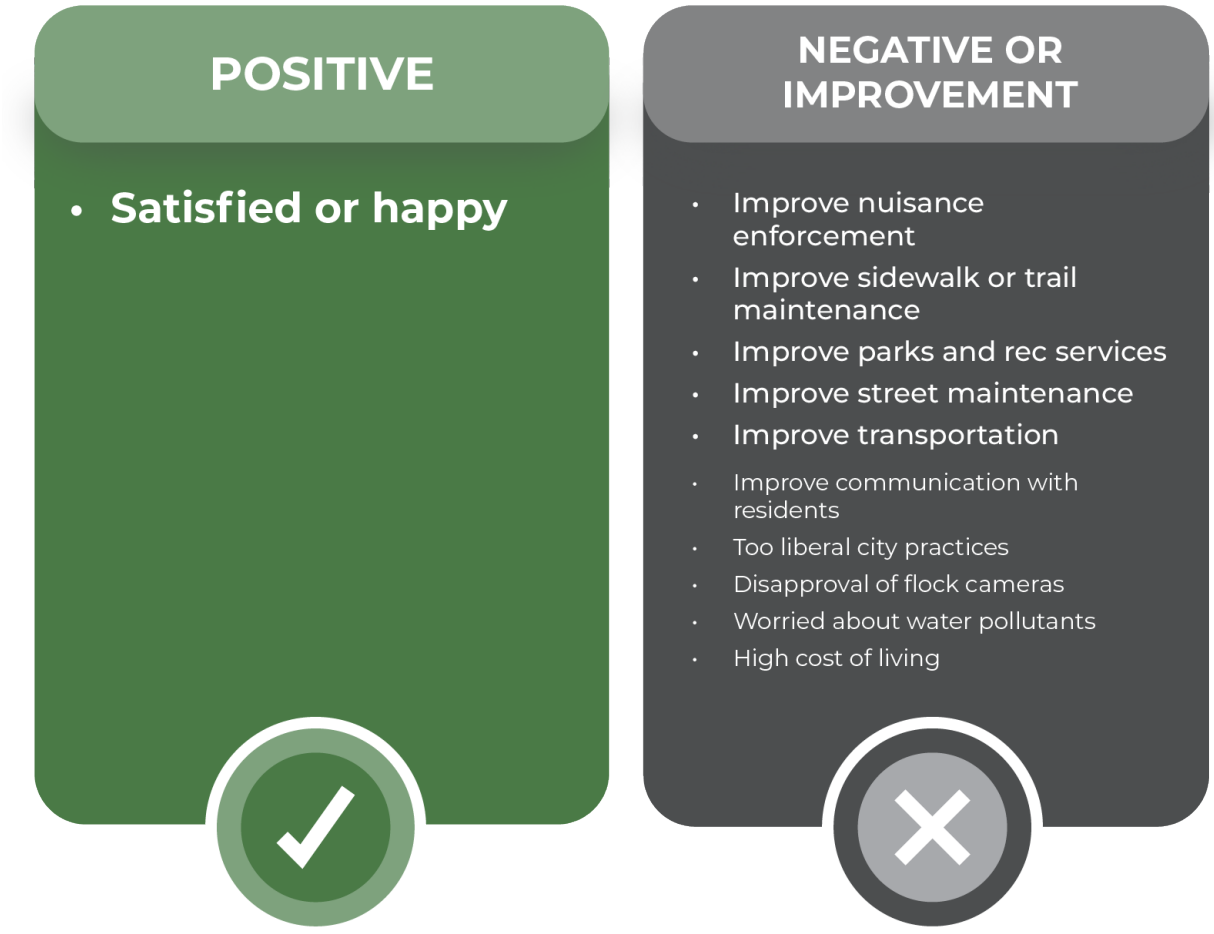
Responses with a low frequency (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) were those that mentioned too high cost of living in Ames, improving communication with residents, too left/liberal city practices, disapproval of flock cameras, and worries about water pollutants, among others.

- "[Prices] are too high"
- "Communication about services would further enhance the overall experience."
- "The City has facilitated the display of left-leaning ideologies on public streets and openly supports the left."
- "Please get rid of the Flock cameras!"
- "We have long since prided ourselves on quality drinking water. In light of becoming #2 in the nation for cancer, what are you doing to ensure that we do not have cancer-causing agents in our water?"

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on City of Ames services. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 5. Visualization of Comments on City of Ames Services



Ames Police Department (APD)

When respondents were asked if they ever interacted with the Ames police department in the last 12 months related to an investigation, traffic, accident, etc., less than a quarter (18 percent or 85 respondents) said yes. Of this, 52 percent were non-student residents and 48 percent were students.

Respondents were then asked if they have ever interacted with the police department at eight different outreach events. Table 9 shows that just over a quarter (28 percent) have interacted with them at a training or education program, followed by Shop with a Cop (19 percent), and National Night Out (18 percent). The rest were attended by less than 15 percent of the respondents.

Comparing the non-student respondents to students, there were more non-student residents who attended at least one outreach event sponsored by Ames Police (20 percent or 47 participants). However, only 27 students (11 percent) attended at least one of the outreach events.

The three most common outreach programs attended by non-students were Shop with a Cop (23 percent), National Night Out (21 percent), and a training or education program (19 percent). The most common for students was a training or education program (44 percent), Donuts in the Park (22 percent), National Night Out (11 percent), and Shop with a Cop (11 percent). No respondents reported attending Cop on Top.

Table 9. Outreach Events Where Respondent Interacted with the APD, 2026

Outreach Event	**Total** (n=74) (%)	**Non-students** (n=47) (%)	**Students** (n=27) (%)
Training or Education Program	28	19	44
Shop with a Cop	19	23	11
National Night Out	18	21	11
Donuts in the Park	14	9	22
Coffee with Cops	4	4	4
Carving with Cops	3	4	0
Citizen Police Academy	1	0	4
Cop on Top	0	0	0
Other (please specify)	34	34	33

Other categories of reported interactions include:

- ISU event/on campus (8 responses)
- Community events (6 responses)
- Youth outreach (4 responses)
- Donating (2 responses)
- Airport fly-in (1 response)
- Lost child search (1 response)
- K9 meeting (1 response)

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

Respondents were asked to choose three different aspects of law enforcement that should be emphasized. Four hundred and seventy-one respondents answered the question. Priorities that were most chosen were traffic enforcement in high accident areas (64 percent), safety programming and training (62 percent), and residential patrolling (51 percent). This data is shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Law Enforcement Priorities Chosen for More Emphasis, 2026

Priorities (n=471)	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
Traffic Enforcement in High Accident Areas	303	**64**
Safety Programming and Training	292	**62**
Residential Patrolling	238	**51**
Police Outreach	162	34
Retail Alcohol Monitoring/Enforcement	113	24
Animal Control and Sheltering	110	23
Business District Patrolling	96	20
Parking Regulations	47	10

Table 11 shows the trends in the priorities chosen for more emphasis from 2024 to 2026. In 2024, the number of priorities was reduced from 16 to the current eight listed priorities. Due to this, percentages for each priority were significantly lower and cannot be accurately compared to data from 2024 and beyond.

Since 2024, the only priorities that have increased in emphasis are residential patrolling and retail alcohol monitoring and enforcement. The rest have slightly decreased in emphasis except for animal control and sheltering which has stayed the same.

Table 11. Trends of Law Enforcement Priorities Chosen for More Emphasis, 2024-2026

Service	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Traffic Enforcement in High Accident Areas	66	67	64
Safety Programming and Training	63	65	62
Residential Patrolling	41	45	51
Police Outreach	40	37	34
Retail Alcohol Monitoring/Enforcement	23	22	24
Animal Control and Sheltering	23	24	23
Business District Patrolling	22	23	20
Parking Regulations	11	7	10

Comments on Ames Police Department

The most common response category for the Ames Police Department was those saying the police do a great job/work. With a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments) of 18 out of 77 respondents' comments.

- "The Ames Police Department does an incredible job at keeping the peace in our community."
- "Our PD seems pretty good."
- "Thank you!! Our Police Department is one to be proud of! Thank you to each and every member of the police department for your commitment and service. So appreciated."

Positive response categories with a medium frequency (mentioned in <15 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were those that said they respect or appreciate the police, they've had positive past experiences, and that the police department is important. Some respondents had neutral responses with no issues or complaints. Responses with improvements or critiques were to continue or improve community outreach, more traffic enforcement is needed, that the department is not useful or trustworthy, more community support/care is needed, there is too much speeding or accidents, or parking policies are too strict.

- "I have a high regard for our PD"

- “Every interaction I have had with Ames PD has been positive. This also goes for Iowa State University PD which have also been great from my experience.”
- “I wish that I could choose every item on the law enforcement priorities list. I have been able to see the value of each item one or more times in my years in Ames.”
- “It would be helpful if there were more police outreach activities, so residents can learn more about their services and feel more connected.”
- “I have never had issues with the Ames Police Department.”
- “I would love to see more patrolling on Stange for unsafe drivers.”
- “I don't think they're very useful”
- “Support for people struggling with substance abuse, housing, mental health, etc. should be priorities”
- “Speeding in South Campus/ CyTown neighborhood is a problem!”
- “I disagree with metered parking & think enforcing it is a waste of time”

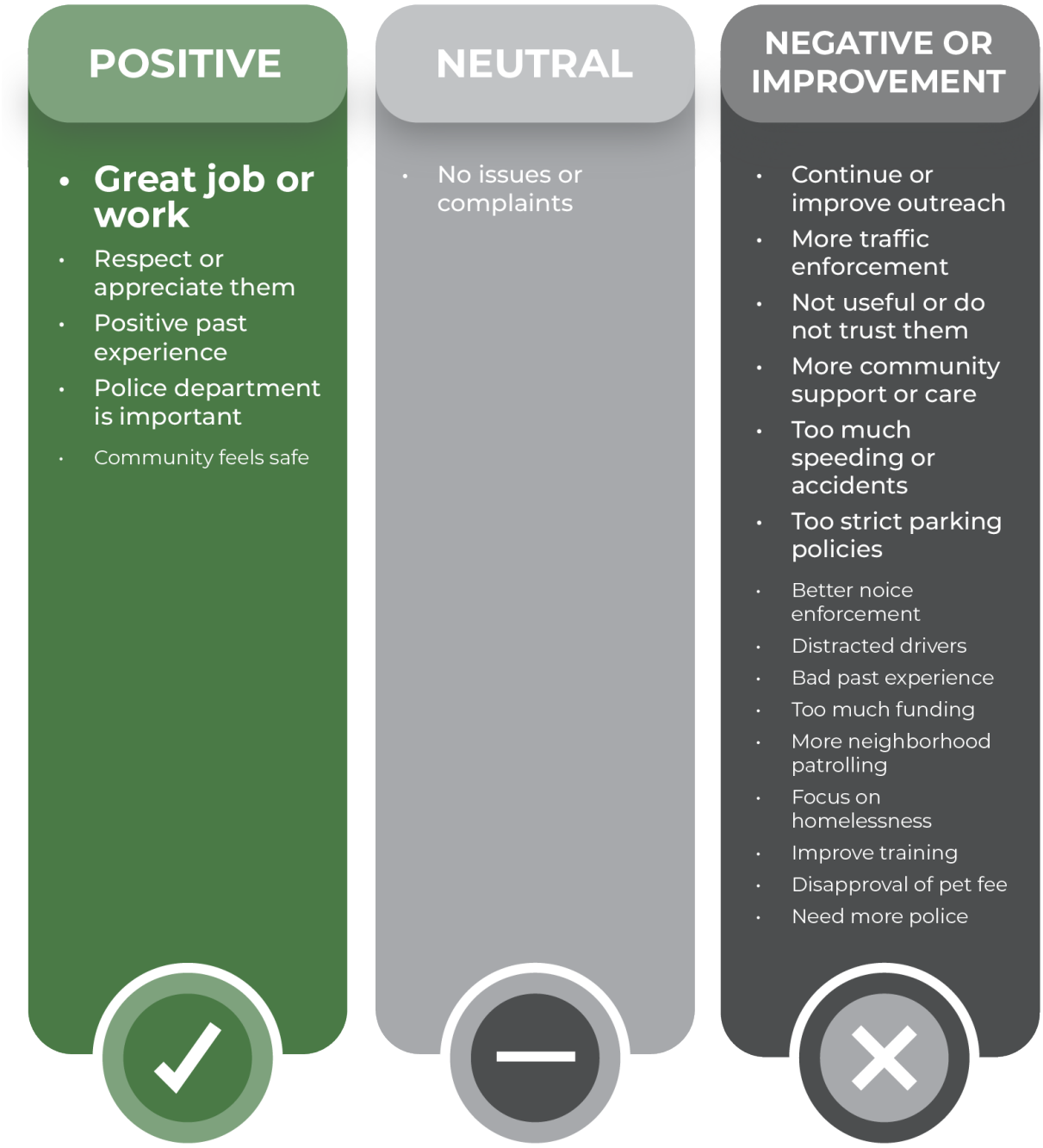
Response categories with a low frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents’ comments) were that the community feels safe, better noise enforcement is needed, focus more on distracted driving, recounting a bad past experience, that the police have too much funding, to focus more on homelessness, etc.

- “Ames is a very safe city and I attribute that to their current levels of patrols and work.”
- “Residents often violate the City rule (e.g. quiet time), but the City never takes care even when we call.”
- “Please engage in very aggressive enforcement of hands-free/device-free driving violations. I see more tops of heads in oncoming vehicles than I do faces. It has got to stop!”
- “My interaction with the Police Department in the past 12 months was very disappointing. I had a concern that I spoke with an officer about and was left feeling my concern was unimportant to the officer. I felt I was treated unfairly due to my gender. All citizens' concerns are important and deserve to be fully understood prior to being dismissed off hand”
- “Would recommend that resources distributed to them be reallocated to services that actually improve people's lives”
- “Dealing with homelessness”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on the police department. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 6. Visualization of Comments on Ames Police Department



Ames Fire Department

Survey respondents reported their satisfaction with Ames Fire Department services, shown in Table 12. For each activity, most survey respondents responded with "don't know", which was excluded in the analysis in Table 12. Almost all of the respondents who *did* report their satisfaction level were satisfied with each service; extinguishing fires (99 percent), emergency response time (98 percent), fire prevention activities and community outreach (98 percent), and emergency medical responses (98 percent). The average rating for each activity was 3.8 out of four.

Table 12. Satisfaction with Fire Department Activities*, 2026

Fire Department Activity	*n*	**Somewhat and Very Dissatisfied** (%)	**Somewhat and Very Satisfied** (%)	**Average Rating**
Extinguishing fires	*133*	1	99	3.8
Emergency response time	*185*	2	98	3.8
Fire prevention activities and community outreach	*207*	2	98	3.8
Emergency medical responses	*184*	2	98	3.8

*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied. "Don't Know" was removed from analysis.

Comments on Fire Department

When asked for additional comments about the fire department, 69 respondents shared their thoughts. With a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), the most common response was that they have not used the fire department's services before.

- "Have luckily not needed fire department services in my time as an Ames resident."
- "I have no interaction with the Fire Department. It's probably a good thing."
- "Thankfully I have never needed any of their services"

The other most common response with a high frequency were respondents who had good things to say about the fire department, such as they do a good job or appreciate them.

- "I have not interacted much with them, but I appreciate their awareness and their frequent inspection of some departments to minimize risk."
- "The Fire Department is quite reliable with quick response times and well-trained personnel."

Medium frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) tended to be positive. Categories were that they've had positive past experiences, the department has good community outreach, fast response times, they are good people, no complaints, and they believe the fire department is an important community service.

- "When my dad had a stroke, they were quick, kind, and calm. Thank you."

- “They came to my door to drop off promotional materials a few years ago when I moved back, and I appreciate their social media presences/community outreach.”
- “In my time in Ames it appears that they have quickly taken action to respond to fires.”
- “The fire department is always friendly and gets the job done.”
- “Seems solid? No direct experiences”
- “They are vital to the community.”

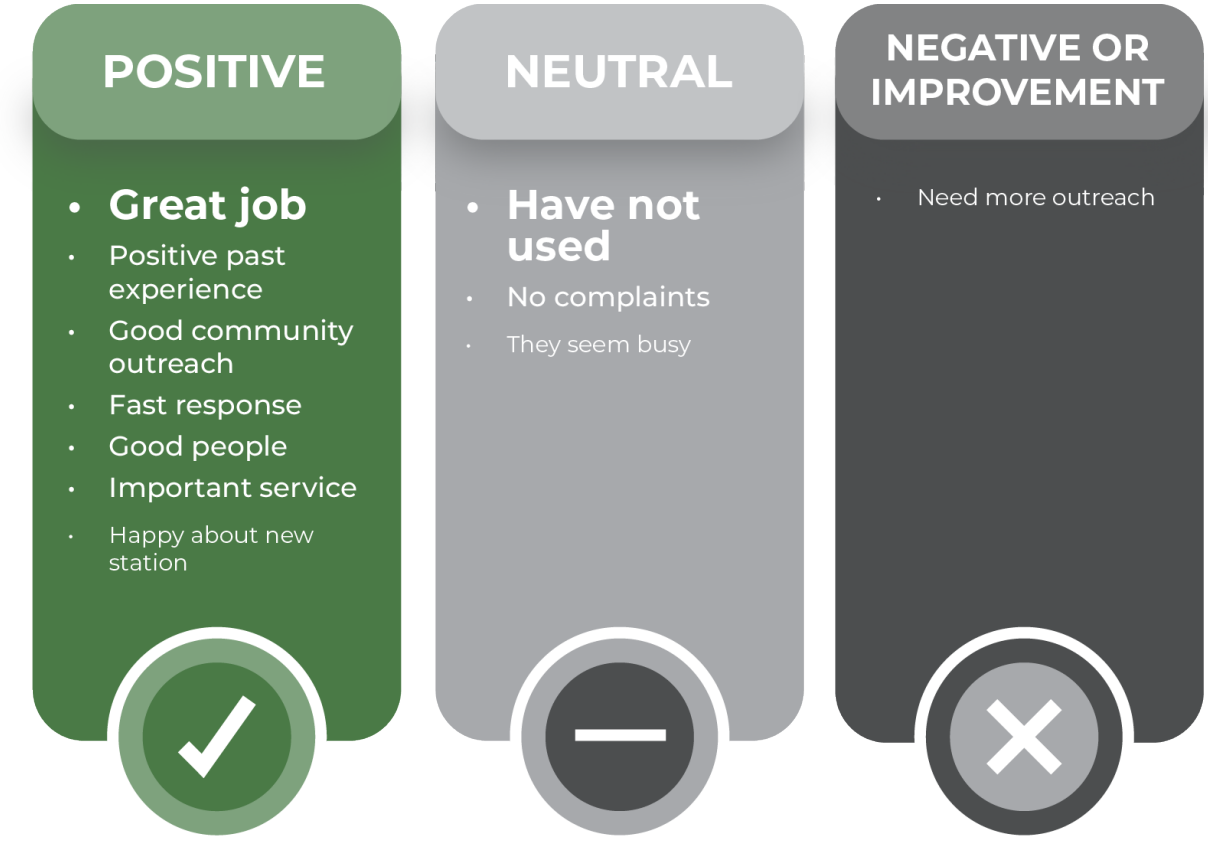
Low frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) included that they are happy about the new fire station, the department seems busy, they need more outreach and some other miscellaneous critiques and improvements.

- “Looking forward to the new station #2”
- “They’re always blaring past my house so they must be working hard”
- “It would be helpful to have more public information or community events to help residents learn about their services.”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on the fire department. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 7. Visualization of Comments on Fire Department



Ames Electric Services

Survey respondents were asked questions regarding Ames Electric Services, including questions about power outages, satisfaction with various aspects of the Electric Services department, and the SunSmart Ames project.

Respondents were asked if Ames Electric Services provides electricity to their home. Of those who responded, 13 percent said they don't know. 81 percent of the respondents reported that the City provides electricity to their home in 2026.

The number of respondents who have experienced a power *outage* fluctuates yearly. Table 13 demonstrates this fluctuation; 43 percent in 2022, 52 percent in 2023, then decreased to 48 percent in 2024 and 30 percent in 2025. Since last year, it has increased by three percent, with 33 percent of respondents who reported experiencing a power outage in the last year.

There was a slight change in those who experienced a power *surge* in the last five years. Those who experienced a power surge which affected computer operations were the same as in 2022, 12 percent, which is a one percent increase from last year's 11 percent.

Table 13. Respondents Reporting "Yes" to Experiencing an Interruption in the Past Year, 2026

Interruption	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Experienced power outage	43	53	48	30	33
Experienced power surge which affected computer operations	12	18	15	11	12

Table 14 shows satisfaction rates with Ames Electric Services. Looking at the average rating for each aspect of electric services, each average is considered satisfactory (represented by an average rating of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale). Majority of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with all six aspects of electrical services. However, satisfaction with electric rates was slightly lower than the other aspects. Ninety-eight percent were satisfied with the response of employees, and 97 percent with the quality of power, and time to restore service. There was also a high rate of satisfaction with ease of reporting an outage (96 percent) and being informed of progress restoring services (91 percent). Seventy-eight percent of the respondents were satisfied with electric rates, with the other 24 percent reporting being very or somewhat dissatisfied with electric rates.

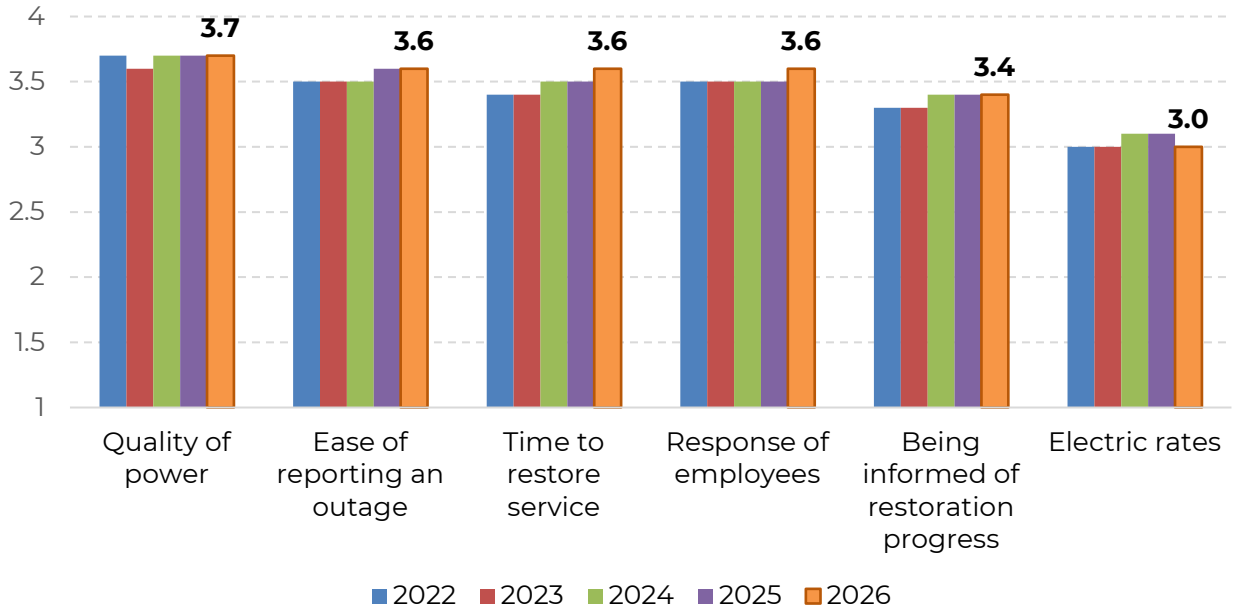
Table 14. Satisfaction with Ames Electric Service Activities*, 2026

Electric Service	*n*	**Very and somewhat dissatisfied** (%)	**Somewhat and very satisfied** (%)	**Average Rating**
The quality of power	*383*	3	97	3.7
Ease of reporting an outage	*250*	4	96	3.6
Response of employees	*250*	2	98	3.6
Time to restore service	*280*	3	97	3.6
Being informed of progress restoring services	*276*	9	91	3.4
Electric rates	*385*	24	76	3.0

*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied. “Does not apply” was removed from analysis.

Figure 8 shows the five-year trends in satisfaction with the Ames Electric Services. The satisfaction levels have remained constant across each category over the five-year period, with little variation from year to year. Three categories stayed the same in 2026 (quality of power, ease of reporting an outage, and being informed of progress in restoring service). Two categories slightly increased in 2026 (time to restore service, and response of employees). Only "electric rates" decreased in 2026.

Figure 8. Average Satisfaction with Ames Electric Services Activities, 2022-2026



Respondents were asked to gauge their interest in participating in the SunSmart Ames community solar farm (https://www.CityOfAmes.org/Solar). Ames Electric Services customers may purchase shares of the project at $210 per "Power Pack" and receive monthly credit on their utility bill for 15 years.

Only 10 percent of respondents indicated that they are participating in the project. The survey then asked for feedback on why they are not participating. Of those not participating, 41 percent specified that their stay in Ames is short-term, 19 percent responded that it was too expensive, and four percent stated they were uninterested.

Various "other" reasons were stated as the reason for not participating (39 percent). The most common was not knowing about the program. Other reasons were living in an apartment or renting, it being too expensive or not worth the price, not having enough information on the program, living temporarily in Ames, or being too busy, among a few others.

Comments on Ames Electric Services

When asked for additional comments on Ames Electric Services, 41 respondents gave a comment. The most common, with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), were those that said they were satisfied or that the department does a great job, with 16 out of 41 comments.

- "Ames does a great job with their electric services."
- "Ames Electric Services is generally reliable, providing consistent power."
- "Seems good. No problems. Worst was after the derecho (I think) when we were without power for a few days. Otherwise very reliable"
- "The electric service in Ames has been great and provided just what we have needed."

Medium frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) featured both positive comments or critiques/needed improvements. Positives were that they are supportive of current renewable energy initiatives, the department has fast response times, they appreciate the municipal service versus private, and they have low or reasonable rates. Critiques or improvements were that more communication or education is needed, rates are too expensive, or they've had issues with their account/setup/portal.

- "SunSmart Ames exemplifies what an informed community can do toward common welfare. And it's voluntary. I wish it a long and productive existence."
- "Do a good job of restoring electricity quickly when lose power"
- "I am glad to use AES over a for-profit company"'
- "Priced fairly"
- "Could there be a way to look at where/what your electricity usage is going to? Especially for people trying to save or cut back."
- "Rates could be lower, and having a fee to pay with a bank account is ridiculous."
- "The payment portal can use some work."

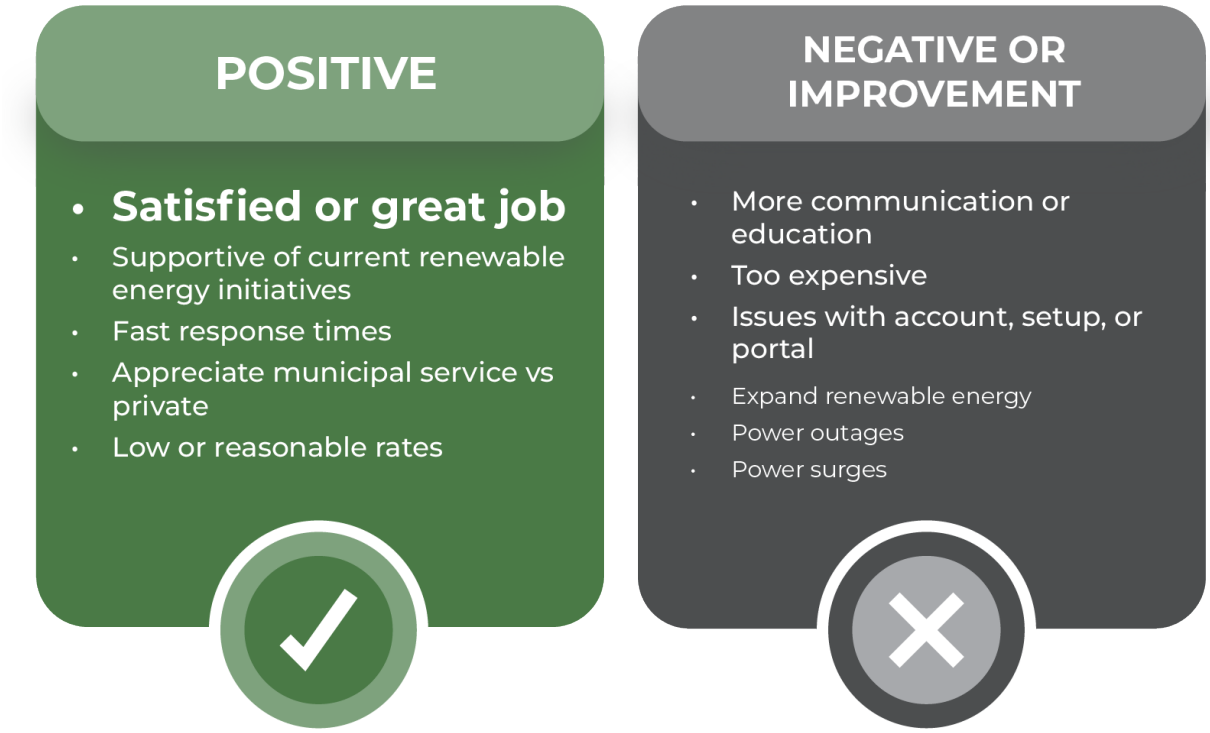
Low-frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) discussed expanding renewable energy, complaints about power outages, complaints about power surges, among others.

- "I think upgrades to the system and support for renewable energy options could further enhance service quality."
- "Have had some nights that we lose power for at least a little bit."
- "Issues with power surges and lights flickering/strobing. Multiple neighbors have called but no change."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on Ames Electric Services. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 9. Visualization of Comments on Ames Electric Services



Drinking water Service

Respondents were asked if they have experienced a list of water service problems and how many times in the last 12 months, shown in Figure 10. The percentage of respondents who reported *never* experiencing any of the problems are as follows: too much pressure (97 percent), soft water (90 percent), rust (80 percent), disagreeable taste or odor (80 percent), too little pressure (77 percent), sediment or cloudy appearance (76 percent), and hard water (68 percent).

Of respondents who *have* experienced water problems, most reported problems only one or two times within the last year. Too much pressure and soft water had the least number of reports overall. Too little pressure and hard water had the highest frequency of problems experienced three times or more. However, sediment or cloudy appearance, rust, and disagreeable taste or odor was reported the most of problems experienced only one or two times.

Figure 10. Frequencies of Water Service Problems in the Last 12 Months, 2026

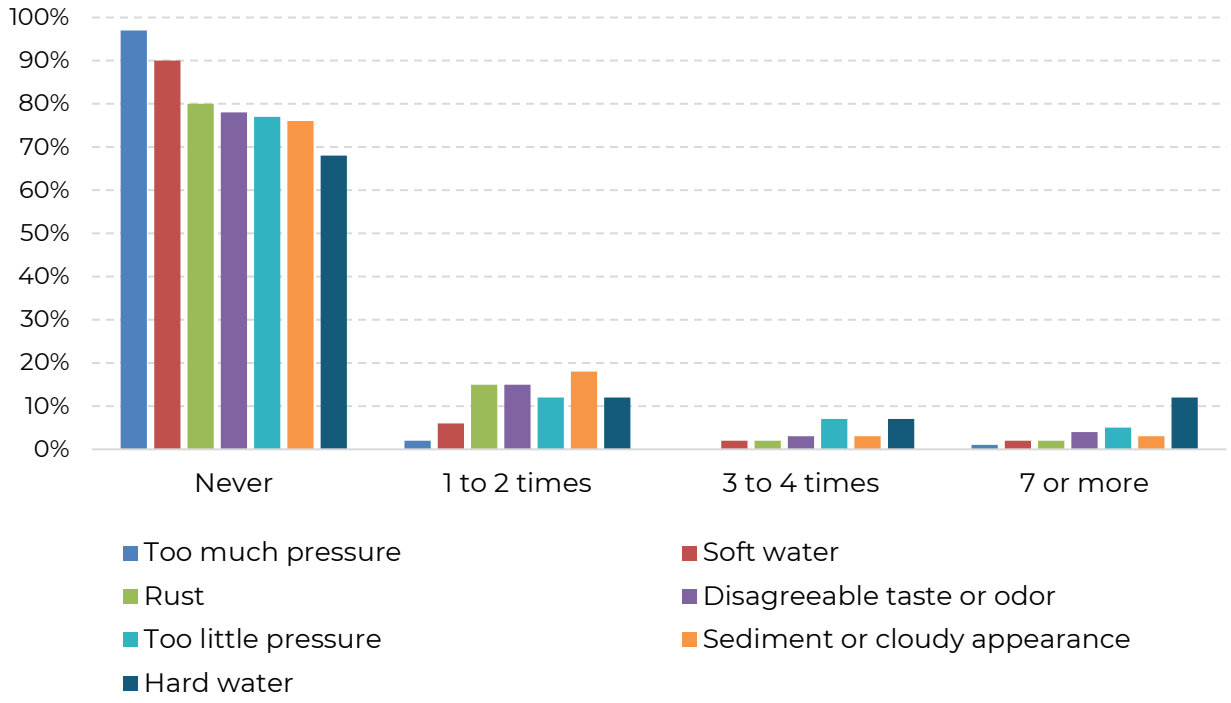
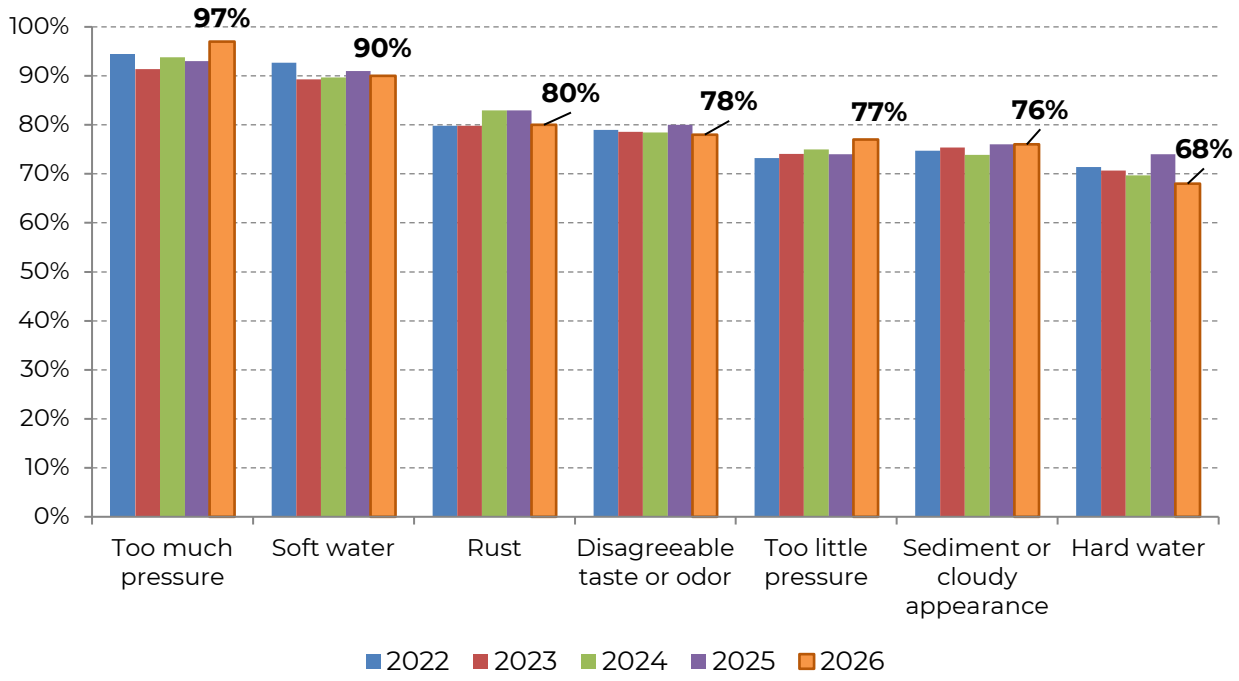


Figure 11 shows the percentage of respondents reporting no experience of each water problem since 2022 – the higher the percentage, the better. Historically, Ames residents are pleased with their water services. Since 2022, those who have never experienced each water problem have stayed fairly

consistent. However, too much pressure and too little pressure has slightly increased and soft water and hard water has slightly decreased.

Figure 11. Respondents Reporting No Water Service Problems, 2022-2026



Comments on Drinking Water Service

Eighty-five respondents shared comments on the drinking water service in Ames. The most common response category, and the only one with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), were those that are satisfied with the water or say that the service is great.

- "Ames has great water and I appreciate it!"
- "Ames Tap Water is the best! I brag about it to my non-Ames friends."
- "Never any problems -- very good water"
- "So far the Ames drinking water has been great!"

Medium frequency categories (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) featured more complaints or worries about the water. Responses included more communication about testing and water quality, worries about nitrates or cancer, no specific issues, bad water taste, rust/minerals/deposits, beliefs that filtering or purification is needed, dislikes of hard water or wanting softer water, neutral comments about hard water, and good water taste.

- "In my view, continued communication about water quality and long-term sustainability efforts could further boost public confidence."
- "Although we filter our City water because we live in a rural farming state and worry about nitrates"

- “I have never had any quality issues with the drinking water”
- “Oftentimes water will have a very chlorinated or even fishy taste.”
- “Also have had deposits build up on faucets and some rust”
- “We have an RO system for drinking at home.”
- “The water here seems very hard and is not nice to my hair and skin.”
- “The water is on the hard side, but I don't want to pay for softening.”
- “To me our water is one of the best tasting in this whole central area”

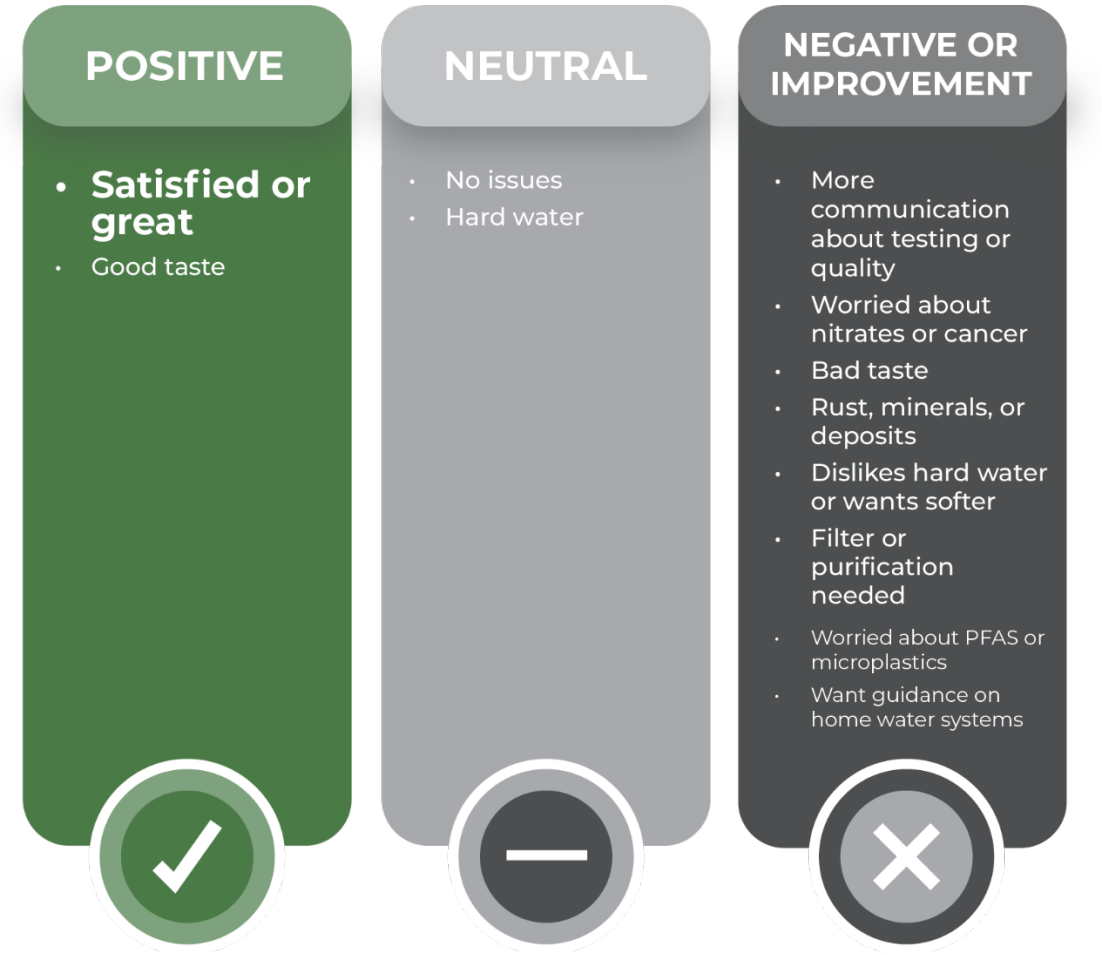
Low-frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) are those worried about PFAS or microplastics, those that want more guidance on water systems, and a few other miscellaneous responses.

- “Worries about microplastics and PFAS, would love info on what Ames is doing to mitigate that”
- “There should be a program available to help residents replace old curb box shutoffs. The current program of replacing water meters creates a need for this assistance, especially given many of the water meters do not actually need replacing due to age, it is happening to "simplify" the job of billing, so not really necessary.”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on the drinking water service. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 12. Visualization of Comments on Drinking Water Service



Water and Pollution Control

Survey respondents were asked to provide their level of satisfaction with water quality, water rates, and sewer rates. Ninety-three percent were satisfied with water quality (3.5 average rating) and 80 percent were satisfied with both water rates and sewer rates (3.1 average rating). Since last year, the average rating for water quality decreased by 0.1, and both water and sewer rates stayed the same. This data is shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Satisfaction with Water and Pollution Control Services, 2026

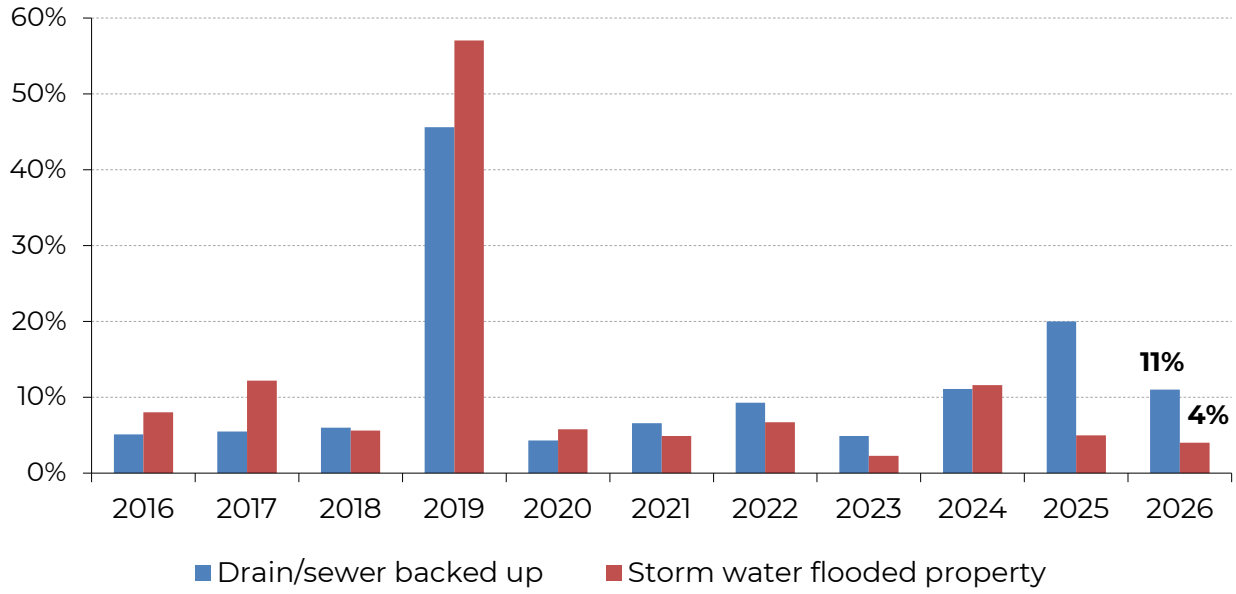
Service	*n*	**Somewhat and very dissatisfied (%)**	**Somewhat and very satisfied (%)**	**Average Rating**
Water quality	*445*	7	93	3.5
Water rates	*391*	20	80	3.1
Sewer rates	*384*	20	80	3.1

*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied. “Don’t Know” was removed from analysis.

Figure 13 shows trends in the percentage of respondents experiencing back-up or stormwater problems. Generally, fewer than 15 percent of respondents have experienced back-up or flooding problems since 2016, except for a couple of key years in 2019 and 2025. These jumps tend to correlate with major weather events.

Eleven percent of respondents experienced a drain or sewer backup this year, which is a nine percent decrease from last year. Of these people, 41 percent reported the issue to the City. When asked for their satisfaction with the City’s response, 70 percent were satisfied (55 percent somewhat satisfied and 15 percent very satisfied). Four percent experienced stormwater flooding compared to backups. Only six of the 17 respondents who experienced flooding reported the problem to the City. Four respondents rated their satisfaction with the City’s response, with one very dissatisfied and three somewhat satisfied.

Figure 13. Respondents' Experience with City Sewer System Problems, 2016-2026



Comments on Water and Pollution Control

Only 21 respondents made comments on water and pollution control. The most common response was that the department does good or great work.

- "Great job!"
- "The water quality is satisfactory."
- "They do a great job of protecting our water resources."

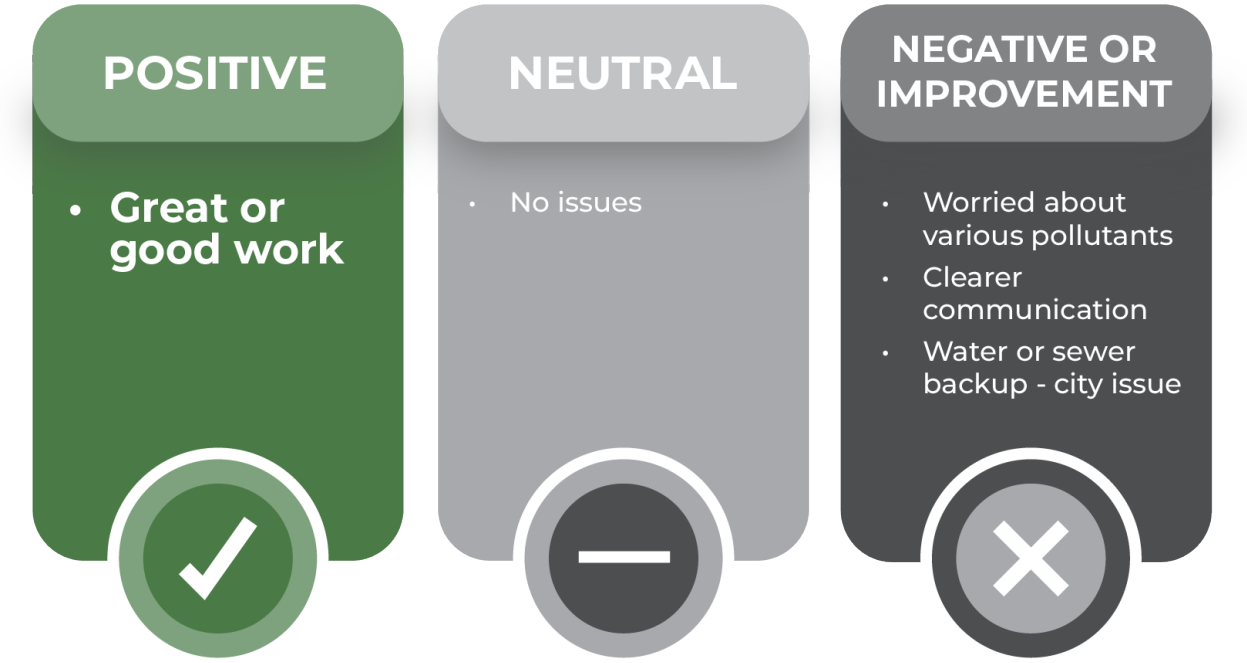
Other medium and low frequency responses were worries about pollutants, wanting clearer communication, no issues, issues with water/sewer backup from the City, among other miscellaneous responses.

- "Sometimes the weather smells like ammonia or urea, which shows that the weather is polluted."
- "I don't understand sewer rates - tried searching the internet for how its calculated, don't see clear answer. Wish water meter had visual tracker like electric meter to better gauge if charges are accurate."
- "Pollution concerns have never crossed my mind while living in Ames."
- "When I had a plumber come in for Kitchen sink backup, they said the problem seemed to be with pipes at the junction, not necessarily my home pipes."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on the Water and Pollution Control Department. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 14. Visualization of Comments on Water and Pollution Control



Nuisance ordinances and enforcement

Table 16 illustrates survey respondents' satisfaction with the City's enforcement efforts for different nuisances. Over half of respondents reported "Don't know" for each violation, ranging from 51 to 77 percent for each type of nuisance.

Among those who expressed their satisfaction, the majority reported being either somewhat or very satisfied with each enforcement effort: over-occupancy (77 percent), front yard parking (77 percent), dangerous structures (72 percent), yard upkeep (67 percent), noise limits (67 percent), and outdoor storage (61 percent). When satisfaction was compared against the respondents' geographic residences, the level of satisfaction was higher for those living in southeast Ames regarding yard upkeep and dangerous structures.

Sixteen percent of the 72 respondents reported nuisance concerns to the City. Only 36 percent of them were satisfied with the City's response.

Table 16. Satisfaction with Nuisance Enforcement*, 2026

Nuisance	*n*	**Somewhat and very dissatisfied** (%)	**Somewhat and very satisfied** (%)	**Average Rating**
Over-occupancy in rental property	*112*	23	77	3.1
Front yard parking on residential properties	*178*	23	77	3.1
Dangerous structures	*189*	28	72	3.0
Yard upkeep	*232*	33	67	2.9
Noise limits	*218*	33	67	2.9
Outdoor storage on property	*206*	39	61	2.8

*1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = somewhat dissatisfied; 3 = somewhat satisfied; 4 = very satisfied. "Don't Know" was removed from analysis.

Comments on Nuisance Ordinances and Enforcement

Sixty-six respondents left a comment about nuisance ordinances and enforcement. Two categories had a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), which were those stating that a specific nuisance had not been addressed or fixed and those complaining about noise nuisances. (Note: many comments within this section fall under two or more response categories.)

- "Other issues like street repair or tree trimming have taken years (literally). Reported sidewalk issues are never addressed at all."
- "I have reported a curb/gutter issue in my neighborhood multiple years in a row. The City comes out and marks the location but does not remedy."
- "Dogs bark constantly, left outside all day while owners are gone."
- "South Ames has noise issues on HWY 69 with people exiting town. I have never called it in because it feels like there might not be much that can be done about it."

Medium-frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were that the City needs stronger regulations or enforcement, complaints about overgrown yards, complaints about trash or junk, that ordinances or enforcement is too strict, complaints about loud vehicles, complaints about bad upkeep of rental properties, or parking nuisances.

- "Would like to see a timelier result instead of waiting & waiting"
- "Lawns and yards overgrown with trees, unmown lawns, same places every year."
- "A lot of junk is in yards"
- "I don't think yard upkeep should be an enforceable nuisance"

- “Seems there could be better enforcement on noise issues - i.e. drag racing on streets, motorcycles speeding on Grand Ave.”
- “Lots of rental properties that just dump in their yard or leave cans unopened. I regularly have to pick up all kinds of trash in my yard. The park by my house is a mess, with broken glass and other debris.
- “Unlicensed car parked on property”

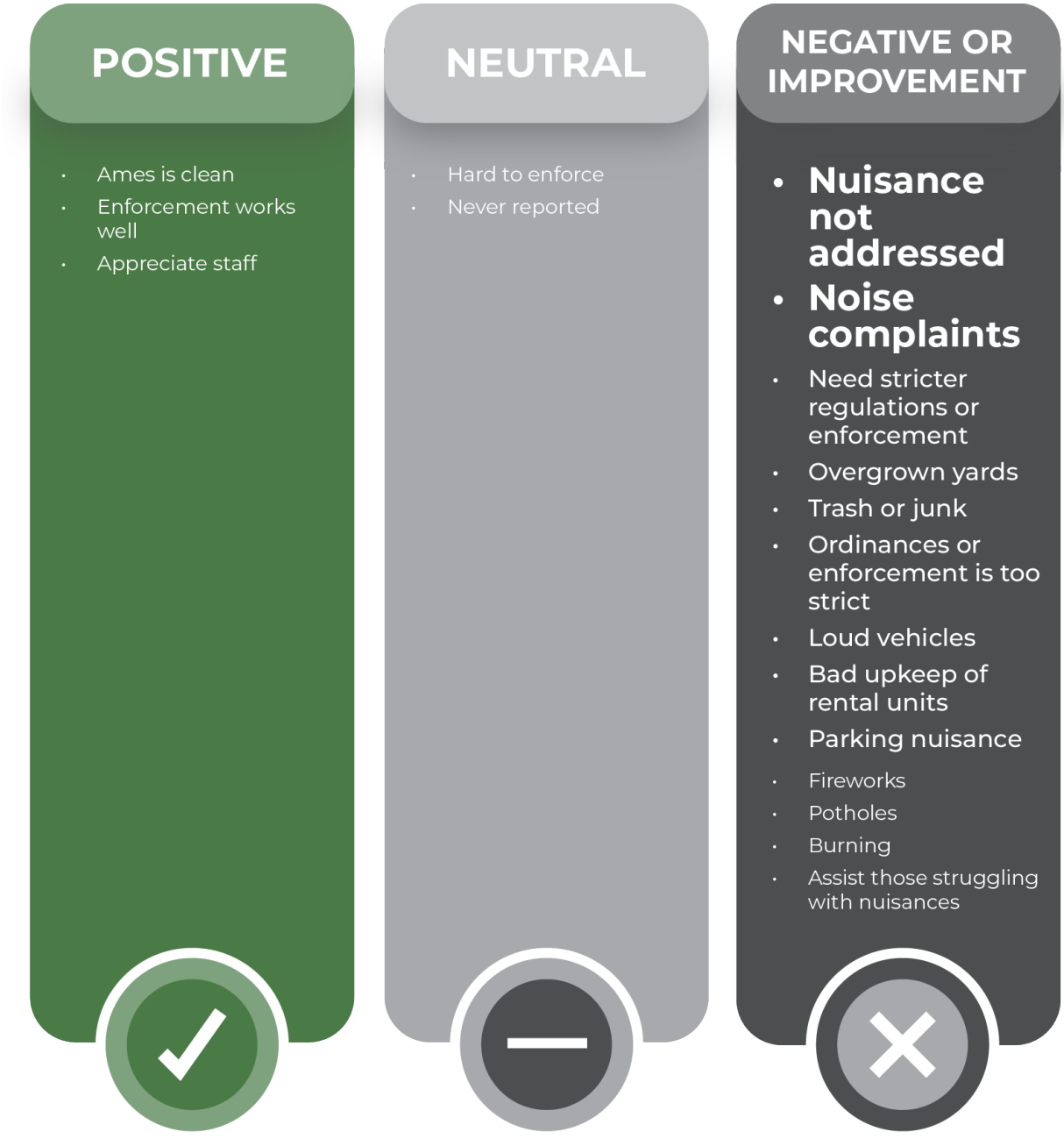
Low-frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) discussed various different topics such as fireworks, that Ames is clean, that enforcement works well, that they’ve never reported anything, that codes are hard to enforce, among other responses.

- “I wish more citations would be issued for illegal fireworks - I think it is unreasonable to expect citizens to pursue illegal fireworks in the middle of the night.”
- “I think Ames is a very clean and safe place to live. I constantly receive comments from visitors on how clean and beautiful Ames is.”
- “I think the nuisance ordinances are working well in my community.”
- “I have not personally reported an issue.”
- “Enforcing nuisance ordinances is a challenging task.”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The next figure helps visualize all free-response comments on nuisance ordinances and enforcement. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared, and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 15. Visualization of Comments on Nuisance Ordinances and Enforcement



Street maintenance and Traffic

Residents were given the opportunity to rate various street maintenance services using a four-point scale from very poor to very good. While most respondents rated each service as either good or very good, two services (ice control at intersections and snow plowing in your neighborhood) had the lowest ratings and received an average just shy of 3.0 (good). The rest of the services received a rating higher than 3.0, representing these as 'good' services.

In 2026, six of the nine street maintenance features mentioned in Table 17 were viewed the same regardless of geographic residence. The other three features – condition of streets in your neighborhood, ice control at intersections, and snow plowing on major streets – were rated higher by those who lived in northwest Ames.

Table 17. Ratings of Street Maintenance Services*, 2026

Service	*n*	**Poor and very poor** (%)	**Good and very good** (%)	**Average Rating**
Street sweeping in business areas	*352*	5	95	3.4
Snow plowing on major streets	*468*	14	86	3.3
Maintenance of bike path system (on street lanes and paths)	*357*	12	88	3.3
Appearance of medians and parkways	*460*	9	91	3.3
Condition of streets in your neighborhood	*467*	16	84	3.1
Street sweeping in your neighborhood	*405*	18	82	3.1
Surface condition of major streets	*466*	17	83	3.1
Ice control at intersections	*460*	27	73	2.9
Snow plowing in your neighborhood	*465*	37	63	2.8

*1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = good; 4 = very good. "Don't Know" was removed from analysis.

Figures 16a and 16b show the trends in the respondents' ratings of street maintenance services since 2022. Historically, ice control at intersections and snow plowing in neighborhoods have had the lowest scores and have both slightly decreased since last year.

Figure 16a. Average Rating of Street Maintenance Services, 2022-2026

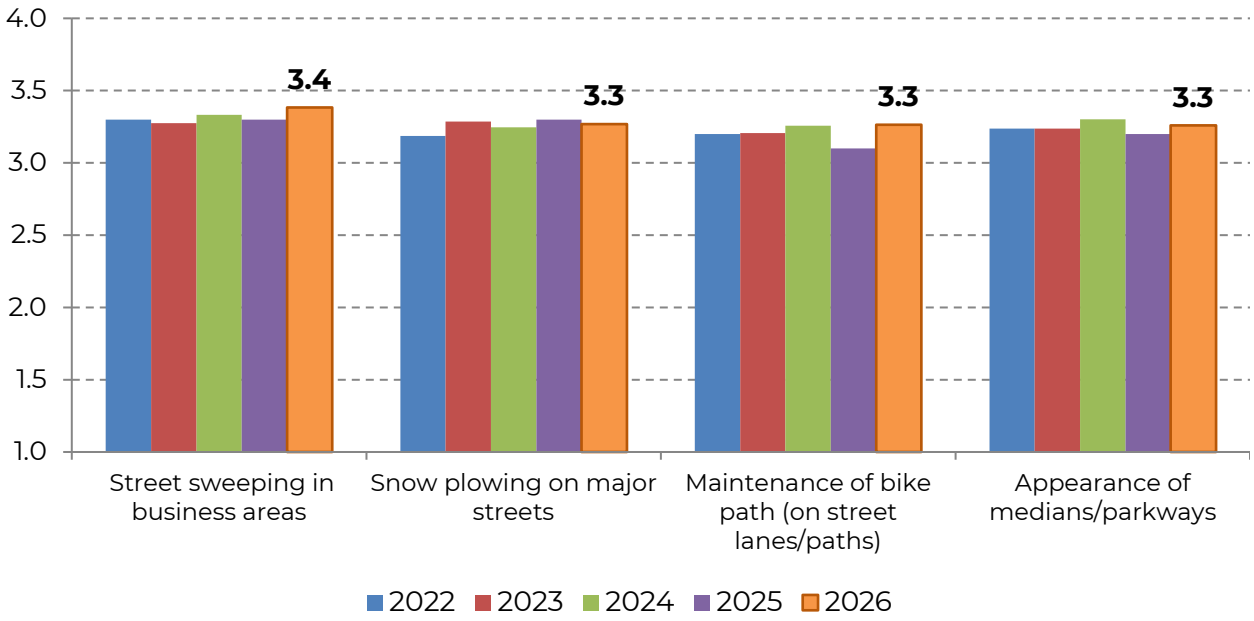
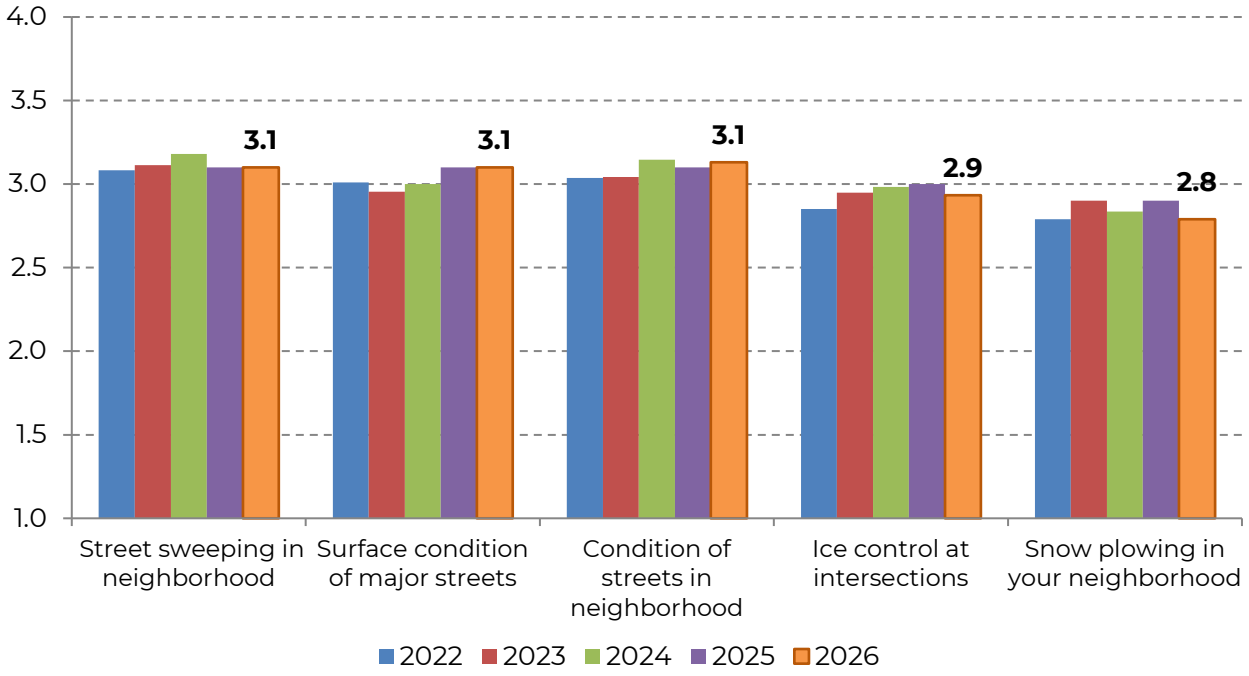


Figure 16b. Average Rating of Street Maintenance Services, 2022-2026 (cont.)



The survey also asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of coordination between traffic signals. Sixty percent of respondents perceived that the traffic signal coordination was often or almost always effective, compared to 30 percent who perceived the signal coordination as sometimes or rarely effective. This is a slight 2 percent decrease in effectiveness from last year. (Table 18)

Table 18. Effectiveness of Traffic Signal Coordination, 2026

Effectiveness	**Percent (%)**
Often effective	32
Almost always effective	28
Sometimes effective	25
Rarely effective	5
Don't know	9

Comments on Street Maintenance and Traffic

When asked to give comments on street maintenance and traffic, 88 respondents shared their thoughts. The most common response, and the only one with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), were those that said there needs to be better traffic light coordination or timing.

- "I feel like Duff Ave can have better signal patterns."
- "I think the traffic signals have a lot of room for optimization to prevent large backups of vehicles when the light is red when minimal traffic is going through the intersection from the other direction."
- "It feels like sometimes I'll hit every possible red light on Lincoln. I know I'm going to hit some, but sometimes it feels programmed to stop cars as much as possible."
- "The lights at 9th and Grand need to be timed better. The North/South light stays green for up to 2.5-3 minutes after the walk light goes off."

Medium frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) are as follows: improved left turns, red lights are too long, congestion and long lines, problems during peak traffic times, needed improvements for pedestrians/crosswalks, traffic lights work well, conflicts between side and main streets, and no issues.

- "Also, some lights would be lovely to have a green arrow left-hand turn before straight-ahead traffic occurs … such as the light on the 3-way stop in front of Geoffrey."
- "Some signals take way too long to change. People tend to avoid those routes for that reason."
- "Lincoln West seems to be designed to plug traffic up."
- "Need to adjust signal timing priorities on peak hours."
- "Many pedestrian signals along bus routes such as Lincoln Way take too long to change, some resulting in wait times of over a minute to cross."
- "Traffic signals in Ames generally feel safe and orderly across major streets."

- “There are many intersections where there is no traffic on the main road, but the crossroad is made to sit and idle far too long.”
- “I have never had any issues on traffic signals.”

Low frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) features topics such as too short of green lights, defective light sensors, appreciation, those who believe they are not coordinated at all, needed snow plowing improvements, and some other miscellaneous topics.

- “The timing on some lights can also be inconsistent, where the light is green for very little time (less than 5 seconds).”
- “There's one traffic signal on Lincoln Way where the left turn into Union Drive doesn't seem to work.”
- “Is there coordination?”
- “This past winter, it would seem that a NOVICE is plowing. Lots of turf stripped from yards beyond the curb.”

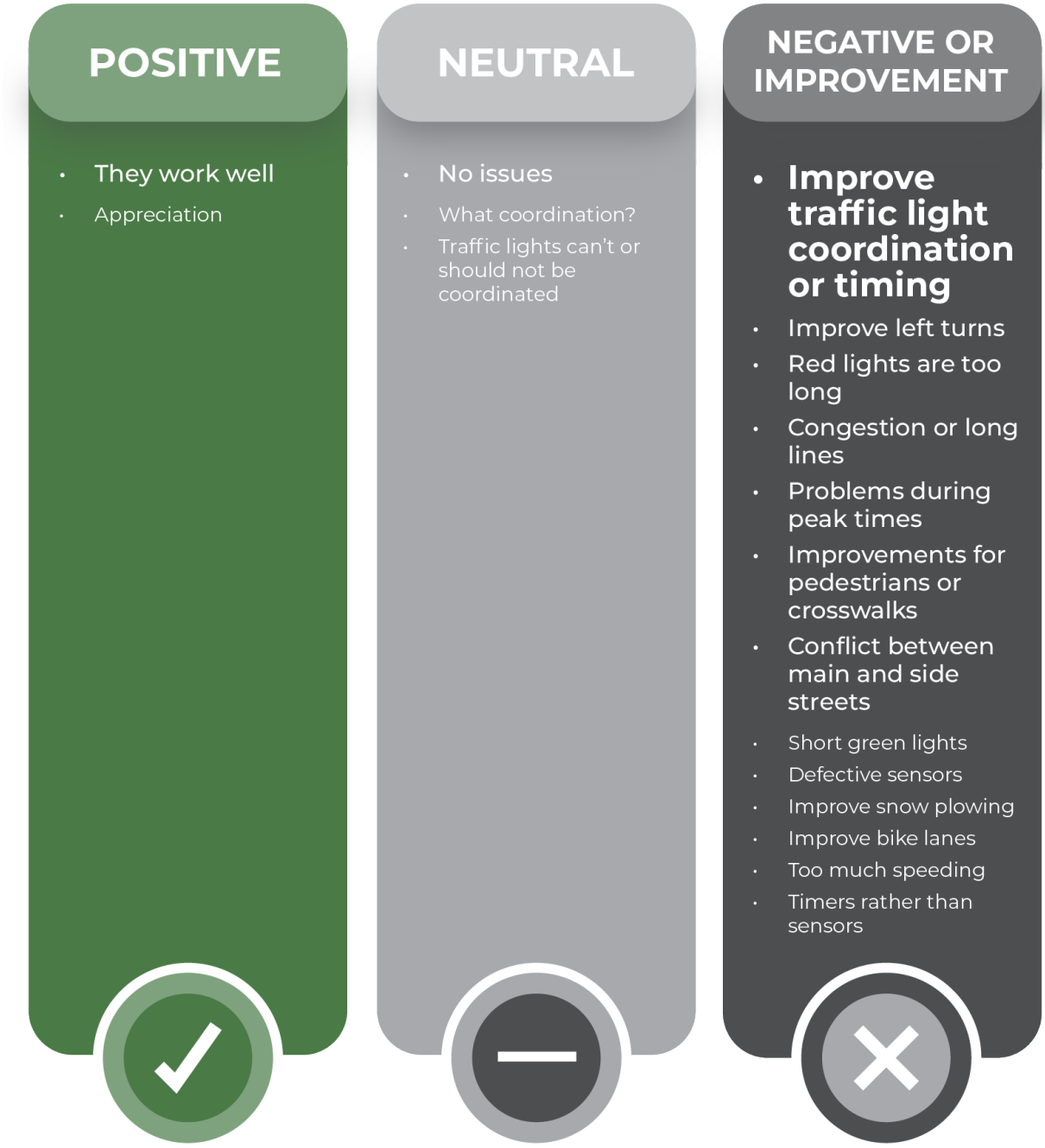
The frequency of mentions of specific streets in these comments was also tabulated.

- 17 comments: Lincoln Way
- 16 comments: Grand Ave
- 11 comments: 13th St
- 10 comments: Duff Ave
- 4 comments: Stange Rd
- 3 comments: Mortensen Rd, North/South Dakota Ave,
- 2 comments: 9th St, University Blvd, Crystal St, Airport Rd
- 1 comment: Aspen Rd, Union Dr, Ferndale Ave, Dotson Dr, Lynn Ave, 24th St, State Ave, 4th St, 20th St, Hayward Ave, Harrison Ave, Hyde Ave

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on street maintenance and traffic. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and whether they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of the font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 17. Visualization of Comments on Street Maintenance and Traffic



CyRide

CyRide is the community-wide transit system serving both Iowa State University and Ames. It is funded through the City of Ames (from property taxes), ISU administration (from the general fund), and ISU students (from student fees).

This year, 42 percent of survey respondents reported some weekly use of CyRide, which is a little lower than last year at 46 percent. This leaves 58 percent of respondents who report never using CyRide on a weekly basis. In the past five years, CyRide has averaged around 44 percent of respondents with weekly ridership. The percentage of respondents reporting different levels of CyRide usage (e.g. once a week vs two to six times a week) has stayed consistent since 2022. (Table 19)

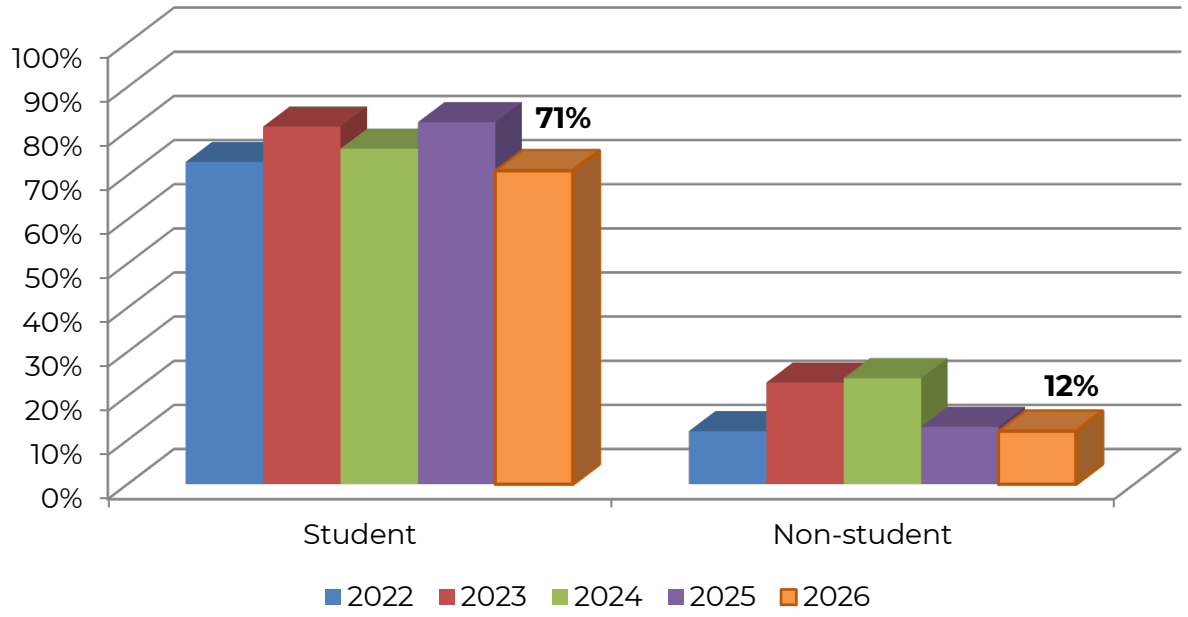
The survey found that students, renters, those under 44 years old, and short-term residents tend to use CyRide more.

Table 19. Respondents' Weekly CyRide Usage, 2022-2026

Weekly Use	***2022*** *(%)*	***2023*** *(%)*	***2024*** *(%)*	***2025*** *(%)*	***2026*** *(%)*
Never	56	54	58	54	58
2 to 6 times	18	19	16	18	17
7 to 10 times	12	13	13	13	12
More than 10 times	7	10	7	10	9
Once a week	7	4	6	4	4

Figure 18 shows the difference in ridership between students and non-student residents since 2022. Of those who reported using CyRide at least once a week this year, 71 percent were students and 12 percent were non-students. Historically, students tend to ride the bus significantly more than non-students.

Figure 18. Respondents Who Use CyRide at Least Once a Week, 2022-2026



When respondents were asked what would make them consider using CyRide, if they are not currently using it, almost half (47 percent) said nothing would make them use it. Twenty percent said they would use the service if it were more frequent on nearby routes. Additional factors were if service was provided to more areas of Ames (17 percent), fare-free rides (14 percent), if service offered on routes is longer during the day (9 percent), and if the fare when boarding the bus was lower (5 percent). Other written reasons are provided below. (Table 20)

Table 20. Reasons That Would Make Respondents Consider Using CyRide, 2026

Reasons (n=274)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Nothing	129	47
Service was more frequent on routes near me	54	20
Services were provided to more areas of Ames	46	17
The fare when boarding the bus was at no cost	38	14
Service was offered on my route longer during the day (earlier or later times)	24	9
The fare when boarding the bus was lower	14	5
Other (please specify)	49	18

Other categories of reasons that would make respondents consider using CyRide include:

- If I couldn't drive (5 responses)
- If I knew how to use it (4 responses)
- Only if I needed to (3 responses)
- Service offered for large events (2 responses)
- If it felt safer (2 responses)
- If it was faster (2 responses)
- Stops closer to me (2 responses)
- If allowed dogs (1 response)
- If I worked in town (1 response)
- Routes to DSM (1 response)
- Cashless payment (1 response)
- If I couldn't bike (1 response)
- More shelters/benches (1 response)
- Better info on times (1 response)
- More accurate times (1 response)
- Maybe more with age (1 response)
- More service to VetMed (1 response)

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

Comments on CyRide

More than 100 respondents shared comments on CyRide services. With a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), almost half of comments said they either love CyRide or believe it is a great service.

- "The service is fantastic."
- "CyRide is a very helpful service within the campus and nearby places around Ames."
- "CyRide is wonderful. I appreciate that a ride can be scheduled to Wolfe Clinic and other businesses that the regular routes don't cover."
- "CyRide works well, I am embarrassed I don't use it more."
- "LOVE CyRide, it is integral to my household."

Responses with a medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were those that don't use or need it, that it is an important community amenity/service, it is convenient or reliable, that other modes of transportation are more convenient for them, there needs to be better service on weekends/breaks/evenings, there needs to be expanded routes or stops, the app and/or bus times need to be improved, the bus drivers are good, and there needs to be more frequency of buses.

- "No need to use it."
- "The service is a tremendous gift to all residents who do rely on it."
- "It is convenient for me when needed."
- "It just is more convenient to use a personal vehicle. I would consider using the bus system more if we didn't have two vehicles or lived closer to campus."
- "Please, could the Brown route run as late as the Green and Red, especially on weekends?"
- "I only wish there were more routes from west Ames to north Ames."
- "App and web times are not quite accurate, which can make planning a trip a little bit difficult."
- "Staff are friendly and helpful."
- "It would be helpful to improve frequency during peak hours."

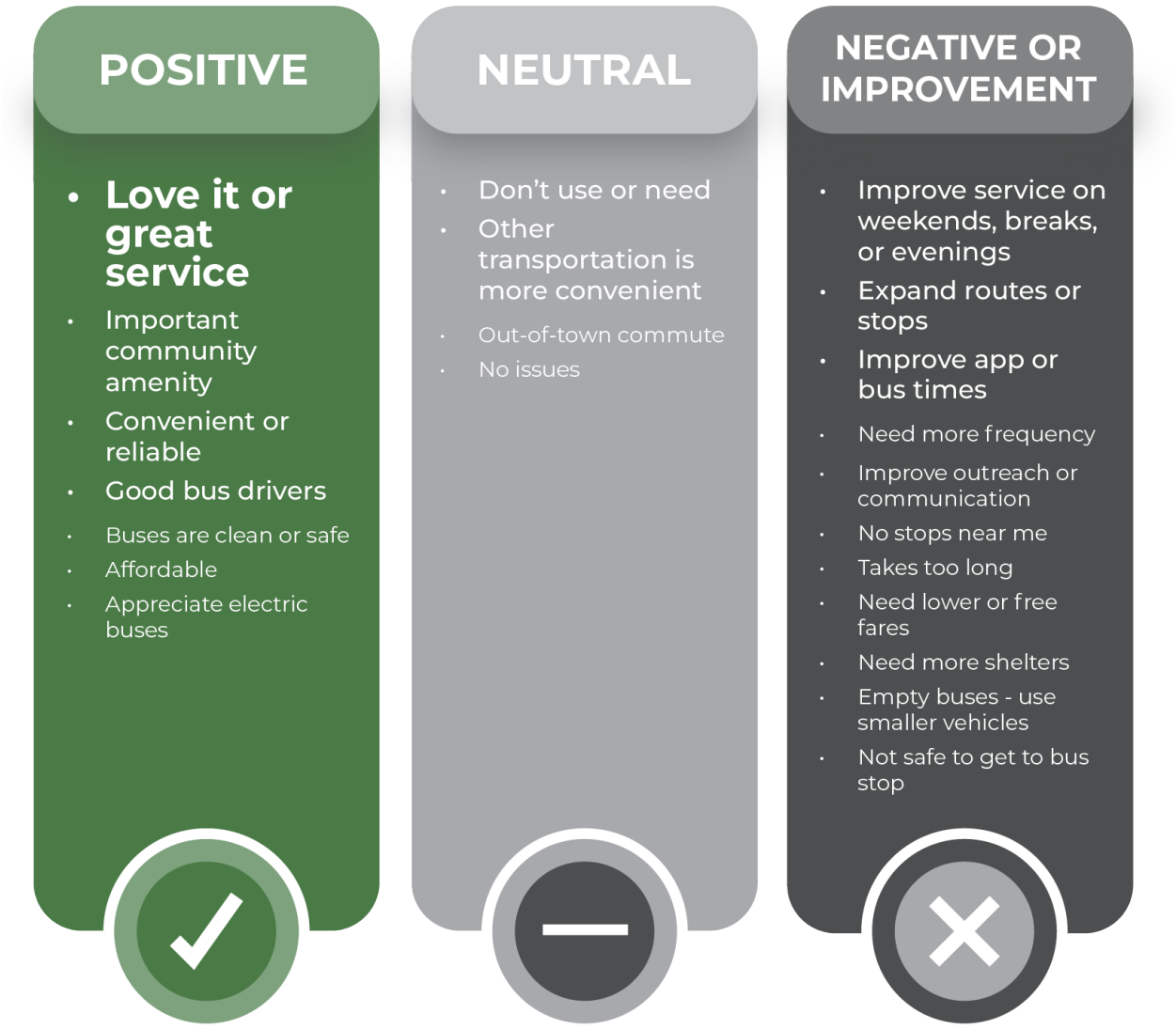
Low frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) discussed better outreach or communications, having no stops near their home, that the buses are clean or safe, that CyRide takes too long, desire for lower or free fares, that the service is affordable, they have an out-of-town commute, among other miscellaneous recommended improvements.

- "Notifications about delays and route changes could be more centralized."
- "I would use CyRide; however, it does not stop at my apartment in West Ames."
- "Always looks nice and clean."
- "Simply, it takes too long to commute; I use my car instead of CyRide (5 min car vs CyRide 40 min with shortest transit)."
- "Would love for it to be free! The bus in Chapel Hill, NC is similar, but free!"
- "The fare of $1 is a good deal."
- "Not interested- work out of town"

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on CyRide. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and whether they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of the font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 19. Visualization of Comments on CyRide



Parks and Recreation

Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various Ames Parks and Recreation programs and services, also asking if they don't use the feature. The least used features were indoor aquatics, outdoor aquatics, recreational facilities, recreational programming, and playground equipment, all with over 40 percent of respondents reporting no use. Among those that left a rating, the parks and recreation features were rated highly, with few respondents giving a poor or very poor rating. The only feature with

a significant percentage of poor ratings was the number of bathrooms in the parks. Still, all features received an average rating of three or higher out of four. (Table 21)

Table 21. Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Features*, 2026

Parks and Rec Feature	*n*	**Poor and very poor** (%)	**Good and very good** (%)	**Don't use** (%)	**Average**
Overall quality of parks	425	2	87	11	3.6
Overall quality of trails	390	2	80	18	3.5
Overall quality of wooded/natural areas	411	3	83	14	3.5
Variety of playground equipment in the parks	277	4	54	42	3.4
Overall quality of outdoor aquatics	232	4	45	52	3.4
Overall quality of recreational facilities	234	2	47	51	3.4
Variety of recreational programming offered	277	5	53	42	3.4
Overall quality of shelters and picnic amenities	400	4	79	16	3.4
Overall quality of recreational programming	270	5	52	43	3.3
Overall quality of indoor aquatics	146	8	23	69	3.1
Number of restrooms in the parks	364	17	60	24	3.0

*1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = good; 4 = very good. "Don't Know" was removed from the average rating calculation.

Figures 20a & 20b show the average ratings of parks and rec features since 2022. (Note: missing years in certain features mean that the question was not asked that year.)

Features whose average rating increased from last year were parks, wooded/natural areas, variety of recreational programming, outdoor aquatics, variety of playground equipment, shelters and picnic amenities, indoor aquatics, and number of restrooms. Features that stayed the same were trails, recreational facilities, and quality of recreational programming. No features had a decrease in their average rating this year.

Figure 20a. Average Rating of Parks and Recreation Services*, 2022-2026

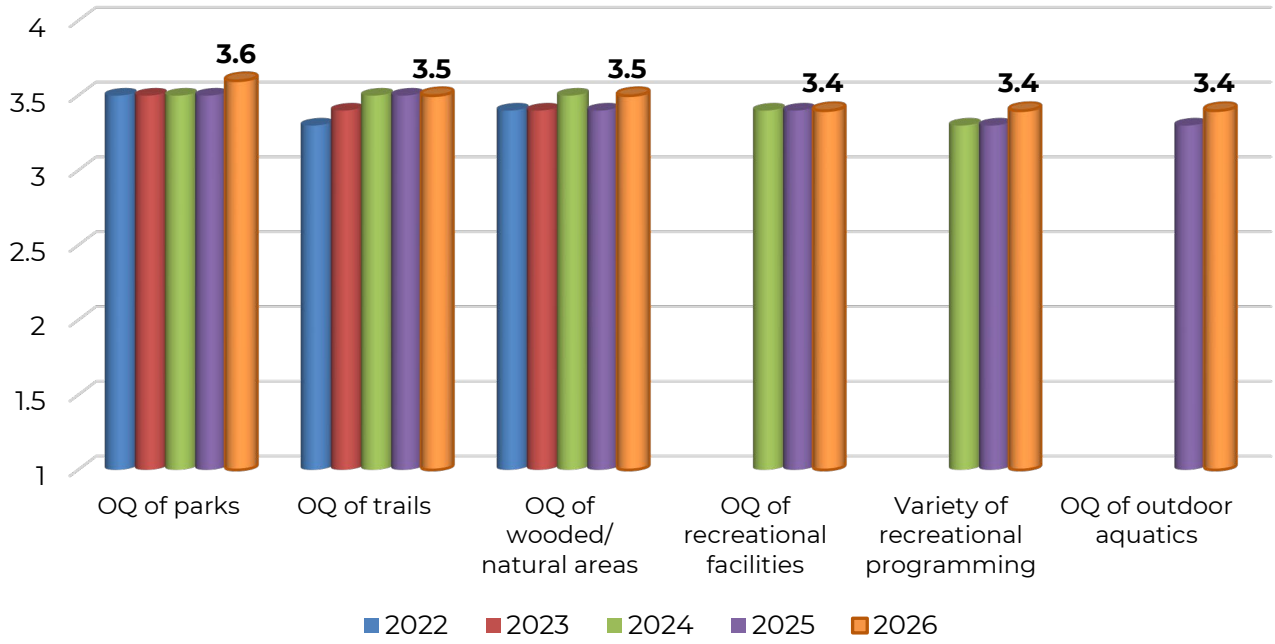
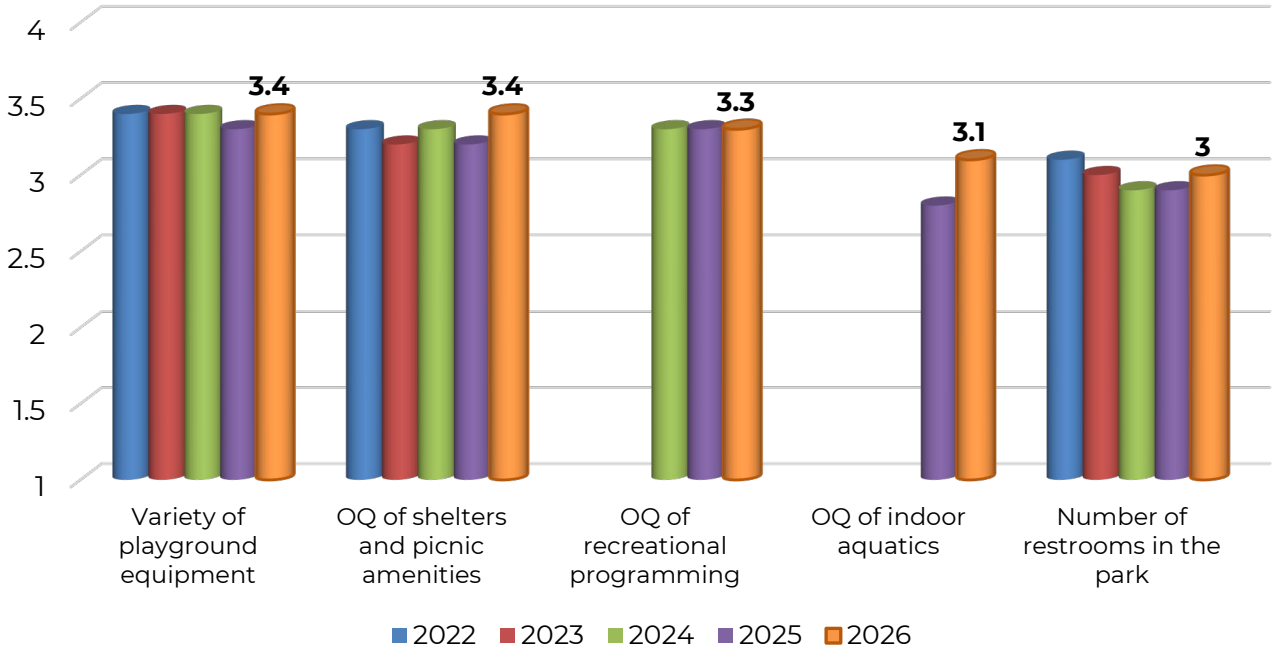


Figure 20b. Average Rating of Parks and Recreation Services*, 2022-2026 (continued)



*OQ = overall quality

Comments on Parks and Recreation

More than 100 respondents shared comments on the Parks and Recreation Department. The only high-frequency response category (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments) was that respondents love or are satisfied with services provided.

- "Ames has a wonderful parks and recs service."
- "I enjoy Ames' parks and trails and my husband, kids and I have participated in a few recreational programs and had good experiences overall (the kids tend to move to other leagues if they get serious about a sport, but P&R leagues are great for trying out new things when you're not sure they'll like it).
- "Overall, really good."
- "The trails are fantastic, and I appreciate how many neighborhoods are easily connected."
- "Very happy and proud to have Ames Park and Rec. The repairs at Miracle Park with the soft ground were quick."

Responses with a medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were maintenance improvements, expanded or improved bathrooms, expanded or improved aquatic centers, that the parks are clean or maintained well, expanded or improved programming, good selection or opportunities, those excited for Fitch to open, or those that don't use Parks and Rec services often.

- "Parks need far more attention to grooming trails, especially Munn Woods and Emma McCarthy Lee."
- "I wish restrooms were open more throughout the year."
- "Need a regular pool - outside of aquatic centers. What we have is too crowded- need more! I've lived here 63 years. We have grown in population and no additional pools provided!!"
- "Ames Parks and Recreation does a very nice job of keeping parks clean and fun for residents!"
- "Times for working people for some fitness classes difficult."
- "Ames Parks & Rec does a wonderful job of providing diverse opportunities."
- "My family is excited to try out the new indoor aquatics center when it opens."
- "Don't use parks."

Low-frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) discuss topics such as improved trail or path connectivity, services being too expensive, improved marketing or communications, more pickleball/tennis courts, dog-friendly improvements, etc.

- "Continue to connect more bike paths."
- "High cost prevents use of pools."
- "Not a really good advertisement of offerings."
- "More tennis and pickleball courts would be great!"
- "Need more dog friendly spaces (fenced areas)."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on parks and recreation. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and whether they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of the font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 21. Visualization of Comments on Parks and Recreation

Ames Public Library (APL)

Generally, survey respondents rated the Ames Public Library's features highly. The survey asked respondents to provide opinions on 13 features/services provided by the Ames Public Library. Table 22 shows the results. Many respondents indicated that they don't use library features. The least used are Page One (library newsletter), Bookmobile services, programs, internet/computer services, and online resources, all with at least half of respondents reporting no use.

On the four-point scale, average scores of the library features ranged from 3.5 to 3.7. Customer services, welcoming atmosphere, variety of materials, asking questions of library staff, use of online resources, programs, Bookmobile services, availability of seating, and building accessibility all had an average rating of 3.7 out of four. The feature with the lowest rating of 3.5 was wait time for requests/holds.

Table 22. Ratings of Ames Public Library Features*, 2026

Library Feature	*n*	**Very Poor** (%)	**Poor** (%)	**Good** (%)	**Very Good** (%)	**Don't use** (%)	**Average**
Customer services	*337*	<1	<1	16	54	29	3.7
Welcoming atmosphere	*355*	0	1	18	55	26	3.7
Variety of materials available	*334*	0	<1	21	49	30	3.7
Asking questions of library staff by phone or email	*251*	<1	<1	15	37	47	3.7
Use of library online resources	*240*	0	<1	16	34	50	3.7
Programs	*199*	<1	<1	13	29	58	3.7
Bookmobile services	*166*	0	<1	11	23	65	3.7
Availability of seating	*302*	<1	1	19	43	36	3.7
Building accessibility	*331*	<1	1	22	47	30	3.7
Meeting/study rooms	*242*	<1	<1	17	33	49	3.6
Internet/computer services	*223*	<1	0	17	30	53	3.6
Page One – library newsletter	*129*	<1	0	11	16	73	3.6
Wait time for requests/holds	*264*	0	2	24	30	45	3.5

*1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = good; 4 = very good. "Don't use" was removed from average calculation.

Forty-seven percent of respondents stated that they *do* use the APL as often as they would like, leaving 53 percent who *don't* use it as often as they would like. Of the respondents who do use the library as often as they like, the majority (58 percent) were non-students.

If respondents reported they do not use the APL as often as they like, they were asked why. Overall, the biggest reasons were not having time and getting materials from other sources. A larger percentage of non-students reported each reason compared to students. This data is shown in Table 23.

Table 23. Reasons for Not Using the APL (students vs. non-students), 2026

Reason	**Non-students** (n=150) (%)	**Students** (n=89) (%)
I don't have time	67	61
I get materials from other sources	40	33
Transportation is a problem	13	4
Other (please specify)	13	27

Other categories of reported reasons for not using the APL include:

- Poor parking (10 responses)
- Use ISU library (8 responses)
- Not interested/no need (7 responses)
- Too busy/no time (4 responses)
- Not open long enough (4 responses)
- Uncomfortable atmosphere (4 responses)
- Age/physical limitations (3 responses)
- Doesn't have what I need (3 responses)
- Laziness (2 responses)
- Forgot about it (2 responses)
- Miscellaneous (4 responses)

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

Comments on Ames Public Library

More than 125 respondents left comments about the Ames Public Library. The most common high-frequency response (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), appearing in half of the comments, was that they love it or overall, it is good. The other high-frequency response was from those who said that it provides good quality resources or services.

- "Really enjoy going to the library, thankful we have such a wonderful facility available for public use."
- "The Ames Public Library is great."
- "Exceptional library."
- "Overall, Ames Public Library is a very useful and welcoming place for the community."
- "There are many books, computers, and study spaces for students and families."
- "Love how many new books they have constantly, and the Bookmobile is very convenient for me on campus."

For medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments), responses included that it is a good atmosphere/space/buildings, they don't use the library often, there is good programming or events, they have helpful or friendly staff, they appreciate the digital resources, issues with the homeless population, and needed improvements to parking.

- "Ames Public Library is a great place for studying and reading. It is quiet, clean, and has a comfortable environment."
- "I do not use it. I find the info I need on the internet."
- "Love the free lectures and activities available."
- "Many … kudos to the kids area staff; it looks like it can be overwhelming."
- "I use my library card for online access frequently."
- "The homeless … sometimes make it difficult at the library entrance early in the mornings."
- "My only comment about using the library is parking and few parking spaces close by, and metered ones are not convenient"

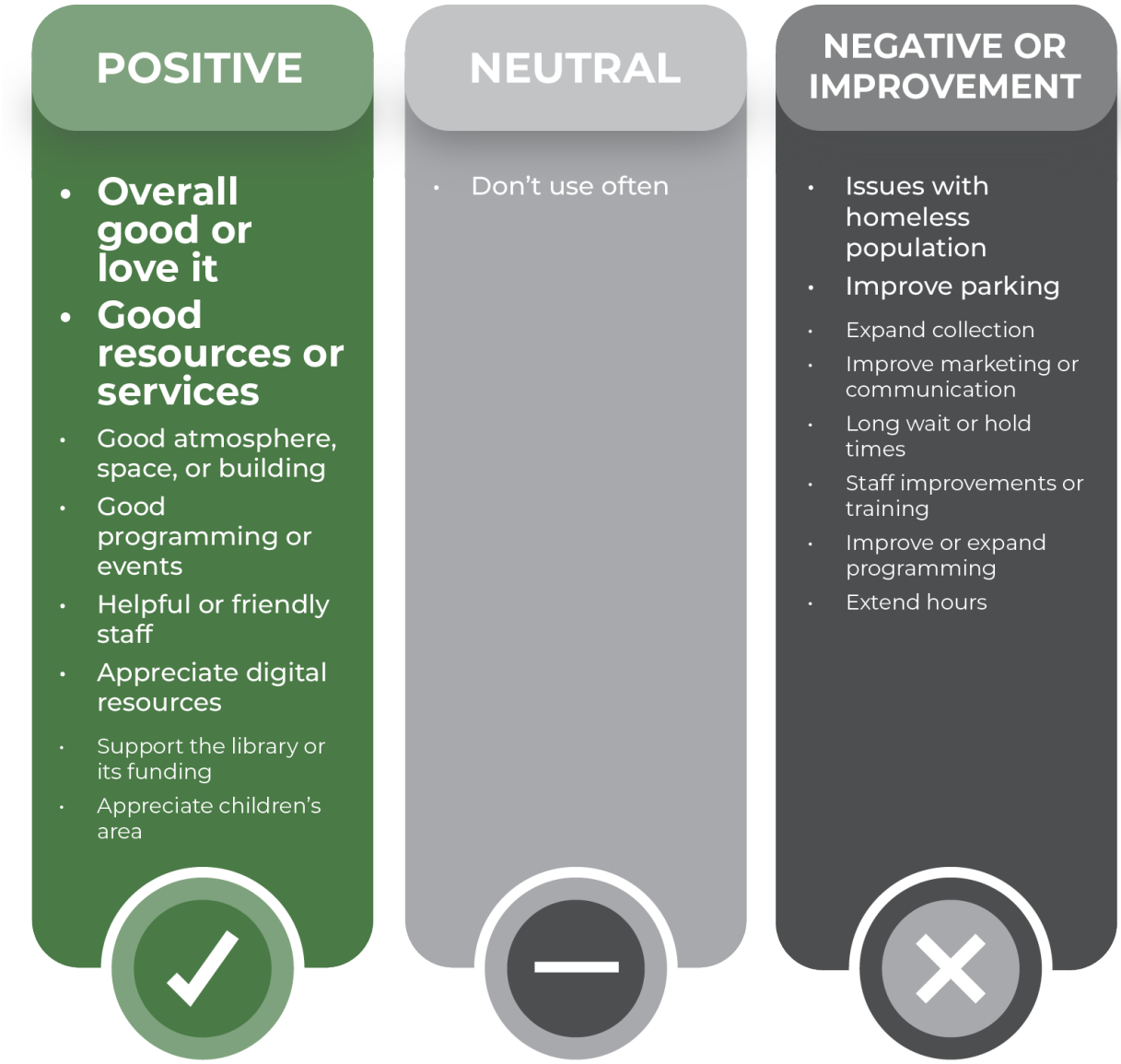
Low-frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) discuss topics such as supporting the library and/or its funding, expanding the library's collection, appreciation for the children's area, improving marketing or communications, long wait or hold times, staff improvements/training, and improved or expanded programming.

- "I think, if anything, the library needs more funding."
- "Expand e-book selections."
- "The child area is great!"
- "I think they could more widely try to reach ISU international students for programming on friendship circles and conversations."
- "Wait time for eBooks (16+ weeks)."
- "Front desk, with the handful of interactions, came off as bothered or irritated with my unfamiliarity."
- "Would love even more trivia nights for adults."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free-response comments on parks and recreation. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and whether they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 22. Visualization of Comments on Ames Public Library



City communications

The survey also asked questions focused on residential preferences for City of Ames communications. Respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of media sources on a three-point scale from not useful to very useful, with the average results in the "average usefulness rating column in Table 24. They were also asked if they don't use the media source. The most used sources were City of Ames website (74 percent), ISU Daily newspaper (57 percent), City of Ames Facebook (53 percent), and CitySide (51 percent). The least used were the City's Threads, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, Ames TV/Cable TV 12, NextDoor, and KASI/KXXQ radio, which were used by less than 20 percent of respondents.

When asked about the helpfulness of these sources, the most helpful were Facebook, the City of Ames website, CitySide, Instagram, and the ISU Daily newspaper.

Table 24. Usage and Helpfulness of Media Sources, 2026

Media Source	*n*	**Use** (%)	**Don't Use** (%)	**Average Rating***
Facebook - City of Ames	*455*	53	47	2.6
City of Ames website	*455*	74	26	2.5
CitySide (utility bill insert)	*450*	51	49	2.5
Instagram – City of Ames	*453*	27	73	2.4
ISU Daily newspaper	*453*	57	43	2.4
KHOI Community Radio	*448*	20	80	2.3
KASI/KCCQ radio	*452*	19	81	2.3
Ames Tribune newspaper	*454*	38	62	2.2
Des Moines Register newspaper	*452*	35	65	2.2
X/Twitter – City of Ames	*451*	12	88	2.0
LinkedIn – City of Ames	*451*	12	88	2.0
Nextdoor – City of Ames	*450*	15	85	2.0
Threads - City of Ames	*451*	11	89	1.9
Ames Television/Cable TV 12	*452*	14	86	1.9

*1 = not helpful; 2 = somewhat helpful; 3 = very helpful; Responses that reported "don't use" were not included in the average calculation.

Other media source responses:

- "Ames reddit page is good tier"
- "Ames Voice newspaper"
- "BBC"
- "Discover Ames Website/calendar"
- "email" (x2)
- "Emails, project updates, Councill agenda..."
- "Newsletter in utility bill"
- "Parks and Recreation email list"
- "PBS/IPR"
- "Reddit"
- "Should include planning/zoning info"
- "The Voice"
- "Voices email NL"
- "WOI public radio"
- "YouTube"

Figures 23a and 23b illustrate trends in the helpfulness of media sources since 2022. In 2024, six City of Ames social media sources were added: Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, Nextdoor, Threads, and LinkedIn. Since last year, the media sources whose average rating increased were Facebook, the City website, and CitySide. Those that stayed the same were Instagram, ISU Daily, KSI/KCCQ radio, Ames Tribune, and X/Twitter. Those that decreased were KHOI radio, DSM Register, and Ames TV/Cable TV 12.

Figure 23a. Helpfulness of Media Sources, 2022-2026

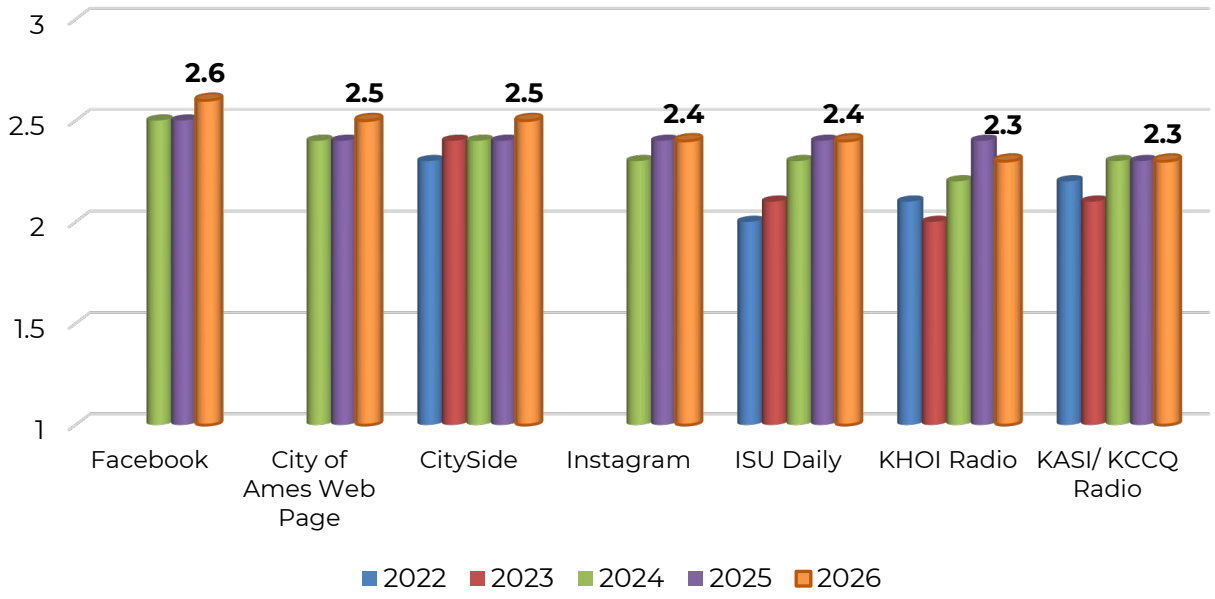


Figure 23b. Helpfulness of Media Sources, 2022-2026 (cont.)

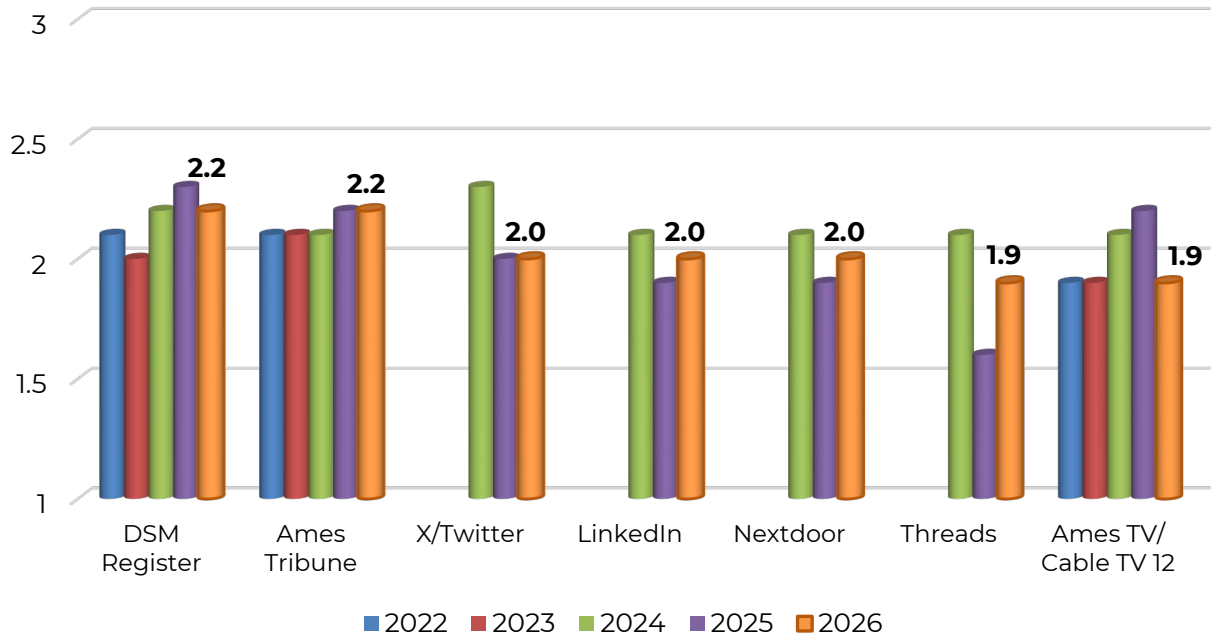


Table 25 indicates the average helpfulness rating of media sources based on the respondent's residency status, students versus non-students.

The only media source with a higher average rating from non-students compared to students was CitySide. Several media sources had a higher rating from students than non-students. These were Instagram, ISU Daily Newspaper, KASI/KCCQ radio, Ames Tribune Newspaper, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, and Threads. Students tended to think online and social media sources are more helpful than non-students.

Table 25. Helpfulness of Media Sources (students vs non-students), 2026

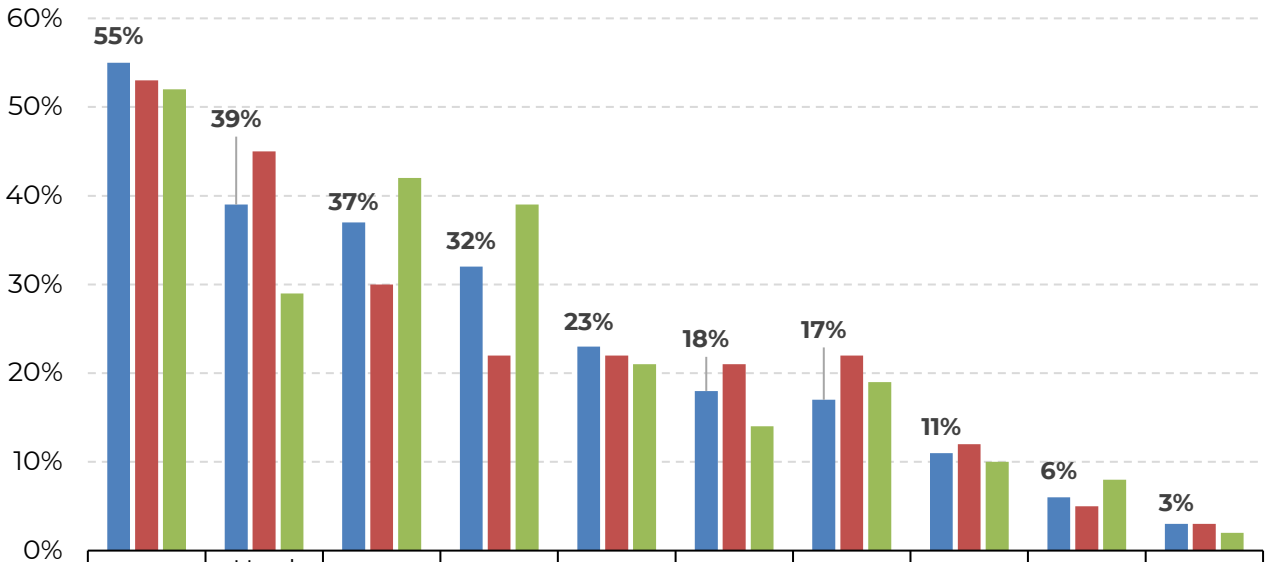
Media Source	Non-students Average Rating	Students Average Rating
Facebook - City of Ames	2.6	2.6
City of Ames web page	2.5	2.5
CitySide (utility bill insert)	2.5	2.4
Instagram – City of Ames	2.2	2.5
ISU Daily newspaper	2.2	2.4
KHOI Community Radio	2.3	2.3
KASI/KCCQ radio	2.2	2.3
Ames Tribune newspaper	2.2	2.3
Des Moines Register newspaper	2.2	2.2
X/Twitter – City of Ames	1.6	2.3
Linkedln – City of Ames	1.6	2.2
Nextdoor – City of Ames	2.0	2.0
Threads - City of Ames	1.8	2.0
Ames Television/Cable TV 12	1.9	1.9

This is the third year the respondents were asked about their willingness to use a City of Ames app for City news, construction projects, programs, and meetings. This year, more respondents said yes compared to last year (64 percent versus 62 percent). Students were more willing to use an app (60 percent) compared to non-students (40 percent). This trend is the same as last year.

Next, those surveyed were asked to choose their three preferred communication methods for construction projects, programs, and meetings. Figure 24 shows that the most preferred methods are email (52 percent), hard copy letter (39 percent), and social media (37 percent). The least popular are radio, newspaper, City of Ames app, and a door hanger. (Figure 24)

Comparing non-students to students, non-students top three preferences are email, hard copy letter, and social media. Students' preferences are email, social media, and through website.

Figure 24. Preferred Communication Methods (non-students vs students), 2026



	Email	Hard copy letter	Social media	Web-site	Text	Door-hanger	City App	News-paper	Radio	Other
Total*	55%	39%	37%	32%	23%	18%	17%	11%	6%	3%
Non-students*	53%	45%	30%	22%	22%	21%	22%	12%	5%	3%
Students*	52%	29%	42%	39%	21%	14%	19%	10%	8%	2%

*Total (n=462), non-students (n=235), students (n=277)

Other media source responses:

- "Ames Voice"
- "Billboard specifically for Ames updates? Maybe on Duff, Lincoln Way, or Grand?"
- "Cityside (electric bill insert)" (x4)
- "Community Members"
- "For students, I think you need to provide upfront resource options. Make a packet for new, incoming students and/or packets for apartments, housing etc. to get when a new tenant is acquired."
- "Local affairs committee ISU student gov (Emily Boland)"
- "Outdoor posters at site of common areas"
- "TV" (x2)

Human Services Agency Funding (ASSET)

For the 2026/27 fiscal year, the City allocated $2,082,431 towards purchasing human services from local non-profits to benefit Ames residents.

This year, ASSET questions were slightly changed. Respondents were still asked if the City should spend less, the same or more, on various ASSET services and which of them should be the first, second, and third priority. However, the list was minimized to nine different services compared to 15 from last year. Also, this year, the survey did not ask if the respondent had used each service – which was asked last year.

The services with the highest average rating, showing the most support for increased spending, were mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and quality and affordable childcare by licensed centers. The services with the lowest were transportation services and service coordination assistance. Overall, few respondents believed less should be spent on any of the ASSET services. (Table 26)

Table 26. How Much the City Should Allocate to ASSET Human Services*, 2026

ASSET Service and Budgeted Amount	**Less** (%)	**Same** (%)	**More** (%)	**Average Rating**
Mental health and substance abuse treatment services ($79,000)	3	34	63	2.6
Quality, affordable childcare by licensed centers ($285,215)	5	43	52	2.5
Community clinic or home health services ($140,178)	2	51	47	2.4
Emergency shelter services and transitional living assistance ($335,422)	4	50	46	2.4
Emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance ($325,742)	6	49	45	2.4
Out-of-school learning opportunities for children and youth ($278,079)	6	56	38	2.3
Legal support services ($160,000)	6	63	31	2.3
Transportation services ($53,034)	5	67	28	2.2
Service coordination assistance ($92,710)	7	65	28	2.2

Using the nine ASSET services listed, respondents were asked to rank what they believe should be the first, second, and third priorities. The top three services for each priority level are listed below:

Top 1st priorities
- Emergency shelter services and transitional living assistance (28 percent)
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment (19 percent)
- Emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance (18 percent)

Top 2nd priorities
- Emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance (25 percent)
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment (19 percent)
- Emergency shelter services and transitional living assistance (17 percent)

Top 3rd priorities
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment (21 percent)
- Emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance (16 percent)
- Emergency shelter services and transitional living assistance (14 percent)

Overall, respondents believed that emergency shelter services and transitional living assistance, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance are the most important ASSET priorities. (Table 27)

Table 27. Priority Ratings of ASSET

ASSET Priority	**1st Priority** (n=437) (%)	**2nd Priority** (n=431) (%)	**3rd Priority** (n=426) (%)
Emergency shelter services and transitional assistance	28	17	14
Mental health and substance abuse treatment services	19	19	21
Emergency rent, utilities, and food assistance	18	25	16
Quality, affordable childcare by licensed centers	15	13	13
Community clinic or home health services	8	9	12
Out-of-school learning opportunities for children and youth	4	8	7
Transportation services	4	3	6
Services coordination assistance	3	2	6
Legal support services	2	3	5

Sense of community and belonging

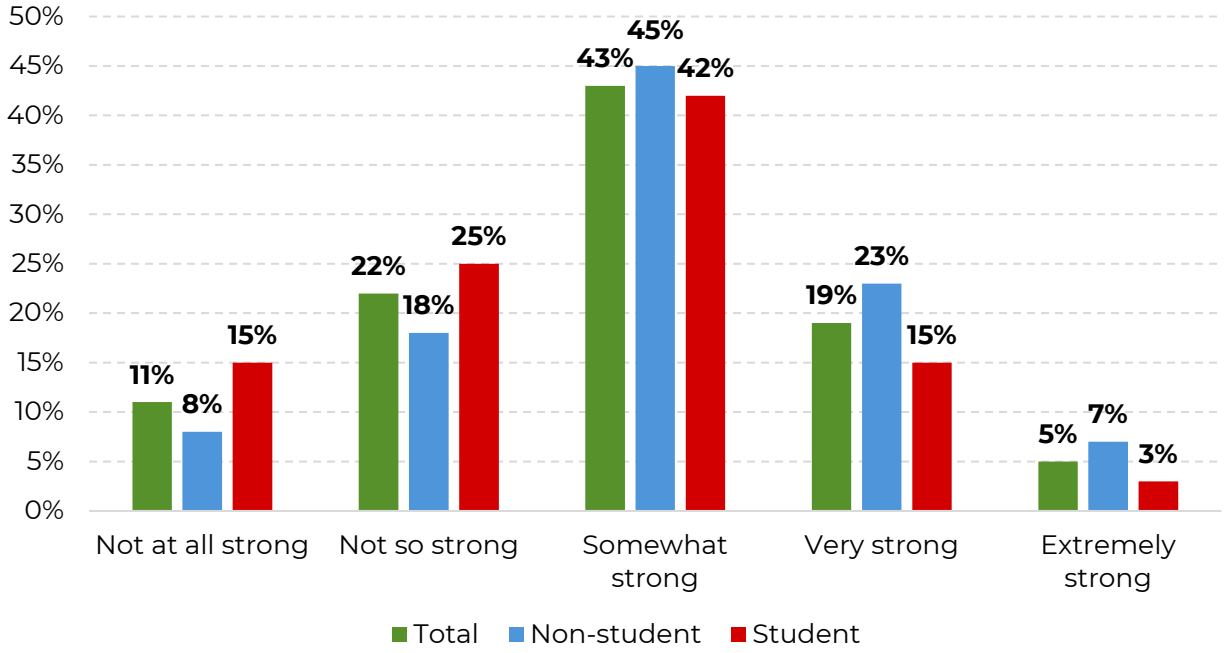
The survey included a question asking about the respondent's perception of connection with the community. Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan, 1976). A clear and empirically validated understanding of sense of community can provide the foundation for lawmakers and planners to develop programs that meet their stated goals by strengthening and preserving community.

On a scale of one to five, from not at all strong to extremely strong, respondents were asked to rate their perceived sense of community in their neighborhood. Overall, the most common answer was somewhat strong (43 percent), followed by not so strong (22 percent), and very strong (19 percent). Not at all strong was a more common answer than extremely strong. Non-students more commonly chose very or extremely strong compared to students, while students more commonly selected not at all or not so strong compared to non-students. (Figure 25)

Perceived sense of community differed based on the demographics of respondents. Listed below are the types of respondents that report a stronger sense of community.

- Household income higher than $50,000 per year
- Full-time homemakers
- Long-term residents
- Older residents
- Non-students
- Homeowners
- Those with a high-school diploma or GED

Figure 25. Perceived Sense of Community in Their Neighborhood (non-students vs students), 2026



Respondents responded to a series of statements regarding community involvement, with results in Table 28. Ninety-five percent of respondents agreed that "issues facing my community are important to me". Sixty-eight percent agreed that "I am knowledgeable about the issues facing my community."

As for actionable community involvement, 57 percent currently support non-profit(s) with financial contributions, 50 percent say they are engaged in addressing community issues, 34 percent currently volunteer for a non-profit, 19 percent served or considered serving on a community board or commission, and 12 percent currently volunteer on a board or commission of an Ames organization. Of respondents, 15 percent reported that language barriers make it difficult to be involved. (Table 28)

Table 28. Respondents' Levels of Community Involvement*, 2026

Community Involvement Statements	*n*	**Somewhat and strongly disagree** (%)	**Somewhat and strongly agree** (%)	**Average Rating**
Issues facing my community are important to me	*432*	5	95	3.5
I am knowledgeable about the issues facing my community	*419*	32	68	2.8

I currently support nonprofit organization(s) with financial contributions	*399*	43	57	2.6
I am engaged in addressing the issues of my community	*412*	50	50	2.5
I currently volunteer for a nonprofit organization serving Ames	*375*	66	34	2.0
I served or considered serving on a City Board/Commission	*363*	81	19	1.6
Language barriers make it difficult to be involved in the community	*382*	85	15	1.5
I currently volunteer on a Board/Commission of an Ames organization	*356*	88	12	1.4

*1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t Know” was removed from analysis.

When comparing respondents’ demography with their level of agreement with community involvement statements, some statistically significant differences have been identified. Overall, long-term residents, homeowners, and older residents tended to have higher community involvement.

Below are the groups of respondents that tended to have a higher level of agreement with each statement:

Issues facing my community are important to me	- Female residents - Homeowners - $125,000 to $149,999 household income
I am knowledgeable about the issues facing my community	- Older residents - Long-term residents - $125,000 to $149,999 household income - Homeowners
I am engaged in addressing the issues of my community	- Older residents - Long-term residents - Homeowners
I currently support nonprofit organization(s) with financial contributions	- Older residents - Long-term residents - $200,000+ household income - Homeowners - Northwest residents
I currently volunteer on a board/commission of an Ames organization	- Long-term residents
I currently volunteer for a nonprofit organization serving Ames	- Long-term residents - Homeowners
I served or considered serving on a City board/commission	- Older residents - Long-term residents - $100,000 to $124,999 household income - Homeowners
Language barriers make it difficult to be involved in the community	- Younger residents - Under $25,000 household income - Renters - “Other” races

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with six statements regarding community integration and sense of belonging in Ames. The four-point scale ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The statement with the highest average level of agreement was “I am treated with respect in this town”, with a 3.5 average. Following this is “I feel I belong in this town”, “Ames has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,” and “Ames is a place where I could perform up to my full potential,” all

with a 3.3 average. The lowest, with a 3.1 average, was "I feel valued as an individual in the Ames community."

Most respondents landed on the "agree" side for all six statements, compared to the "disagree" side. However, 4 to 20 percent disagreed with each statement, with "I have found one or more organizations in Ames where I belong" having the highest level of disagreement (20 percent).

All statements had a slight decrease since last year in those that agreed, except for "I am treated with respect in this town," which stayed the same, and "Ames has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion," which slightly increased. (Table 29)

Table 29. Respondents' Sense of Belonging and Integration, 2026

Community Belonging and Integration Statements	*n*	Somewhat and strongly disagree (%)	Somewhat and strongly agree (%)	Average Rating
I am treated with respect in this town	*442*	4	96	3.5
I feel I belong in this town	*442*	12	88	3.3
Ames has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion	*410*	11	89	3.3
I feel Ames is a place where I could perform up to my full potential	*433*	16	84	3.3
I have found one or more organizations in Ames where I belong	*414*	20	80	3.2
I feel valued as an individual in the Ames community	*423*	16	84	3.1

When comparing respondents' demography with their level of agreement with sense of belonging statements, some statistically significant differences have been identified. Overall, long-term residents, homeowners, and female residents tended to have a higher sense of belonging.

Below are the groups of respondents that tended to have a higher level of agreement with each statement:

I feel I belong in this town	- Long-term residents - Homeowners
Ames has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion	- Homeowners
I am treated with respect in this town	- Female residents

I feel Ames is a place where I could perform up to my full potential	- Older residents - Long-term residents - $125,000 to $149,999 household income
I have found one or more organizations in Ames where I belong	- Female residents

An additional question was asked this year which was, “Have you felt treated unfairly in Ames because of the following?”, asking yes or no to a list of personal characteristics such as race, age, or religion. Fewer than 10 percent of respondents said yes to each characteristic, with the highest being age (9 percent), race (9 percent), and color (8 percent). The lowest were marital status (4 percent), disability (5 percent), and religion (6 percent). (Table 30)

Table 30. Experienced Unfair Treatment Due to Personal Characteristics, 2026

Personal Characteristic	*n*	**Yes** (%)	**No** (%)
Age	*448*	9	91
Race	*451*	9	91
Color	*450*	8	92
National origin	*451*	7	93
Sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity	*447*	7	93
Religion	*449*	6	94
Disability	*426*	5	95
Marital status	*450*	4	96
Other (please specify)	*56*	9	91

Other reported characteristics:

- “Commuting on the bike and motorists frequently do not see you or respect you (cut you off).”
- “Economics.”
- “ISU police hassle old gray hair guys.”
- “Lack of doctors available.”

Enhancing Residents’ Sense of Belonging

The survey asked respondents to answer the following open-ended question, “What, if anything, could be done to enhance your sense of belonging as an Ames resident?” Sixty-six respondents shared their ideas. The two most common responses, with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents’ comments), were those who said nothing could be done to enhance the feeling and those requesting more events or places for connection.

- “Nothing really. It is a great town.”
- “None needed.”
- “I'm privileged in all of the categories above, so my response isn't too helpful.”
- “Programs/events for veterans, as well as the post college but still young age group (20-30).”
- “How about an "international fair" food, games, art, etc.”
- “I would like more opportunities to connect with my neighbors where I live.”

Medium frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents’ comments) include more inclusivity, more personal efforts from residents, a less liberal agenda or community, financial or job stability, better communication or outreach, and less discrimination.

- “Just continuing to shape a town focused on inclusion and diversity.”
- “My willing to participate at my age.”
- “Ames has very liberal views and as a more conservative person, I don't feel that my viewpoints are welcome.”
- “More affordable housing.”
- “Better communication would help people feel more connected.”
- “My wife and I were discriminated against. She is Latina.”

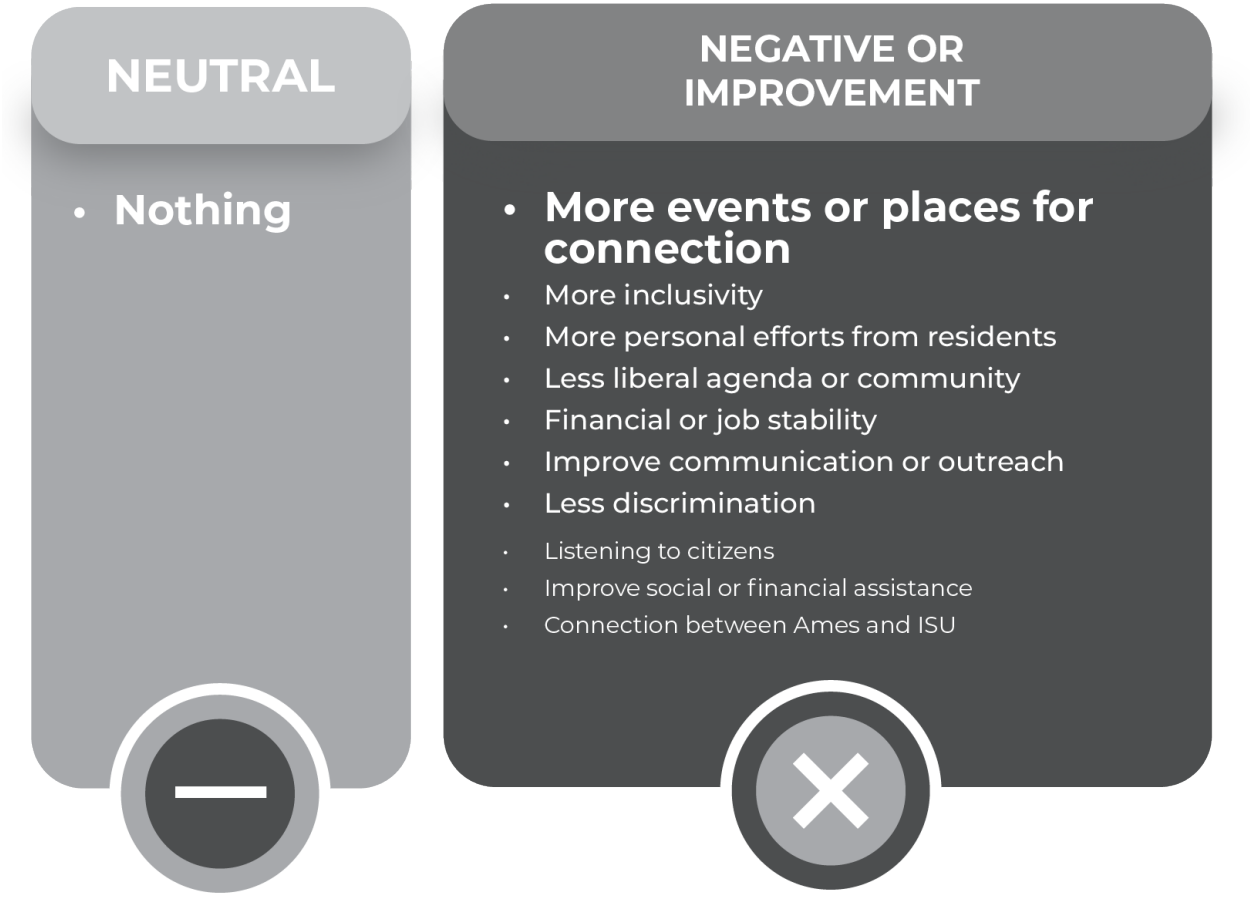
Low frequency responses (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) featured a request to listen to citizens, better social or financial assistance, a stronger connection between Ames and Iowa State University, among other miscellaneous responses.

- “For Ames council to listen to citizens and protect and value the homes of residents who have spent their lives here at least as much or more than new growth.”
- “A town is judged by how well it treats its weakest members. We can do better with childcare, funding the Arc of Story County, and Friendship Arc, and more services for these struggling with addiction.”
- “I question if as an Iowa State student and living in Residences (Freddy court) if I am really an Ames resident.”
- “No flock cameras and no ICE.”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on how the respondents’ sense of belonging could be enhanced. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 26. Visualization of Comments on How Respondents' Sense of Belonging Could Be Enhanced



Energy efficiency improvements

New questions related to energy efficiency were asked in this year's survey, aimed at homeowners. First, respondents were asked, "if you are a homeowner, are you planning any energy efficient improvements to your home this year?" Of the homeowners, 36 percent said yes, and 64 percent said no.

Respondents were also asked what energy-efficient improvements they are considering, with the ability to choose multiple answers. 44 percent said none. Of the listed improvements, the most common were improving insulation and sealing (19 percent), replacing windows or doors (18 percent), and improving personal energy management (16 percent). The least common were ductwork maintenance (six percent) and smart thermostats (10 percent). (Table 31)

Table 31. Considered Energy Efficiency Improvements, 2026

Improvement (n=330)	**Frequency**	**Percent** (%)
Improving insulation and sealing	63	19
Replacing windows or doors	60	18
Improving personal energy management/usage	52	16
Upgrading appliances or lighting	53	12
Upgrading water heater	41	12
Upgrading HVAC system	39	12
Installing smart thermostats	33	10
Doing ductwork maintenance	20	6
Other (please specify)	22	7
None of the above	146	44

Other improvement responses include:

- "Solar panels" (x5)
- "Energy audit"
- "Upgrading panel"

Shown in Table 32, respondents were then asked what would prevent them from implementing improvements. Sixty-three percent said financial constraints, 18 percent said lack of construction knowledge or skills, 17 percent said lack of incentive, and 14 percent said lack of knowledge about energy efficiency. Twenty-four percent specified other reasons, listed below Table 32.

Table 32. Reasons that Prevent Energy Efficient Improvements, 2026

Reason (n=303)	**Frequency**	**Percent** (%)
Financial constraints	192	63
Lack of construction knowledge or skills	53	18
Lack of incentive	51	17
Lack of knowledge about energy efficiency	43	14
Other (please specify)	73	24

Other energy improvement prevention responses include:

- Renting or don't own home (x31)
- Already done (x16)
- New home with upgrades already installed (x6)
- Time (x6)
- Cost (x3)
- Location constraints (x3)
- Finding a contractor (x2)
- Not interested (x1)
- Weather (x1)

Downtown and Campustown Improvements

This year, questions were added to the survey about increasing visits to Downtown Ames and Campustown. A list of improvements were provided for both Downtown and Campustown, and the survey asked which ones would make the respondent visit each more.

The most common responses for Downtown were recurring public events (50 percent), accessible or affordable parking (45 percent), and more unique local businesses (40 percent). The most common responses for Campustown were the same, but with some differences in percentages – accessible or affordable parking (49 percent), more unique local businesses (36 percent), and recurring public events (34 percent).

Overall, percentages for improvements to Downtown were higher than percentages to Campustown. This shows that improvements to Downtown have more potential to increase visitors compared to Campustown. The only two improvements that had a higher percentage for Campustown were accessible or affordable parking, cleaner or maintained spaces, and an improved sense of safety. (Table 33)

Table 33. Improvements that Would Increase Visits to Downtown and Campustown, 2026

Improvement	**Downtown** (n=457) (%)	**Campustown** (n=424) (%)
Recurring public events	**50**	**34**
Accessible/affordable parking	**45**	**49**
More unique local businesses	**40**	**36**
Increased amenities (restrooms, water fountains, etc.)	39	26
Activities (interactive art, games, water, etc.)	38	30
Cultural centers (museums, theaters, etc.)	37	22
Extended business hours	35	11
Outdoor dining	35	24
Welcoming public spaces (benches, shade, etc.)	34	33
Improved walkability	17	17
Convenient public or bike transportation	16	13
Increased mixed-use development	12	8

Cleaner/maintained spaces	10	23
Improved sense of safety	9	18
Other (please specify)	10	12

Other downtown improvement responses include:

- No improvements needed (x7)
- Free parking (x5)
- Businesses I'm interested in (x4)
- More parking (x4)
- More info or communication (x3)
- More or better restaurants (x3)
- More third spaces (x2)
- Cheaper or had more money (x2)
- Live music (x1)
- Less traffic (1)
- Less loitering (x2)
- Pedestrian only (x1)
- Lodging (x1)
- ESA friendly businesses (x1)
- More time (x1)
- Safer bike baths (x1)
- Nightlife that isn't bars (x1)
- Appeal for Gen X (x1)
- Better Chamber of Commerce (x1)
- Less walking (x1)

Other Campustown improvement responses include:

- Nothing or not interested (x21)
- Better parking (x8)
- No improvements needed (x7)
- Less people or students (x5)
- More events (x3)
- Businesses other than bars (x3)
- More decorum (x1)
- Less trash (x1)
- Flock camera removal (x1)
- Cheaper or had more money (x1)

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The percentage of respondents who chose each improvement were broken down by students versus non-students, for both Downtown and Campustown (Table 34). The most chosen improvements for Downtown for non-students were accessible or affordable parking (51 percent), recurring public events (43 percent), and increased amenities (42 percent). For students, the most common were recurring public events (57 percent), activities (48 percent), and more unique local businesses (46 percent). (Table 34)

Table 34. Improvements that Would Increase Visiting Downtown (students vs non-students), 2026

Feature	**Non-students** (n=226) (%)	**Students** (n=231) (%)
Accessible/affordable parking	**51**	39
Recurring public events	**43**	**57**
Increased amenities (restrooms, water fountains, etc.)	**42**	36
More unique local businesses	33	**46**
Cultural centers (museums, theaters, etc.)	33	42
Welcoming public spaces (benches, shade, etc.)	29	39
Activities (interactive art, games, water, etc.)	28	**48**
Outdoor dining	28	41
Extended business hours	27	43
Improved walkability	13	21
Convenient public or bike transportation	12	20
Improved sense of safety	8	10
Increased mixed-use development	8	16
Cleaner/maintained spaces	5	14
Other (please specify)	14	6

Regarding Campustown, the most commonly chosen improvements for non-students were accessible or affordable parking (56 percent), more unique local businesses (32 percent), welcoming public spaces (28 percent), and recurring public events (27 percent). For students, the most common were accessible or affordable parking (42 percent), activities (42 percent), more unique local businesses (40 percent), and recurring public events (42 percent). (Table 35)

Table 35. Improvements that Would Increase Visiting Campustown (students vs non-students), 2026

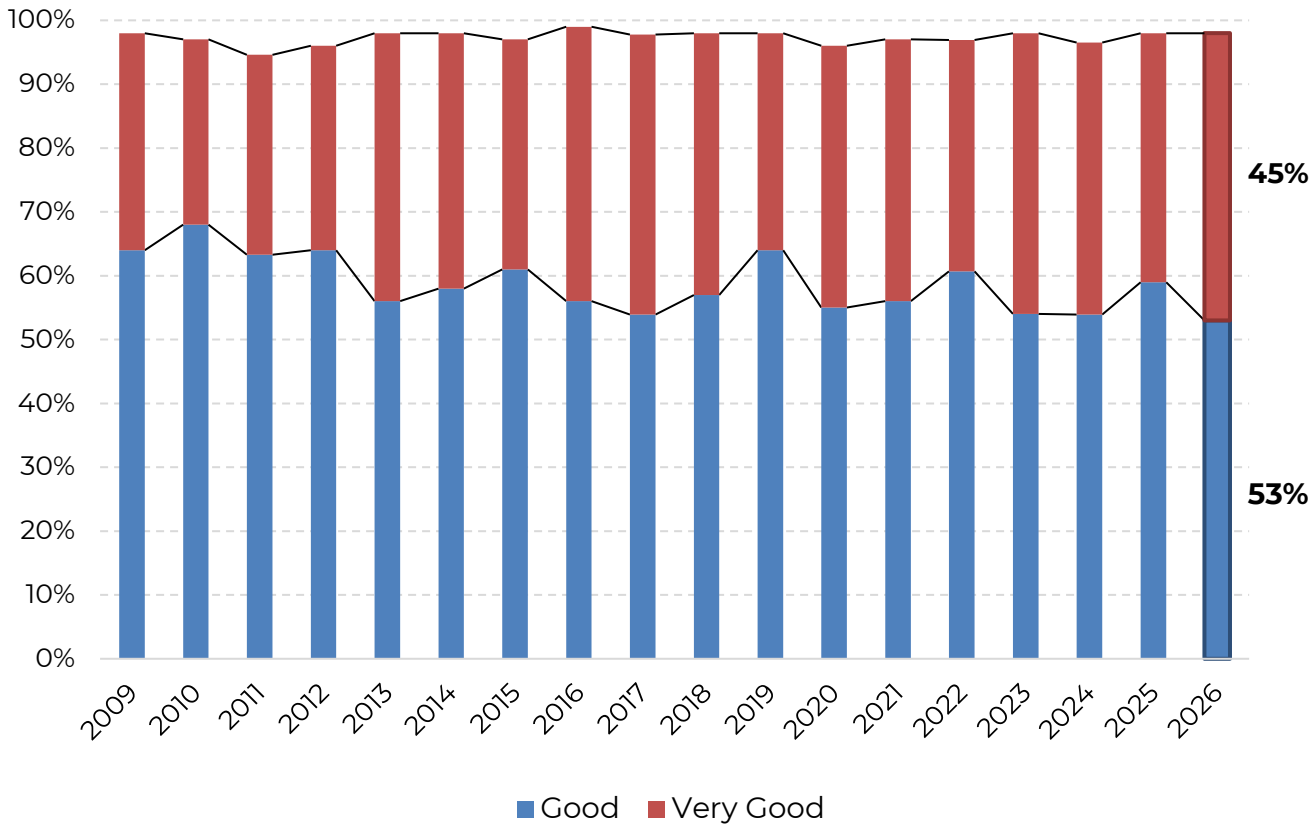
Feature	**Non-students** (n=212) (%)	**Students** (n=212) (%)
Accessible/affordable parking	**56**	**43**
Recurring public events	27	**40**
Increased amenities (restrooms, water fountains, etc.)	23	30
More unique local businesses	**32**	**40**
Cultural centers (museums, theaters, etc.)	22	21
Welcoming public spaces (benches, shade, etc.)	**28**	38
Activities (interactive art, games, water, etc.)	18	**42**
Outdoor dining	20	27
Extended business hours	4	18
Improved walkability	12	22
Convenient public or bike transportation	10	16
Improved sense of safety	11	25
Increased mixed-use development	5	11
Cleaner/maintained spaces	18	29
Other (please specify)	16	8

City of Ames overall service quality

Every year, survey respondents are asked to give an overall evaluation of the service quality they receive from the City of Ames. The survey gave a four-point scale of “very poor, poor, good, and very good”. This year, the most common response was “good”, with 53 percent of respondents, followed by “very good”, with 45 percent. Very few respondents reported “poor” (one percent) or “very poor” (less than one percent).

Figure 27 shows the trends of “good” and “very good” responses since 2009. The ratio between “good” and “very good” has been consistent over the years, with some slight variation. However, there has been a slight increase in “very good” responses since the early 2010s.

Figure 27. Trends in Ratings of Overall Quality of City of Ames Services, 2009-2026



Best things about living in Ames

The survey asked what the best thing about living in Ames is and it received the best response rate out of all open-ended questions, with 321 respondents. The two most common responses, with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), were the people of Ames and the outdoor/parks/green space.

- "The people."
- "Bright people who are trying to make the world a better place."
- "People care and want to hang out."
- "Oh so many things- but the people are top notch!"
- "Ames has many good parks and outdoor recreational activities."
- "Parks available throughout town."
- "Lots of parks and green space. Ada Hayden is a jewel."
- "The whole town looks like a giant garden."

Lots of different responses were recorded with a medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) such as activities/recreation/events, safety, ISU/college town, community, amenities/services/resources, convenience or ease of getting around, atmosphere/environment/feel, calm/quiet/peaceful, clean or maintained, CyRide, restaurants or food, the mix of small and big town benefits, and the diversity.

- "So many educational, sporting, recreational, and performing arts event offered. If you're bored it's because you want to be."
- "Ames feels like a safe and inclusive environment for all walks of life."
- "Having Iowa State University here."
- "If I had to pick the one best thing, it would be the community."
- "Quality & variety of services offered."
- "It's quick to get anywhere I want."
- "Good and relax environment."
- "Peaceful place to live."
- "The city is well maintained with clean neighborhoods and public spaces."
- "CyRide is better public transit than I have experienced anywhere else in the state."
- "Good restaurant selection."
- "Ames has a great balance of big city opportunities along with small town benefits."
- "Diverse population."

Responses with a low frequency (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents' comments) were the administration or government, affordability, walkability, downtown/Main Street, the water quality, businesses or shopping, quality of life, the size of Ames, schools, the library, vibrancy, and culture, among various others.

- "Well-organized, professional, caring city government."
- "Low cost of living."
- "Pedestrian friendly."
- "The main street/downtown core is a highlight."
- "Clean water."
- "The small businesses."
- "Quality of life in general."
- "Small population."
- "Love the library."
- "What it has to offer culturally."

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on the best things about living in Ames. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 28. Visualization of Comments on the Best Things About Living in Ames

Other issues the city should focus on

Respondents were asked to share any other issues they think the City should focus their attention on and 182 people left comments. No one response or topic reached a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments), given that respondents could talk about a plethora of topics. So, the medium frequency responses (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) were traffic flow or congestion, social/mental/financial services, homelessness, the environment/sustainability or renewables, affordable housing, street maintenance, and improved planning or land use/zoning.

- “Heavy (busy) traffic issues, Grand Ave & Duff Ave.”
- “I have experienced some concerns about clear mental health problems in the community. I was pleased to see support for the ARCH program. I appreciate what is being done and hope that the community will continue to find ways to assist.”
- “The unhoused population of Ames needs more assistance than they are currently receiving.”
- “I think we should keep making strong efforts to use more renewable energy.”
- “How can we provide affordable housing.”
- “Mostly the roads. The roads are the poorest I've ever driven on.”
- “Please ... curb enthusiasm for continual housing developments further out from city center.”

Responses with a low frequency (mentioned in <5 percent of respondents’ comments) were as follows: snow/ice removal, park improvements or additions, walkability, no issues/none, communication or transparency, reduced taxes, recreation/activities/programming, bike ability, nuisance enforcement, project construction/completion, arts/music/culture, crime, cost of living, connection between Ames and Iowa State University, parking, recycling improvements, CyRide improvements, less apartment development, more industry/business attraction, maintaining current quality of life, local food systems, among many others.

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all free response comments on other issues the City should focus on. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 29. Visualization of Comments on Other Issues the City Should Focus On

Additional comments

Respondents were encouraged to leave any additional comments they would like to share about Ames, and 96 people did. The most common response and the only one with a high frequency (mentioned in >20 percent of respondents' comments) were those who said they are overall happy or satisfied with Ames.

- "Very nice town Ames, you do a great job!"
- "My family has enjoyed getting to know Ames since we moved here 4 years ago. This is where we plan to settle and raise our kids so we're excited for the new facilities such as the indoor aquatic center and the ISU renovations for Cytown that are underway."
- "Ames is the very best place! Thanks for all you do!"
- "I appreciate the work of the mayor and city council and city staff."
- "We're so happy to be in Ames; we fell in love here, and we're excited to raise a family here. Props to Ames Parks & Rec for being above and beyond awesome."
- "We love Ames!"

Responses with a medium frequency (mentioned in <20 but >5 percent of respondents' comments) thanked the City for the survey or discussed topics such as street maintenance, increased walkability or bike ability, or improved administration or communication.

- "Thank you for doing this survey and getting our input."
- "Streets need to be improved (potholes everywhere), better construction notices."
- "CROSSWALKS, and bike accessibility."
- "I do overall like our services, but I don't know where to get data on spending. I'd like to see why Ames PD gets $12 mil and so on."

Low frequency responses discussed many different topics, given its very open-ended nature. The following were only some discussed: controlling development or developers, improved ice/snow control, improved traffic flow, addressing noise nuisances, improving spending or budgeting, addressing high housing costs, improving sidewalk maintenance, having more events/gatherings, more businesses/variety, keeping the quality of Ames, and traffic control/enforcement.

- "Ames is good but could be much better. Better planning and design, and more controls over developers is desperately needed! Duff and Lincoln Way are awful!"
- "Please spend more money on snowplowing this upcoming winter."
- "City council should really work to improve traffic flow around the city. Widening roads, adding turning lanes, increasing speed limits and signal timing would help a lot. Instead, their agenda seems to focus on discouraging automobile travel."
- "Loud motorcycles going extremely fast and noisy."
- "The budget should be spent on necessary city utilities, streets, services. Don't borrow money for more big plans."
- "Housing affordability is an ongoing issue (I live in a trailer)."
- "There wasn't that much about sidewalks. Please pay more attention to the sidewalk conditions and connectivity. My main issue in winter is when Ames plows the snow, it pushes them to the curb ramp and makes it impossible to pass the crosswalk. 3rd and 4th intersection"
- "We support improvements that in turn support local businesses and events and encourage outdoor activities and community gatherings."

- “Would like to see another restaurant on the southside of town.”
- “We absolutely love and are so proud of Ames, IA. Please be mindful and don't mess it up.”
- “Mortenson Drive needs some speed control. Stop lights or police control. There are too many people speeding around residential areas without care. Many streets have difficult access into Mortenson.”

(For the full list of verbatim responses, please see the appendix.)

The figure below helps visualize all additional comments. The visualization shows the types of responses that were shared and if they were positive, neutral, or negative/an improvement. The size of font distinguishes high, medium, and low frequency responses.

Figure 30. Visualization of Comments on Other Issues the City Should Focus On

Appendix 2026

Below are all verbatim free response comments from the survey. The total number of respondents who left comments on each section are noted. Within each topic, comments were organized into categories of comments/answers. To best organize comments into categories, some longer comments that feature several categories of answers were separated. However, some fit under several categories and cannot be separated; any other categories that a comment fits under is listed after the comment in parentheses. Comments in the miscellaneous categories are ones that give a unique answer that does not appear in any other comments from the question.

Comments on Funding Allocation for Programs and Services (51 respondents)

Satisfied (11 comments)

- "I think our city government is mostly run very well."
- "Ames provides good services in these areas."
- "Funding allocation for programs and services appears to be generally effective in supporting core community needs."
- "I am very satisfied living in Ames!"
- "I have no complaints and am generally happy with services."
- "Pretty good."
- "Seems like the mix is good now."
- "Seems reasonable."
- "The distributions seemed practical to me."
- "The government of Ames has a good workable budget."

Not enough knowledge or information to comment (7 comments)

- "Don't have enough info to say."
- "No comment on these since it's just a sum of spending."
- "I would like to know a little more than just numbers. Like, what's the money being used for. Like is the $12 million buying new gear or cars or salary."
- "I'm not knowledgeable enough about these programs and their spending to comment on if it's the proper budget or not."
- "I'm not qualified to answer these as I really have no idea if each dept feels their budget is currently inadequate."
- "I do not feel well informed enough to correctly answer the last question. I wish I had more of a breakdown on what those budgets are usually spent on."
- "I do not have the knowledge to form an opinion on this."

More arts funding (6 comments)

- "I was shocked how low art funding was."
- "Arts and library definitely need more." *(+ more library funding - miscellaneous)*
- "It would be wonderful to have a public arts space, for both visual and small performance arts."
- "It's so disappointing how low arts funding is. It should at minimum double if not triple."
- "More funding for the Octagon Center for programs during the summer please."

Homeless, housing, or social services (5 comments)

- “Housing & feeding those living on the street should be a priority!!”
- “I reluctantly chose reducing library funding to cover increased social services funding because I know it is a zero-sum situation. In reality, I would like to leave library funding the same and increase social services funding.”
- “I would like funding for programs and services to prioritize helping families with children access stable, long-term housing, not just emergency shelters. While shelters serve an important purpose, they often place families in shared spaces with strangers, which can feel unsafe, stressful, and unstable for children. Additionally, there needs to be greater support for individuals with past felony convictions who are trying to rebuild their lives. Many people are denied housing because of their background, even when those offenses are many years in the past. This creates a major barrier to stability and prevents people from moving forward, securing housing, and supporting their families. Funding should focus on expanding access to safe, private, and affordable housing while also creating fair opportunities for people to move beyond their past. Without these changes, families and individuals remain stuck in cycles of housing insecurity instead of being given a real chance to start over.”
- “More money is needed for homeless - opportunity for housing.”
- “Really need funding for homeless population, followed by youth services, domestic violence, & mental health.”

Less police funding (5 comments)

- “I don't understand why law enforcement needs a budget of $12 million.”
- “If anything, law enforcement could maybe use less, and less parks.” *(+ less parks funding - miscellaneous)*
- “Cut the police budget. It doesn't need to be that high.”
- ““No more money to Flock camera subscriptions and please remove the cameras!” *(+ no money for flock cameras - miscellaneous)*
- “That law enforcement budget is crazy high though.”

Stronger land use planning policies (5 comments)

- “But why allow building in flood prone areas?!?! MENARDS?”
- “Investments in urban planning are great for the longevity of Ames and for the sustainable improvement in the lived experience of ISU students and long-term residents.”
- “Land use planning is undone by council, often without attention to historical perspective. I have no confidence in land use planning in Ames, it is a waste of so much time & money when City Council does not respect the planning, zoning, ordinances.”
- “More control over what developers do is needed! Better planning and design is essential!”
- “City has done a terrible job on land use planning-priorities rather than "stakeholders" that prioritizes money in their pockets”

Walkability or bike ability (3 comments)

- “Improve bicycle paths and connect them to make them useful.”
- “Increasing walkability should be added to these goals, programs, and services.”

- “Also, bike markings on streets should be redone in bright paint to promote safety and greater usage!”

Sustainable infrastructure (2 comments)

- “I don’t know where this fits but environmental sustainability and food and water system? This is very important in Iowa given our cancer rates and ag industry. Feel like there should be specific agency focusing on this.”
- “More blue & green infrastructure! Especially nature-based solution.”

More police funding (2 comments)

- “Law enforcement is a core community function that suggests numerous other functions. It must be fully funded for the community to function.”
- “More funding for police to enforce speed, etc.”

Keep a balanced budget (2 comments)

- “Maintaining a balance across other services while improving efficiency would help ensure long-term sustainability and quality of life.”
- “That's a hard question. My answers on what programs and services to take money from is purely based on a desire to have a balanced budget, not on any belief that the program or service is misusing funds or has a surplus.”

Budget more as needed for inflation (2 comments)

- “It should go without saying, but budget more as needed for inflation ... "same" assumes inflation adjusted in my view.”
- “But with rising costs for everyone, maybe they should all be increased as well.”

Keep it affordable (2 comments)

- “Please do not place any further burden on the residents. This is not something that should be pursued—especially to the point of increasing burdens and issuing bonds.”
- “Reduce property taxes so we can afford to continue living in Ames.”

Increase funding for public amenities (3 comments)

- “I generally believe that if a necessary service requires a certain amount of funding, it should be funded. I think it would be nice to allocate additional resources to arts programs, community programming, the animal shelter, and other enrichment activities.” *(+ more arts funding)*
- “I welcome more funds spent on all public amenities as available.”
- “Funding should prioritize essential services such as public safety, transportation, and community support programs.”

Increase transparency or communication about funding (2 comments)

- “Greater transparency in prioritization.”
- “These numbers should be more publicized.”

CyRide is important (2 comments)

- “CyRide is a remarkable achievement in a city the size of Ames.” *(+ satisfied)*

- “I do not presently use CyRide, but I know that it is an incredible service, reduces traffic, particularly in a college community.”

Miscellaneous (12 comments)

- “Advertise Ames to bring (more) investment.”
- “Add more funds to parks so they can build more pickleball courts.”
- “Animal nuisance control, help get rid of racoons and skunks. Create funds for!”
- “Increased investment in underserved areas could further improve impact.”
- “Funding should prioritize essential services such as public safety, transportation, and community support programs.”
- “In winter it is very cold to stay in bus station, I think it is very important to have closed and indoor bus station with heater.”
- “It is insane to me that library spending is close to half of law enforcement spending and more than twice CyRide's spending. I value and respect the library, but that is a crazy amount of spending.”
- “Need to consider increasing the local option sale tax to be able to fund programs at a higher level.”
- “I'm surprised the library receives more funding than Parks & Recreation. This is a difficult section. The amount each area receives ... and needs ... depends on many variables. Most people will most likely say yes to increase the things they use/enjoy without regard to monetary management, sources for other funding, etc.”

Comments on City of Ames Services (56 respondents)

Satisfied or happy (29 comments)

- “Ames is a great place to live.”
- “Ames is AWESOME! :)”
- “Ames is fortunate to have high-quality services.”
- “City of Ames services are generally reliable and well-managed. They provide strong performance across utilities, public safety, and community programs.”
- “City of Ames services are generally very good. The city is clean, safe, and well managed. Public services like parks, library, and road maintenance are helpful for residents.”
- “CyRide is the best! Thank you for everything you do for us!”
- “I have never had an issue with any service from the City of Ames.”
- “I love this city.”
- “I really appreciate living in a municipality where quality matters. I am happy to invest in the community. Thanks for all you do to make Ames a really nice place to live.”
- “In general, I love it here!”
- “Keep up the good work!”
- “Most of these things I’ve never had specific thoughts on.”
- “My wife and I have enjoyed living in Ames for the last 8 years and plan to continue to live here. Our family lives and enjoys life because the City of Ames always provides services at the highest standard.”
- “One of the better cities I lived in.”
- “Overall I feel like the city of Ames wants to provide good services for its citizens.”
- “Overall pretty good. Better than other places I've lived.”
- “Overall pretty happy with Ames services.”
- “Overall really great! Thank you all for the effort everyone from the City of Ames put into that!”
- “Overall very good.”
- “Overall, the City of Ames provides reliable and high-quality services. The community is safe, well-maintained, and supportive, especially for students.”
- “Thank you hardworking staff and volunteers.”
- “Thanks for doing this survey. It shows you care and want to improve!”
- “The city is well-managed and city staff is very committed to service. Thank you!”
- “The City of Ames Services are very helpful for all its users - highly commendable services overall!”
- “The services of City of Ames are very satisfactory.”
- “Very good services with lots of variety.”
- “Very good!”
- “We have great public services.”
- “We've lived in Ames for 4 years and have positive feelings about the city services.”

Improve nuisance enforcement (5 comments)

- “Ames On The Go App is terrible. I submitted a broken streetlight three times before somebody came to fix it. Most of the time they just post "has been passed on to ..." and nothing happens. Why even bother.”
- “Ames on the Go is a great tool to report issues in any given area, but more effort should go into actual remedies for reported issues.”
- “During the school year things can get loud - having campus department helps!”
- “Fire pit smoke from neighbors.”
- “Some areas of rental housing or near campus can be eyesores.”

Improve sidewalk or trail maintenance (4 comments)

- “Need good sidewalks.”
- “Need to enforce business shoveling sidewalks.”
- “I do have an extra question that I don't know where to ask: I keep noticing some manmade trash (eg: bottles, food package and so on) near sidewalks when I'm walking on the sidewalks in front of Menards. I don't think there's somebody who is in charge of this as the trash just stays there but there seems to be somebody in charge of trimming the grass and they just decided to break those trash into smaller pieces and cover in dirt/grass, which I don't think is a good practice due to the microplastics and pollution. Can somebody please look into this? Thank you!”

Improve parks and recreation services (4 comments)

- “Can we please get rentable fire pits for club rentals or get togethers,. Currently there are no publicly available options”
- “There are few opportunities for preschool age kids for sports and swimming lessons. Year-round swimming lessons would be great!”
- “We need a cover over the children's items at the front part of Inis Grove Park. There is no shade and the play items get too hot for children on sunny days - which is when you want to go there.”
- “Clean parks.”

Improve street maintenance (3 comments)

- “My main complaint is that the snowplowing in the winter is very poor. I drive a small car, and I've spent a lot of time in the Quad Cities and Des Moines. I'm not a snowplow expert, I don't know what the problem is, but it seems to take Ames multiple days to plow the roads well enough so that I'm not sliding around. This is not the case when I'm in the Quad Cities or Des Moines.”
- “I have an issue with the use of salt and other chemicals for snow and ice conditions in the city. This is harmful to the environment and contributes to rust on cars. Can you find alternatives to this treatment during winter conditions?”
- “Have called to public works for work done in the boulevard and forestry for a tree there. The dirt that was used as replacement is not suitable for growth and had many rocks, however it was a good conversation but yielded no actual results. For the tree, I called and left messages concerning growth and that I have concerns that in a bad storm that my property may be damaged. Called and asked for an assessment as well as reasonable pruning. Have seen other boulevard trees in the neighborhood with similar looks, many widow makers above sidewalks as well. One of the replanting from a spot that had an ash tree, the crew drove on a wet boulevard to plant a young tree. It's been almost a year and the ground is still impacted from where they drove on it.”

Improve transportation (3 comments)

- “Higher frequency on CyRide please.”
- “Need more benches with cover or shelter at bus stops.”
- “Continued improvements in transportation convenience.”

Too high cost of living (2 comments)

- “[Prices] are too high.”
- “The cost of living in Ames is high enough to preclude me from being able to make use of many of the services of the city. This also includes being able to participate in many of the business and social aspects of the city as well.”

Improve communication with residents (2 comments)

- “One thing that could be improved is providing more information or updates about services, so people can better understand what is available.”
- “Communication about services would further enhance the overall experience.”

Too left or liberal city practices (2 comments)

- “I understand that my upbringing and household values may differ from those of most people in Ames. In this city, you have the option to openly express your support for the Democratic Party, as there are many rallies against right-leaning ideologies. Alternatively, you can choose to remain silent. The city has facilitated the display of left-leaning ideologies on public streets and openly supports the left. As a Christian, my home is a place free of hatred for anyone. I choose not to share my political or religious beliefs because I recognize that the same love and acceptance I offer are often not reciprocated by those on the left. My family escaped from communist Cuba and sought freedom in America, which we love deeply. I am so grateful for this country that I felt compelled to serve in the U.S. military for over 20 years. I dislike being patronized by individuals who presume that, as a person of color, I should vote or think a certain way. The governing should remain neutral, and its property should reflect that neutrality.”
- “Library needs to quit pandering to the 2% of LGBTQ++IAEIO crowd. My children don't need exposure to dudes in dresses.”

Disapproval of flock cameras (2 comments)

- “Not sure if it is the city of Ames or specifically ISU but I think the installation of Flock cameras is a gross overreach on the privacy of members of the community and shouldn't be tracking people and sharing data to train mass surveillance services.”
- “Please get rid of the Flock cameras!”

Worried about water pollutants (2 comments)

- “We get Ames water and it tastes wonderful however we are very concerned with the amount of pollution in the local water supply and in the Iowa water supply. Just because you can't see it doesn't mean pollutants aren't there.”

- “We have long since prided ourselves on quality drinking water. In light of becoming #2 in the nation for cancer, what are you doing to ensure that we do not have cancer-causing agents in our water?”

Miscellaneous (7 comments)

- “Access to businesses on South Duff is incredibly bad. With how much traffic there is, there really should be access roads and connected lots. Each business having their own lot connected to duff is not only frustrating but also unsafe”
- “Ames should focus on developing the area between Lincoln way and Main Street. I have lived in Ames as a student since 2017, I love the city. Everyone who comes to Ames sees that area, and it does not look good.”
- “It was way past time for the City to pursue cleaner energy. The health of countless people was jeopardized by burning garbage and coal. The Resource Recovery plan was a dinosaur. The praising of the "greatness" of the Resource Recovery Plant was pure propaganda. A city should be honest with its residents.”
- “More police officers and more traffic control.”
- “The City should reorient itself away from a punishment model for ordinances imposed on its citizens to a model of compassion and understanding, and assistance to those in need. Neighbors should be encouraged to build communication between themselves, to discuss and compromise on issues where they disagree, instead of filing complaints that lead to hardships. The City does a lot of things right, but falls short a lot, too. These challenges are a reflection of those who run the administration of the City and can only truly be corrected with new ideas and people.”
- “If I have to recommend one thing to improve, it would be monitoring and controlling drug abuses by some residents. Often, it causes great discomfort to other residents in residential area as well as in public places. It would be helpful if quick responses and actions can be taken after reporting these kinds of incidents.”

Comments on Ames Police Department (77 respondents)

Great job or work (18 comments)

- “When needed the last 2 years, very helpful and positive.”
- “APD work hard, and I trust them.”
- “Doing great.”
- “From what I know I think our Ames Police Dept. is effective.”
- “Great job APD. We gave to the policeman's fund every Christmas before Shop with a Cop.”
- “They have always been friendly and eager to help.”
- “They appear to do their job professionally and in an upstanding manner, which I appreciate.” *(+ respect/appreciate them)*
- “I think that they do a great job patrolling in general.”
- “I think the Ames PD are doing a great job as is. These 3 things selected as an emphasis are just if I had to pick, but I think it is not much of a problem currently.”
- “I think they do an amazing job.”
- “I would ask you to keep up the good work on all areas!”
- “Our PD seems pretty good.”
- “Thank you!! Our police department is one to be proud of! Thank you to each and every member of the police department for your commitment and service. So appreciated.” *(+ respect/appreciate them)*
- “The Ames Police Department does an incredible job at keeping the peace in our community.”
- “The Ames police department has been excellent.”
- “The Ames Police Department is generally responsive and maintains a visible presence for community safety.”
- “Very responsive and courteous.”

Respect or appreciate them (11 comments)

- “I have a high regard for our PD.”
- “Overall, I appreciate their work and efforts in maintaining safety in the community.”
- “I really appreciate those free trainings by police department.”
- “Am grateful for their support when needed.”
- “It's very nice to see such an engaging police department in the Ames community.”
- “Police have a difficult job, and the only stories that get attention are usually the negative interactions with police officers.”
- “We appreciate seeing police out in public.”
- “We back the blue.”
- “I have Confidence in the APD and appreciate the officers.”

Positive past experience (9 comments)

- “Any interactions have been positive.”

- “Have only had positive interactions with Ames police, was grateful for the help installing a car seat.”
- “I had to report an incident to the police department this year, and the officer I talked to was really nice and helpful.”
- “My limited interactions with the Ames police have been positive.”
- “Some months ago, there was a car thief in the neighborhood. My wife called the police, and they arrived quickly, although the thief had disappeared.”
- “I have only had positive experiences with them.”
- “Every interaction I have had with Ames PD has been positive. This also goes for Iowa State University PD, which have also been great from my experience.”
- “I thought it was great that Ames Police department had a fingerprinting booth at the elementary school STEAM night that we attended.”
- “The response time to our TA incident was slow, but the officer was courteous, knowledgeable, and professional during our interaction.”

Continue or improve community outreach (7 comments)

- “As a college student, I think that the department should make a greater effort in showing the community that they are prepared and actively have plans in place for major events like an active shooter. I know many people my age have grown up having to constantly look over our shoulders and being afraid of these attacks, so I think more outreach could be helpful. It would just be reassuring to know that the university administration, police, and other officials have detailed and active plans in place for protecting students, faculty, and the wider community. This is especially true considering the recent tragedy in Iowa City.”
- “Being a positive force in the community is essential for building trust in a time where people can be skeptical of authority due to a few negative incidents (not from Ames) that received national attention. Outreach is a great way to build connections. Patrolling in the form of outreach is also good if done well.”
- “Continue efforts on Police Outreach.”
- “It would be helpful if there were more police outreach activities, so residents can learn more about their services and feel more connected.”
- “I only really think they should work on outreach”
- “I see them around all the time. Patrolling and monitoring high traffic areas. So maybe there could be more focused on education and training and outreach.”
- “The one I feel most strongly about is Police Outreach to build relationships and trust in the community.”

No issues or complaints (6 comments)

- “I don't have any complaints.”
- “I have never had issues with the Ames police department.”
- “I have no major issues with the Ames Police Department.”
- “I have never had a law enforcement issue while living here. No issues with breaks in or vandalism either”
- “No real experience with them in general, Seems fairly good”
- “They do a good job as far as I know. I don't interact with police.”

Need more traffic enforcement (6 comments)

- "As a driver for CyRide, I personally would like to see more traffic enforcement, as I have seen many traffic violations while driving, but no point in reporting as response time would simply take too long."
- "I would like to see increased police presence monitoring traffic around the school, especially to address vehicles speeding in the area. Stronger enforcement would help improve safety for students and families." *(+ too much speeding/accidents)*
- "I would love to see more patrolling on Stange for unsafe drivers."
- "There needs to be more traffic control."
- "There should be more traffic enforcement on Lincoln Way, Grand, and Duff."
- "Probably more with highway patrol, but the amount of people that stay in the passing lane is disturbing. Poor traffic flows and the need for more lanes wouldn't be necessary if distractions and using the passing lane for passing were better enforced."

Not useful or do not trust (5 comments)

- "I don't think they're very useful."
- "I think we would all appreciate it if officers stopped pulling people over in the middle of university blvd, I feel like one person driving too fast is safer for the driver, the officer, and the community, than 2 cars stopped in the middle of the road impeding traffic in the middle of the day"
- "I'm afraid of all cops. They all seem to be jerks. So many times I have seen people speeding by me when I'm trying to be law abiding- why do they stop me when I'm already having a bad day. I also got stopped because they somehow saw my registration in the [illegible] it was past due. IT WAS NOT." *(+ bad past experience)*
- "If we want people to build trust in the police force, then seeing them active in more things than detainment and traffic stops is what will do that. I don't feel safer when I see a cop on patrol, I feel like I'm in the panopticon, waiting to see what I'll be punished for."
- "Most traffic enforcement is just road piracy. Get a real job."

More community support or care (5 comments)

- "I think if we want people to feel "American freedom" the way to do that is not to increase surveillance but to increase community care."
- "Support for people struggling with substance abuse, housing, mental health, etc. should be priorities."
- "Haven't had many interactions with them, they seem better than police in my hometown in terms of actually trying to help and assist members of the community. I do think there is disconnect of Ames vs ISU police at least in terms of visibility and outreach, I know they are both Ames police but there is still a difference where most of the time I think if there was an issue I would rather reach out to the ISU PD vs the Ames PD. ISU seems to be more focused on helping students vs I just see the Ames PD as standard cops not necessarily here to help people/the community." *(+ ISU PD is better than Ames PD – miscellaneous)*

Too much speeding or accidents (4 comments)

- "So many accidents on corner of 20th & Grand."
- "South Duff is a traffic and accident central, I know many of the officers stake out the area and try their best, but I think some more could be done to make the area less crazy."

- “Speeding in South Campus/ CyTown neighborhood is a problem!”

Police are important (4 comments)

- “All 8 above are important!”
- “Important to overall safety.”
- “I have not had any direct contact with the Ames Police Department, so I do not have personal experience to share. However, I believe they play an important role in keeping the community safe.”
- “I wish that I could choose very item on the law enforcement priorities list. I have been able to see the value of each item one or more times in my years in Ames.”

Too strict parking policies (4 comments)

- “Attending a downtown event, parked in metered space at 5:50, got a parking ticket. Soured us on downtown events.”
- “Get rid of parking meters if you want us to visit businesses.”
- “I disagree with metered parking & think enforcing it is a waste of time.”
- “The parking division is terrible.”

Community feels safe (3 comments)

- “Ames feels very safe so my lack of interaction with police is not a bad thing per se.”
- “Ames is a very safe city, and I attribute that to their current levels of patrols and work.”
- “I think Ames Police Department does a nice job keeping the community safe.” *(+ great job/work)*

Need better noise enforcement (3 comments)

- “Can anything be done about the LOUD motorcycles and soup-ed up cars during the night?”
- “Residents often violate the city rule (e.g. quiet time), but city never take care even we call.”
- “The noise level from motorcycles is becoming a problem. They speed excessively on nearby streets and highways most of the day/night and their mufflers are obviously defective. Thanks to Ames police for responding to that route in from of my house for days.”

Focus more on distracted driving (3 comments)

- “Please engage in very aggressive enforcement of hands-free/device-free driving violations. I see more tops of heads in oncoming vehicles than I do faces. It has got to stop!”
- “They also need to be aware of people on their phones while driving. This is a very common issue in Ames, and it is leading to slow and ignorant drivers.”
- “With the new phone and driving law, I notice a lot of distracted drivers and could really attribute bad traffic flow to distracted drivers. Further follow-through with either education or tickets for these drivers I think would help. Increased driver’s education by local PD might be able to help with this.” *(+ continue or improve community outreach)*

Bad past experience (3 comments)

- “My interaction with the Police Department in the past 12 months was very disappointing. I had a concern that I spoke with an officer about and was left feeling my concern was unimportant to the officer. I felt I was treated unfairly due to my gender. All citizens' concerns are important and deserve to be fully understood prior to being dismissed off hand.”

- "We were scammed by a man pretending to clean the ductwork in our home. When we realized what had happened, we called the Ames police so hopefully others would not fall prey to this as we had. The officer I spoke to was absolutely no help and actually somewhat rude. We were surprised and very disappointed."

Too much funding (3 comments)

- "Would recommend that resources distributed to them be reallocated to services that actually improve people's lives."
- "It annoys we every time I drive by the PD and see a dozen cars parked out front. No wonder my taxes are so high. They don't have value parked."
- "Too much money spent on PD."

Focus on homelessness (3 comments)

- "Dealing with homelessness."
- "My neighborhood has seen an increase in homeless people walking around and camping out in the nearby farm fields, it would be nice if the police could patrol our neighborhood more often & help the homeless find somewhere to go." *(+ more community support/care, more neighborhood patrolling)*

Improve training (2 comments)

- "Also, more training for the officers themselves, but I had to choose 3."
- "Always will advocate for training on mental & developmental health issues & partnering with licensed therapists when needed." *(+ more community support/care)*

Disapproval of pet fee (2 comments)

- "Charging a registration fee for pets is an awful idea."
- "The license proposal for pets is disappointing. It will be a struggle for some people to afford and put them in a position to be in trouble for not licensing. Find another way to boost income."

More neighborhood patrolling (2 comments)

- "I believe more focus on community surveillance and proactive patrolling could further strengthen the Ames Police."
- "There should be patrols of alleys in old neighborhoods where the homeless frequent. We need more neighborhood policing." *(+ focus on homelessness)*

Need more police (2 comments)

- "We need more police."
- "More officers."

Miscellaneous (6 comments)

- "I and others are uncomfortable with the numerous flock cameras in the city. They do not foster trust. The cameras are also not secure from a local and national security perspective. Finally, even if they were secure, I would not trust a private company with the data they provide and would prefer that tax dollars are spent locally on supporting officers and the department than on a subscription service."

- “Prioritize crime.”
- “The spray paint incidents are very concerning & need to be taken care of ASAP.”
- “Tripp Street is not a fun place to walk through, it seems like something bad happens there every week.”
- “We don't know how to use the QR code on the parking meters. We've gotten parking tickets for running out of change. Please make a program available to teach this skill.”

Comments on Ames Fire Department (69 respondents)

Have not used (31 comments)

- “Did not use these services.”
- “Don't really have any experience with the fire department outside of fire alarms going off in dorms when I was an undergrad.”
- “Have luckily not needed fire department services in my time as an Ames resident.”
- “Have not interacted.”
- “Haven't needed to utilize them.”
- “Haven't seen them extinguish a fire; I hope they're doing well.”
- “Hope I never know!”
- “I have had no exposure to the fire department in Ames.”
- “I have never had to use the fire dept services.”
- “I have never had to use these services.”
- “I have no interaction with the fire department. It's probably a good thing.”
- “I have not had any direct contact with the fire department, so I do not have personal experience to share.”
- “I'm happy to say we haven't seen the fire dept. in action.”
- “Luckily haven't used for an emergency.”
- “Luckily, I have not been in a situation where I needed the fire department's services.”
- “Never had to use it.”
- “Never have used emergency services and I am unaware of how fast they are.”
- “Never needed them.”
- “Never needed to use.”
- “Never needed.”
- “Never used the service.”
- “Thankfully I have never needed any of their services.”
- “Thankfully I have not had any experiences with the fire department.”
- “Thankfully I have not had to use the services of the Ames Fire Department.”
- “Thankfully, I haven't needed to interact with the fire department much.”
- “Thankfully, we haven't had to use the fire department.”
- “Very happy to not know response times.”

Great job (15 comments)

- “Great.”
- “Great job AFD!”
- “Great medical service (the only service we have used).”
- “Great service!”
- “FD has been great every time.” *(+ positive past experience)*
- “Overall, I appreciate their work and dedication.”
- “I have not interacted much with them, but I appreciate their awareness and their frequent inspection of some departments to minimize risk.”

- “I have used the fire dept and each time I have been pleased with their professionalism and kindness, they do a great job!” *(+ good people, positive experience)*
- “They did a good job getting the fire out at the mall recently.”
- “Keep up the great work.”
- “They appear to be professional and attentive to issues in the community.”
- “The fire department is quite reliable with quick response times and well-trained personnel.” *(+ fast response)*
- “They have been there when we needed them and were very professional. Thank you!” *(+ positive past experience)*

Positive past experience (13 comments)

- “Took old extinguishers to check if good, freely looked & disposed of bad ones.”
- “Block party appearance is AWESOME! Not familiar with other outreach.”
- “Haven't had to call them but one time when there was a fire they were here and took care of the fire and no one was injured.”
- “My interactions have been very positive.”
- “They put out an apartment fire behind my house last summer. I'm grateful for that. But luckily I haven't interacted with them otherwise.”
- “We are thankful not to have ever had need of their services, except once 6 or 7 years ago when our cat got trapped behind our washer dryer in a closet and the fire department people came and moved the equipment to get the cat out.”
- “When my dad had a stroke, they were quick, kind, and calm. Thank you.” *(+ great job, fast response, good people)*

Good community outreach (10 comments)

- “Every year there is a fire safety event on central campus of ISU. While I have only participated one time. I love seeing the community participation every year. They gave me the opportunity to use a fire extinguisher for the first time, and despite that being a few years ago, I still feel confident in the steps and remember the acronym.” *(+ positive past experience)*
- “I loved when they visited my sorority house this fall for fire safety training. They made it fun am engaging!” *(+ positive past experience)*
- “Impressed with all interactions in public & outreach.”
- “My kids love to go to the fire safety day at the Burnett Department.”
- “They came to my door to drop off promotional materials a few years ago when I moved back, and I appreciate their social media presences/community outreach.”
- “We attended several open houses and events this past year and the team was wonderful.” *(+ good people)*
- “Thanks for teaching fire safety in schools.”
- “They taught us at work years ago and it was helpful. Hope I don't need them to come to my house.”
- “We've attended some events at local fire stations geared at children and learned a lot and had good interactions but not much experience outside of that.” *(+ positive past experience, have not used)*

Fast response (9 comments)

- “Have had to call for emergency services at the university and usually not a long wait.”
- “I am deeply pleased by the speed at which the fire department responds to emergencies.”
- “I have not had personal experience with the fire department, but I am pleased with the response time I have seen from them for on-campus calls.” (*+ have not used)*
- “I reported an open burning in progress and called and they were out within 10 minutes.”
- “In my time in Ames it appears that they have quickly taken action to respond to fires.”
- “They were first on the scene for health emergency.”
- “Very quick!”

Good people (7 comments)

- “Friendly.”
- I worked with the fire department in campus town for a class project once- they were very welcoming and enthusiastic.” *(+positive past experience)*
- “Lt. Facio is awesome!”
- “The fire department is always friendly and gets the job done.” *(+ great job)*

No complaints (4 comments)

- “I haven't heard of anything bad about the fire department so that's probably a good sign.”
- “No complaints, but also no personal witness testimony to offer.” *(+ have not used)*
- “No complaints, which is maybe a good sign!”
- “Seems solid? No direct experiences.” *(+ have not used)*

Important service (4 comments)

- “Ames FD is an asset, and I knew if something bad happens, I will get the best help.”
- “It’s comforting to know that it’s there.”
- “I believe they play an important role in keeping the community safe.”
- “They are vital to the community.”

Happy about new station (3 comments)

- “I am excited for the firehouse to no longer be in campus town, as it does lower response time during weekends, and when I have lived on campus it took a long time for response during certain events.”
- “Looking forward to the new station #2.”
- “Happy about Station 2 moving :)”

Seem busy (2 commnets)

- “I will be honest--I can't recall the firefighters doing any outreach except for maybe at the Juneteenth event when I first moved here 3 years ago. But they seem to be busy doing things around town that are their main job activities (putting out fires/responding to medical emergencies) so that seems pretty important.”
- “They’re always blaring past my house so they must be working hard”

Need more outreach (2 comments)

- “It would be helpful to have more public information or community events to help residents learn about their services.”
- “It seems I don't hear about fire prevention & fire safety activities like I used to. Maybe that is due to less use of the Ames tribune, KASI no longer being a true local station, and less promotion in the City newsletter.”

Miscellaneous (5 comments)

- “Can we move fire open house to a different station? Just to see something new.”
- “I’d like to be able to get a recertification for CPR and AED with the fire department. It’s hard to find a facility in Ames to do that.”
- “Inspections Department should not be part of the Fire Department.”
- “Utilities should always have a fire call responder to home fire. I remember watching with the Fire Department, as a home burned while waiting for electrical service to show up to disconnect electricity as the pole.”
- “I think more investment in equipment, vehicles and staffing could further strengthen public safety.”

Comments on Ames Electric Services (41 respondents)

Satisfied or great job (16 comments)

- “Ames does a great job with their electric services.”
- “Ames Electric Services is generally reliable, providing consistent power.”
- “Does a pretty good job!”
- “Good but wonder if smooth flow.”
- “Great!”
- “Has been easy to work with.”
- “I am grateful for the proactive work Ames Electric Services has done to reduce chances of outage and for their rapid response when needed.” *(+ fast response times)*
- “Auto-pay is convenient.”
- “Pretty Solid.”
- “Reliable.”
- “satisfied.”
- “Seems good. No problems. Worst was after the derecho (I think) when we were without power for a few days. Otherwise very reliable”
- “The electric service in Ames has been great and provided just what we have needed.”
- “With at most one power surge a year, things going well!”

Supportive of current renewable energy initiatives (6 comments)

- “Buying solar through the community solar farm is a great opportunity for local residents to support solar energy without having to install solar panels on individual homes. This also reduces our electric rates.”
- “I am glad you offer Sun Smart Ames”
- “Love renewables!!”
- “Sign me up! [for SunSmart]”
- “SunSmart Ames exemplifies what an informed community can do toward common welfare. And it's voluntary. I wish it a long and productive existence.”
- “I think this [SunSmart] is a wonderful idea.”

More communication or education (5 comments)

- “Could educate public on likelihood of outage during storms, ie percent of power lines buried, how far away are purchased sources, how Ames compares to similar communities.”
- “Could there be a way to look at where/what your electricity usage is going to? Especially for people trying to save or cut back.”
- “I do wonder why the estimate for the new power generator plant came in at twice the original estimate?”
- “How much is the monthly credit? make us more aware of this program- how many people participate and can it be expanded?”

Too expensive (4 comments)

- “I can barely afford my bills.”
- “Over $100 for water/electric monthly for a 1 bedroom with 1 occupant is insane.”
- “Rates could be lower, and having a fee to pay with a bank account is ridiculous.”
- “The rates seem to be quite expensive. This is especially shocking considering Ames doesn't even utilize 100% renewable energy.”

Fast response times (4 comments)

- “Do a good job of restoring electricity quickly when lose power.” *(+ satisfied/great job)*
- “I've had maybe 2-3 power outages in the last 5 years. I don't remember reporting the outage or if I was informed of a progress restoring services, but I remember service was restored within a few hours.”

Appreciate municipal service vs private (3 comments)

- “I am glad to use AES over a for-profit company.”’
- “I'm glad the electricity is municipally owned.”
- “Living in Ames has made me appreciate the value of having a community-owned and operated electrical system.”

Issues with account, setup, or portal (3 comments)

- “The payment portal can use some work.”
- “I didn't like the setup process when I moved into my apartment but now that's it's all settled it's fine.”
- “My biggest issue with the electric services is that my account got closed without notice to my associated email/phone number/a physical mailing to the apartment that the account holder had changed. I did not attempt to close it--there was an error with a new tenant in the same unit in a different building. It got fixed and I was very happy with the person at the Ames Electric Services who helped me--she was super great and quick at figuring out the issue. But I feel like I should have been informed that my account was closing in the first place so I could have figured out the issue before it truly became an issue.” *(+ more communication/education)*

Low or reasonable rates (3 comments)

- “Rates are fairly low.”
- “Coming from a community powered by a major regional private system, the rates are very reasonable and issues are addressed quickly.” *(+ satisfied/great job, fast response times)*
- “Priced fairly.”

Expand renewable energy (2 comments)

- “I think upgrades to the system and support for renewable energy options could further enhance service quality.”
- “Expanding into renewable energy seems like an interesting idea as long as it is cost effective to the end user.”

Power outage (2 comments)

- “Power goes out somewhat frequently in my neighborhood. They have fixed some things, but more may need to be done”
- “Have had some nights that we lose power for at least a little bit.”

Power surge (2 comments)

- “Issues with power surges and lights flickering/strobing. Multiple neighbors have called but no change.”
- “Seems okay, not sure if it is just my apartment building electric but there will be weird surges when turning on electronics that can cause lights to flicker occasionally even when there isn't a heavy load on our apartments electrical system.”

Miscellaneous (4 comments)

- “’Green Energies’ make us feel good but as a whole there is no true look at the overall carbon footprint. I hold a BS in Env Sci and Policy and a Masters in Env Mngt. Solar comes with its own pollution hazards.”
- “A top level skilled electrical professional should always be on call and maybe be required to live in the service area. I watched a house continue to burn well after the fire dept. arrived because power needed disconnected and it was quite a wait for Ames electric to arrive and the technician seemed really bothered to have to be there.”
- “I am concerned about the smart meters going into homes.”
- “The SunSmart credit is much less than initially predicted (just an observation not a complaint)”

Comments on Drinking Water Service (85 respondents)

Satisfied or great (40 comments)

- “A great product.”
- “a strength of living in Ames!”
- “Amazing water.”
- “Ames has great water and I appreciate it!”
- “Ames has the BEST water!”
- “Ames tap water is great!”
- “Ames Tap Water is the best! I brag about it to my non-Ames friends.”
- “Ames water is grea.t”
- “Awesome.”
- “Best water in the USA!! Keep up the good work.”
- “Excellent.”
- “Excellent drinking water service. Keep it up!”
- “Excellent water.”
- “Excellent, take it with us when we travel.”
- “Good quality drinking water, but has gone down in quality of taste in last couple years.” *(+ recent decline in quality – miscellaneous)*
- “Good!”
- “I like the Ames tap water.”
- “Love Ames water!”
- “My favorite water.”
- “Never any problems-very good water.”
- “Overall good.”
- “Overall very satisfied.”
- “Satisfaction to good.”
- “Services are great.”
- “Shower pressure is kind of low. Kitchen is excellent pressure. Water in Ames is very good!!”
- “So far the Ames drinking water has been great!”
- “Thankful for good water.”
- “The drinking water in Ames is the best there is.”
- “The drinking water service in Ames is generally of good quality and consistent.”
- “The water system is in my experience well-functioning.”
- “Usually good.”
- “Very good water.”
- “Very happy with Ames water services.”
- “Water is excellent!”
- “We are very happy with our Ames water.”
- “We love Ames water.”
- “Very good water quality.”
- “Seems good.”

- “But it apparently according to the tests is least likely in Iowa to give me cancer so I appreciate that hard work to make our water safe.”

More communication about testing or quality (12 comments)

- “Are nitrate levels for Ames drinking H2O published? W/hydrant flushing, rust alert/instructions have been readily available. Thank you.” *(+ worried about nitrates/cancer)*
- “I would appreciate further evaluation to ensure the water is safe and meets quality standards.”
- “Is there a place/website to get information on what's in our water? Levels of things like nitrates?” *(+ worried about nitrates/cancer)*
- “It would be helpful to get more information on water quality and particularly chemicals and other particulates that may be in the drinking water in Ames. In general, I am concerned about poor water quality in Iowa and would like to be more informed about city water.” *(+ worried about PFAS or microplastics)*
- “Would like to see water test results as nearby areas have known high level nitrates.” *(+ worried about nitrates/cancer)*
- “Notices when water quality is lessened would be nice.”
- “They should be communicated to residents as well, so they are aware that there are forever chemicals present in the water.”
- “In my view, continued communication about water quality and long-term sustainability efforts could further boost public confidence.”

Worried about nitrates or cancer (10 comments)

- “Please keep updating filters to remove nitrates etc. to keep it safe to drink.” *(+ filter/purification needed)*
- “I am concerned about nitrate levels, especially as a renter, since I cannot install a reverse osmosis system. I know reports say it is safe, but I am having a hard time trusting that.” *(+ more communication about testing/quality)*
- “I heard that the pesticide level is highly correlated to the higher cancer rate, and I am kinda concerned as a resident in Ames or Iowa in general, as Iowa leads in the cancer rate above other states. Even though there may be other factors, such as radioactive gas level, can you please provide information on the water quality level in terms of fertilizer and pesticide residue levels?” *(+ more communication about testing/quality)*
- “Nitrates is my biggest concern.”
- “I don't know if Ames has test results from water but Iowa having really high nitrate levels generally does turn people off in general to tap water.” (*+ more communication about testing/quality)*
- “Very concerned about Iowa H2O quality.”
- “Although we filter our city water because we live in a rural farming state and worry about nitrates.” *(+ filter/purification needed)*

No issues (7 comments)

- “I appreciate that I never think about the water each time I use water for whatever purpose. Thank you!”
- “I have never had any quality issues with the drinking water.”

- “Never had issues.”
- “No problems.”
- “Not that I can remember any drinking water service issues.”
- “So far no complaints we use a Britta water filter since we didn't trust the pipes or anything at our last apartment building, but in our current place it seems to be fine.”
- “Very fine.”

Bad taste (7 comments)

- “I do not like the taste of Ames water.”
- “Moving from another country I've had to get used to the tap water tasting differently.”
- “Often times water will have a very chlorinated or even fishy taste.”
- “Taste is off.”
- “The water is nasty.”
- “Water has a chemical smell/taste that is not chlorine. Can be carbon. Filters but fouls filter quickly leaving an aquarium odor/sour.”

Rust, minerals, or deposits (7 comments)

- “Guess it's the water that keeps my toilets looking like there is mold in them.”
- “I have concerns about the water quality. Although the water appears clear and seems safe for bathing, and clean with it has a noticeable rust-like smell and taste. Because of this, I do not feel comfortable using it for drinking.” *(+ bad taste)*
- “I've had rust and red sediment come out of my faucets after water was temporarily shut off to fix a leak.”
- “Also have had deposits build up on faucets and some rust.”
- “Trouble with calcium deposits in water lines.”
- “We don't have hard water, but we get some orange-y mineral deposits in the bottom of the sink & shower that washed out easily.”

Filter or purification needed (7 comments)

- “I typically filter my drinking water from the sink, this is personal preference.”
- “We have RO system for drinking at home.”
- “Purify much more as Iowa is high risk of cancer zone.” *(+ worried about nitrates/cancer)*
- “I use a Pur Filter for my water.”

Dislikes hard water or wants softer (7 comments)

- “Hard water is chronic.”
- “Have water softener.”
- “The hard water is a serious problem in Ames and I think filter or water purifier is a must for all buildings, also for showers which cause hair fall and skin damage in long term.” *(+ filter/purification needed)*
- “The water here seems very hard and is not nice to my hair and skin.”
- “The water is always hard.”
- “Water softener is a must in Ames.”
- “Would like softer water.”

Hard water – neutral (6 comments)

- "Ames water tends to be hard as a result of focusing on quality taste. As a result, the water is harder. *(+ good taste)*
- "I do not have a water softener and although I know the water taste is very good, I also know our water is hard - just ask a plumber!" *(+ good taste)*
- "Our water is hard and leaves behind minerals on the showerhead and faucets, I prefer hard to soft water though." *(+ rust/minerals/deposits)*
- "Is usually hard."
- "The water is on the hard side, but I don't want to pay for softening."

Good taste (5 comments)

- "Always trust it tastes good."
- "To me our water is one of the best tasing in this whole central area."
- "I love the taste of Ames water, which is naturally hard and can have cloudy appearance. It's nothing I have issue with though." *(+ hard water (neutral))*
- "It's ok, has a good taste."

Worried about PFAS or microplastics (4 comments)

- "Would very much like our city to address the issue of forever chemicals, however."
- "However, we concerned with PFAS and other levels."
- "Worries about microplastics & PFAS, would love info on what Ames is doing to mitigate that." *(+ more communication about testing/quality)*

Need guidance (2 comments)

- "Guidance on home water systems."
- "There should be a program available to help residents replace old curb box shut offs. The current program of replacing water meters creates a need for this assistance, especially given many of the water meters do not actually need replacing due to age, it is happening to "simplify" the job of billing, so not really necessary."

Miscellaneous (7 comments)

- "I live near a tower, so the H2O pressure is always on the higher side, but I'm used to it & have low flow fixtures to help."
- "Only issue was when they are working with the fire hydrants."
- "Please consider stopping fluoridation of our drinking water. It's not necessary and is harmful to thyroid health and our health in general. Fluoridation of municipal water is an outdated idea, and more cities are choosing to eliminate it."
- "Spurts here and there."
- "The water pressure in our area has been dropping year by year as they build new homes and add irrigation systems & so forth. Out irrigation system output has noticeably declined year by year."
- "Never had a problem, except when a main line burst near my apartment and we did not have water pressure for a few days."

Comments on Water and Pollution Control (21 respondents)

Great or good work (9 comments)

- “Great job!”
- “I’ve read that Ames has some of the best water quality in all of Iowa, so based on that, I’m very satisfied. I have no way to verify this.”
- “Keep up the good work!”
- “The water quality is satisfactory.”
- “They do a great job of protecting our water resources.”
- “Water & Pollution Control services in Ames are generally effective and maintain standards.”
- “Water quality is generally very good and reliable. I appreciate the consistent service.”
- “We had water build up in a street near our home, and the guys came to fix it within 48 hours. It was very quick service!”
- “You do a good job.”

Worried about pollutants (3 comments)

- “Can we find a solution for the PFAS levels in our water? I appreciate that the water is better than most, but this is concerning as a resident especially with the cancer rates in Iowa being so bad.”
- “Sometimes the weather smells like Ammoniac or Uria which shows that the weather is polluted.”
- “Stop cancer-causing stuff in the water.”

Clearer communication (3 comments)

- “I don't understand sewer rates - tried searching internet for how its calculated, don't see clear answer. Wish water meter had visual tracker like electric meter to better gauge if charges are accurate.”
- “Clearer communication about services could further enhance reliability.”
- “It would be helpful to provide more information about water hardness and any ways residents can address it.” *(+ hard water - miscellaneous)*

No issues (2 comments)

- “I am grateful for the fact that I have not had to think about any related problems in the past 12 months!”
- “Pollution concerns have never crossed my mind while living in Ames.”

Water or sewer backup – city issue (2 comments)

- “The sewer backed up into my basement twice within a week and a half. I've had several plumbers from different companies come to look at it, and they've all said it's the city's problem so they can't really do much. The city continually insists that it isn't their problem, even though my next door neighbors also had the sewer back up into their basement at the exact same time as mine (which every professional plumber who's been involved in the situation has said is a clear indication of this being a city problem). The city did come and mark the sewer connection points with paint on the street after it backed up the second time, so it seemed like maybe they were going to do something about it, but they never came back again after marking the lines and that

was months ago. I have significant damage to my basement due to the sewage backup (i.e. had to rip out carpet and drywall, and had to throw away a lot of personal property that got wet), and it's super frustrating that fixing this doesn't seem to be a priority for the city because I can't even start repairing my basement or replacing my belongings until I know this isn't going to happen again."

- "When I had a plumber come in for kitchen sink backup, they said the problem seemed to be with pipes at the junction, not necessarily my home pipes."

Miscellaneous (6 comments)

- "Cattail overgrowth is out of control in many greenspace area drainage fields and stormwater control ponds."
- "I don't know who to contact or if the City even can do anything from a regulatory and enforcement standpoint, about poor storm water drainage and runoff management on apartment complex property."
- "However, providing at least one drinking water facility within a certain distance would benefit residents."
- "Greater investment in infrastructure."
- "Water quality can be better."
- "Water rates are increasing often, it seems."

Comments on Nuisance Ordinances and Enforcement

Nuisance not addressed (16 comments)

- “It was on Northwestern Ave 2618. Been a problem over 10 years”
- “My sister on Mesa Verde Place has contacted the Police Dept … still in the same condition, no movement on cleaning up the property that abuts her property :(“
- “Other issues like street repair or tree trimming have taken years (literally). Reported sidewalk issues are never addressed at all.”
- “I've never had a noise complaint taken seriously, I've just been told they have the proper permits or it's Boone's jurisdiction.” *(+ noise complaint)*
- “I have reported a curb/gutter issue in my neighborhood multiple years in a row. The city comes out and marks the location but does not remedy.”
- “Noise complaints are hard, but I have called and watched an officer drive by and not stop ... it can be frustrating.” *(+ noise complaint, hard to enforce)*

Noise complaints (14 comments)

- “(Not recently) we reported to city about the noise (backyard party with loud music) at midnight, but city never take care.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- “Dogs bark constantly, left outside all day while owners are gone.”
- “Other than noise, these things are not important to us.”
- “Ours is a quiet residential neighborhood and these noise concerns don't affect us. However, in campus area, these issues are very important.”
- “Sort of satisfied (yes + no). That outdoor concert carries all the way to north Ames which was SUPER obnoxious. That can't be safe for the folks attending, but I get limited control by the PD.”
- “South Ames has noise issues on HWY 69 with people existing town. I have never called it in because it feels like there might not be much that can be done about it.”
- “Roommate submitted a noise complaint. An officer came to the offending house, but not much was done.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- “Noisy neighbor situation, wasn't taken seriously.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- “Noise ordinance calls were basically not addressed.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- “Noise complaint was largely ignored.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*

Need stricter regulations or enforcement (13 comments)

- “The city seems to respond only to citizen reports - it should also respond to issues it is aware of.”
- “A few houses on Grand and Duff need to be cleaned up”
- “I do believe that Ames lacks enforcement when it comes to noise and improper behavior. The city needs to make a greater effort when it comes to people yelling and being disruptive at midnight.” *(+ noise complaint)*
- “Would like to see a more timely result instead of waiting & waiting”

Overgrown yards (11 comments)

- “I don't spend much time traveling around Ames, but when I do, I notice that there are many homes within the city limits that have "green" themed lawns that require no maintenance but

look terrible. For example, there are properties on Grand Avenue that are in poor condition and have various items stored in plain sight on the premises, which makes the overall appearance equally unappealing." *(+ trash/junk, need stricter regulations/enforcement)*

- "Though we do have several neighbors again who continue to live in the wild vegetation of their yards"
- "When others don't take care of their yard or property, it is disturbing and brings down the value of neighboring houses. We wish there were stricter regulations when it comes to maintaining and caring for one's yard." *(+ need stricter regulations/enforcement)*
- "Overgrown yard."
- "Lawns and yards overgrown with trees, unmowed lawns, same places every year."
- "Neighborhood overgrown yard. Told there was no ordinance on it."
- "Several houses in high visibility/traffic areas are unkept, with visible junk or overgrown yards." *(+ trash/junk)*
- "In our HOA we have a house that doesn't mow regularly and weeds are abundant. I've heard that they have been reported several times to the city but even though the yard looks terrible, the height of the weeds isn't such that anything is every done by the city." *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- "More and more people seem to be raising dandelions in the name of something. I have no problems with wildflowers but unkempt should be monitored and enforced. Also, I thought the City passed a ordinance about low limbs over sidewalks, but i have not seen anything done. Do I need to complain to get action." *(+ nuisance not addressed, need stricter regulations/enforcement)*

Trash or junk (10 comments)

- "The garbage was still in the alley 6 months later."
- "A lot of junk is in yards."
- "I know it's a college town but May brings so much furniture to the yards."
- "Small amount of 'junkyards"!"
- "Regarding trash and a lot of spiders next to our doors, tenants rights society responded that it is not harmful." *(+ nuisance not addressed)*
- "There is a house on W. Grand with an unsightly amount of junk, etc. in their front yard. I have reported this twice. Even though I don't live close to this property, I drive by all the time. It's disgusting." *(+ nuisance not addressed)*

Ordinances or enforcement is too strict (8 comments)

- "Considering much of the trash comes from sources outside of the property owners' behavior, I think it is ridiculous to put the responsibility on homeowners to keep the town looking clean. The problem is all the college town and apartment dumpsters. People throw loose trash in them and then that lose trash gets caught in the wind when trash trucks come to empty the dumpsters. Please do not fine individual people for a systemic failing. They should not be held responsible for trash they are not putting in their own yards. Additionally, a focus on overgrown lawns is, I think, ridiculous. There is a point where it becomes a safety concern but if it is just that the lawn is "a little long," I think people can learn to mind their business. Why are we elevating the concerns of people who flip a gasket over the length of grass of someone else's lawn over actual problems? There are bigger things to care about. Being a "good neighbor" is so much more than keeping lawns looking a certain way." *(+ bad upkeep of rental properties)*

- “Got a ticket for “Front Yard Parking,” my front tire was 5 inches off my driveway. Absolutely egregious.”
- “I don't think yard upkeep should be an enforceable nuisance.”
- “I like interesting yards, I like the limited enforcement.”
- “People should be able to keep their yards however they want.”
- “Was called and reported about my dog barking, after explaining the situation, I was given a warning. Yet confused because there's some other dogs constantly outside also barking so unsure how this noise complaints are determined to be certain people”
- “There should be no ordinances that value one person's or a group of people's opinion over that of another person or group of people. While I may not feel it is reasonable for me to park my vehicle on my yard, another person may disagree. As long as that action is not creating an imminent threat to the safety of anyone, it should not be an illegal act. The same logic applies to grass height or roof or siding condition: as long as it is not creating a demonstrable, imminent threat, it should not be scrutinized in an ordinance.”

Loud vehicles (6 comments)

- “Again, loud motorcycles and cars, especially at night.”
- “Better enforcement of vehicle muffler noise, Interface with railroad for buffer barriers along tracks N,S rails.” *(+ need stricter regulations/enforcement)*
- “Can you do anything about loud motorcycles?”
- “Cars constantly revving their engines very loud, people obviously racing or being wrongly parked, etc.” *(+ parking nuisance)*
- “Seems there could be better enforcement on noise issues - ie drag racing on streets, motorcycles speeding on Grand Ave.” *(+ need stricter regulations/enforcement)*
- “Please take action re motorcycles who are speeding on streets and highways at any hour and whose mufflers are either defective or souped up to maximize noise.” *(+ need stricter regulations/enforcement)*

Bad upkeep of rental properties (5 comments)

- “Lots of rental properties that just dump in their yard or leave cans unopened. I regularly have to pick up all kinds of trash in my yard. The park by my house is a mess, with broken glass and other debris.” *(+ trash/junk)*
- “More enforcement needs to be done on property managers who don't keep up their properties, especially mowing in the summer.” *(+ overgrown yards, need stricter regulations/enforcement)*
- “I understand nuisance ordinances are meant to address broader community concerns, but I am experiencing ongoing issues with my landlord and the condition of the property where I live. At my rental property in the neighborhood, there are significant problems with overgrown grass and weeds. Since spring, the lawn was not maintained until I personally called to request it be cut. When it was finally done, the weeds were simply cut over and the debris was left behind, leaving the front of the property looking unkempt. Additionally, there are safety concerns involving two large trees in the front yard that do not produce leaves and have branches that frequently snap and fall throughout the year. There is also ongoing overflow and clutter in the garage area. These issues are affecting my quality of life. I would appreciate stronger enforcement or clearer protections to ensure tenants have safe and properly maintained living conditions.” *(+ trash/junk, overgrown yards, need stricter regulations/enforcement)*

Parking nuisance (4 comments)

- “Neighbor has 4 vehicles parked on driveway. 3 never used, one occasionally.”
- “Unlicensed car parked on property.”
- “Parking.”

Fireworks (3 comments)

- “Fireworks - personal use by neighbors.”
- “I wish more citations would be issued for illegal fireworks - I think it is unreasonable to expect citizens to pursue illegal fireworks in the middle of the night.”
- “Significant issues with fireworks being set off well past midnight, was told could only enforce if they actually observed it happening, would not approach the home that was setting them off to ask them to stop despite multiple neighbor complaints.” *(+ nuisance not addressed)*

Ames is clean (3 comments)

- “City is clean and quiet.”
- “I think Ames is a very clean and safe place to live. I constantly receive comments from visitors on how clean and beautiful Ames is.”
- “The neighborhood where I live is quiet and clean, and I have not experienced any major issues like noise or disturbances.”

Enforcement works well (3 comments)

- “Enforcement must work here.”
- “I think the nuisance ordinances are working well in my community.”
- “Many years ago, animal control, very satisfied”

Never reported (3 comments)

- “I have never reported anything.”
- “I have not had to report a nuisance issue to the City of Ames.”
- “I have not personally reported an issue.”

Hard to enforce (3 comments)

- “Enforcing nuisance ordinances is a challenging task.”
- “Noise complaints seems to be a hard thing to enforce. So the problem seems to continue despite best efforts.” *(+ noise complaint)*

Potholes (2 comments)

- “I have notices quite a few potholes around Ames that have been there for several months.”
- “The potholes are a real issue and real annoying.”

Burning (2 comments)

- “When confronted or near, the no burning ordinance should be enforced. I don't see that.”
- “Is there a burn ordinance?”

Appreciate staff (2 comments)

- “I appreciate the commitment of the current staff.”

- “There are times the city does a wonderful job responding to issues. I've reported streetlights out and they get fixed in a day or two.”

Assist those struggling with nuisances (2 comments)

- “Overgrown yards can happen for a variety of reasons, and I don't believe this should be something people automatically get fined for. Rather, social services and social determinants should be reviewed before taking corrective action.” *(+ ordinances/enforcement is too strict)*
- “Instead of vilifying and punishing people for financial hardships that impede their abilities to maintain their properties, programs should be created to help them.”

Miscellaneous (5 comments)

- “There is a city owned pathway from Oklahoma Dr. to British Columbia adjacent to our property. It's been in bad shape since we moved into our house 10 years ago. We notified our then council rep and have also written letters, but nothing's been done. It's a safety issue for kids/parents who use it and liability for the city.”
- “Nuisance ordinances maintain community standards and overall neighborhood quality. However, I think clearer guidelines and better communication with residents could improve fairness and understanding.”
- “Should have better enforcement of no drugs policies in apartment buildings. Offensive odors.” *(+ need stricter regulations/enforcement)*
- “Sidewalk cleaning (snow/ice) remains a problem where I live now. It was terrible where I used to live (West Ames) due to renters/rental companies waiting 3-5 days to clean, then ice forms and fall risk for residents in neighborhood is high!” *(+ bad upkeep of rental properties)*
- “Maybe making it where a certain amount of insulation b/w apartments units is required would help [noise]?

Comments on Street Maintenance and Traffic (88 respondents)

Improve traffic light coordination or timing (32 comments)

- “Ames has some very slow traffic light-controlled intersections (13th & Stange, 13th and Grand, Duff and ... the one closest to the interstate.)”
- “Ames is a wonderful city but needs coordination between the traffic signals on Lincoln. If nothing is going on, then they are all green, but during busy times you can stop at almost all of the lights which is very frustrating, slowing down traffic and increasing pollution.”
- “Coordination on S. Duff from Airport Rd. to Ioway Creek bridge is poor to nonexistent, Airport Rd. to S. 16th is awful! Side streets get too much priority.” *(+ conflict between side and main streets)*
- “Could do better on timing of intersection lights in some places … not sure exactly where.”
- “I feel like Duff Ave can have better signal patterns.”
- “I hit every single light pretty much every single day on my way to work taking 4th street to the university during the school year. While I think generally the traffic signals coordination on streets like Grand or Duff or Stange are pretty good, the ones on University are not as well coordinated.”
- “I think the traffic signals have a lot of room for optimization to prevent large backups of vehicles when the light is red when minimal traffic is going through the intersection from the other direction.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “I've gotten 10+ red lights in a row sometimes on Lincoln Way. (from Dakota to Duff)”
- “In Ames I spend a lot of time sitting at read traffic lights. There is no reason for all traffic directions to have red lights all at the same time. One direction should always be in motion.” *(+ red lights are too long)*
- “It feels like I'm always hitting every red light in a row. But that could be that I only take note when it doesn't go my way.”
- “It feels like sometimes I'll hit every possible red light on Lincoln. I know I'm going to hit some, but sometimes it feels programmed to stop cars as much as possible.”
- “Lincoln Way Campustown - eastward is notoriously poorly timed traffic light-wise.”
- “Seems like some of the these need to be reprogrammed to come on together and go off together. Especially the lights on Duff so traffic doesn’t build up in the sections that are too short.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “Signal timing on many major arterial roads does not promote smooth or efficient flow of traffic.”
- “Stange and 13th north and southbound should coordinate! I hate sitting there so long.”
- “Stop and start especially on Lincoln Way.”
- “The light at Lincoln and Grand is inconsistent.”
- “The lights at 9th and Grand need to be times better. The North/South light stays green for up to 2.5-3 minutes after the walk light goes off.”
- “The signals on Duff do not seem to be coordinated, and it makes it unsafe to change lanes during busier hours because of high car build up since every light is red.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “The stop light exiting W Crystal Street and South Duff is incredibly slow to respond, particularly Monday-Friday, and traffic tends to build up during high traffic hours e.g. between 7-8am.” *(+ congestion/long lines, problems during peak times)*
- “The timing of the light at South Dakota & Mortensen and the 30 overpass needs reviewed”

- “The timing seems to stop traffic rather than letting cars through, especially along duff”
- “There are times on Grand where I've hit EVERY night going N/S. It's rare, but a bit weird.”
- “There seems to be very little coordination between the new streetlights on Grand Avenue.”
- “We only ever hit every green or every red.”
- “You need to work on coordinating the traffic lights on South Grand, especially northbound from Hy-Vee towards 9th St.”

Improve left turns (12 comments)

- “13th needs a turn lane for a left on Grand.”
- “There should be more left-hand turn lights/lanes. The congestion that happens on Lincoln, Duff, and Grand can get very bad. The interaction at Grand and 13th is annoying with having to have 3 different exchanges when a left signal/lane could accomplish the same goal without the need for an additional light rotation.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “I don't drive anymore. I think more green left turn arrows necessary at intersections.”
- “I think the 20th street and Grand intersection going North South could use a turning arrow.”
- “Adding green arrows to turn left in busy intersections that don't currently have them.”
- “It's better than it used to be. More left turn arrows needed.”
- “Left turn on Lincoln Way onto Hayward. I swear the arrow is never green, only flashing yellow.
- “One time I was at the intersection of South Dakota and Lincoln Way and the left turn light would not change to green. Someone had to get out of their car and press the pedestrian crossing button.”
- “Also, some lights would be lovely to have a green arrow left hand turn before straight away traffic occurs … such as the light on the 3-way stop in front of Geoffrey.”
- “Sometimes the lights are green, and there are no cars waiting. Also, we need more explicit turn-to-left lights, especially at intersections like Grand Avenue and 13th Street. It is so difficult and dangerous to turn left onto 13th Street, which creates longer queues.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “Still think a way to have a turn signal at 13th/Grand Ave intersection for the East-West lanes, specifically at "Rush hour' after hospital/clinic shift changes.” *(+ problems during peak times)*
- “There are a few places in town that left turns are difficult and can be dangerous (13th and Grand) during high traffic periods.” *(+ problems during peak times)*
- “Also how about turning lanes at 13th & Grand.”

Red lights are too long (9 comments)

- “I feel like I wait a hundred years for the light to turn green, creating unbelievable lines of traffic on busy streets. When they do, they're green for about two seconds. Same with green arrows. They appear for a second and immediately turn red.” *(+ congestion/long lines, short green lights)*
- “Some intersections (such as waiting on 9th St at 9th and Grand intersection) seem to take forever for the light to change. Wish it were times a little better and more evenly.” *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*
- “Some signals take way too long to change. People tend to avoid those routes for that reason.”
- “The I-35 exit on to 13th St. light is not well coordinated at night. I'm waiting 3+ minutes with no one else there. I've seen people run it because it was taking so long.”
- “They seem overly long.”

Congestion or long lines (10 comments)

- "Lincoln West seems to be design to plug traffic up"
- "There is a short stretch near the west Dunkin Donuts that sometimes gets backed up/gridlocked."

Problems during peak times (10 comments)

- "Coordination seems to vary with time of day or day of week."
- "For having town engineering building on campus that has civili engineering, it seems like the population increases are not accounted for. Traffic lights work as intended with the break time population."
- "Need to adjust signal timing priorities on peak hours." *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*
- "The traffic signals on South Duff from 5-6pm need to let traffic flow better. The signal stops Duff traffic when only a few cars are on Crystal & cars on Duff get stuck at Crystal Street in the middle of the intersection at Airport Road, also at the intersection with Hwy 30." *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*
- "They are great for most days of the year. Feel like they struggle during high traffic times." *(+ works well)*
- "However, I think better coordination during peak hours." *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*

Improvements for pedestrians or crosswalks (6 comments)

- "More flashers needed at crosswalks."
- "Many pedestrian signals along bus routes such as Lincoln Way take too long to change, some resulting in wait times of over a minute to cross."
- "More pedestrians press flash signal needed! For example, at Stange & Aspen."
- "One suggestion is that many drivers in right turn lanes don't seem to realize pedestrians have right of way when the walk signs are on. I would like to see more right turn lane yield to pedestrian signs at busy intersections like Stange and 24th."
- "Please make pedestrian crossing lights automatic. When the crossing light isn't automatic, people will see that it's green and start walking and get caught in the middle of the street. Or they give up on the buttons and just start jaywalking. The countdowns are helpful for drivers, too, because they can use them to see whether they're about to get a yellow light. Please. This is the only feedback I truly care about, and I've been thinking about this the whole time I've lived here. I understand making the crosswalk require the button after a certain time at night. But please make high traffic crosswalks have automatic crossing lights."
- "Clearer pedestrian signaling could improve efficiency."

They work well (5 comments)

- "Generally, I think the traffic signal patterns work well. Traveling from Dakota/Lincoln to Downtown Ames can be a hassle with the stoplights, but this is something I attribute more to the university traffic than to problems with the signals."
- "The traffic light in my environment is working perfectly and is very reliable. I believe it is able to detect when the street is empty, enabling me to cross at the right time."
- "Traffic signals in Ames generally feel safe and orderly across major streets."
- "Very good."

Conflict between main and side streets (5 comments)

- “There are many intersections where there is no traffic on the main road but the cross road is made to sit and idle far too long.” *(+ red lights are too long)*
- “There are too many intersections where motorists on side streets wait long periods for a light change even when no traffic is on the main street.” *(+ red lights are too long)*
- “Turning into Lincoln Way from side streets is not well timed by existing signals - too long to get into L.W.” *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*

No issues (5 comments)

- “Generally, not an issue.”
- “I have never had any issues on traffic signals.”
- “Never had an issue”
- “Never really had any complaints about traffic signals in Ames outside of occasional blinking red lights at intersections but those are almost always corrected promptly.”
- “Nothing has stood out to me.”

Short green lights (4 comments)

- “The only thought that comes to mind about traffic signals are that the N/S light at the intersection between State and Mortensen is so quick, the flow of traffic through that light gets slow when the light is only green long enough to let a few cars through.”
- “The timing on some lights can also be inconsistent, where the light is green for very little time (less than 5 seconds).”
- “I understand why the main roads have to have more time but east-west streets have 2 seconds to go across. *(+ conflict between side and main streets)*

Defective sensors (4 comments)

- “One traffic signal (Lincoln Way at Dakota) is defective at sensing left turns going northbound dakota. It always shows a green arrow even if no one is present, slowing traffic down. And most times this light is green way too long for both directions causing excessive waiting when traveling north/south Dakota. 13th and grand also has a similar issue.” *(+ congestion/long lines)*
- “The left turn light by Birch to Campus will not work if you are the only car there”
- “There's one traffic signal on Lincoln Way where the left turn into Union Drive doesn't seem to work.”

Appreciation (3 comments)

- “Appreciate the "new" system at Ontario and North Hyland - before the current roadwork.”
- “I enjoy when lights are coordinated to move the flow of traffic. I don't often remember when these occur and only remember when I have to wait at every light on Duff.” *(+ red lights are too long)*
- “Looking forward to Grand and 13th being completed.”

What coordination? (3 comments)

- “Is there coordination?”
- “My initial response to this question is "What coordination?", which is usually an indication that either the system is working so well it is beneath notice or so poorly that you can't tell an attempt

was made. I've erred on the lower side, but my actual answer is on the extreme end I just don't know which one."
- "They are never coordinated, and I believe there is no coordination system currently in place."

Improve snow plowing (3 comments)

- "They always plow snow back into my driveway AND they have plowed up the dirt in my yard by the curb just go the opposite way with the snowplow on the circles! This year they went around & piled snow onto the circle. Then they went the opposite way & PILED IT INTO MY DRIVEWAY :("
- "This past winter, it would seem that a NOVICE is plowing. Lots of turf stripped from yards beyond the curb."
- "I feel the community does not do a good job with snow and ice removal. There have been multiple occasions this past winter where I, and many of my classmates, have almost slipped on huge chunks of ice that very clearly were never fixed by the community. This is shocking considering we are in Iowa, which frequently gets winter. It reminds me of Southern communities who get snow and then don't know how to handle it because it is so rare."

Traffic lights can't or should not be coordinated (2 comments)

- "Traffic signals increase safety by slowing traffic and requiring the driver to refocus. Stopping traffic in town makes traffic safer. It's nice to have a few lights in sync, but there can be too many in sync which increases danger. In town driving is inherently stop and go and should be."
- "We're all in a hurry to get to our destinations - coordinating traffic signals to meet everyone's expectations is impossible"

Improve bike lanes (2 comments)

- "Bike lanes are almost non-existent on campus."
- "It is always a 50/50 on if the traffic light will pick me up on my bike when I commute to work -- sometimes it does, sometimes I wait and then have to go push the crosswalk sign after I realize it can't detect me in the bike lane, especially at the Lincoln/Lynn light." *(+ defective sensors)*

Too much speeding (2 comments)

- "I have seen three or four accidents at the intersection of Tripp and Dotson since I have lived here less than a year. People are always speeding down Dotson. I have written to the city, and nobody has responded."
- "Too many vehicles speed through yellow and red light, needs better enforcement."

Timers rather than sensors (2 comments)

- "It's better to use timer instead of who ever arrive to the light can get passed."
- "Overall, the traffic sensor system works very well in most streets, but I believe that the traffic lights on Lincoln Way nearby the main ISU campus should operate without them during busy hours. In other words, I believe that limiting its use to consistent intervals rather than following pedestrian crossing calls during rush hours will improve traffic and prevent students from crossing the street when the pedestrian light is red." *(+ problems during peak times)*

Miscellaneous (6 comments)

- "Ferndale between 20th and Hunziker gets forgotten on a lot of maintenance."

- "I would like it if maybe send a notice if the street sweepers will be in an area so cars can be moved"
- "Many unnecessary traffic signals and stops. It is difficult to pull out onto the road from my home, which is located just downstream from a four-way stop intersection. Before rezoning anything unnecessarily, please do something about the intersection of 13th and Grand." *(+ need better traffic light coordination/timing)*
- "Please consider putting a stop sign and trimming trees at the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Hyde Avenue. The trees at the subdivision partially block traffic coming from the north and traffic on Hyde Avenue can be fast and at times, frequent. It would be nice to make things slower and increase visibility."
- "Some signals, like on Mortensen-University, need a sensor rather than a timer, especially early in the morning and late at night. The crosswalk is way too long"
- "This was my biggest shock when coming to Ames. It is a beautiful community; however, it struggles with cleanliness. There are garbages frequently overflowing, and trash in the streets and sidewalks."

Frequency of streets mentioned for needed improvements

- 17 comments: Lincoln Way
- 16 comments: Grand Ave
- 11 comments: 13th St
- 10 comments: Duff Ave
- 4 comments: Stange Rd
- 3 comments: Mortensen Rd, North/South Dakota Ave,
- 2 comments: 9th St, University Blvd, Crystal St, Airport Rd
- 1 comment: Aspen Rd, Union Dr, Ferndale Ave, Dotson Dr, Lynn Ave, 24th St, State Ave, 4th St, 20th St, Hayward Ave, Harrison Ave, Hyde Ave

Comments on CyRide (152 respondents)

Love it or great service (71 comments)

- “Have used in the past and been satisfied.”
- “The service is fantastic.”
- “Amazing. Routes span across the city.”
- “An excellent service.”
- “Best thing ever. Never get rid of it.”
- “CyRide is a generally and clean and convenient way to get around Ames, and I appreciate having access to it! *(+ buses are clean/safe, convenient/reliable)*
- “CyRide is a good program.”
- “CyRide is a very helpful service within the campus and nearby places around Ames.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “CyRide is a great public transportation system in Ames.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “CyRide is an amazing public transport system for a city the size of Ames.”
- “CyRide is great, and I'm thankful Ames has this for anyone needing transportation. I drive but if the day would would come that I could not drive, Cyride my next best option.” *(+ don’t use/need, important community amenity)*
- “Cyride is great, I go in cycles of using or not.”
- “CyRide is great!” (x3)
- “CyRide is great. I use it to travel to/from the ISU campus and downtown from my apartment.”
- “CyRide is very excellent!”
- “Cyride is wonderful. I appreciate that a ride can be scheduled to Wolfe Clinic and other businesses that the regular routes don't cover”
- “CyRide provides affordable public transportation with good campus connectivity.” *(+ affordable)*
- “CyRide works well, I am embarrassed I don't use it more.”
- “Easy bus is a wonderfully helpful idea- love it!”
- “Excellent.” (x2)
- “Fantastic.”
- “Generally, like CyRide, especially compared to other public transport systems.”
- “Good service.”
- “Good!”
- “Good.”
- “Great for students!”
- “Great service for Ames residents, I would use it if I could not drive or walk due to age, mobility issues, or weather issues.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “Great service for our town! I do use occasionally on snow days when my drive hasn't been plowed yet before I need to get to work.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “Great work!!”
- “Great!”
- “Hope that there a lot more people taking CyRide, it's a great service.”
- “I am grateful for the option to ride the bus in place of driving.”
- “I brag about CyRide to all of my out of town friends. As a longtime bus rider in places like Cedar Rapids and Cedar Falls, I believe Ames has the best public transit system in Iowa.”
- “I have used on a few occasions and found it exceptional.”

- “I love CyRide.” (x3)
- “I love CyRide!!! Take it to and from work 4 times a week. Grateful to have such a great public transportation system in Ames.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “I really appreciate CyRide when I need to take my car to the mechanic.”
- “I'm happy we have CyRide and I do occasionally use it and will sometimes in the future.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “It is awesome.” (x2)
- “It is very satisfying.”
- “It works greatly!”
- “It's great.”
- “LOVE CyRide, it is integral to my household.”
- “Love CyRide.” (x3)
- “Perfect.”
- “Really good and friendly service.”
- “Service is excellent.”
- “The CyRide is working great.”
- “Under 'T' I would add a section 'have you even rode CyRide.' Yes, when my car was in the shop. They did a great job.”
- “Used it when I was a student, had a positive experience.”
- “Very good service.”
- “Very good system, love the public transport.”
- “Very good.” (x2)
- “Very happy with CyRide.”
- “Very impressive.”
- “Very satisfied.” (x2)
- “We love CyRide.”

Don’t use or need (30 comments)

- “Do not need at this time.”
- “Do not use CyRide.”
- “Have a car.” *(+ other transportation is more convenient)*
- “I drive.” *(+ other transportation is more convenient)*
- “I have no need for it at this time.”
- “I live close to where I have to go.”
- “Just not currently needed.”
- “Need for use.”
- “Just don't use it in my situation.”
- “We don't have a need for it.”
- “We have no current need.”
- “Don't use buses.”
- “Have not had need.”
- “I don't use it but I have in the past.”
- “I have not needed CyRide in grad school.”
- “No need to use it.”
- “don't use it going somewhere around town, works best around campus.”

- “We have used CyRide in the past, but no need at the present.”

Important community amenity (19 comments)

- “I have a bus stop 5 blocks from home, so I used previously when I needed to get to downtown. CyRide is a great amenity!”
- “We're glad it exists for those who need it.”
- “The service is a tremendous gift to all residents who do rely on it”
- “CyRide is a great addition to use not only on campus but through Ames as well” *(+ love it/great service)*
- “CyRide is a wonderful service to the community and should be made as available as possible to those needing/wishing to utilize!” *(+ love it/great service)*
- “CyRide is a wonderful amenity for the city of Ames. Without it, it would be very arduous to get to work in inclement conditions. CyRide is one of my favorite parts of living and working in Ames. CyRide is an essential part of Ames.” *(+ love it/great service)*
- “It's very important!”
- “It needs to be available always - a city priority!”
- “The service is undoubtedly very helpful for students and non-students”
- “Happy we have a bus route.”

Convenient or reliable (17 comments)

- “Bus is usually on time”
- “CyRide is a convenient and reliable transportation option for students.” *(+ important community amenity)*
- “For the most part I think they do everything possible to make it convenient for students and the Ames community to use and it goes pretty much everywhere I can think of in Ames.”
- “Everywhere I've lived in Ames (3 off campus locations) has had great access to CyRide and campus, which is all i need it for.”
- “I love the access CyRide provides, as well as quick interval between buses for many routes.” *(+ love it/great service)*
- “It is convenient for me when needed.”
- “It's convenient for our ISU student to travel home from campus.”
- “Super convenient.” (x2)
- “They are always on time.”
- “The frequency of the bus services is appreciable.”
- “This service has saved my life. Everyday even at night I know CyRide is there”
- “Fast, accurate, safe.” *(+ buses are clean/safe)*

Other transportation is more convenient (18 comments)

- “I mostly walk or bike as I live in central Ames. (the reason we moved close to downtown)” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “I'm using personal car for commute right now.” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “Use a bike or drive my car.” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “It just is more convenient to use a personal vehicle. I would consider using the bus system more if we didn't have 2 vehicles or lived closer to campus.”
- “I usually just bike or walk.”

- “I use it very rarely as I almost always just drive my car.” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “I have reliable transportation and exceptional parking.” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “I would use CyRide more but a CyRide pass for the year is about the same as a parking pass at ISU for a year. Because I can take my car whenever I need and CyRide stops by my apartment like every half hour/every 15 minutes my car is the more flexible option. Especially because sometimes I'd need to change buses 2 or 3 times to get to where I need to go and my commute to that place would be 45 min+ to get there (for example to get to the mall or the pool I would need to go out of my way and take 2 different buses--versus driving I can get to either in 10 min driving). I would like to take the bus more. I think it’s important for the environment, but it just is a big hassle here.” *(+ takes too long)*
- “I usually prefer to use my personal car.”
- “My family often walks or rides bikes. It's possible as my kids get older that they will use CyRide more.”
- “I just use my car more.”
- “We drive everywhere.” *(+ don’t use/need)*
- “We have two vehicles, we don't use city buses.” *(+ don’t use/need)*

Improve service on weekends, breaks, or evenings (14 comments)

- “Please, could the Brown route run as late as the Green and Red, especially on weekends?”
- “I wish it traveled to North Ames more often int he evenings. And I wish it ran more frequently in the summer.”
- “Effective except Sundays with the yellow lines.” *(+ convenient/reliable)*
- “There are not enough buses on the weekends in my opinion.”
- “Increase frequency in summertime.”
- “It would be nice to have night service on the weekends, even if it's just on a couple of routes.”
- “It would be nice if they ran more frequently back to campus in the evening.”
- “Late night rides from ISU library would be great.”
- “More buses during the summer, please.”
- “Weekend timings are poor.”
- “Weekend service could also be improved, but the system is great overall.” *(+ love it/great service)*
- “Would prefer if service was offered on my route longer during the day and the fare was no cost.” *(+ lower/free fares)*

Expand routes or stops (11 comments)

- “Ames is big enough to support a city-wide system.”
- “In my view, expanding coverage and increasing off-peak frequency could further improve riders' convenience.” *(+ need better service on weekends/breaks/evenings)*
- “I only wish there were more routes from west Ames to north Ames.”
- “I miss using it, but not close bus if you live on the farther north side of Ames.” *(+ no stops near me)*
- “Have special routes for rides to the stadium on football game days from outer areas instead of the warning about parking. (Also use for big concerts & often major events). Keep expanding it.”
- “Please add a stop to Reiman Gardens. I would bus to work if I didn't have to walk so far”
- “Please, please, please help people get to Childserve and Foundations Learning Center by bus. Many low-income Ames families need access to these places.”

- “It would of course be great to have a more extensive bus network, but I know the real limitations on something like this.”
- “Would love it if there were even more buses and routes.” *(+ need more frequency)*
- “When I rode it didn't always go where I needed to go.”

Improve app or bus times (10 comments)

- “Would greatly appreciate if drivers communicated more clearly and stuck to schedules (like not arriving or departing early) to make transfers smoother!” *(+ better outreach/communication)*
- “App and web times are not quite accurate, which can make planning a trip a little bit difficult.”
- “Provide more real-time updates.”
- “I often use the 3rd (blue) bus and have encountered the following issues: 1) After my shift on campus, I take the bus to go grocery shopping and plan to meet members of my household at the “South 4th Street at Stadium View Apartments” stop with reusable bags and a shopping list. At times, the bus is marked “out of service,” which prevents them from boarding. As a result, I have to get off at that stop and wait together for the next bus, which is especially uncomfortable during cold weather. A driver explained that allowing additional passengers to board outside the campus area would be considered unfair to those boarding on campus. However, this feels inconsistent, as the bus often continues toward “River Birch Apartments” with many empty seats and still stops at the same bus stops along the route. While many drivers are understanding, the rule itself feels unclear and inconsistent from a rider’s perspective. 2) A different case when going to grocery shopping, I board the bus at the “South 4th Street at Stadium View Apartments” stop to go to “River Birch Apartments.” Occasionally, drivers say they are not going to campus, which creates confusion, even though the route still goes to “River Birch Apartments.” Because of this, I sometimes skip the bus unnecessarily. If I were going to campus, I would instead cross the road and use the “South 4th Street at South Hazel Avenue” stop. These are observations from a rider’s perspective. I understand there may be operational, scheduling, or efficiency considerations behind these situations that are not visible to passengers.” *(+ better outreach/communication)*
- “A more on-time schedule on the CyRide app during the summer. Buses are not on time during the summer.”
- “Sometimes the app isn't very accurate.”
- “The AP can have “ghost” reporting, in which a bus will allegedly arrive at a stop in some time, but there is no bus on the geo tracker or reality.”
- “The app could also use an update. I planned to use the buses when I first arrived, but the app was so difficult to visually process that I decided to just drive. I’m not going to use a service that makes me panic just looking at the app.” *(+ driving is more convenient)*
- “Very strange rules on Blue 3rd route. The map shows that it is coming, but very often driver only drops people but doesn’t allow to get into bus, even if it’s super cold/rainy, and there is no normal shelter.” *(+ better outreach/communication, need more shelters)*

Good bus drivers (9 comments)

- “Staff are friendly and helpful.”
- “Drivers are nice.”
- “Drivers are courteous.”
- “The CyRide personnel are very friendly and approachable!”

- “Many drivers are excellent at their jobs and navigate the route skillfully. Some are not as careful and bump the occasional curb and accelerate/brake too quickly.”
- “Drivers are always polite and respectable.”
- “The bus drivers are amazing! Very kind, patient, and helpful.”
- “All the bus drivers are very friendly and good drivers.”

Need more frequency (7 comments)

- “I just wish they came up to North Ames more often on the brown route than every 30 minutes.”
- “It would be helpful to improve frequency during peak hours.”
- “Gold should run more often.”
- “I have friends who rely on the CyRide who work at the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine and I have had many complaints about this bus not arriving frequently, so it is very unreliable.”
- “With the new apartments going up in south Ames along University, more frequency on the #6 Brown route would be ideal.”
- “It may be helpful to increase the frequency and service time for some of the routes.” *(+ need better service on weekends/breaks/evenings)*

Improve outreach or communication (6 comments)

- “I would LOVE to use CyRide but it's hard to know when buses will be here.”
- “Notifications about delays and route changes could be more centralized.” *(+ improve app/bus times)*
- “My classes are mostly in Vet-Med so I wasn’t really shown or taught how to use CyRide. Maybe there would be some outreach to that campus for those of us who aren’t completely sure.”

No stops near me (5 comments)

- “It is not easy to access from my apartment.”
- “I would use CyRide, however it does not stop at my apartment in west Ames.”
- “Not practical for route to be close to our house.”
- “The nearest stop is about 3 blocks away across a busy street.” *(+ not safe to get to bus stop)*

Buses are clean or safe (5 comments)

- “Clean and almost always on time.” *(+ convenient/reliable)*
- “Buses are clean.”
- “Always look nice and clean.”

Takes too long (5 comments)

- “Simply, it takes too long to commute, I use my car instead of CyRide (5 min car vs CyRide 40 min with shortest transit).” *(+ don’t use/need, other transportation is more convenient)*
- “I live on the west side of Ames and it takes a long time to get to Downtown or the South Duff area, even on weekdays.”
- “It would take much longer for me to get to my job (only 8-minute drive) if I took CyRide.” *(+ other transportation is more convenient)*
- “I used to sue CyRide a lot in school and would use it more often if it didn't take so long to get across town.”

Lower or free fares (4 comments)

- "Could always be better though (free & wider spread)." *(+ need expanded routes/stops)*
- "Make it free."
- "Would love for it to be free! The bus in Chapel Hill, NC is similar but free!"

Affordable (4 comments)

- "The fare of $1 is a good deal."
- "The price is great."
- "We used it prior to a route changing and removing the service from our street. Fare was reasonable and it was nice when we were without a vehicle for a period." *(+ convenient/reliable)*

Out-of-town commute (4 comments)

- "I work out of town, so no need to use CyRide." *(+ don't use/need)*
- "Not interested- work out of town." *(+ don't use/need)*
- "Don't work in the area."
- "I am a commuter student. NA."

Need more shelters (3 comments)

- "A lot of stops lack a hospitable area."
- "There should be weather shelters at locations necessary for living, like at grocery stores. West Hyvee has one, but both Walmarts do not."

Appreciate electric buses (3 comments)

- "I think many of the busses need to be modernized. Now would be a great time to invest in going 100% electric. It decreases sound, smells, and air pollution."
- "The transition towards newer fleets of vehicles -- especially the fully electrified busses -- is something I am excited about."
- "Love the electric buses."

Empty buses – use smaller vehicles (3 comments)

- "It would be good to have more of the smaller vans to give rides for people along routes that are less used by riders."
- "I live in Johnson St. area see bus several times each day (coming & going). I never see more than 3 to 5 people riding. Suggest smaller bus for those routes with lighter loads."
- "Too many empty buses during breaks and at certain times and on some routes. Too many empty or almost empty double long buses."

Not safe to get to bus stop (3 comments)

- "There's a stop at my house, near busy street (13th/Ontario), yet no crosswalk so many sprint across which is not safe."
- "There's a bus stop on Airport Road and Hwy 69 - there is no crosswalk to get to it and the stop itself is a small square of gravel immediately next to the highway. This is dangerous."

No issues (2 comments)

- “I have no problems with CyRide.”
- “It seems like a good service”

Miscellaneous (5 comments)

- “Not sure. I am not able to carry much weight, so waiting and walking to the nearest bus stop with my bags for work make it difficult for me.”
- “Please can you train drivers to brake gently unless it's an emergency?”
- “The electric buses were an overall bad investment. A pilot program of one electric bus should have implemented to gauge efficacy before pouring millions of tax dollars into several buses at once.”
- “CyRide is not neighbor friendly. Will not consider making improvements to stops to keep trash and debris out of residential property.”
- “Love that the college helps support public transit.”

Comments on Parks and Recreation (113 respondents)

Love or satisfied (44 comments)

- “Ames has a wonderful parks and recs service.”
- “Ames has wonderful parks.”
- “Ames is my favorite city, in large part because of the parks and trails.”
- “Ames Parks and Recreation is very good for the community. The parks are clean, safe, and nice for families. I like that there are playgrounds, walking trails, and open spaces for people to relax and exercise. They also offer different programs for children and adults. Overall, I think Ames Parks and Recreation is helpful and makes the city a better place to live.” *(+ clean/maintained/looks good, good selection/opportunities)*
- “Ames Parks and Recreation offers overall decent park quality and recreation areas with trails and facilities.”
- “Ames's parks are incredible and are one of the best features of the city, especially one of its size. As someone who enjoys hiking and exploring nature, I appreciate the diversity of the park system and the well-maintained trail systems.” *(+ clean/maintained/looks good, good selection/opportunities)*
- “When our grandchildren come to town they love the playgrounds. Miracle is so creative and fun.”
- “Emma McCarthy Lee Park is such a great spot - the facilities and trails are amazing. Thanks for all you do to keep areas like these in Ames excellent! It makes it such a good place to spend my college years at!”
- “Have used AP+R for 20 years - great part of Ames!!”
- “I enjoy Ames' parks and trails and my husband, kids and I have participated in a few recreational programs and had good experiences overall (the kids tend to move to other leagues if they get serious about a sport, but P&R leagues are great for trying out new things when you're not sure they'll like it).
- “I feel fortunate for the obvious commitment of the Parks and Recreation director, staff, board, and Council to create and maintain the park facilities and to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.” *(+ clean/maintained/looks good, good selection/opportunities)*
- “I love Brookside Park.”
- “I love the parks and trails around Ames!”
- “I love the parks in Ames! Truly makes a difference on my quality of life.”
- “I love using the parks and aquatic centers in Ames! I have no complaints about the facilities.”
- “I walk the nearby trails everyday, and I really enjoy them!”
- “Improvements on Ada Hayden were great.”
- “Is very good.”
- “Love Ames!!!!”
- “Most trails are great.”
- “My wife and I enjoy the number of parks and facilities available in Ames. I particularly enjoy how many of the parks offer paved trails that are connected to one another. I have participated in a pickleball league put together by the city. My wife likes to walk in the lazy river during the summer. Many different events through work and church have been hosted at the parks in Ames

to great success. I proposed to my wife in one of the parks in Ames. The Ames parks system is very special and important to us and our communities."

- "Overall, I could say it's good."
- "Overall, really good."
- "Pretty solid."
- "Seems that there is always something new coming on board. That is good for residents."
- "The costs are reasonable."
- "I like the new path being put in at Ada Hayden."
- "The parks in Ames are definitely a wonderful resource for residents. They are accessible and well used by all ages."
- "The trails are fantastic and I appreciate how many neighborhoods are easily connected."
- "Very happy and proud to have Ames park and rec. The repairs at miracle park with the soft ground was quick."
- "Very happy to see Ames keep its Tree City USA status!"
- "CyTown we really look forward to!"
- "We love all the parks and Ames and the family friendly environment here."
- "We love parks and rec in Ames."
- "Everything else seems to be nice though."

Improve maintenance (15 comments)

- "The frisbee golf course by university village has poison ivy, making it difficult to find a frisbee. I guess that is a part of the challenge too!"
- "I would like more maintenance of dirt trails in woods. During summer, the overgrowth of stringing nettles and invasive species poses risks of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases."
- "I'm most concerned about the sheer amount of trash near residential parks and in waterways. I assume it's not cost-effective to employ someone specifically to do that job, but it makes the entire town look trashy and unkempt. I wish I could pick up the trash myself, and I do my part when I can, but I am disabled. I can only do so much. It should be someone's job. The earth is the only home we'll ever have, even if some freaks think colonizing another planet when we can't even maintain our first one is a good idea. Every time I go for my short walks I feel embarrassed to live in a town that does not take care of the environment in even the simplest form of picking up litter. It is actually, I think, a sign of declining community when these tasks are relegated to "volunteer days" where the ISU daily paper can tout how much the "community comes together to take care of the environment." False. If our community cared about the environment, it wouldn't be a task left for volunteers to take up, it would be built into the system. Pay. People. Invest more in city planning that requires regular upkeep. You can't make humanity cost-effective. Please stop trying."
- "If I apply my experiences with the trails to the rest of the Parks and Rec, I would say more attention needs to be paid to upkeep and maintenance of existing infrastructure and facilities. Overall, there are some paths and trails that are in very poor condition that could be current liabilities, while there are some that are in very good condition and need only a watchful eye to keep them in good condition. This most likely applies to all the infrastructure and facilities."
- "Improvements to the paved trails last summer were a little frustrating because there was a lot of construction at once, making it difficult for trail users to find routes."

- “The biggest issue is litter and people not cleaning up after their dogs. I do my best to clean up the parks by my apartment but I’m one person. Maybe something like this? *Link to dog waste station on Amazon* *(+ dog friendly improvements)*
- “Most trails seem to be well-maintained, but trails near or crossing water (e.g., Ann Munn woods) have eroded significantly over the last couple of years.”
- “Parks need far more attention to grooming trails, especially Munn woods and Emma McCarthy Lee.”
- “The parks could use better, more frequent trash pickups.”
- “There are a lot of bad sidewalks, making various wheeled sports treacherous.”
- “They removed the trash can at the park by my house. Franklin Park and the surrounding area is always a mess.”
- “Too much litter - plastic waste, plastic bags”

Improve or expand bathrooms (13 comments)

- “A lot of bathrooms are locked but the portable ones help and they are surprisingly clean too.”
- “Improvements are needed in restroom availability and picnic/shelter amenities to better support visitors. Expanding the number of playgrounds and shelter options could enhance the overall experience.” *(+ improved shelter/benches, improved/expanded playgrounds)*
- “I live close to Miracle League playground. On nice off-season days after restrooms are closed, there are often people needing restrooms. might consider portable facilities there in off-season.”
- “I wish restrooms were open more throughout the year.”
- “Would also appreciate a bathroom at Northridge Heights Park”
- “It would be really nice to have a permanent bathroom installed at the Lloyd Kurtz Park.”
- “Restrooms - make them more visible & closer to kids play areas so my grandsons can quit finding trees :(“
- “Place portable toilets in all parks year round. The elderly & young families need them.”
- “Please try to improve restroom facilities and cleanliness.” *(+ improved maintenance)*
- “Quality of restrooms is poor. Often no soap.”
- “Restroom cleanness is poor, and they are close too early in fall.” *(+ improved maintenance)*
- “Specifically, bandshell park restrooms have homeless people in them in the summer. Taking kids along to use the restroom is hard as a young woman. I have gone in before and had to call in "squatters."

Improve or expand aquatic centers (12 comments)

- “I don't like new changes to family pool pass calling age 16 an "adult" and only allow 2 adults per family. We won't get a pass this year due to this.” *(+ too expensive)*
- “I put poor on the indoor aquatic quality because I think the very delayed opening of the indoor aquatic facility could have been handled better.” *(+ improved marketing/communications)*
- “More lap pool options.”
- “Need a regular pool - outside of aquatic centers. What we have is too crowded - need more! I've lived here 63 years. We have grown in population and no additional pools provided!!”
- “Not having a municipal pool for years is a major issue related to parks and rec. While the new indoor one will be open "soon," it must be staffed throughout the day, morning to night, to address pool time needs of the City. Relying on Bayer Hall or Ames Fitness is insufficient for students.”

- “Staffing issues over the summer impacted swimming at the outdoor pool.”
- “Our major concern is Furman Aquatic center. it seems as though cleanliness, the quality (care of facility and general management) has gone down.”

Clean, maintained, or looks good (11 comments)

- “Ames Parks and Recreation does a very nice job of keeping parks clean and fun for residents!” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “The parks are always well maintained!”
- “I used to go to parks. It is usually clean and well maintained.”
- “Upkeep of Emma McCarthy recreational area (trails, pickleball courts) is fantastic as well!”
- “The parks have always been well kept and clean when I have visited.”
- “There are a variety of nature paths to walk throughout Ames. A majority of the paths and parks are very clean. There are very few that I have been to where I felt unsafe. The parks are very well maintained and a joy to visit.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “Trails and parks are well maintained and safe for walking.”

Improve or expand programming (7 comments)

- “One thing that could be improved is to have more indoor activities during the winter.”
- “Bandshell park could benefit from more programming in fall”
- “It can be so much better by extending its services to older people. In the sense that they are games that attend to the adult senses and excitement.”
- “Parks & Rec should do more to partner w/ the Octagon. Where I used to live the art center programming was much more in tandem with city programming. Made registering for a variety of activities easier. Same with the library. It's all too siloed in Ames.”
- “I would love more opportunities for swim lessons; they fill up so quickly.”
- “Times for working people for some fitness classes difficult.”
- “Would love to have some activities in parks.”

Good selection or opportunities (7 comments)

- “Ames has a great selection of parks and woodlands. We walk out dog frequently at 5 different parks/woods.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “Ames Parks & Rec does a wonderful job of providing diverse opportunities.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “I absolutely love the amount of outdoor recreation that Ames has to offer! The variety of activities is better than most other communities I have lived in.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “I love the number of parks and natural spaces for families and college students to enjoy.” *(+ love/satisfied)*

Excited for Fitch to open (7 comments)

- “My family is excited to try out the new indoor aquatics center when it opens.”
- “Cannot wait to start using the new Fitch indoor aquatic center.”
- “Indoor aquatics - anticipating a change to "very good" once Fitch is open!”
- “I'm sure the indoor aquatics experience will be better once the new facility is done.”
- “Looking forward to Fitch Facility.”
- “Looking forward to using the aquatic centers in the future - we just had our first child and have visited several parks and trails already.”

- “We look forward to Fitch Aquatic Center opening.”

Don’t use often (6 comments)

- “As older people, we're no longer as active as we were, so this section really doesn't apply!”
- “Don't use parks.”
- “Don't use very much but the times I have used the parks in Ames they have been pretty good.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “Don't use very often but they look great!” *(+ clean/maintained/looks good)*
- “I'm 88 years old and have not been to the Parks and Recreation for several years now. But based on friends' comments, overall- they're good.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “Only use Furman.”

Improve trail or path connectivity (5 comments)

- “Ames is good with greenspace, however when I do get out, I wish there were more. The best walking path I have found is Ada Hayden, however that is sometimes difficult to access throughout the year.”
- “Better connectivity via walk/bike is always great. eg: pathway from Campustown to Hyvee is excellent.”
- “Continue to connect more bike paths.”
- “I would enjoy more urban bike trails to traverse the city safely with kids (such as the one from south of 30 that intersects with Grand). I also love hiking on trails in town that make you feel like you can get lost in nature. There are a few kind of like that in Ames but would love more.”
- “Make an easy to see bike trail map app! Connect the trails!”

Too expensive (5 comments)

- “High cost prevents use of pools.” *(+ improve/expanded aquatic centers)*
- “Our family doesn't use the aquatic centers due to the high cost and the inconsistent hours of the outdoor pool.” *(+ improve/expanded aquatic centers)*
- “I would use the pools more to lap swim if it was more affordable, or a lap swim only membership.” *(+ improve/expanded aquatic centers)*
- “Too much cost for unnecessary infrastructures.”

Improved marketing or communication (5 comments)

- “Information about new Fitch Family Aquatics and updates has not been clear to Ames residents.”
- “Indoor center had VERY poor communication.”
- “Not a really good advertisement of offerings.”
- “What indoor aquatics are available as can no longer use Green Hills pool.” *(+ improved/expanded aquatic centers)*

More pickleball or tennis courts (4 comments)

- “I would like more public pickleball courts.”
- “More tennis and pickle ball courts would be great!”
- “Please build more pickleball courts, Emma McCarthy Park has so much space”
- “We need another pickleball only court. I often struggle to find a court to play tennis on because all the courts are taken up with pickleball players.”

Dog-friendly improvements (4 comments)

- "Also, a central Ames dog park (downtown) is needed."
- "Need more dog friendly spaces (fenced areas)."
- "Need poop drop trash cans put back at Ada Hayden and one added at the top of upland trail and/or at NE intersection with main trail."

Improve shelters or benches (3 comments)

- "Could have more tables/benches with shelter."
- "Grills need to be replaced."

Improve or expand playgrounds (3 comments)

- "If there is any way to fix or restore the kids park equipment annually vs replacing when broken would be nice." *(+ improved maintenance)*
- "Would like to see more outdoor explorative play - natural climbing opportunities, water hand pumps, etc."

Indoor aquatics isn't open yet (3 comments)

- "Haven't use indoor aquatics yet!"
- "Indoor aquatics is not open."
- "Indoor aquatics isn't open yet so that is NA."

More conservation efforts (2 comments)

- "I think many of the parks … with planted flowers and not much prairie, which is the natural vegetation of this area. Keeping some prairie to grow will allow people to see more animals and enjoy the parks more; at least some can be like that. Ada Hayden is an example of a less intervened park with a lot of visitation."
- "I also think, though wooded areas are nice, some parks should be used to preserve the natural prairie that used to be all throughout Iowa."

Improve lighting (2 comments)

- "There only thing is lighting issue on some trails."
- "The shelter lights and restrooms located at - 340 Wilder Blvd, Ames IA 50014 This location's shelter lighting does not fully illuminate the entire area. Additionally, the bathrooms are often locked during the day, and when they are accessible, there is no lighting inside. This makes children feel unsafe and afraid to use them." *(+ expanded/improved bathrooms)*

Improve locker rooms (2 comments)

- "My only comment is that the ice arena needs a dedicated locker room with an attached restroom for female hockey players (not shared with the female college team). This has been neglected for years and should be updated."
- "The locker rooms at the community center are in need of renovations, especially the showers and ventilation."

Improve water fountains (2 comments)

- "More parks need water fountains."

- “The water fountains don't work in some parks, like McCarthy Lee and McFarland.”

Issues that are not the city’s fault (2 comments)

- “In fairness, it is not your fault the woodlands are poor - many have invasive problems & are young, secondary woodlands. By Iowa standards, they're ok …”
- “The parks seem fairly drought damages - not the city's fault.”

Miscellaneous (10 comments)

- “The only thing I want to mention is that I've seen a lot of snakes on the trail this year. One day I saw a total of 6 snakes while walking near Daley Park for less than an hour! I'm not sure if it's a big deal since they are just those small Garter snakes, but it may scare some people.”
- “Ice rink is outdated, but functional.”
- “Would a consideration of a sportsplex that is city owned be considered like Nevada's?”
- “Make handicap accessible in all parks.”
- “Need more clear pedestrian signage for the State Ave crossing in the arboretum.”
- “Some bike paths could be safer.”
- “Need to install fences between neighborhood parks & adjacent properties.”
- “Please continue to focus on the parks! They are a big part of what makes Ames great and gives the community a place to meet.” *(+ love/satisfied)*
- “Please no flock/wifi cameras on/around the parks. It is unnerving.”
- “Would be great to have rentable fire rings/fire pit sites.”

Comments on the Ames Public Library (135 respondents)

Overall good or love it (67 comments)

- "[heart] the Ames PL ... though I go on binges & then forget to go for months. Great, modern library overall!
- "Ames Library ROCKS!"
- "Overall, Ames Public Library is a very useful and welcoming place for the community."
- "Ames Public Library is well coordinated for the community."
- "Ames Public Library provides a welcoming environment with good resources, helpful staff, and well-maintained spaces." *(+ good atmosphere/space/building, good resources/services, helpful/friendly staff)*
- "An excellent public library!"
- "Excellent facility." (x2)
- "Excellent space in all aspects."
- "Excellent, no notes."
- "Exceptional library."
- "Generally, an excellent facility."
- "Good library good central location."
- "Great library!"
- "I appreciate the public library greatly when I am able to use it, which is not as frequent as I wish I could!"
- "Great job!!"
- "I have been using the Ames public library for over two years. My friends and I study there and check out books."
- "From what I've seen, it's great!"
- "I love how it is set that we can get books, and the accessibility."
- "I love it!"
- "I love the library." (x4)
- "I love the library, amazing institution."
- "I love the library! Just not always my first stop, and I like supporting small business, too."
- "I thoroughly enjoy the Ames Public Library."
- "We love the library and my 4-year-old loves going there after our Wednesday Octagon art class."
- "Love it." (x4)"
- "Love our library!" (x2)
- "Love the Ames library!"
- "Loved it when I need it."
- "Lovely."
- "My family loves the library. Easily one of the best things in this community. A local treasure."
- "One of my favorite places in Ames."
- "One of the best libraries I've seen."
- "Outstanding!!!!!!"

- “Really enjoy going to the library, thankful we have such a wonderful facility available for public use.”
- “Really good place.”
- “Really nice from the times I have visited.”
- “The Ames Public Library is a treasure! I feel very fortunate to live in the Ames community for many reasons, but the library is a highlight.”
- “The Ames Public Library is a very nice facility.”
- “The Ames public library is great.”
- “They are the best!”
- “Very good.”
- “very good. Our family really like the library.”
- “Very nice facility.”
- “Very nice.”
- “We enjoy taking our young grandchildren to the library. They had a ball with all there was to do there!”
- “We go to the Ames Public Library every couple of weeks. We love to go, and it is a great resource, also hoopla and Libby.” *(+ good resources/services, appreciate digital resources)*
- “We have a wonderful library.”
- “We love it and live nearby.”
- “We love the library!”
- “Wonderful library.”
- “You all are the best!”

Good resources or services (30 comments)

- “A great resource for the city.”
- “There are many books, computers, and study spaces for students and families.”
- “An excellent resource for our community.”
- “Great easy access to books and media.”
- “Excellent resource.”
- “Has so many books available. Even if they don't have the book you want, they will usually order it for you. 10/10.”
- “Fantastic community resource!”
- “I can't mention how program suck as the repair café is good.”
- “It is an important resource for children, youth, and adults. I appreciate the options in books that are available digitally and on the library shelves.” *(+ appreciate digital resources)*
- “I love going and finding new books to read. The book picks that are emailed to me every so often are also pretty sweet.”
- “They always either had or could get me any book etc. that I wanted.”
- “I think it's good that there are meeting rooms and internet services.”
- “They offer many accessible resources both in-person and online.” *(+ appreciate digital resources)*
- “Love how many new books they have in constantly and the Bookmobile is very convenient for me on campus.”
- “Love free lunches in the summer.”
- “I appreciate the ability to borrow books from other libraries through inner library loan as well!”
- “Special thanks to the Notary service too.”

- “APL is wonderful.”
- “Our library is a gem - wish I had more time to utilize all of its amazing services!” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “I do appreciate the drive-up book return.”
- “The Ames Public Library is a fantastic community resource and provides invaluable resources for our community. I thoroughly appreciate the access to books/resources on a variety of topics. I also appreciate the access to the Libby app and the seed library!” *(+ overall good/love it, appreciate digital resources)*
- “I love the used book sales and have used the study rooms in the past. The general collection and children's sections appear to be great.” *(+ good programming/events)*
- “The Ames Public Library is very accessible and provides a number of services.”
- “There are so many opportunities at the library that there is no way I have time to take advantage of them all? The Ames public library is fantastic!” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “We use it to borrow books, buy used books, go to lectures-authors, etc.” *(+ good programming/events)*

Good atmosphere, space, or building (25 comments)

- “It is a lovely space for Ames residents.”
- “Always comfortable place to interact. Used so much when working with children.”
- “Ames Public Library is a great place for studying and reading. It is quiet, clean, and has a comfortable environment.”
- “Beautiful facility!”
- “The whole building is a place I like being at.”
- “Excellent place for leisure reading.”
- “It is always decently quiet.”
- “Great place to chill and work on your projects.”
- “I appreciate the library as a meeting space for all ages.”
- “It is a very welcoming environment.”
- “I have visited Ames Public Library. I really liked the atmosphere. The place is calm.”
- “I love seeing it when I’m around Main Street. It’s a visually appealing.”
- “I had a meeting there in one of the rooms and it all seemed very nice.”
- “We have also used it as a study space when we were students. We occasionally go there to read a book and do work.”
- “Looks good from the outside!”
- “I have been using more often for actual studying and writing but have always used for checking out books. Very good every time I visit.”
- “It has a good ambiance and welcoming facilities for its users.”
- “The atmosphere is very welcoming to comers.”
- “The building is clean. Never been disturbed by loud noise or loud users.”
- “The public library is a very welcoming space. Even though I have only been there a handful of times, I can tell the facility is well maintained and the community puts it to good use.”

Don’t use often (18 comments)

- “Don’t use much. Don’t see much need overall”

- “Even though I don't use it that much, I know many people that is very satisfied with it.” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “I do not use it. I find the info I need on the internet.”
- “I have been reading more over the past few months, and I really want to get a library card and start checking out books from there. I just haven't committed to going yet.”
- “I have not entered Ames Public Library yet.”
- “I have not visited the place that often due to busy schedules. However, I have seen people benefit from the library, from borrowing books to spending quality time with international people, or from studying alone.” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “I have only been once.”
- “I have used it in the past and enjoyed it but don't have as much time as I would like to continue using it” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “I mainly rely on Iowa State University library resources for my academic work.”
- “I rarely use it.”
- “I think the library is wonderful and wish I could go there more often; it's just out of my way since I don't have other reasons to frequent the Downtown area anymore.” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “Make the likelihood of spending time with my kids impossible - so we just stop going.”
- “Never use the public library.”
- “Not using but wish to be there more.”
- “Seems like a cute place, just don’t use it since school is so demanding of my time/hours.” *(+ good atmosphere/space/building)*
- “Since I am also a student at ISU, I don’t use the local library often, but it is a nice building.” *(+ good atmosphere/space/building)*
- “The public library is a lovely place, I just don't have time to go as much as I'd like. The book sales always get me to come out, however.” *(+ good atmosphere/space/building, good programming/events)*

Good programming or events (15 comments)

- “Love the free lectures and activities available.”
- “The programs are also educational and entertaining!”
- “Storytime has been very well organized when we're gone.”
- “My wife and I have gone to the different puppet shows hosted there in the past.”
- “Great summer reading program.”
- “Good variety of resources, events, and activities.” *(+ good resources/services)*
- “We bring our kids to Saturday story times several times a year - it's a great way to get out and about in an engaging and affordable way for the whole family. I recently attended the "Repair Cafe" for the first time, and it was delightful.”
- “We love events like Women’s Day and Pub Fiction.”
- “Love the programming for babies, kids, teens & adults.”

Helpful or friendly staff (13 comments)

- “I also like that the staff are friendly and helpful.”
- “Many an excellent kudos to the kids-area staff, it looks like it can be overwhelming.”
- “Superb staff.”
- “The staff are so friendly.”

- “Thank you for being so welcoming :)”
- “The person in the front desk was very kind.”
- “Everyone is friendly and helpful.”
- “Thanks for the friendly service and the welcoming atmosphere.” *(+ good atmosphere/space/building)*
- “I appreciate the staff's kindness.”
- “The staff is very helpful.”
- “The staff is amazing and want you to be there!”
- “Excellent staff!”

Appreciate digital resources (8 comments)

- “Libby and bookshelf are two of my most used apps, since I don't have as much time to read as I used to.”
- “I mostly get books via Libby, but I'm impressed with the selection available in-person.” *(+ good resources/services)*
- “I read on a Kindle, so I use the library to download books.”
- “I use my library card for online access frequently.”

Issues with homeless population (7 comments)

- “Do more to discourage/eliminate homeless population around this area so children and elderly don't feel threatened.”
- “Let me preface my comment by saying that I believe that the APL should be open to all. But with the increase in use by unhoused citizens, I no longer use the library in person, or want my kids to use. It feels less welcoming and sometimes less safe!”
- “Homeless people outside.”
- “I have occasionally not felt safe when I've visited APL at odd hours, ie late afternoons Sat/Sun. There were unhoused folks lingering around the door and upstairs and at least once one of the individuals appeared mentally unstable and was eyeing me weirdly (I am a small female). I know they need a place to go, but it saddens me that I feel I have to be guarded at times. And libraries have always been one of my fav places to hang out!”
- “The homeless personnel sometimes make it difficult at library entrance early in the mornings.”
- “The people loitering outside the building have screamed or otherwise yelled at our children, so our children are too scared to go to the library when people are loitering about.”

Improve parking (7 comments)

- “Handicapped is a problem. The parking is not good.”
- “I would just comment that I don't like that there isn't any free parking around the library. I can afford it but that has bothered me since I move here.”
- “My only comment about using the library is parking and few parking spaces close by, and metered ones not convenient.”
- “Parking is awful.”
- “Poor parking.”
- “Poor parking. Meters! Please get rid of them!”
- “The APL might want to consider increasing the number of handicap parking spaces”

Support the library or its funding (6 comments)

- “Today, I'm older, and have enough available without depending on APL. Will always wish to see a strong system provided for the community.”
- “I fully support the public library in Ames.”
- “I think, if anything, the library needs more funding”
- “I want to get more involved. I will try.”
- “Love when they have book sales, and it helps support the library!”
- “I always donate money when it asks.”

Expand collection (5 comments)

- “One thing that could be improved is to add more new books, so readers can have more updated choices.”
- “Expand e-book selections.”
- “I wish it provided power tools especially ones that are niche but very expensive.”
- “Sometimes seems we need more copies of popular items.”
- “Variety of online resources could be increased.”

Appreciate children’s area (4 comments)

- “Child area is excellent and the staff in that area is welcoming, friendly, and encouraging.”
- “Children's area is very nice.”
- “A section for kids to play certainly helps parents and other users.”
- “The child area is great!”

Improve marketing or communication (4 comments)

- “Advertise it more.”
- “I think they could more widely try to reach ISU international students for programming on friendship circles and conversations.”
- “I am not sure of all the amenities available and what to use for also - not sure if I have any "fines" or a library card.”
- “I wish more of their lectures/programs were at times I could go to and/or I knew about them more in advance. I used to learn about them through the newsletter being shared at my work (Parks Library), but since the Ames Public Library/Parks Library person who worked at both retired I hear a lot less about what the APL is doing.” *(+ improved/expanded programming)*

Long wait or hold times (3 comments)

- “Sometimes the wait times for books on Libby feels excessive - but otherwise it's great!” *(+ overall good/love it)*
- “The wait times for requests/holds are getting worse.”
- “Wait time for ebooks. (16+ weeks)”

Staff improvements or training (3 comments)

- “Front desk, with the handful of interactions, came off as bothered or irritated with my unfamiliarity.”
- “I don't know what it is, but I feel like perhaps librarian training isn't what it used to be. Or reference service training. I think a welcoming service desk should have librarians at the desk

ready for questions, approachable, and happy to see you, and I don't know that every single staff member offers that at this library."
- "Some of the least friendly staff are at the front desk, the friendliest are at youth & adult services."

Improve or expand programming (3 comments)

- "I think expanding study activities, updating technology, and increasing program variety could further enhance the community's experience." *(+ update technology – miscellaneous)*
- "Would love even more trivia nights for adults."

Extend hours (2 comments)

- "24hr library."
- "I wish it was open later at least a few times a week or had extended weekend hours."

Miscellaneous (10 comments)

- "I like the book spotlights you do like "twelve to try" and "Rory Gilmore's reading list"- I get most of my books I wasn't looking for there - the only thing I would change about them would be refreshing them slightly more often." *(+ good resources/services)*
- "It would also be helpful to have more study rooms."
- "Decor is too industrial; too cold looking."
- "It would be nice to have book drop boxes on the north side of town maybe by the Fareway. I know we have the Bookmobile on Wednesday, but it would be great to drop off books anytime."
- "More seating on the upstairs level would be nice and enforcing more quiet rules as sometimes it's hard to focus."
- "Really wish there was an app."
- "Has it ever been discussed to give Ames residents priority for holds vs out of town folks?"
- "Used it for voting last election, they had a good system set up."
- "Would appreciate a database for non-English books near Ames, easy for ILL, that could be browsed"
- "With the anti-conservative street artwork and the number of homeless people that congregate there, I do not feel welcomed there, so I don't use it at all." *(+ don't use often, issues with homeless population*)

What, if anything, could be done to enhance your sense of belonging as an Ames resident? (66 respondents)

Nothing (17 comments)

- “None.” (x3)
- “None needed.”
- “Nothing.” (x3)
- “Nothing I can think of.”
- “Nothing I can think of, thanks for asking.”
- “Nothing really. It is a great town.”
- “It's more about federal government rather than Ames itself.”
- “I'm privileged in all of the categories above, so my response isn't too helpful”
- “I am Caucasian, so I rarely feel that way -- can't answer fairly”
- “I have loved my time in Ames, I simply have more attachments to my original home, to which I will return after graduation.”
- “Ha. You could always pay me!!!”
- “As a white male I have it easy. I fear for others however.”

More events or places for connection (15 comments)

- “Having more themed community events to celebrate different cultural ideas.” *(+ more inclusivity)*
- “A big multicultural & multireligious celebration event could be cool!” *(+ more inclusivity)*
- “How about an "international fair" food, games, art, etc.” *(+ more inclusivity)*
- “I wish there were more things to do that didn't cost (a lot of) money and were aimed at people out of college. Understandably there is a lot of things directed at college students but then I feel like city programming then skips to anyone who is working and then just aims at people who are retired or work a part-time job.” *(+ more inclusivity)*
- “I would like more opportunities to connect with my neighbors where I live.”
- “Creating more shared public spaces for interaction.”
- “More activities that allow interactions.”
- “More close-community in my neighborhood.”
- “More community activities.”
- “More community events.”
- “More events.”
- “More micro-local event.s”
- “More opportunities to connect with young-ish neurodivergent individuals such as myself.”
- “More public gatherings during the winter, please. There is literally nothing to do during the winter.”
- “Programs/events for veterans, as well as the post college but still young age group (20-30).”

More inclusivity (13 comments)

- “Acceptance of biracial families.”
- “As a white woman I don't really face issues - but I am not Christian-evangelical, and I have a disease that limits dining - so I have unique challenges in finding community here.”

- “Just continuing to shape a town focused on inclusion and diversity.”
- “Let's focus on us as "people" rather than calling out differences.”
- “Public commitment that all people are welcome in Ames.”
- “Spread/allocate residents all across Ames regardless of race, national origin, color, etc. It seems that all/majority of minorities are placed in one area only in Ames SE. Having condos/apt. available all across Ames NE/NW/SE/SW.”
- “While Ames is focused on DEI, I feel you need more diverse voices leading these conversations.”

More personal efforts from residents (7 comments)

- “Ames residents are withdrawn. Is difficult to get to know them.”
- “Honestly, that's on me. Lots of opportunities in Ames.”
- “If we can build a good community that knows about all these things.”
- “My more willing to be active.”
- “My willing to participate at my age.”
- “Polite people.”
- “Don't think it’s an easy thing to change, starts with the people.” *(+ nothing)*

Less liberal agenda/community (6 comments)

- “Ames has very liberal views and as a more conservative person, I don't feel that my viewpoints are welcome.”
- “Dump CRT.”
- “From the outside, Ames is a liberal space that does not value conservative Christian ideology. You support and promote "protests" throughout the city every weekend. It’s tiresome.”
- “Less political polarization. Less DEI agenda.”
- “Stop wasting any money or effort on "WOKE"”
- “Would be a better place to live if it wasn't so liberal.”

Financial/job stability (5 comments)

- “More affordable housing.”
- “Stable job.”
- “To be honest I love Ames, just need the planner 1 position to stay in Ames.”

Improve communication or outreach (5 comments)

- “I would love a regular email w/ city news, events, changes, laws, etc.”
- “If you want people to join community service, try serving them first before asking them to serve. It is much more likely that people will want to volunteer when it’s been made beneficial to them. People are struggling to survive and are not aware of a community surrounding them that cares. Why would they take their time to serve a community that has not yet served them? Applying pressure only pushes people away.” *(+ more inclusive)*
- “Improving outreach to diverse & new residents.” *(+ more inclusive)*
- “Knowledge of community activities.”
- “Better communication would help people feel more connected.”

Less discrimination (4 comments)

- “I'm not racist and I don't like people being racist to me.”

- “My wife and I were discriminated against. She is Latina.”
- “Some college men are just sexist.”

Listening to citizens (2 comments)

- “Finding Ames employees that *listen* to their citizens, not just bow them off.”
- “For Ames council to listen to citizens and protect and value the homes of residents who have spent their lives here at least as much or more than new growth.”

Improve social or financial assistance (2 comments)

- “A town is judged by how well it treats its weakest members. We can do better with childcare, funding the Arc of Story County, and Friendship Arc and more services for these struggling with addiction.” *(+ financial/job stability)*
- “Financial relief would be a great start.” *(+ financial/job stability)*

Connection between Ames and ISU (2 comments)

- “I question if as an Iowa State student and living in residences (Freddy court) if I am really an Ames resident.”
- “I think the community and school need to have better relations and inter-community events. It should bring the students and citizens together. Currently, it seems like the school just exists in Ames and is not apart of it.”

Miscellaneous (4 comments)

- “Ames is a wonderful place to live. I wish that I lived in an apartment closer to downtown, which would help foster my sense of belonging more.”
- “Better access to medical care (doctors here are either not taking patients or not very good at what they do or both)”
- “More friendly to people who commute on a bike. Meaning, more signs for cars emphasizing that cyclists use paths. Cars stopped at a stop sign who intend to make a right turn only check for traffic coming from the left side. There are many paths where the only option is to bike on the left side of the road. And now you have made the situation where drivers are blind to biking commuters. Example - Mortensen Parkway riding a bike traveling eastbound.”
- “No flock cameras and no ICE.” *(+ less discrimination)*

What's the best thing about living in Ames? (321 respondents)

The people (67 comments)

- "Friendly and helpful people around."
- "Ames is the best- great people."
- "Filled with smart, kind people."
- "Bright people who are trying to make the world a better place."
- "it's people!"
- "The friendliness of the people."
- "Everyone is very kind."
- "The people." (x18)
- "Friendly people." (x5)
- "Friendly." (x5)
- "High education population."
- "The people I interact with."
- "It is always super welcoming wherever I go."
- "People care and want to hang out."
- "Love the people."
- "My neighbors!"
- "Nice people." (x2)
- "Of course, the best thing is the people"
- "Oh, so many things - but the people are top notch!"
- "People are generally friendly and welcoming."
- "People here are friendly."
- "People are nicer here than in Iowa City. I was hit by a car and random strangers stopped to call the ambulance."
- "Friendly people all over."
- "The education and the level of knowledge." *(+ ISU/college town)*
- "The people and the fact that we care about our neighbors." *(+ community)*
- "The people- we have great, caring people who care about each other & our city." *(+ community)*
- "The people, citizens."
- "Good people."
- "Most people are friendly but not overtly so."
- "We have lived in Iowa and only Ames for 56 years. The best thing ARE the people!"

Outdoors, parks, or green space (66 comments)

- "Outdoor recreation options – parks."
- "Decent outdoor spaces in town."
- "Many wild forest trails for mushroom hunting."
- "All the parks and recreational aspects of it." *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- "Ames has many good parks and outdoor recreational activities." *(+ activities/recreation/events)*

- “Ames is a very 'livable' city with plenty of green space and easy access to shopping, parks, and recreation.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around, businesses/shopping, activities/recreation/events)*
- “Lots of trees and greenery.”
- “Good parks.” (x2)
- “Ease of access to parks & recreational activities.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around, activities/recreation/events)*
- “Love the xc course.”
- “The parks.” (x15)
- “Park accessibility, ADA Hayden!”
- “Good mix of nature and urban infrastructure.” *(+ infrastructure)*
- “Good park system.”
- “Nice parks & activities.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “The numerous parks.”
- “The nature.” (x2)
- “The amount of trails the city has, and of course the pickleball courts.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “The parks in the city are very well kept.” *(+ clean/maintained)*
- “Love birdwatching at parks and rec gymnastics and tae kwon do. Good parks.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “Natural wooded areas in parks.”
- “Nature and trails.”
- “Parks and natural places.”
- “Parks and recreation.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)* (x2)
- “Parks and walking paths.”
- “Parks available throughout town.”
- “Parks or nearby recreation is nice.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “Green.”
- “Clean public rec areas and lots of parks.” *(+ clean/maintained)*
- “Outdoor parks/rec. activities.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “Outdoor facilities.”
- “Parks, trees.”
- “Lots of parks and green space. Ada Hayden is a jewel.”
- “The green spaces are really good and give the feeling of living in a close space.” *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- “The parks and recreational services, green space.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “The greenery around.”
- “The quality and quantity of parks.”
- “The whole town looks like a giant garden.”
- “The parks and recreation programs. The parks are great and we love how much the city cares about maintaining its green spaces.” *(+ activities/recreation/events, administration/government, clean/maintained)*
- “Lots of greenery.”
- “Good places to run/walk. Density of natural habitat. Please don't take away our parks!” *(+ walkability)*
- “Walking trails.” *(+ walkability)*

Activities, recreation, or events (53 comments)

- “Parks and rec program options.”
- “Access to free community recreation and Cy Ride to get there.” *(+ CyRide)*
- “Variety of community programs and opportunities.”
- “Community events.”
- “Access to sporting events.”
- “Live music in the summer.”
- “Through fun events (Farmer's Market, pub fiction, Ames pride, campus town showdown).”
- “Farmers market and other public events bringing in local business.” *(+ businesses/shopping)*
- “Always something to do.”
- “Plenty to do within driving/walking/bus distance.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*
- “I love all of the opportunities to do things.”
- “I think the best thing about living in Ames is that there are things to do -- I love going to the pool and the farmers market. I do wish we got more concerts or like small festival things that happened here more often.”
- “Band concerts.”
- “Lots of great things to do.”
- “a lot of things to do.”
- “farmer's market, and Roosevelt music Sundays!”
- “Recreational opportunities.”
- “So many educational, sporting, recreational, and performing arts event offered. If you're bored it's because you want to be.” *(+ arts)*
- “Wide variety of free things to do.”
- “I love farmers' markets.”
- “City events.”
- “The event opportunities.”
- “The community events, specifically downtown events like Farmers Market and Art Festival.” *(+ downtown/main street)*
- “The pools.” (x2)
- “There’s always something to do.”
- “Community programs, downtown events.” *(+ downtown/main street)*
- “All ages have something to do.”

Safety (52 comments)

- “Safety.” (x11)
- “Ames feels like a safe and inclusive environment for all walks of life.” *(+ diversity/inclusivity, atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- “Low crime.” (x2)
- “Safe community.” (x2)
- “Safe.” (x10)
- “For the time being, it feels safe.”
- “I've always felt relatively safe in my house or when out for walks, etc.”
- “It is a safe & clean community.” *(+ clean/maintained)*
- “It is very safe.”
- “The crime or nuisance rate is low.” *(+ clean/maintained)*

- “It's a very safe town.”
- “Relatively safe”
- “Safe for raising a kid.”
- “But if I had to choose an infrastructure or city services option, I would say that it is very safe, likely due to police doing their job well and a good community culture.” *(+ good police, community, culture)*
- “It’s a safe, family friendly environment.” *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- “Minimal crime.”
- “Low crime rate.” (x3)
- “Security.”
- “Sense of security and safety.”
- “Safe city.”
- “The best thing about living in Ames is its safe, welcoming community and high quality of life.” *(+ community, quality of life)*
- “The safe and clean environment.” *(+ clean/maintained)*
- “The safe, welcoming community.” *(+ community)*
- “Safe (no crime, not too much enforcement).”
- “Feels safe.”
- “Safety at night.”

ISU or college town (47 comments)

- “I also like to take advantage of university events and facilities. Thank you for soliciting our feedback!!”
- “Closer to ISU athletic events.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “College town.”
- “university.” (x3)
- “ISU.” (x7)
- “Good university resources.”
- “Having Iowa State University here.”
- “ISU events.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “The connection to the university.” (x2)
- “Iowa State.”
- “Iowa State University.” (x3)
- “ISU BB games, softball games, events at CY Stephens.”
- “Campus is pretty.” *(+ beauty)*
- “The college that brings opportunities & culture with it.” *(+ culture)*
- “The presence of Iowa State University also brings energy, diversity, and opportunities to the area, making it a great place to live.” *(+ vibrancy, diversity/inclusivity, quality of life)*
- “The college.” (x2)
- “A good veterinary school.”
- “That I go to school at Iowa State.”
- “The activities that can be attended on the ISU campus.” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “The beautiful campus.” *(+ beauty)*
- “University life!”
- “The connection between ISU and the City.”

- “The football and ISU campus (student perspective) as well as the good food.” *(+ activities/recreation/events, restaurants/food)*
- “The fun of having a major university here!”
- “The university atmosphere.” *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- “The University, students and athletic events bring huge resources, activity and venues to an otherwise small remote community.” *(+ amenities/services/resources, activities/recreation/events)*
- “University community - much to do” *(+ activities/recreation/events)*

Community (44 comments)

- “A close-knit community.”
- “Community.” (x17)
- “Community gathering.”
- “Everyone works together to build up community.”
- “Good community.”
- “Great community.”
- “If I had to pick the one best thing, it would be the community.”
- “I love the community.”
- “I love the community of Ames. Making friends is fast and easy here.”
- “I love the small close-knit community.”
- “I think there is an actual community that should be a focus on proiritizing. I grew up in a suburb of Des Moines that doesn't feel like it has any community and have lived in some small towns that felt like they used to have community, but it died. So I like that Ames has a feel like the people and local government actually care.” *(+ the people, administration/government)*
- “My community.”
- “One of the best things about living in Ames is the strong sense of community.”
- “Friendly supportive community.” *(+ the people)*
- “Sense of community - everyone helps each other.” *(+ the people)*
- “Sense of community.” (x3)
- “Strong community.”
- “The best thing about living in Ames is the friendly community.” *(+ the people)*
- “The Community is awesome!”
- “Kind community.” *(+ the people)*
- “There are so many opportunities for community engagement. My friends and I utilize a lot of the various parks during the year to host events and play outdoor games.” *(+ outdoors/parks/green space)*

Amenities, services, or resources (40 comments)

- “There are a variety of services offered that I wouldn't have expected for a town in Iowa.”
- “Ames is a great city w/ all its amenities.”
- “Great services.”
- “Availability of resources.”
- “Availability of services and activities if desired.” (*+ activities/recreation/events)*
- “Good services.”
- “Access to amenities as a result of the university.” *(+ ISU/college town)*

- “Amenities.”
- “Everything I need is close.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*
- “Excellent health services.”
- “Rebate programs.”
- “Great quality of city services.”
- “Having access to all the resources I need in one city (aka having access to enough food places, entertainment, etc).” *(+ restaurants/food, activities/recreation/events)*
- “It has more resources than its population requires.”
- “I have access to everything I need. The city does a nice job providing services to the residents.”
- “It's condensed without being metro. Almost all of the wants are available and all the needs are available. There are means and resources to have successful opportunities for everyone.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around, quality of life)*
- “Access to resources.”
- “Healthcare.”
- “Quality & variety of services offered.”
- “Dedication to excellence in beauty, education, opportunity.” *(+ beauty, schools)*
- “Facilities in Ames!”
- “I also like that there are good public services, parks, and a nice library.” *(+ outdoors/parks/green space, Ames Public Library)*
- “I enjoy going to community events like the farmer's market and other events downtown.” *(+ downtown/main street)*
- “All its amenities.”
- “Good mostly accessible health care.”
- “Services.”
- “High quality of services create a welcoming community.”

Convenient or easy to get around (36 comments)

- “Ability to bicycle many places and car drivers are considerate to bicyclists.”
- “Low traffic flow.”
- “Ames is quick, clean, and safe.” *(+ clean/maintained, safety)*
- “Convenience,”
- “Manageable traffic.”
- “Ease of getting around.”
- “Convenience.”
- “How close everything is.”
- “Its quick to get anywhere I want.”
- “Love living in Ames! Everything is close by and we live close to downtown area so we can walk to downtown or farmers market!” *(+ walkability, downtown/main street)*
- “No traffic. Easy access transportation.”
- “It is easy to get around.” (x2)
- “Traffic is nothing compared to big metro cities, close to everything (meaning essential facilities are within 10-15 minutes away).”
- “Easy access to dining and retail areas.” *(+ restaurants/food, businesses/shopping)*
- “Free of heavy traffic.”

- “Transportation is good. If we accept somewhat longer transportation time, we can reduce the usage of cars (this is good for environment).”
- “The accessibility of the town through trails and public transportation.” *(+ outdoors/parks/green space, CyRide)*
- “The accessibility.”
- “Ease of access to many places.”
- “The connectivity: connected sidewalks, CyRide.” *(+ walkability, CyRide)*
- “The ease of being able to participate in civic life without a personal motor vehicle (as facilitated through CyRide, parks, walkability of areas of interest, etc.). *(+ CyRide, walkability, outdoors/parks/green space)*
- “The paths and CyRide make the city nice to walk and get around.” *(+ walkability, CyRide)*
- “Ease of getting around to grocery stores, restaurants, schools, etc.”
- “With the University here, it’s fairly easy to find educational & entertainment opportunities; but it's not a problem to get around. Just recently spent some time in California, and I appreciate that everything in town here isn't dependent on rush hour traffic or finding parking.” *(+ ISU/college town, activities/recreation/events)*
- “All the needed stores are in close proximity.”

Atmosphere, environment, or feel (32 comments)

- “Cozy vibes from nice people.” *(+ the people)*
- “Cozy.”
- “Generally a friendly, easy-going environment perhaps/likely because of the university.” *(+ the people, ISU/college town)*
- “Good and relax environment.”
- “The atmosphere.”
- “High-quality environment.”
- “Small town feeling.” (x4)
- “The atmosphere.”
- ““The best thing about living in Ames is that it is a safe, quiet, and friendly community. Overall, Ames has a comfortable and peaceful living environment.” *(+ safety, the people)*
- “Welcoming atmosphere.” *(+ the people)*

Calm, quiet, or peaceful (29 comments)

- “Calmness.”
- “Quiet.” (x2)
- “Quiet places to hang out.”
- “Overall, a peaceful place to live at considerably low expenses.” *(+ affordable)*
- “It's a quiet city.”
- “Laid back, quiet.”
- “Peaceful.” (x2)
- “Peaceful family town.”
- “Peaceful place.” (x2)
- “Peaceful place to live.”
- “Quiet … especially the west side.”
- “Quiet and peaceful.” (x2)

- “Quiet atmosphere.” *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- “Quiet town.”
- “It's very calm.”
- “The quiet important.”
- “The quietness.” (x2)

Clean or maintained (27 comments)

- “Almost everything is very well maintained.”
- “The City does a great job maintaining public spaces and services.” *(+ amenities/services/resources)*
- “Ames is so calm and clean. This place has less pollution, more green, decent facilities, and kind people.” *(+ calm/quiet/peaceful, outdoors/parks/greenspace, amenities/services/resources, the people, administration/government)*
- “Cleanliness.”
- “Clean.” (x7)
- “Clean city.”
- “It is a clean accessible city.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*
- “The city is well maintained with clean neighborhoods and public spaces.”
- “The city is clean and well organized, and it is a great place for families and students.”
- “The best thing about living in Ames is the cleanliness of the city.”
- “The cleanliness.”
- “Clean air.”

CyRide (25 comments)

- “CyRide is one of the best transit systems for a city of this size (although some areas could use improved routes).”
- “Bus services.”
- “CyRide.” (x8)
- “CyRide is better public transit than I have experienced anywhere else in the state.”
- “CyRide buses make it so I rarely have to use my car and pay for gas, which is expensive.” *(+ affordable)*
- “A working bus system.”
- “CyRide/public transport makes it very easy and effective to get around.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*
- “It's a very livable city with decent public transportation. It's great for learning how to adult!” *(+ quality of life)*
- “Lots of things - but CyRide is one of my favorites. It's rare to have such a robust and reliable public transportation system in a city this size.”
- “Public transportation options.”
- “Public transportation.”
- “The buses.”
- “The things that I love about Ames include its transportation services, parks and forests, water quality, and friendly community.” *(+ outdoors/parks/green spaces, water, the people)*

Restaurants or food (20 comments)

- "Good restaurant selection."
- "Anderson and Erikson Chocolate Milk."
- "Variety of restaurants."
- "Good restaurant scene."
- "Restaurants." (x5)
- "Restaurants in town!"
- "West street deli."
- "Wasabi."
- "Food options."

Mix of small and big town benefits (18 comments)

- "A small city in comparison but provides a wealth of appointments if residents avail themselves to use and enjoy." *(+ amenities/services)*
- "All of the different opportunities/availabilities of shopping, activities, programs, etc. in a smaller town rather than a big city." *(+ businesses/shopping, activities/recreation/events)*
- "Ames has a great balance of big city opportunities along with small town benefits."
- "Ames feels small most of the time, but during large events it's the place to be in the state." *(+ vibrancy)*
- "Ames is not too fast, but it is not too slow. At times, when the students are in session, it can be somewhat undesirable. When they are not around, it is mostly calm, which is good." *(+ calm/quiet/peaceful)*
- "Besides the university, the small town feel with amazing benefits to the people. I'm grateful to live here temporarily." *(+ ISU/college town, atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- "Big town feel small town vibes." (+ *atmosphere/environment/feel)*
- "Good mix of city living in rural area."
- "Has a nice balance between small town and big city."
- "Small town feel w/ amenities." (+ *atmosphere/environment/feel, amenities/services/resources)*
- "Small town feeling with big city amenities." (+ *atmosphere/environment/feel, amenities/services/resources)*
- "Small town vibe, big city energy." (+ *atmosphere/environment/feel, vibrancy)*
- "Smaller town feel with opportunities." (+ *atmosphere/environment/feel, amenities/services/resources)*
- "The best part about living in Ames is getting a small-town vibe in a college town. My wife and I enjoy the size of the city and services they provide." *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel, ISU/college town, size, amenities/services/resources)*
- "Small town living with enough conveniences." *(+ size, amenities/services/resources)*
- "The size and culture: it's small enough that it's fairly quiet most days, but big enough that you still have personal space." *(+ size, culture, quiet/calm/peaceful)*
- "The small town feel with all the big city amenities." *(+ atmosphere/environment/feel, amenities/services/resources)*
- "The variety and opportunities for the size of the community." (+ *amenities/services/resources)*

Diversity (17 comments)

- “Diversity acceptance.”
- “Diverse population.” (x2)
- “Diversity.” (x8)
- “Diversity of residents.” (x2)
- “The diversity of the city.”

Administration or government (16 comments)

- “Great administration, top notch!”
- “Compared to the rest of the state, I appreciate that the city of Ames at least tries to help its citizens.”
- “My city is fiscally conservative but forward- thinking.”
- “The fantastic Parks & Rec department.”
- “The City of Ames.”
- “I think the city does a variety of things with excellence. The combination of wide-spread efforts is what makes the "best thing."
- “It is well facilitated.”
- “The best thing about city of Ames is that they are so organized. They start the reconstruction and all the projects when the city is not busy, and they finish on time. Also, whenever they close a road they open other options.” *(+ infrastructure)*
- “City government.”
- “Good city government.”
- “Try to keep residents informed and improve relationship between city and residents.”
- “Well-organized, professional, caring city government.”

Affordable (15 comments)

- “Affordability.”
- “Affordable rent and grocery.”
- “Cheap.”
- “Affordable cost of living.”
- “Living spend.”
- “Low(er) cost of living compared to city living.”
- “Low cost.”
- “COL”
- “Low cost of living.”
- “The city offers a good balance of affordability, convenient transportation, and access to parks, services, and the university.” *(+ convenient/easy to get around, outdoors/parks/green space, amenities/services/resources, ISU/college town)*
- “The cost of living.”
- “The relatively low cost of living.”
- “We love the affordability.”

Walkability (14 comments)

- "Walkable." (x2)
- "I love how it is big but pretty walkable as well." *(+ size)*
- "Pedestrian friendly."
- "Walkability." (x3)
- "Walkable areas with greenery/landscaping and maintained sidewalks (campus, campustown, downtown Ames, etc.)." *(+ outdoors/parks/green space, clean/maintained)*

Downtown or Main Street (13 comments)

- "The Main Street/Downtown core is a highlight."
- "Main Street." (x2)
- "Downtown farmers market." *(+ activities/recreation/events)*
- "Downtown rules."
- "Downtown."
- "The Downtown area." (x2)
- "The farmers market and other Downtown community events" *(+ activities/recreation/events)*

Water (13 comments)

- "Ames Tap Water."
- "Clean water."
- "Good water." (x4)
- "Drinking water quality."
- "Drinking water."
- "Water quality." (x2)
- "The water." (x2)

Businesses or shopping (12 comments)

- "All the small businesses and the great food we have." *(+ restaurants/food)*
- "The small businesses."
- "Local shops and restaurants." *(+ restaurants/food)* (x2)
- "Shopping."
- "Small business."
- "Variety of retail, cultural, and sports opportunities." *(+ culture, activities/recreation/events)*

Quality of life (12 comments)

- "Quality of living."
- "Quality of life in general."
- "It is a livable community with a wonderful university." *(+ ISU/college town)*
- "It is a low crime, high quality place to live." *(+ safety)*
- "Most of the people have a moderate to high quality of life."
- "Quality of life."
- "Easy to live."
- "The easy way of living.."

Size (11 comments)

- "Size." (x4)
- "It is a small, beautiful and quiet city." *(+ beauty, calm/quiet/peaceful)*
- "Not a lot of people."
- "Size of community."
- "Small community with little traffic." *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*
- "Small population."
- "Small town."
- "it's not too large of a town and easily accessible." *(+ convenient/easy to get around)*

Schools (11 comments)

- "Decent schools."
- "Love our schools."
- "Good schools." (x3)
- "The elementary schools."
- "Schools." (x2)
- "Gilbert school system."
- "Schools for my child and grandkids."

Ames Public Library (11 comments)

- "Free programs, library and outreach services for youth."
- "Ames Public Library."
- "Great library." (x2)
- "Library." (x2)
- "Good library."
- "Love the library."
- "Wonderful library."

Vibrancy (8 comments)

- "Ames is a fairly vibrant city for its size." *(+ mix of small and big town benefits)*
- "Vibrant community."
- "Full of life."
- "Night life."
- "The city life."

Culture (8 comments)

- "Culture."
- "Local culture, not just a bunch of dumb corpo things. Local restaurants, businesses, events, niche markets, great stuff!" *(+ restaurants/food, businesses/shopping, activities/recreation/events)*
- "Cultural attractions."
- "What it has to offer culturally."

Infrastructure (6 comments)

- “The maintenance of public infrastructure is good, but generally on par with the other Iowa communities I have lived in.” *(+ clean/maintained)*
- “Excellent infrastructure.”
- “Spending $ on infrastructure - good!” *(+ administration/government)*
- “The streets without Flock Cameras.”

Beauty (6 comments)

- “Beautiful town.”
- “It's really a beautiful city, especially in the spring.”

Everything (6 comments)

- “Everything.” (x2)
- “Everything. I wouldn't live anywhere else.”
- “I love most of the things in Ames. Especially as someone who came from another country, Ames feels like my second home. Thank you”
- “Overall experience.”
- “Overall great place for me to live.”

Political environment (5 comments)

- “Diverse Political spectrum that encourages tolerance and dialogue.” *(+ diversity/inclusivity)*
- “Protests that push us to keep improving.”
- “Freedom.”
- “Progressive.”
- “The more liberal environment in this town vs much of Iowa.”

Location (5 comments)

- “Convenient location.”
- “The location between Minneapolis and Des Moines.”
- “I'm close to work.”
- “It is close to a larger city like Des Moines while still being a small city.” *(+ size)*
- “It's location.”
- “Being near Des Moines.”

Neighborhoods (5 comments)

- “Great neighborhoods and services.” *(+ amenities/services/resources)*
- “How foresty the neighborhoods are (especially in West Ames).” (*+ outdoors/parks/green spaces)*
- “Quiet neighborhoods.” *(+ calm/quiet/peaceful)* (x2)
- “Somerset.”

Sustainability (3 comments)

- “Sustainable indeed.”
- “It's sustainability thinking. Things like this survey”
- “I also love all of effort from the community towards making the city more sustainable.”

Friends or family (3 comments)

- “Close to family.”
- “Family here.”
- “Having friends.”

Good police (3 comments)

- “Police seem approachable & sane.”
- “Police department.”

Arts (3 comments)

- “Access to the Arts.”
- “Support for the arts.”

On what other issue(s) do you think the city should focus its attention? (182 respondents)

Traffic flow or congestion (20 comments)

- “13th & Grand needs turn arrows going East/West!!!!!”
- “Add turning lanes where needed.”
- “Addressing traffic flow on Duff Ave, if possible, to minimize congestion.”
- “More efficient intersections.”
- “Another east/west route to alleviate traffic on Ontario.”
- “I think it would be nice to have more thoughtful traffic control during road-closures, construction, and community events. Sometimes you forget about something like a concert or game, and get stuck in traffic that doesn't have to pertain to you. Things like better signage, alternative routes, directed traffic flow for events, traffic control personal at busy intersections, etc.” *(+ communication/transparency)*
- “Lights placement for left-turns (e.g., 13th Street and Grand Avenue).”
- “No more roundabouts, no more traffic lights, no more medians, fix current streets and widen Dayton Ave by 3M.”
- “Stop narrowing streets ie. 24th Street, when increasing density need to make sure streets will support the extra traffic.”
- “The Grand-13th interchange.”
- “Traffic management during ISU games.”
- “Also, the left turn onto Main Street from Duff should be prohibited. It backs up travelers on the train tracks.”
- “Heavy (busy) traffic issues, Grand Ave & Duff Ave.”
- “Lincoln way access/egress to/from I-35. Stop building traffic circles.”
- “Traffic.”
- “The city should continue to focus on improving transportation, road conditions, and traffic management.” *(+ street maintenance)*
- “Hwy 30 entrance to Ames is disorganized.”
- “Left turn arrows on light when you are on 13th st. trying to go left on Grand Ave.”

Social, mental, or financial services (18 comments)

- "Mental health services."
- "I have experienced some concerns about clear mental health problems in the community. I was pleased to see support for the ARCH program. I appreciate what is being done and hope that the community will continue to find ways to assist."
- "Emergency services -- for housing, rent, mental health." *(+ homelessness)*
- "Mental health support/ addiction recovery."
- "$12.5M for Law Enforcement vs. $2M for Human Svc. Seriously??"
- "Mental Health service."
- "Housing and mental health and substance abuse programs-improvements to existing programs."
- "I'm not sure how often residents of Ames are in need of the human services provided by ASSET, but if they're needed, they should be the highest priority."
- "I believe the City should focus more attention on support for families facing housing instability. There is a need for stronger support for families with children to access safe, stable housing rather than relying only on shelters. While shelters serve a purpose, they can place families in shared environments that feel unsafe or stressful for children. Many families are also impacted by housing barriers related to past felony convictions, even when those offenses are years behind them, making it difficult to secure housing and move forward. Housing accessibility is another major issue. Many rental properties have strict requirements, such as high credit score thresholds and income requirements of three to five times the monthly rent. These standards can be unrealistic for families working regular or lower wage jobs, making it extremely difficult to find stable housing even when they can afford to pay rent. These are not isolated issues they affect many families in Ames. I believe city resources and funding should prioritize safe, stable housing options and fair, realistic access to housing for all residents." *(+ homelessness, affordable housing)*
- "mental"

Homelessness (18 comments)

- "Care for the unhoused." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "Homelessness." (x4)
- "Sheltering."
- "Shelters for the homeless in the winter and providing them with food from donations (in ways that the Romero House and Public Library services are helping them)." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "Homeless aid."
- "The homeless need more homeless shelters."
- "The unhoused population of Ames needs more assistance than they are currently receiving." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "There is a big homeless population in Ames, and I think it would be important to focus more budget on housing resources, mental health resources, etc. Some of the things listed in the budget I thought did not nearly need that much money." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "Utilize recommendations by Dr. Flowers to address unhoused situation in Ames. This is a college town, we need to keep students safe."
- "When I lived on the east side of Ames in the Sunnyside neighborhood, there was a notable homeless population. I don't know if the homeless population is generally unticking in Ames, but

finding out what services they need is likely in need of some focus." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "I have noticed some homeless people around the city. I am wondering if there are ways to help get them off the street by providing them with resources. I think this not only helps them, but makes the city look a little cleaner." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*
- "Better services and shelters for homeless folks." *(+ social/mental/financial services)*

Environment, sustainability, or renewables (15 comments)

- "Being environmentally friendly."
- "I think we should keep making strong efforts to use more renewable energy."
- "Implementing some form of incentive/consequence for owners of rental properties to install electrical charging stations for tenants to help incentive renters to purchase PHEV and electric vehicles. It's difficult to own an electric vehicle if charging is not available at the place of residency."
- "Worried about pesticides in the water."
- "There is more dirt in the air than expected for a city without classically polluting industry. Ex: a car parked at DSM airport for a week is cleaner than a car in Ames for same days"
- "The city should continue to emphasize sustainability and climate-smart projects and practices. These include raising awareness and investing in solutions in our community around public transportation, pedestrians, and biking." *(+ walkability, bikeability, CyRide improvements)*
- "Please recycle plastics number 1-5. Just accepting screw top containers is barely a drop in the bucket. The though of all these other plastics in our landfills for a thousand years makes me ill." *(+ recycling improvements)*
- "Park and natural area restoration is a top priority for me. I think restoring natural prairie and wetland should be a top priority." *(+ park improvements/additions)*
- "Making us as fuel efficient as possible - more solar energy & ways to more away from fossil fuels. Electric cars we can use for popular routes so older people can have rides & drive less."
- "Keeping plastic waste under control."
- "Ban plastic bags!"
- "More prairies."

Affordable housing (14 comments)

- "Affordable housing." (x2)
- "Affordable housing in Ames for non-students. I feel like so much housing is controlled by large rental businesses that it is not really fair to university employees on a low salary."
- "Affordable housing/rentals."
- "Ensuring students are not priced out of living here. Living in an apartment is way cheaper than the dorms but rent keeps increasing significantly faster than our wages."
- "High renting costs."
- "Housing costs."
- "HOUSING!!! As in AFFORDABLE & SMALL houses, no more McMansions of 2K+ square feet. I want to move but stuff is too big/expensive!!"
- "How can we provide affordable housing."
- "Lower rent and housing prices so more folks have a home." *(+ homelessness)*
- "Also do something about the cost of buying a home."

- “In addition, expanding affordable housing, enhancing mental health services.” *(+ social/mental/financial services)*

Street maintenance (11 comments)

- “Mostly the roads. The roads are the poorest I've ever driven on.”
- “Please patch the large cracks in the sidewalk/bike path from Lincoln Way to Mortensen Parkway. They, and sharp curbs at Center Drive, are bone-rattling and rim-busting.”
- “Potholes.” (x2)
- “Planning. For example, making repairs on the 2 main E-W streets connecting [illegible] Ames at the same time is a very bad idea (happened earlier this year)” *(+ project/construction completion)*
- “Saw curbs being painting but surface itself is flaking so much so what's the point?”
- “Make sure lane lines are painted and well-marked - the lines are hard to see in the rain.”
- “Quit spending money on projects and initiatives that are hard to measure and define success or failure. The roads are terrible. Potholes everywhere. Traffic gets backed up on south duff every day. It was "updated" less than five years ago and immediately could not handle the traffic. This is true in many other areas. You spend our money and don't end up fixing anything. Then you keep assessing our homes at higher and higher values in order to raise our taxes while still being able to say you haven't raised taxes because the rate may not go up, just the base that you are taxing goes up. Clean up your room before you try to fix the world, as in, fix the roads before you try spending money on other projects that don't matter if we can't navigate the city.” *(+ traffic flow/congestion, reduce property taxes)*
- “Roads.”

Improved planning, land use, or zoning (10 comments)

- “Better planning & less vacant business costs.”
- “Impact of Cytown on South Campus neighborhood.”
- “It's growing too fast. Slow down the development.”
- “Redevelopment of Lincoln Way (both downtown and campus).”
- “Please ... curb enthusiasm for continual housing developments further out from city center.”
- “Wider setback on lot lines in new neighborhoods. I think the houses are being packed in now and the aesthetics are degrading.”
- “The area between Lincoln and Main Street needs work.”
- “I don't know if the city can do anything about it, but I wish there wasn't just an ugly lot on Lincoln way. It has been that way for a long time, it's where Mandarin, Starbucks, etc. used to be.”
- “Removing the eyesore east of city hall called Schainker Plaza?? It's an embarrassment for all city residents.”

Snow or ice removal (9 comments)

- “Clean the snow during the winter early and more often.”
- “My number one complaint is on snow removal. I've lived in both MN and WI, and if it is snowing, you will immediately see plows hitting all the roads. In this city, we take too long to get started with snow removal, and many streets don't seem plowed at all. It makes driving unsafe for multiple days rather than just during the snowstorm.”
- “Please spend more money on snowplowing this upcoming winter.”
- “Snow & ice removed.” (x2)

- “Snow cleaning - quality and speed.”
- “Snow management.”
- “Ice control and recycling should be improved (will write more in additional comments at the end).” *(+ recycling improvements)*

Park improvements or additions (9 comments)

- “Add more pickleball courts.”
- “Adding additional lighting to parks where tennis and pickleball courts are at night. Sometimes park hours are still going but you can’t see”
- “Allocating enough funds for winter restrooms in parks and providing a map of locations of where those temporary bathrooms are.”
- “Dog friendly spaces (fenced areas and parks).”
- “Location far off-road Bike Park- Similar to Mason City (prairie rock trails).”
- “Small parks near housing areas for families to hang out.”
- “Parks and recreation. Spaces families and children use.”
- “More benches, areas of shade.”

Walkability (8 comments)

- “Attention to pedestrian logistics is recommended for those who do not use cars. For example, the sidewalk on the south side of South 4th Street near the “Ames–S 4th Street Path” ends abruptly at the bridge and then resumes afterward; no sidewalk between the “Target” and “South East 5th Street at Petco” bus stops, which forces pedestrians to walk along a two-lane road. These are observations from a pedestrian perspective. I understand there may be operational or infrastructure considerations behind these conditions that are not visible to pedestrians.”
- “Install an amber pedestrian signal at the intersection of Lincoln Way and Stanton Avenue.”
- “Making Ames a more walkable/less car dependent town for people.”
- “Making parts of Ames (outside of ISU) more walkable and pedestrian friendly.”
- “Safe crosswalks, especially along bus routes.”
- “Sidewalks/shared paths.”
- “Bigger sidewalks.”

No issues or none (8 comments)

- “Everything was discussed.”
- “I'm an urban planner, with two master's and years of experience. I do believe Ames is doing well in general, in fact I hope I can find a job and stay here for rest of my life. To me, Ames is a sustainable city which will be even better in future.”
- “None.” (x2)
- “None that haven't already been addressed.”
- “Not sure.”
- “N/A.”
- “No issues.”

Communication or transparency (8 comments)

- “Better public awareness of city plans-planning/zoning/construction, transparency.”
- “Better communication to community. Often hear about events after they happen.”

- “I used to like watching Channel 12 when I had cable. Since we switched to streamers is there a way to view this another way? (Live on Facebook or Instagram?)”
- “Information regarding the Ames parking app.” *(+ parking)*
- “DEI, education to public on harmful bills at state legislature i.e. when state in consideration stage of not allowing cities to vote for option tax letting residents know how it would impact them.”
- “Communicate about the quality of water in Ames. I know it is one of the best in Iowa, but I also know it is not great in the state.”

Reduce taxes (7 comments)

- “Our taxes and property assessments are high.”
- “Property taxes are very high in Ames, and given the current economic climate, the city needs to consider a pause to raises, or even a rollback.”
- “Property taxes way too high!!”
- “Taxes.”
- “The outrageous increase in property taxes!”
- “Very high property tax. why our tax is used for Gilbert resident in Ames high?”

Recreation, activities, or programming (6 comments)

- “Providing more fun activities (concerts etc.).”
- “Much better parks and rec activities website and registration.”
- “Noncompetitive recreational activities.”
- “The accounts we have there have login issues. So, I was not able to register for any of the programs yet.”
- “More affordable or free activities that don't rely on food or music.”
- “Art and Recreational programs for teenagers.” *(+ arts/music/culture)*

Bikeability (6 comments)

- “Make bike lanes”
- “Safer biking environment by physically separated bike lanes.”
- “Improve bike paths and CyRide.” *(+ CyRide improvements)*
- “Bike lanes.”
- “You've made Ada Hayden un-bikeable by implementing an unrealistic speed limit. (I understand what you were trying to do, and recognize that it's really the idiots on e-bikes who ruined it for everyone, but it's hard to even keep a road bike upright when you have to stay under 10mph). With this in mind, PLEASE pay better attention to the condition of the few on-road bike paths we have. The sand and debris from the road is constantly getting pushed into the bike lanes (especially on south Duff), and they're bad enough that you'd be safer just risking it in the middle of the road with cars than trying to dodge all the obstacles that are in the bike lane. I'd also really appreciate any off-road bike options (that don't come with a 10mph speed limit) because the ones we had have been taken away. I love biking and sadly haven't even bothered trying to go at all this year because Ames is actively making it impossible to bike outside anymore.” *(+ street maintenance)*

Nuisance enforcement (5 comments)

- “Street noise and personal fireworks.”
- “Code enforcement for homeowners who don't shovel snow/mow lawns & store junk.”
- “The bad smell from the manure that is applied in the fields. Some days it is awful.”
- “Garbage pickup, cleanliness.”

Project or construction completion (5 comments)

- “Please finish the area east of the police station.”
- “Completion of projects! ie. Schainker plaza, Lincoln way between Kellog & Clark”
- “Would love to see the splash pad get finished.”
- “How long it takes for road construction.”

Arts, music, or culture (5 comments)

- “Culture-music, art, entertainment.”
- “More arts funding.”
- “Removing biased artwork and replacing it with art that celebrates the history and all residents within the city.”
- “Would also love a children's museum.”

Crime (5 comments)

- “Gangs & violence, drugs.”
- “Decreasing crime.”
- “Monitoring drug abuses could be improved.”
- “There seems to be increased crime in some areas. Is this real?”
- “A few of the higher incidence neighborhoods - Tripp street area for example. High crime & issues, lots of trash & neglect in area, also” *(+ nuisance enforcement)*

Cost of living (4 comments)

- “Affordability.”
- “Keeping cost down.”
- “Reducing costs.”
- “The cost of living in Ames is very high and the folks that are facing that don't have any other option because they don't have transportation. Supporting those folks is a great way to focus attention.”

Connection between Ames and ISU (4 comments)

- “Connective with the college students.”
- “Creating a better environment between the college kids and the normal people that live here.”
- “Better communication between ISU and the city.”

Parking (4 comments)

- “Downtown parking.”
- “Event parking.”
- “More parking.”

Recycling improvements (4 comments)

- "Recycling program."
- "As far as the new recycling service, I'm glad to see recycling get more attention, but disagree with it being mandatory for each residence to pay. I am currently taking my recyclables to the drop off site and wish that option would remain as an alternative."

CyRide improvements (4 comments)

- "Transportation to neighboring cities!!!!"
- "Heater inside bus stations during cold weather. More benches along the streets."

Less apartment development (3 comments)

- "Fewer new apartment buildings."
- "The overwhelming number of apartments being constructed. Ames does NOT need more apartments. Please focus on city planning in a way that encourages neighborhoods, not squeezes as many people as possible into a tiny area." *(+ improved planning/land use/development)*
- "No new apartments."

More industry or business attraction (3 comments)

- "Attract more industry to Ames."
- "More restaurants in Ames, not near 30 or 35 highway."
- "Supporting business growth & development & overall development wider vision."

Maintain quality of life (3 comments)

- "Keep our city the very best place to live. Make good decisions to keep it that way."
- "Maintaining excellent quality of living."
- "Spend money on things which benefit majority of residents."

Local food systems (3 comments)

- "Supporting local foods and markets"
- "Sustainable development connectivity to local food production / food in general like small grocers in Campustown."
- "Community gardens."

Traffic control or enforcement (3 comments)

- "An issue of concern to me is the speed limit and lack of control on South Duff Street going north when entering the City of Ames. There is heavy traffic travelling north on South Duff especially during the 7 am - 8 am hour. This time is also when kids are going to school at Kate Mitchell. Turning left on Jewel Dr from South Duff, it can sometimes be difficult due to both heavy traffic and the high speed of vehicles entering the city. I propose two solutions: (a) reduce the speed of vehicles on entering the city limits from the current 50 Miles per hour to 35 Miles per hour. (2) Place a stop sign a stop light at South Duff - Jewel intersection. The stop sign can be time limited one that is active during the droff and pick hours of school. These two solutions can help address this issue. If not addressed, this issue can lead to serious accidents involving kids - something none of us wants to see."
- "Speeding in residential areas."

- “Traffic control.”

Welcoming environment (2 comments)

- “Being a welcoming community.”
- “Making the outsiders here for events feel appreciated and welcome. So many longtime residents complain about students or ISU.” *(+ connection between Ames and ISU)*

Community beautification (2 comments)

- “Paying for janitors and lawn care again. The floors and the grounds are embarrassing to look at.”
- “The "Welcome to Ames" signs are a bit embarrassing. This needs work!”

Housing rehab or upgrades (2 comments)

- “Grants to update oldest buildings & residences.”
- “Campustown/rental apartments can look junky.”

Healthcare (2 comments)

- “Clinics not (with) ties to McFarland.”
- “Public healthcare facilities.”

Utility prices (2 comments)

- “Electricity bills based on neighborhood in Ames, electricity bill is a concern for me.”
- “Sustainable/affordable electrical and utility use and price rates” *(+ environment/sustainability/renewables)*

Remove flock cameras (2 comments)

- “Get rid of the Flock Cameras.”
- “There are way too many Flock cameras. I, along with pretty much anyone I have asked in my own life, despise the sudden surge of Flock cameras/mass surveillance within the community. Ames was and is, by all metrics, a very safe community and this has been the case since well before the introduction of such surveillance by Flock and the ISU/Ames police departments. Citizens should never be subjected to such invasive and potentially unsafe surveillance. US citizens are protected from unreasonable searches and seizures under the 4th amendment of the Bill of Rights, and the incessant installation of surveillance cameras directly violates that amendment. The City of Ames does a lot of good for the community, but there is absolutely no reasonable argument for such aggressive surveillance of its population. These Flock cameras also command a high price both in their installation costs and extended subscription-based costs, and these funds would be infinitely more useful in other aspects of the community. Flock, automated license plate readers (ALPRs), and anything of the sort should be relegated back to the pages of 1984 and other dystopian visions of our future. While the state and federal governments might currently encourage and allow such actions/behaviors by the local/city governments, that does not mean that the citizens approve of such actions. People should not be tracked while going about their daily lives! Perhaps if the city council understood the extent of the surveillance with regards to their own activities and behaviors, the rest of the city of Ames would not be subjected to this level of control.”

Historic preservation (2 comments)

- "Continue to emphasize historic preservation programs and incentives, both in/around downtown and throughout the other regions of the city."
- "Preserving the historical housing and ambiance of the neighborhoods North and East of Downtown - without the supplemental character if the historic neighborhoods, Ames Downtown is just an anywhere type of main street."

Childcare (2 comments)

- "Affordable childcare."
- "Childcare is very backed up and underfunded in Ames. This is a critical issue and is a great investment that the city should make. Free or low-cost childcare will allow more workers into the economy. Everything else I am very or moderately happy with."

Animal control (2 comments)

- "Dealing with wild animals - raccoons, skunks, etc. Helping homeowners. No one will help them with this!"
- "Animal control"

Expensive admission prices (2 comments)

- "I love the Parks and Rec programs. The admission to the indoor and outdoor water facilities is prohibitively high."
- "less $ towards aquatic centers as those aren't priced affordable for a lot of families."

Library improvement (2 comments)

- "Library app."
- "I feel like the library staff are being asked to serve as social workers because it is a safe place for vulnerable populations, but that shouldn't be their primary job, nor are they trained for it."

Reduce number of police cars (2 comments)

- "Selling some of the excess police cars and putting that towards tax relief."
- "Too many police vehicles!!"

Miscellaneous (16 comments)

- "NO pet licensing."
- "Stricter oversight to obtain taxpayer funded welfare or government assistance."
- "Reducing the number of single-family homes being bought by property managers & used as AirBnB. We need smaller & more modest single family homes that people can afford. I don't want strange cars & unfamiliar people in my neighborhood all the time." *(+ affordable housing)*
- "Quit inviting people from Chicago to invade Iowa. Stop building section 8 housing to increase population. Take care of our own homeless population." *(+ homelessness)*
- "More deliberate education to residents on tenant rights, what issues you should take up with your landlord and what issues are reportable to the city." *(+ communication/transparency)*
- "Monitoring city trees planted in easement/tree lawn."
- "Safety."

- “Maintenance of overhead power lines, lot of low voltage have black cylinders hanging, trees approaching lines.”
- “Declining quality of our schools.”
- “Lack of good animal rights laws.”
- “Substantial increased needed [for property tax], but many can't afford that - is there a way to have tiers, such as less for home $125K or less and more for homes $500K or more?
- “More attention to disability issues.”
- “Enforcing leash laws, both in parks and just within neighborhoods.”
- “Maintaining infrastructure such as storm water drainage would further improve the quality of life for residents.”
- “Clearing and maintaining sidewalks (especially when it snows) should be a higher priority. Streets are often cleared using snowblowers which cover the sidewalks and make them unsafe for weeks.” *(+ snow/ice removal)*
- “Funding allocation to the following human services ...] Why is service coordination necessary with the help of a nonprofit when you have grouped these services under the ASSET umbrella? Sounds redundant.”

Additional Comments (96 respondents)

Happy/satisfied (35 comments)

- “Again, thank you to our hardworking city staff, volunteers, Parks and Recreation folks, and council for the hard work of local government.”
- “Ames has been overall a great place to live.”
- “Ames is my favorite city in Iowa.”
- “Ames is the very best place! Thanks for all you do!”
- “Great community. I live near Ada Hayden, it’s a wonderful park.”
- “I am appreciative of the town of Ames and its efforts to be a place that welcomes everyone.”
- “I appreciate all the hard work the City of Ames employees do to help maintain and improve our community!”
- “I appreciate every investment into the community. The work has not gone unnoticed. There has been a shift in post COVID.”
- “I appreciate the work of the mayor and city council and city staff.”
- “I think Ames is a great place to live, and I appreciate that we are accepting of anyone.”
- “I very much enjoyed the Branching Out event - it was very well-run and I loved the opportunity to pick up a bush for my property.”
- “I am very excited for the splash pad coming near my home this summer. That will be fantastic! My kids have loved Parks and Rec gymnastics and tae-kwon-do. My favorite Parks and Rec activity was a bird walk led by someone named Wolf. I wish this was all the time! Please more of this.” *(+ more events/gatherings)*
- “It’s shocking how good this town is for its size. It far out performs towns like Rochester, MN, which is larger and wealthier, but is way worse.”

- “My family has enjoyed getting to know Ames since we moved here 4 years ago. This is where we plan to settle and raise our kids so we're excited for the new facilities such as the indoor aquatic center and the ISU renovations for Cytown that are underway.”
- “Overall Ames is a good city.”
- “Overall Ames is a nice place to live. it truly is a nice town with great people.”
- “Overall, I am satisfied with city services in Ames. I especially appreciate the safety, cleanliness, and public transportation.”
- “Proud to live in Ames. Having a family in Ames is perfect.”
- “Thank you all for taking good care of our community!”
- “Thank you for all you are doing, your hard work is appreciated!”
- “Ames is a wonderful place.”
- “Very nice town Ames, you do a great job!”
- “We are very pleased with the Ames commissions & departments in continuing to make our city function well.”
- “We love Ames!”
- “We're so happy to be in Ames; we fell in love here, and we're excited to raise a family here. Props to Ames Parks & Rec for being above and beyond awesome.”
- “While there are definitely some things that I wish were different or managed differently, I like living in Ames. The people are generally kind, the employees of the city have always been nice and friendly, and I think the people working for the city/managing it typically want the city to continue to be a place people want to live and I think that says lots of good things about Ames.”
- “Addition of 60 Forward has been great for the community!”
- “It’s a very nice town overall compared to many others that I have lived in.”

Thank you for the survey (8 comments)

- “Great Survey!”
- “Thank you for doing this survey and getting our input.”
- “I enjoyed filling out this survey, and I'm glad Ames does this to get a pulse of this city.”
- “Thank you for asking these questions.”
- “Thank you for doing this survey!”
- “Thank you for including me in the survey. Helps to know a bit more about how the city gets input from residents on spending priorities and concerns.”
- “Thank you for the survey!”
- “Thanks for this survey.”
- “The Ames and Iowa State University co-existence make an incredible community.”

Improve street maintenance (7 comments)

- “Streets need to be improved (potholes everywhere), better construction notices.”
- “Maybe coordinate street closured to ensure main streets are not all closed at the same time.” *(+ improve traffic flow)*
- “Some smaller side streets have terrible potholes. My neighborhood is generally okay, but I've seen some had ones near campus for example. Though it looks like some are getting fixed, with all the active construction in Ames.”
- “When the construction is going on, alternative roads are not good or too far. I would appreciate if you could start constructions on the roads with parallel roads.” *(+ improve traffic flow)*

- “The only issue in my opinion is asphalt.”

Improve bikeability/walkability (7 comments)

- “Bike lanes please.”
- “Did not like the narrowing of Hyland with the bike lanes removed. I have watched several drivers pull out of their drives directly across the shared use path and did not stop to look for pedestrians or cyclists.”
- “Make it more bike friendly as a mode for transportation. The major streets (Lincoln Way, Grand Ave., University are not bike friendly.”
- “I walk a lot of the northwest area. The Ross Rd. neighborhood doesn't have sidewalks. I know they don't want them, but a shared path would be helpful. The curbs are awful and many need replacing. The cars drive fast.” *(+ street maintenance)*
- “More bike lanes.”
- “CROSSWALKS, and bike accessibility.”

Improve administration or communication (6 comments)

- “I find it hard to know if there are grants or programs to help maintain sidewalks, etc. It would be helpful to see where grants and assistance are available and how to apply in communications that were plainly and simply written so citizens could know if financial help is available for certain situations, and how to apply for it.” *(+ improved sidewalk maintenance)*
- “I really cannot stress enough how to connect more with students AND emphasizing the role city employees have in understanding their citizens when it comes to concerns and customer service.”
- “It was discouraging when our neighborhood spoke up against the housing development going up on Welbeck Drive. It felt as if the city disregarded concerns and comments of the existing neighborhood members. The consensus was that the city just cared about money which is a sad impression. We chose to leave the neighborhood due to the housing development, being built eventually.” *(+ control development/developers)*
- “My father escaped Cuba, and I learned about oppressive governments from a young age. I find it sad that when meeting people in Ames who are left-leaning, they are shocked that a POC is not staunchly in the Democratic camp. I have seen firsthand the effects that socialist policies have on free thinkers and families. We can do better.”
- “I do overall like our services, but I don't know where to get data on spending. I'd like to see why Ames PD gets $12 mil and so on.”
- “Continued improvements in communication and winter maintenance would make the city even better.” *(+ improved ice/snow control)*

Control development (4 comments)

- “Ames is good, but could be much better. Better planning and design, and more controls over developers is desperately needed! Duff and Lincoln Way are awful!” *(+ happy/satisfied)*
- “The city has many people concerned about development issues and tax breaks to developers, but feel unneeded. ISU has many knowledgeable people who could and would offer advice, but who feel the city doesn't want to use/listen to their expertise.”
- “The city needs to think about how much apartment/retail space keeps getting built. I see buildings with apartments and empty retail space on the first floor. We need less of this until we fill what is available. We also do not need any more banks!”

Improve ice and snow control (4 comments)

- “Ice control on some of the smaller streets can be terrible and leads to unsafe conditions. The street I live on regularly has a thick sheet of ice and snow that doesn't melt for weeks at a time.”
- “Please spend more money on snowplowing this upcoming winter.”

Improve traffic flow (4 comments)

- “City council should really work to improve traffic flow around the city. Widening roads, adding turning lanes, increasing speed limits and signal timing would help a lot. Instead, their agenda seems to focus on discouraging automobile travel.”
- “This city is "circled" by ISU, I-35 and US-30, and RR. It needs more freeways, collectors, and streets to improve circulation. Especially on the only ways in-out like DUFF, Mortensen, etc. We have enough vehicle to justify a major street system.”

Address noise nuisances (4 comments)

- “I feel fortunate to have landed in Ames. Up until 3-4 years ago (or 5?), I had no complaints. Since then, motorcycles and loud cars disrupt sleep, and personal fireworks go off for weeks before and after July 4th. This is bad for pets, wildlife combat vets with PTSD, and people trying to sleep. both also have safety issues.”
- “I generally have a very favorable opinion of Ames, but as I have indicated on all of these surveys I have received, there is one VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM: TRAFFIC NOISE. Yet year after year, nothing effective is done about it! I will NOT fill out another survey until the city council and police department sit down together and find a solution to this problem. Once effective laws are identified, they must be enforced on a regular basis. Thank you.”
- “Loud motorcycles going extremely fast and noisy.”
- “We've lived in Ames about 20 months. One significant annoyance is garbage trucks coming at 6am. We live by a cul-de-sac, truck backs up and the backup warning beeper is loud, typically wakes us up. How about an ordinance restricting garbage trucks to 7am or later?”

Improve spending or budgeting (4 comments)

- “Please stop unnecessary constructions and don't use tax for private school. I want you to consider just how much the teachers are struggling due to school budget cuts.”
- “The budget should be spent on necessary city utilities, streets, services. Don't borrow money for more big plans”

Address high housing costs (3 comments)

- “Housing affordability is an ongoing issue (I live in a trailer).”
- “It is also unfortunate how expensive housing is in Ames. We need more starter level homes.”
- “I grew up in a 5-bedroom 2-story house w/ full finished basement on the northeast side of Ames. Now I can barely afford to rent even though I have a career with a pension.”

Improve sidewalk maintenance (3 comments)

- “There wasn't that much about sidewalks, please pay more attention to the sidewalk conditions and connectivity. My main issue in winter is when Ames plows the snow, it pushes them to the curb ramp and make it impossible to pass the crosswalk. 3rd and 4th intersection” *(+ improved ice/snow control)*

More events or gatherings (3 comments)

- "We support improvements that in turn support local businesses and events and encourage outdoor activities and community gatherings."
- "I do wish we had more adult activities not centered on food or alcohol - but I know my issues are not common."

More businesses/variety (3 comments)

- "Would like to see another restaurant on the southside of town."
- "Would like to see improvements to Lincoln way. In general, more business & development friendly to allow for greater variety of offerings."
- "Would like to see some halal food availability in Ames if possible"

Keep the quality of Ames (3 comments)

- "For sure there are issues, but it's lovely town. Hopefully someday if I get back here, I see better and improved Ames." *(+ happy/satisfied)*
- "I think Ames is really good place to live. Maintaining the service to be great for me to keep living here." *(+ happy/satisfied)*
- "We absolutely love and are so proud of Ames, IA. Please be mindful and don't mess it up." *(+ happy/satisfied)*

Improve traffic control or enforcement (3 comments)

- "Look both ways when you enter or turn onto a road while driving."
- "Mortenson Drive needs some speed control. Stop lights or police control. There are too many people speeding around residential areas without care. Many streets have difficult access into Mortenson."

Trash control or clean-up (3 comments)

- "As I previously mentioned, the trash issue where I see a lot of trash by the pavement. Since Menards and Hunziker owns the land next to it, I believe the City of Ames have the authority to ask them to be more aware of those trash issue since it kinda affects business reputation." *(+ improved sidewalk maintenance)*
- "Plastic waste blows from the dumpsters at Frederiksen Court & University village. Large amounts of it lie in the field on the east of the student parking lot & on the edge of the woods near the maintenance facility on the east of university village. It's very visible in the winter & then is covered in vegetation in the spring. Much of it enters the woods in both areas. This has been a problem I have noticed for years & nothing seems to be done about it. I don't know if the city sees this as a University issue or what but they should work together to stop it. Also, at various times larger amounts of trash have been dumped in the woods - seems its abandoned belongings from homeless people - I have no problem with homeless making camps in the woods, but please could the city do a better job of educating people about trash and take some time & care to collect this trash. Surely there's enough city workers who could devote some time now & then to better trash control. THANK YOU."

Remove flock cameras (2 comments)

- "Just get rid of the Flock cameras"

- "Please do everything possible to remove the Flock cameras installed throughout the city. If they can be installed this quickly (at great cost to the taxpayer/student WITH NO BENEFIT TO THE PUBLIC, mind you), they can most definitely be removed just as quickly." *(+ improve spending/budgeting)*

Improve yard waste disposal (2 comments)

- "Lawn waste disposal ... A bag of waste now costs 3 times as much as in the past - plus you have to drive out to county line road. Gas is more expensive every day. Many smaller communities have better systems than Ames"
- "Yard waste location has been removed to build new resource plant. Where am I supposed to take my yard waste? Page of Ames website says not available"

Less bike lanes (2 comments)

- "Do we really need all these bicycle paths on our roads? I rarely even see them being used!! It seems we need the space for our increasing traffic more. And I myself am an avid biker...."
- "For maintenance - Focus on what gets used most by residents- roads vs bike paths/trails, quit narrowing roads to allow for bikes- not safe travel at curbs anyways causes traffic delays" *(+ street maintenance)*

Better or more parking (2 comments)

- "Quit eliminating parking needs for Downtown- events bring people by car- over parking on side streets do not make it safe to see bikes or pedestrians also coming & going from events. All apartments outside of campus need 1 park space per bedroom- it will be lifetimes before cars are eliminated."
- "Not mentioned earlier, but the park mobile app is very useful for purchasing parking spots around town, BUT I would prefer to not have to pay for parking when I am parking at local bars and restaurants."

Increased bus or bike connection (2 comments)

- "And the bike trail extended to other trails/towns."
- "Living in Ames, Iowa without a car can feel very limiting. The local bus system, CyRide, works within the city, but there are almost no convenient options to travel outside of it. There's no train service, and getting to Des Moines or the airport without a car is difficult and often expensive. Overall, it can feel isolating and inconvenient for anyone without a vehicle."

Miscellaneous (25 comments)

- "Ames can be very cliquey and status aware."
- "CyTown will be great for Ames but will come with a new set of issues the City needs to be mindful of and prepared to address."
- "I cannot emphasize enough how more funding & support of the arts is needed." *(+ improve spending/budgeting)*
- "I feel we could do more for the disadvantaged."
- "I wish the water parks were less expensive."

- “In my neighborhood the buildings are very old, and I think they cannot keep the heat inside of the building so the electricity bill is very high during winter it is usually 70 to 90 for a small 1-bedroom apartment.”
- “Be upfront about ICE activities. We do not want to support those who threaten the sense of community Ames can have.”
- “Outdoor seating please!”
- “Many apartment buildings and properly managers don't offer recycling collection (I assume this is something they would need to pau extra for), so residents without cars (particularly students) have no way of recycling.”
- “Paying utilities is very convenient, I have appreciated the process of either dropping off a check or going into town hall to pay. I do wish that the online payment option did not have a fee, otherwise I may be more inclined to opting to an email bill and online payment to reduce paper waste.”
- “Please build more pickleball courts.”
- “Park n Rec ... (A1) quality of trails/quality of park- (A2) specifically Moore Park on Beach Ave. 1. Poison hemlock continues to grow along N edge at Beach Ave. 2. Why was the trash container removed? I pickup garbage, frequently on my walk now. 3. There is a sidewalk that runs from Gaskill down to the park but ends at a muddy spot on the W side/corner. What about extending that walkway to Beach? Doesn't have to be concrete, but maybe granite fines? Or mulch? Lots of ISU athletics/concerts/foot traffic there” *(+ increase bikeability/walkability, trash control/clean-up)*
- “Storm Street”
- “Thank you so much for planting a tree on our property even though we were not originally chosen to receive one. We really appreciate being considered and provided with a tree. We will take care of it to the best of our ability. We live near the railroad tracks, and I would love to turn the area between our property line and the tracks into a native plant landscape. I know the railroad sprays down vegetation but if there could be an initiative to increase native planting along railroad tracks, I would be happy to have more natural prairie area back there.” *(+ happy/satisfied)*
- “This question system is rigged and biased for the "WOKE" not residents.”
- “When I moved here, I was surprised and disappointed how unappreciative the locals were to have ISU in town. And then locals want college students on the census to benefit from federal money. You encourage voting in Ames rather than absentee ballots. They could be supporting hometowns - where their roots are! Ames has so much more than many of the towns students come from - encourage them to consider hometown support.”
- “Would love to see water fountains along the trails.”
- “For visitors to city hall, it is a long walk from West parking lot to elevator, and I think between 17 to 23 steps at West staircase. I'm 82 yrs old, get around ok, visit city hall once or twice per month, I appreciate the chairs at the top of the west stairs, may need to find someone to do my trips in future.”
- “It's overall fine. Everything is fine. Nothing is great about it, but nothing about it is truly terrible.”
- “We got lots of transients in Ames, so that presents some unique challenges and priorities.”
- “While technically no stormwater, we get constant seepage due to poor design of the complex here, not the city's fault, at least not directly.”
- “Should bikes on the roads follow traffic signals and stop signs?”
- “Nice town; nice options in general; but encouraging advancements would be lovely.”

- “More police officers please for more traffic control and other issues.” *(+ traffic control/enforcement)*
- “Concentrate on parks.”

“Other” Responses

For what reasons do you not use the library as often as you would like? – Other (please specify) (49 respondents)

Poor parking (10 responses)

- “Don't want to pay to park.”
- “I don't want to have to pay for parking.”
- “Not enough parking spots.”
- “Parking.” (x2)
- “Parking availability.”
- “Parking costs to spend a long time at the library prevents me from spending more.”
- “Parking is an issue.”
- “Parking options usually cost money.”
- “Unavailability of free parking.”

Use ISU library (8 responses)

- “I go to the ISU library.”
- “I mainly study at the Iowa State University library out of convenience.”
- “I use ISU library.”
- “ISU Parks library.”
- “ISU student and use on-campus services.”
- “Mostly I go to the Iowa State University library, being a student there.”
- “Parks Library is closer and has what I need.”
- “University resources.”

Not interested/no need (7 responses)

- “Choose not to use.”
- “Don't think of it as a reference.”
- “Haven't had the need.”
- “I don't need it at the moment.”
- “No need.”
- “No need to use.”
- “Enough resources outside of Ames Public Library.”

Too busy/no time (4 responses)

- “As a student you often have very little time to go outside the university campus unless you have an easy schedule/major.”
- “Busy in graduate school and haven't had time for leisurely reading.”
- “Personal time availability.”

- “Taking time is more accurate.”

Not open long enough (4 responses)

- “I would go more if the hours were extended further into the night, but I know that's not the point of the Ames Public Library.”
- “Library is closed.”
- “Open times.”
- “Work hours interfere.”

Uncomfortable atmosphere (4 responses)

- “Your signage and art on the public street signal to me, a conservative Christian, that I am not welcomed, so I don’t patronize your establishment.”
- “Feel unsafe sometimes.”
- “Homeless hanging around create discomfort.”
- “Overwhelming LGBT propaganda and atmosphere homeless people.”

Age/physical limitations (3 responses)

- “I'm age 91.”
- “I'm elderly and health challenged.”
- “Physical limitations.”

Doesn’t have what I need (3 responses)

- “A lot of the resources I utilize are scientific research that is hard to find at local libraries.”
- “No resource materials relevant to my field of interest.”
- “Not a lot of law literature.”

Laziness (2 responses)

- “Lazy.”
- “Sheer laziness.”

Forgot about it (2 responses)

- “Forget about using.”
- “Really forgot it was a thing until my child had a field trip and was introduced to the library. Northwood's trip is beyond valuable to start engagement for kids and restart for adults.”

Miscellaneous (4 responses)

- “I buy books, but the space is great to study, and their various book selection is good.”
- “I do not know what they have to offer.”
- “I get 2 or 3 books at once.”
- “I use the Libby app- but I used to use it 2-3x per week.”

Which event(s) [interacted with police]? – Other (please specify) (23 respondents)

ISU event/on campus (8 responses)

- “Career Fairs.”
- “Iowa State University Welcome Fest.”

- “On campus.”
- “Special event with ISU students.”
- “Tabling on campus with stickers and discussions about what they do and how.”
- “Was at a football game.”
- “ISU games.”
- “It was at the Memorial Union at Iowa State.”

Community events (6 responses)

- “Block party.”
- “Comic conventions.”
- “HOA potluck.”
- “Neighborhood block party.”
- “Neighborhood walk.”
- “The fire and police department showed up to our block party last year and they were very engaging with the kids.”

Youth outreach (4 responses)

- “Boys and Girls Club.”
- “Pancake event and the children's backpack event.”
- “Son rode in car once.”
- “STEAM night for our school. Fingerprinting booth.”

Donating (2 responses)

- “Donate.”
- “Have donated to Shop with a Cop.”

Miscellaneous (3 responses)

- “Airport fly-in.”
- “Lost child search.”
- “Met Penny!”

Why not [participating in SunSmart Ames]? – Other (please specify) (157 respondents)

Didn’t know about program (74 responses)

- “Did not know about it.” (x40)
- “Not aware of the program.” (x9)
- “Haven’t heard about it.” (x14)
- “No information on the program. (x5)
- “Was not informed and will get more information.” *(+ not enough/need more info)*
- “Did not know about this. When did it start?”
- “Did not know it was an option.”
- “I didn't even know this existed. I have seen almost nothing about it.”
- “Wasn't completely aware.”

Apartment/renting (30 responses)

- “As a student, I am not sure how long I will stay in Ames, so it is difficult to commit to a long-term program.”
- “Not a homeowner.” (x2)
- “Live in an apartment.” (x9)
- “Renting.” (x9)
- “I live in a rental unit. This is something that should be pushed to property management companies!”
- “I don't think I qualify because I live in a rental unit.”
- “I don't pay for electricity directly in my apartment.”
- “I rent this apartment so the property owner would be interested. However, I think it is a good idea. As a student I paid a lot - about $90 for my electricity bill in winter.”
- “Landlord pays electricity.”
- “Was not aware or given opportunity through my apartment.”
- “I don't know if I can participate since I am renting an apartment unit.”
- “I rent an apartment, and the electric is included in monthly payments.”
- “Had not heard about this but I currently rent, not own.” (*+ didn’t know about program)*

Not worth it/too expensive (12 responses)

- “After researching found that return was not great. Not a great investment when accounting for opportunity cost of the dollars.”
- “Makes no financial sense.”
- “I’m on a fixed income.”
- “Not a good return of investment.”
- “Retired on a fixed income.”
- “Return of investment.”
- “Return on money spent.”
- “I'd happily pay $210 for solar if the credit was larger each month for a shorter duration.”
- “Not cost effective.”
- “Not sure if it’s cost effective.” *(+ not enough/need more info)*
- “I'm not convinced that the rewards are significant enough to cost of purchase maybe I need more information.” *(+ not enough/need more info)*
- “What kind of college student has that money?”

Not enough/need more info (15 responses)

- “Don’t understand it enough.”
- “Economics of this project are unclear. How much does the average home user recover per year over 15 years with $210 powerpack?”
- “It's unknown how it really works and would cost over time.”
- “Need to learn more.”
- “Need to look into it more.”
- “I don't have much knowledge about the program.”
- “Don't know enough about it.”
- “Don’t know. More information needed.”
- “Need info.”

- “Need info. I will look at it.”
- “Still investigating.”
- “I will look into it.”

Temporary stay in Ames (6 responses)

- “As a student, I am not sure how long I will stay in Ames, so it is difficult to commit to a long-term program.”
- “College student.”
- “Moving out of Ames for a job.”
- “Will be moving away in the next few years.”
- “I would be interested if I knew I would be living in Ames for the next 15 years.”
- “I think if this was offered years ago, I would have participated or if I lived in Ames in a home that I’m not renting. But I am moving out this summer so I’m not participating because of that.” *(+ apartment/renting*)

Too busy (5 responses)

- “Busy with life.”
- “Have not taken the time.”
- “Just haven't taken the time.”
- “Laziness.”
- “No time to do cost benefits evaluation.”

Old age (4 responses)

- “Being elderly, I'm satisfied with what I currently have.”
- “I'm too old to reap the long-term benefits.”
- “My age (104).”
- “Our age.”

Not interested (4 responses)

- “Just not right for my family right now.”
- “Not a highly effective energy source in this area.”
- “The drawbacks of a solar farm are not being considered properly.”
- “I considered participating but just did not do it.”

Already own solar panels (2 responses)

- “We have our own solar.”
- “We have solar panels but great idea!”

Not up to me (2 comments)

- “Husband unwilling to consider.”
- “Not the decision maker at my house.”

Not possible in my home (2 responses)

- “Living in a trailer, no space.”
- “Own a second-floor unit, no roof access.”

Miscellaneous (6 responses)

- “I attempted to get involved early in the program, reached out to get started and never received a reply.”
- “We applied but were not accepted.”
- “Need to!”
- “Have not applied.”
- “Not sure.”
- “Haven't thought about it.”

If you do not currently use CyRide, what would make you consider using these services? – Other (please specify) (29 respondents)

If I couldn’t drive (5 responses)

- “Decrease in my independence of personal transportation.”
- “If both our vehicles broke down or became unaffordable or extremely high gas prices.”
- “If we could no longer drive.”
- “Inability to drive where needed.”
- “Only if personal transportation is not available.”

If I knew how to use it (4 responses)

- “Don't use it due to working from home, and I don't have info available for bus times and cost. I would have to make a transfer to get to the hospital (place of work) from my home - just not sure how to do it”
- “If I could tell what buses went where, I'd probably ride the bus. I have no clue about bus routes, schedules, fares, or connections.”
- “Would like more info on use and routes.”
- “Still investigating.”

Only if I needed to (3 responses)

- “If I had a need for public transportation.”
- “If my need was there for it, I would use it. I live in a walkable area.”
- “Only if I had an emergency for travel”

Service was offered for large events (2 responses)

- “I would possibly use it if service was provided to large events, such as concerts, football games”
- “Service offered on ISU football or basketball gamedays from and to my neighborhood.”

If it felt safer (2 responses)

- “If it felt safer, I'd let my teens use it.”
- “The price is good, but some others riding have B.O and are threatening/frightening for children to be around.”

If it was faster (2 responses)

- “If it had a faster arrival time from point. A to point B.”
- “If wait time for transfers was lower.”

Stops closer to me (2 responses)

- “More routes that are not for students only.”
- “No stops near my house.”

Miscellaneous (11 responses)

- “Accuracy of the time.”
- “I graduated, but if CyRide allowed my dog I would take it to near parks, no other purpose for me.”
- “I much prefer bicycling. If this weren't possible then I'd use CyRide.”
- “If paper maps were available.”
- “It'd be great if I didn't need cash to ride without a pass. I don't carry cash on me so I'm often not able to ride the bus.”
- “Maybe I’d use more with age.”
- “More frequent service to Vet Med.”
- “Routes to the Des Moines area would be very cool.”
- “Shelters! Benches.”
- “Arrival info (times).”
- “Used to use CyRide regularly for work but now I work out of town.”

Five-year capital improvements plan project importance - Other (please specify) (15 respondents)

- “Better public restrooms.”
- “Create indoor closed bus stations for winter.”
- “Develop the area between Lincoln and main.”
- “Do not waste money on Flock subscriptions. Remove the cameras.”
- “EMS.”
- “Improved traffic signals to better traffic flow.”
- “Management of roads.”
- “More pedestrian infrastructure!”
- “More water fountains.”
- “MTB Bike Trails.”
- “Plowing.”
- “Pothole filling.”
- “Redesigning South Duff roadways and access.”
- “Road repair.”
- “The Bridge Home.”

Which of the following sources of information do you use and how helpful are they? – Other (please specify) (16 respondents)

- “Ames reddit page is god tier.”
- “Ames Voice newspaper.”
- “BBC.”
- “Discover Ames Website/calendar.”
- “Email notification.”
- “Emails.”

- “Emails, project updates, Councill agenda.”
- “CitySide Newsletter in utility bill.”
- “Parks and Recreation email list.”
- “PBS/IPR.”
- “Reddit.”
- “Should include planning/zoning info.”
- “The Ames Voice.”
- “Ames Voice emails.”
- “WOI public radio.”
- “YouTube.”

How would you prefer to learn about construction projects, programs, and meetings in your area? – Other (please specify) (12 respondents)

- “Ames Voice.”
- “Billboard specifically for Ames updates? Maybe on Duff, Lincoln Way, or Grand?”
- “CitySide newsletter.”
- “Community Members.”
- “Electric bill CitySide insert.”
- “For students, I think you need to provide upfront resource options. Make a packet for new, incoming students and/or packets for apartments, housing etc. to get when a new tenant is acquired.”
- “CitySide insert with utility bill.”
- “Local affairs committee with ISU student gov (ISU City Council Rep. Emily Boland).”
- “Outdoor posters at site of common areas.”
- “The CitySide insert in my utility bill.”
- “TV.”
- “TV News.”

What energy efficient improvements are you considering? – Other (please specify) (6 respondents)

Solar panels (5 responses)

- “Home solar.”
- “Solar.” (x2)
- “Solar panels.”
- “Someday: solar.”

Miscellaneous (2 responses)

- “Energy audit.”
- “Upgrading panel.”

What would prevent you from implementing these improvements? – Other (please specify) (68 respondents)

Renting/don’t own (31 responses)

- “Again, not the homeowner, but my apartment desperately needs it.”
- “I’m a renter.” (x10)

- “Not a homeowner.” (x19)
- “I do what I can in a rental, but there are things I cannot change.”
- “I wouldn't be able to do this to a property because I don't own property.”

Already done (16 responses)

- “Already done.” (x7)
- “Have done all we feel we need to do.”
- “Have done some upgrades already.”
- “I've already done some of these items.”
- “In the early stage.”
- “Invested lots already in home improvements within the last five years, including one big window and deck door. But replacing doors/windows will follow within the next five years.”
- “Most are up to date.”
- “Already did most of the list.”
- “Already have many of the above.”

New home w/ upgrades (6 responses)

- “Live in a new home.”
- “Live in a new house that is energy efficient.”
- “My house is new, so I don’t really need these improvements right now.”
- “New house.”
- “New property- it's done!”
- “Newer home with none to make.”

Time (6 responses)

- “I’m a student and will be in Ames only for a short duration.”
- “Next homeowner's decision.”
- “Not certain how long we are going to live in our current house.”
- “Here for short time only.”
- “Time.” (x2)

Cost (3 responses)

- “Additional code/permit cost.”
- “Cost effectiveness.”
- “Cost.”

Location constraints (3 responses)

- “Geothermal - not enough real estate.”
- “Condo, little we can do.”
- “Already done much of what I can, constrained by HOA :(“ *(+ already done)*

Finding a contractor (2 responses)

- “Finding someone who is good, capable, and reasonable.”
- “Not knowing reputable to contact.”

Miscellaneous (2 responses)

- “Weather”
- “Apathy”

What would make you visit Downtown Ames more often? – Other (please specify) (42 respondents)

No needed improvements (7 responses)

- “Happy the way it is.”
- “I could not possibly visit downtown Ames more frequently.”
- “I feel relaxed in downtown. I like that feeling.”
- “It's all very good now.”
- “It's great!”
- “Love downtown.”
- “We have NO complaints.”

Free parking (5 responses)

- “Free parking.” (x3)
- “It would be nice not to have parking meters.”
- “Not having to pay to park.”

Businesses I’m interested in (4 responses)

- “Clothing drives, grocery stores, drive-up foods.”
- “I don't find myself wanting to shop at the businesses and restaurants there as often as other places in Ames.”
- “More businesses that I use frequently - gas station, pharmacy.”
- “Normal things I can buy. I want to give money to local businesses, but I don't need random trash.”

More parking (4 responses)

- “Better parking availability”
- “More handicapped parking and parking in general”
- “More parking”
- “Parking!!”

More info/communication (3 responses)

- “Better communication of current events.”
- “Better signage for small businesses that give customers an idea of what they sell and how much it costs.”
- “Lack of knowledge of what Downtown offers (businesses, services, amenities).”

More/better restaurants (3 responses)

- “A wider range of attractive restaurants...especially a breakfast restaurant.”
- “More and better restaurants.”
- “More/better restaurant scene.”

More third spaces (2 responses)

- “Indoor places I don’t have to spend money (because the library isn’t always open).”
- “More “third spaces.”

Cheaper or had more money (2 responses)

- “Better economic circumstances.”
- “Lower Costs for going to those businesses.”

Miscellaneous (12 responses)

- “I think the whole thing should be rejuvenated. Doesn't appeal to Boomers. Go for ages 40-50.”
- “I would shop downtown if the Chamber was less "greedy" and focused on and included priorities other than growth and profits.”
- “Less traffic congestion.”
- “Lodging.”
- “Make Main Street a pedestrian - only area, like Iowa City.”
- “Music concerts by local groups, like a concert series.”
- “Nightlife establishments that aren't bars. Downtown has plenty of bars!”
- “People loitering around library area creates sense of concern for taking children anywhere in the Downtown area. People screaming at children is a negative.”
- “Pet-friendly establishments for ESA.”
- “Safer bike paths.”
- “Time.”
- “I can't do the walking anymore.”

What would make you visit Campustown more often? – Other (please specify) (48 respondents)

Nothing/not interested (21 responses)

- “Campustown feels like it's for students, so not typically interested in going there.”
- “I don't even know what Campustown is.”
- “I have no need to visit Campustown except for eating out occasionally.”
- “I was 21, 30 years ago. Campustown is not for me.”
- “I'm not going to Campustown regardless of what you put there.”
- “I'm too old for Campustown.”
- “Limited reasons to visit.”
- “My age and physical conditions on my walking distance.”
- “None.” (x2)
- “Not that interested in Campustown.”
- “Nothing.” (x6)
- Nothing, I am staff and I don't feel comfortable seeing students after hours. *(+ less people/students)*
- “Nothing, I try not to go there.”
- “Nothing. I have no reason to visit campus since I am not a student.”
- “Other than occasionally going to a place to eat. I don't ever feel the need to go to Campustown nor do I really ever want to.”

Better parking (8 responses)

- “FREE Parking.”
- “Terrible parking.”
- “Not having to pay to park.”
- “Parking.” (x3)
- “Parking handicapped.”
- “We are retired, don't visit Campustown. We would if we were given parking app information.”

No needed improvements (7 responses)

- “Also, great.”
- “Can't think of anything.”
- “Happy the way it is.”
- “I already visit as a student.”
- “I need to go there every day as I am a student in ISU.”
- “I'm already here all the time.”
- “It's a beautiful campus.”

Less people/student (5 responses)

- “Too crowded.” (x2)
- “When students aren't there!”
- “Won't until school it out.”

More events (3 responses)

- “Live music.”
- “More events more non-ISU students.”
- “More notice of events happening in Campustown.”

Businesses other than bars (3 responses)

- “Only bars, don't drink.”
- “Shops & food, currently mostly food.”
- “Thing to do for those <21 ie. not just bars & crap stores.”

Miscellaneous (4 responses)

- “Better economic circumstances.”
- “Flock Out.”
- “Less trash.”

In the past 12 months, have you felt treated unfairly in Ames because of the following? – Other (please specify) (5 respondents)

- “Age.”
- “Commuting on the bike and motorists frequently do not see you or respect you (they cut you off).”
- “Economics”
- “ISU police hassle old, gray-haired guys.”
- “Lack of doctors available.”

What is your gender? – Prefer to self describe (please specify) (1 respondent)

- "Male and female are not genders, babe. Those are sexes. But I prefer not to answer."

What is your race? – Other (please specify) (14 respondents)

- "'Indigenous' instead of "American Indian" in wording"
- "Asian, White"
- "Bengali"
- "Caribbean American"
- "European"
- "European/Scandinavian America"
- "Human"
- "Latino" (x2)
- "Middle Eastern" (x2)
- "Mixed race"
- "Mixture, black and white"
- "Multi"
- "North African"
- "Persian/Iranian"

What languages are spoken in your home? – Other (please specify) (50 respondents)

- "Farsi/Persian" (x10)
- "Bengali" (x6)
- "German" (x3)
- "Portuguese" (x3)
- "French" (x2)
- "Japanese" (x2)
- "Kazakh" (x2)
- "Malayalam" (x2)
- "Tamil" (x2)
- "Vietnamese" (x2)
- "Af-somali"
- "Bangla"
- "Danish"
- "Dutch"
- "Filipino/Ilocano"
- "Italian"
- "Hindi
- "Mandarin"
- "Nepali"
- "Norwegian"
- "Russian"
- "Sinhala"
- "Tagalog"
- "Telugu"
- "Turkish"
- "Prefer not to say"

What is your current employment status? – Other (please specify) (25 respondents)

Full-time student (15 responses)

- "Employed as part of my degree"
- "Full-time graduate student" (x2)
- "Full-Time Student"
- "Graduate student" (x6)
- "Graduate Student Working for University"
- "I have a graduate stipend from the university"
- "Student" (x2)
- "PhD student"

Self-employed (3 responses)

- "Side business"
- "Self-employed"
- "Self-employed part time"

Part-time student worker (3 responses)

- “Student Part Time”
- “Student employee”
- “Part time at the university”

Full-time intern/assistantship (2 responses)

- “Employed full time as an Intern”
- “Full-time Assistantships”

Miscellaneous (3 responses)

- “Looking for a job”
- “Semi-retired”
- “Disabled”

Do you rent or own your home? – Other (please specify) (5 respondents)

- “Living in an apartment” (x2)
- “Living with parents” (x2)
- “Own mobile home, rent land”

For what reasons do you rent? – Other (please specify) (19 respondents)

Cost (9 responses)

- “Affordable”
- “Expensive housing”
- “Houses in Ames are overpriced” (x3)
- “Housing options are very limited in the under $250,000 range” *(+ lack of options)*
- “I don’t have money to buy and maintain a home”
- “Large student loan balance”

Short-term stay (7 responses)

- “College student” (x2)
- “Graduate School long-ish term”
- “I don't know how long I'll live here”
- “International student”
- “Practical, given I don’t know if I’ll stay after grad school”
- “Renting apartment for undergrad”

Lack of options (3 responses)

- “Housing market, not too many houses for sale when I was looking”
- “Can't find the type of house I would want to purchase. Most of the homes on the market are either way too expensive or way too big for what I need/want.” *(+ cost)*

Miscellaneous (3 responses)

- “Personal preference”
- “Will move into a house we bought soon”

Research Team:

***Susan Gwiasda**, Communications & Outreach Manager, City of Ames, City Manager's Office, City of Ames*

***Nora Ladjahasan**, Research Scientist III, Institute for Design Research & Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University*

***Julie Robison**, Assistant Director, Institute for Design Research & Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University*

***Laurel Waterman**, Program Specialist I, Institute for Design Research & Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University*

***Srishti Malhotra,** Communication Outreach Coordinator, Institute for Design Research & Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University*

***Leannah Choi,** I-RAISE Intern, Institute for Design Research & Outreach, College of Design, Iowa State University*