

The Morris Leatherman Company

2024 Findings and Implications

City of Roseville

City Demographics:

Roseville remains a balanced first-ring suburban community, with longer residential longevity, growing population diversity, slowing generational replacement, and decreasing numbers of renters than in the 2020 study. The median longevity of adult residents is 13.0 years. Twenty-six percent of the sample report moving to the city during the past five years, while 36% are there for more than two decades. Sixteen percent report they will move in the next five years, in contrast, 67% have no plans to leave during the next ten years.

Thirty-one percent of city households classify themselves as “single, no other family at home.” Five percent are “single parents with children at home.” Twenty-one percent are “married or partnered, with children at home.” Forty-three percent are “married or partnered with no children or no children at home.” Sixty-six percent classify themselves as “White.” Eleven percent are “African-American,” and ten percent are “Asian-Pacific Islanders.” Six percent are “Hispanic-Latino.” One percent classify themselves as “Native American,” while seven percent are “mixed/bi-racial.” Women outnumber men by four percent in the sample.

Thirty percent of Roseville households contain residents over 65 years old. Twenty-eight percent report the presence of adults between the ages of 50 and 64; fifty-four percent contain adults between the ages of 18 and 49. Twenty-six percent of the households contain school-aged children or pre-schoolers. Sixty-eight percent own their current homes, while 32% rent.

The average age of respondents is 49.8 years old. Forty-two percent of the sample fall into the over 55 years age range, while 27% are less than 35 years old. Fifteen percent live north of Highway 36 and west of Snelling Avenue. Forty-four percent reside north of Highway 36 and east of Snelling Avenue. Twenty-six percent are south of Highway 36 and east of Snelling Avenue, while 15% live south of Highway 36 and west of Snelling Avenue.

Forty-seven percent report they are fiscally stressed – either their monthly expenses exceed current income, or their monthly expenses meet their income, but little or no savings result. Fifty-one percent report no fiscal stress – either managing comfortably and putting money aside or managing very well.

Quality of Life Issues:

Eighty-seven percent, a drop of seven percent in four years, rate their quality of life as either “excellent” or “good.” In fact, a solid 33% deem it “excellent.” Thirteen percent, up eight percent since the 2020 study rate the quality of life lower. The overall positive rating is in the top

quartile of suburban communities, while the “excellent” rating is 13% higher than the Metropolitan Area average of 20%.

At 17%, “closeness to family and friends” leads the list of attributes people like most about living in the community. At 13%, three responses tie: “closeness to job,” “friendly people,” and “neighborhood/housing.” “Convenient location” places third, at 11%, followed by “parks and trails,” at nine percent, and “quiet and peaceful,” at seven percent. “Safe,” at six percent, and “schools,” at five percent, round out the list of statistically significant responses. The most serious issues facing the city remain “rising crime” at 25%, up eight percent in four years. “High taxes” and “aging population” rank at 16% and nine percent, respectively. Seven percent each post “street repair” and “lack of jobs and businesses.” Six percent point to “aging infrastructure.” A “booster” group of 22%, virtually unchanged from the 2020 result, says there are “no” serious issues facing the community – over twice as high as the Metropolitan Area suburban norm.

Eighty-five percent think things in Roseville are generally headed in the “right direction.” Thirteen percent regard things are “off on the wrong track.” This is primarily due to perceptions of “rising crime” in the community. A secondary factor contributing to the increase is “high taxes.”

A very high rating of 86% of the sample reports the general sense of community identity in the City of Roseville is “very strong” or “somewhat strong”; thirteen percent rate it lower. Eighteen percent report a closer connection to the City of Roseville “as a whole,” an almost four-fold increase since the last study, while 43% have a closer connection to their “neighborhood.” Seven percent report a closer connection to the “School District.” Twenty-three percent volunteer “family and friends.” And, five percent feel a closer connection to their “workplace.” As in the 2020 study, intermediary institutions and social precincts are prominent in the community as cohesive forces. Eighty-eight percent, a ten percent decrease in four years, feel “welcomed” in the City of Roseville, only eight percent disagree. The major reason for feeling welcomed is “friendly people,” while the only statistically significant reason for not feeling welcomed is “not knowing their neighbors.”

In thinking about a city’s quality of life, 24%, down eight percent in four years, feel the most important aspect is “safety.” Seventeen percent point to “sense of community,” 16% cite “good schools,” and twelve percent point to “quiet and peacefulness.” Nine percent each post “upkeep of the city” and “open spaces and natural areas.” Eight percent state “parks and recreational facilities.” Twenty-one percent believe “reducing crime” is the aspect of the city which needs to be fixed or improved in the future. Sixteen percent believe “lower taxes” and 11% feel the same about “better roads” as aspects of the city which need to be fixed or improved in the future. “More jobs” and “sidewalks” follow at eight percent each. Seven percent cite “more senior

housing,” and six percent point to “more public transit.” Seventeen percent, a decrease of 16% in four years, think there is “nothing” or are unsure about anything needing fixing or improving. Thirty-seven percent, a decrease of 16% since the 2020 study, believe there is “nothing” or are unsure about anything currently missing from the community which, if present, could greatly improve the quality of life for residents. Seventeen percent would like to see “more jobs”; 14% would like to see “more sidewalks”; 11% would like to see “more affordable housing”; and 10% each would like to see “more entertainment opportunities” or “more public transit.”

Community Characteristics:

In assessing the one or two most important characteristics of a high quality of life community, 48% point to “low crime rate” and 33%, down 10% in four years, choose “good school system.” This continues the order of the top two choices four years ago. Twenty-four percent pick “sense of community.” Nineteen percent select “well-maintained properties.” Sixteen percent each pick “low property taxes” or “job opportunities.” There are five characteristics residents consider to be of least importance: “variety of shopping opportunities” or “community events and festivals,” each at 11%, and “high property values,” “well-maintained properties,” or “sense of community,” all at 10%.

When examining the number or quantity of various community characteristics, majorities of residents think Roseville has “about the right amount” of 11 of 12 discussed. In the one case where opinions split almost evenly between “too many” and “too few,” residents are divided on affordable rental units. The 11 attributes posting higher levels of agreement about sufficient current numbers are: market rate rental units, condominiums, townhomes, affordable owner-occupied housing, “move up” housing, higher cost housing, assisted living for seniors, parks and open spaces, trails and bikeways, service and retail establishments, and entertainment and dining opportunities.

Eighty-nine percent, virtually unchanged from the 2020 study, are either “very committed” or “somewhat committed” to stay in Roseville if they were going to move from their current home to upgrade. Just as impressive, 88% are “committed” to staying in the city if they were going to move from their current home for downsizing. While most of the small number of residents who are not “committed” to stay in the city report there is nothing missing or could be improved to make them more committed to stay, 15% would like to see “lower property taxes” and eight percent wish for “expanded choices of affordable housing.”

City Services:

In evaluating specific city services, the mean approval rating is 87.0%, a significant 2.7% increase over the 2020 level. If we consider only residents holding opinions, the mean score is a

higher 89.3%, well within the top 10% of summary ratings in the Metropolitan Area. Over 90% rate fire protection, emergency medical services, sewer and water, building inspections, animal control and code enforcement as either “excellent” or “good.” Eighty-nine percent favorably rate police protection and drainage and flood control. Key reasons for giving services an unfavorable rating include “poor patrolling,” at 31%, “flooding,” at 18%, “loose animals,” at 16%, and “poor taste of water,” at 11%. Between 79% and 89% similarly rate street repair and maintenance, snow plowing, trail and pathway plowing in parks, trail and pathway plowing in neighborhoods, pathway repair and maintenance in the parks and pathway repair and maintenance in neighborhoods. The lowest rated service remains street repair and maintenance at 79%, which is a seven percent increase from the 2020 study. This service rating is now well above the Metropolitan Area norm of 60%.

Property Taxes:

Roseville residents remain tax sensitive during the past four years. Forty-six percent think their property taxes are “high” in comparison with neighboring suburban communities, while 45%, a 10% increase in four years, see them as “about average.” Eighty-five percent, an eight percent increase, view city services as either an “excellent” or a “good” value for the property taxes paid; this endorsement level now places Roseville within the top decile of Metropolitan Area suburbs. While 57% of the sample, a seven percent increase from the 2020 level, would support an increase in their city property taxes to maintain city services at their current level, thirty-seven percent, also a seven percent increase, would oppose an increase under these circumstances.

Solid majorities endorse the City continuing to invest in long-term infrastructure projects. By a 94%-5% margin, residents support investing in city roads. An 86%-13% majority favors investments in water and sewer pipes, and a 77%-21% majority feels the same about city buildings. An 80%-19% majority is in favor of continued investment in pedestrian pathways, and a 75%-24% majority endorses continued investments in bikeways. Overall, the average change in support in comparison with the 2020 study is an insignificant -2.7%, reflecting the stable consensus in favor of long-term investments during the past four years.

Sales Tax Referendum:

Respondents were reminded that Minnesota cities and counties are permitted to ask for legislation to permit a public vote on an increase in the local sales tax to pay for improvements that are regionally significant. The sales tax is assessed in the same way as the state sales tax, exempting items such as clothes and groceries. During the 2023 legislative session, the City of Roseville was given permission to hold a sales tax referendum this November for the construction of a Public Works and Parks and Recreation Maintenance Facility and a new license and passport center. Fifty-six percent report awareness of the November sales tax referendum.

They were told the City will ask voters to approve two questions for a new local half-cent sales tax increase for up to 20 years. The sales tax would expire once the approved projects are fully funded.

By a 69%-24% majority, residents support the referendum for the construction of a Public Works and Parks and Recreation Maintenance Facility. Strong support outnumbered strong opposition by a 13%-5% margin. Supporters base their decision on “reasonable cost,” “like instead of property tax increase,” and “needed.” Opponents base their verdict on “current inflation and economy,” “no more tax increases of any kind,” and “not needed.”

They were informed a second referendum question would be required to allow the funds from the same half-cent sales tax increase to be used to build a new license and passport center. There would not be a second half-cent sales tax increase if this referendum question passes.

By a 66%-29% majority, residents support the referendum for the construction of a new license and passport center. Strong support outnumbered strong opposition by a 14%-7% margin. Supporters again base their decision on “reasonable cost,” “like instead of property tax increase,” and “needed.” Opponents base their verdict on “current inflation and economy” and “not needed.”

Next, respondents were read three statements and asked if each one would affect their decisions. The table below shows the statement, followed by the percentage of respondents who are “more likely” to support the referenda, “less likely” to support the referenda, and “makes no difference” to them.

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<i>Statement</i>	<i>More Likely</i>	<i>Less Likely</i>	<i>No Difference</i>
A sales tax increase would not only capture sales tax from city residents, but also from people outside the city who make purchases in Roseville. A University of Minnesota study projected almost 64% of the new sales tax revenue would come from people who live outside of Roseville and use city services.	62%	3%	35%
It is projected with a half-cent sales tax increase that the typical Roseville resident would pay an additional \$55.48 per years in sales tax.	56%	10%	33%
The current city budget does not include funding to make these improvements. If the sales tax is not approved, the City could consider a property tax increase which only Roseville residents and businesses would pay. These projects could cost the owner of a \$350,000 home in Roseville about \$430.00 per year for the improvements only.	60%	6%	33%

All of the statements result in at least 56% of the respondents saying they are “more likely” to support the referenda. The negative impact never exceeds 10%. A consistent 33%-35%, though, were unmoved by each statement.

City Government and Staff:

Respondents give the Mayor and Council a job approval rating of 92%, an eight percent increase in four years, and a disapproval rating of six percent. The current fifteen-to-one approval-to-disapproval rating of the Mayor and City Council is now within the top five communities in the Metropolitan Area suburbs. The small disapproval rating stems from perceptions of “poor spending,” “high taxes,” and “overall poor job.”

Citizen empowerment remains high and shows a significant increase in the four-year interim between studies. The number of residents -- 22% -- who feel they could not have a say about the way the City of Roseville runs things is well below the suburban norm. This level of alienation is 11% lower than the 2020 level.

Residents award the City Staff a job approval rating of 92%, a nine percent increase from the 2020 level, and a disapproval rating of only five percent. Both the absolute level of approval and the 18-to-1 ratio of approval-to-disapproval are also among the top in the Metropolitan Area suburbs. The miniscule disapproval rating stems from “not listening to residents” and “poor spending.”

Neighborhoods and Businesses:

Ninety-three percent rate the general appearance of the community as either “excellent” or “good”; six percent are more critical in their evaluations. “Messy yards” is the chief complaint of the small number posting a negative judgment. Over the past four years, 49% think the appearance of Roseville “remained about the same,” while 44%, a 12% increase from the 2020 level, see an “improvement,” and only six percent, a “decline,” a ten percent decrease from the 2020 study. Code enforcement is also highly rated. Ninety-one percent award this service either an “excellent” or “good” rating, while eight percent are more critical, focusing on “messy yards” and “loose animals.” Fifty-eight percent are aware Roseville works with organizations to offer a variety of different housing programs for residential homeowners, including foreclosure protection, home improvement loans for interior and exterior remodeling, and a land trust program.

Garbage Collection:

By a 48%-37% plurality, residents support the City of Roseville changing from the current system, in which residents may choose from several different haulers to a system where the City manages trash collection; eleven percent strongly favor this change, while six percent strongly oppose it. Sixteen percent are unsure.

Supporters of the change base their decision primarily on “less truck traffic,” “lower cost with one hauler,” “less pollution,” and “better service.” Opponents cite “prefer to choose my own hauler,” “like current hauler,” and “competition creates lower cost.”

Curbside Recycling:

Eighty-one percent participate in the curbside recycling program by separating recyclable items from the rest of their garbage. The 19% who do not participate indicate they “rent or their association does it,” “do not have enough waste,” and “they think it is too much hassle.” Most program participants, 74%, down eight percent in four years, put their recyclables out for collection every two weeks; nineteen percent do so monthly. By a virtual tie of 50%-49%, participants narrowly favor a change to a weekly collection schedule for recyclables.

Sixty-seven percent of residents are aware of the drop-off site to recycle food scraps and other organic waste, an increase of 18% in four years. Among aware residents, 14% use the site at least once a week, 50% use the site at least once a month, and 18% are more sporadic users. Among

non-users, two statistically significant reasons are given: “no interest or too much hassle” and “not enough waste.” Among residents not aware of the organics drop-off site, a projected 14% would use the site. Among all residents, a projected 16% of households would use a curbside collection program for compostable waste if it were available.

Public Safety:

In rating the seriousness of public safety concerns in the City of Roseville, 15% think “drugs” and “traffic speeding,” at 14% are the greatest concerns. Thirteen percent each feel similarly about “youth crimes and vandalism” and “break-ins and theft from automobiles.” Eight percent consider none of these as serious concerns.

Seventy-one percent, down 12% in four years, rate the amount of police patrolling in their neighborhood as “about the right amount,” while 25%, up ten percent since the last study, think it is “not enough,” and three percent see “too much.”

Parks and Recreation:

Ninety-four percent rate the park and recreation facilities in Roseville as either “excellent” or “good.” Only six percent are more critical. Among the City’s recreational facilities, 38% most frequently use “trails,” 34% most often use “neighborhood parks,” and 10% most frequently use “athletic facilities.” Eighteen percent of the City’s households do not use any of these facilities. Ninety-three percent highly rate the upkeep and maintenance of Roseville City Parks; eight percent are more critical in their judgments.

Thirty-four percent report household participation in a city-sponsored park and recreation program. Ninety-six percent are satisfied with their experience. No statistically significant suggestion was made for offering new or expanding current park and recreation programs.

Thirty-seven, down eight percent since the 2020 study, report household members use the trail system at least once per week; thirty-five percent, up eight percent, do so several times a month or just monthly; fourteen percent are less frequent trail users. Fourteen percent report no one in their household uses the trails at all. In prioritizing expansions or improvements of the City’s trail system, 38% pick “construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and parks,” while 33% choose the “construction of additional trails for exercise within parks.” Twenty-one percent, down eight percent from the 2020 level, choose “construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and shopping and business areas.”

Sixty-five percent, a decrease of 16% since the 2020 study, are aware of the City's park buildings and the newer Cedarholm Community building. Thirty-six percent of the sample have visited or used one of the new park buildings. One hundred percent of park building visitors rate their experience as either "excellent" or "good," and an emphatic 95% would consider using one of the new park buildings or the Cedarholm Community building again in the future. A nearly-unanimous 95% feel the current mix of recreational or sports facilities meets the needs of members of their household.

Communications Issues:

The City newsletter and the City website are the most often indicated primary sources of information about the community, at 42% and 20%, respectively. The "grapevine" ranks third, at 13%. Email/e-newsletter is relied upon by eleven percent of the sample. "Social media" completes the list at 10%. Preferred sources of information about City Government and its activities are slightly different from the existing communications pattern. This time, the City publications and newsletters are at the top of the list at 43%, followed by the City website, at 21%. Ten percent choose the City's Facebook page, while nine percent indicate email, and eight percent opt for direct mail.

Seventy-six percent receive the "Roseville City News," and 92% of this group regularly read it. The reach of the publication is 70% of the community's households, lower by five percent from the 2020 level. The newsletter's effectiveness as an information channel is highly rated. Ninety-three percent, an increase of nine percent since the 2020 study, see it as "effective" in keeping them informed about activities in the city.

Social media usage among Roseville residents has changed since the 2020 study. Seventy-seven percent use the City website, sixty-two percent use "email," and 61% use Facebook. Forty-eight percent use "YouTube," 40% tweet, and 37% use "Nextdoor." Thirty-five percent, over three times the 2020 level, report using other social media sites. Over 70% of the users of five social media sources would be likely to use each to obtain City information: the "City website," "email," "other social media sites," "Facebook," and "Nextdoor."

Eighty-seven percent rate the City's overall performance in communicating key local issues to residents as either "excellent" or "good." Thirteen percent are more critical in their evaluations. This rating remains among the top five in the Metropolitan Area.

Conclusions:

As in the 2020 study, the key issues in 2024 facing decision-makers is addressing perceptions about “rising crime,” particularly “drugs,” “youth crimes and vandalism,” and “automobile break-ins and theft.” Unlike other suburbs, concerns about crime in Roseville have not seriously eroded the high levels of approval and support for the quality of life, fiscal management of the community, direction of the city, tax tolerance, government job ratings, and sense of community. So far, the City has done a comparatively good job tempering the concern about crime. Since 48% rate “safety” as the most important aspect of city’s future quality of life, “crime”— together with its prevention and reduction – should continue to be given a high place in the discussion of issues, policies, and resource allocation. Additionally, worries about “speeding traffic” and “more police patrolling” will need to be discussed and a framework for policy goals considered.

While perceptions of city property taxes have worsened across the Greater Metropolitan Area suburbs, the general hostility is far more moderate in Roseville than the regional trend would suggest. Even so, it should be considered a more limiting factor in using additional funds to maintain and augment services. While 46% still see their property taxes as “high,” this is nine percent lower than the current suburban average. A corresponding seven percent increase in the number of residents willing to increase their property taxes to maintain city services, indicates residents are more tolerant to a discussion of additional funding to continue to provide city services at their current level. It is also a testament to the high ratings city services are granted.

The proposed sales tax referenda are in the most curious position MLC has encountered this year. The 69% and 66% support levels do not deviate significantly among all demographic groups. Since 2024 is a presidential year, turnout will be at its usual maximum level. Only two demographic groups register even high levels of support: households containing 18-24 year olds, and residents in the Southeast or Southwest quadrant of the community. The major communications challenge facing supporters is to aggressively inform voters that the second question does not request approval of another half-cent sales tax increase. In addition, as always, another challenge will be to make sure voters know the referenda are on the ballot – a surprised voter usually votes against a referendum.

Community development efforts should continue to focus on helping seniors stay in the community and provide younger adults options to move into the city. Moderate concerns continue about assisted living opportunities for seniors. This perception is in line with the very high levels of commitment to staying in the city if residents moved from their current homes.

The parks and recreation system remains the “crown jewel” in the City’s quality of life. Usage is still higher than expected viewed against the demography of the community. Park buildings and the newer Cedarholm Community Building are very well-received by the public. Trails and

neighborhood parks play an unusually large and growing role in city life, acting as key ingredients in the strong sense of community. No strong consensus is present on future city trails and sidewalk expansions: thirty-eight percent support the construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and parks, 33% favor the construction of additional trails for exercise within parks, and 21% prioritize the construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and shopping and business areas.

Information levels about City Government activities remain extremely high in comparison with neighboring communities. Positive ratings of the Mayor, City Council and City Staff are among the top of the Metropolitan Area. “Roseville City News,” the City newsletter, and the City website are very well used and exceptionally well regarded. In fact, the City newsletter continues to possess higher readership and effectiveness ratings than most peer communities.

Citizens remain enthusiastic about their City. At a time when government at different levels polarizes people, Roseville residents are overall extremely satisfied with their local government and its services. With a 22% “city booster” core, the City still possesses a large reservoir of goodwill which has served it well.

Methodology:

This study contains the results of a sample of 400 randomly selected adult residents residing in the City of Roseville. Professional interviewers conducted the survey by telephone between April 18th and May 7th, 2024. The typical respondent took seventeen minutes to complete the questionnaire. The non-response rate was 5.5%. The results of the study are projectable to all adult City of Roseville residents within $\pm 5.0\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.