

**Top 5 Community Issues by Community Type (2024-2025 Data)**

| <b>Urban Community</b>   | <b>Suburban Town</b>   | <b>Rural Area</b>  | <b>University Town</b>  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>1. Crime and Public Safety</b>  | <b>1. Traffic Congestion &amp; School Safety</b>   | <b>1. Digital Infrastructure Gap</b>   | <b>1. Student Housing Shortage</b>  |
| 41% of metro residents cite drugs and crime as top concern; violent crime remains elevated in many cities    | 38% of school leaders report traffic around schools poses safety threats; suburban traffic calming is a major priority                 | Only 72% have broadband at home vs 80%+ in urban/suburban areas; infrastructure doesn't support reliable high-speed internet | Two-thirds of college students live off-campus; severe shortage of affordable options                                 |
| <b>2. Housing Affordability</b>  | <b>2. Infrastructure Maintenance</b>   | <b>2. Healthcare Access</b>  | <b>2. Town-Gown Relations</b>   |
| Record-high share of organizations observe decline in affordable housing availability; costs continue rising | 71% say infrastructure like sidewalks, roads need expansion/improvement; aging suburban infrastructure requires significant investment | Limited healthcare facilities and specialists; long travel distances to quality care   | Student behavior, traffic congestion, and noise complaints strain community relations; need for ongoing collaboration |
| <b>3. Economic Development</b>   | <b>3. School Quality &amp; Segregation</b>   | <b>3. Economic Opportunities</b>   | <b>3. Parking and Transportation</b>  |
| 35% concerned with economy and jobs; need for local employment opportunities and business growth             | Suburban school segregation rising significantly; twice as many students in racially isolated schools since 2011                       | Limited job opportunities; economic dependence on agriculture or single industries   | Limited parking capacity; inadequate public transit; traffic congestion during academic year                          |
| <b>4. Infrastructure &amp; City Services</b>   | <b>4. Property Taxes</b>   | <b>4. Aging Population Services</b>  | <b>4. Noise and Disruption</b>  |
| Aging water systems, road maintenance, waste management; inadequate public transit in many areas             | 26% concerned about taxes; rising costs for infrastructure and school funding  | Residents want to "age in place"; need for senior services and accessible housing  | Unsupervised house parties pose health and safety issues; noise ordinance violations                                  |
| <b>5. Transportation</b>   | <b>5. Environmental Concerns</b>   | <b>5. Infrastructure Decay</b>   | <b>5. Economic Dependence</b>   |
| Motor vehicle theft more than doubled; inadequate public   | Growing concerns about climate change impacts; need for sustainable development practices  | Deteriorating roads, bridges, water systems; limited funding for rural   | Over-reliance on university as primary economic driver;   |

| Urban Community                      | Suburban Town | Rural Area                    | University Town                             |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---|
| transit; pedestrian<br>safety issues |               | infrastructure<br>maintenance | vulnerability to<br>enrollment fluctuations |

## Key Trends and Insights

### Most Critical Shared Issues:

- **Housing affordability** affects all community types, with record shortages reported across urban, suburban, and university areas
- **Infrastructure needs** are universal, though specific challenges vary by location
- **Safety concerns** manifest differently but remain top priorities everywhere

### Community-Specific Patterns:

- **Urban areas** focus heavily on crime reduction and economic development
- **Suburban communities** grapple with managing growth while maintaining quality of life
- **Rural areas** struggle with connectivity and access to services
- **University towns** face unique challenges balancing student needs with permanent resident concerns

### 2024-2025 Notable Changes:

- Crime rates showing improvement in many categories, with violent crime decreasing but motor vehicle theft remaining elevated
- Rural broadband access improved 9 percentage points since 2016
- Suburban school segregation accelerating, with new policy responses needed
- Student housing crisis reaching critical levels in university communities

Sources: Based on 2024-2025 surveys from Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Council on Criminal Justice, Pew Research Center, National Center for Education Statistics, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, and academic studies.