

The Morris Leatherman Company

2020 Findings and Implications

City of Roseville

City Demographics:

Roseville remains a demographically balanced first-ring suburban community but showing more generational change and somewhat greater diversity than in the 2018 study. The median longevity of adult residents is 11.5 years, down 0.8 years since the last study. Twenty-eight percent of the sample report moving to the city during the past five years, while 32% are there for more than two decades. Eight percent report they will move in the next five years, in contrast, 69% have no plans to leave during the next ten years.

Twenty-seven 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-six percent are “married or partnered with no children or no children at home.” Sixty-one percent classify themselves as “White.” Thirteen percent are “African-American,” and eleven percent are “Asian-Pacific Islanders.” Six percent are “Hispanic-Latino.” Two percent classify themselves as “Native American,” while seven percent are “mixed/bi-racial.”

Twenty-five percent of Roseville households contain residents over 65 years old. Thirty percent report the presence of adults between the ages of 50 and 64; fifty-eight percent contain adults between the ages of 18 and 49. Twenty-nine percent of the households contain school-aged children or preschoolers. Sixty-two percent own their current homes, while 38% rent.

The average age of respondents is 48.0 years old. Thirty-seven percent of the sample fall into the over 55 years age range, while 26% are less than 35 years old. Women outnumber men by four percent in the sample. 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.

Quality of Life Issues:

Ninety-four percent rate their quality of life as either “excellent” or “good.” In fact, a high 42% deem it “excellent.” Only five percent rate the quality of life lower. The overall positive rating is at the top of suburban communities, while the “excellent” rating remains double the Metropolitan Area average of 20%.

At 19% and 15%, respectively, “proximity to job” and “closeness to family” lead the list of attributes people like most about living in the community. “Neighborhood and housing” is third,

at 14%, followed by “quiet and peaceful,” at 12%. The most serious issues facing the city remain “rising crime” at 17%, down five percent in two years. “High taxes” and “aging population” rank at 14% each. Eleven percent point to “aging infrastructure.” A “booster” group of 19%, virtually unchanged from the 2018 result, says there are “no” serious issues facing the community; twice as high as the Metropolitan Area suburb.

Eighty-seven percent think things in Roseville are generally headed in the “right direction.” But, 12% regard things are “off on the wrong track.” This is primarily due to perceptions of “rising crime” in the community. Secondary factors contributing to the increase include “poor City spending,” “high taxes,” and “growing diversity.”

A very high rating of 88% of the sample report the general sense of community in the City of Roseville is “very strong” or “somewhat strong”; eleven percent rate it lower. Five percent report a closer connection to the City of Roseville “as a whole,” a decrease of twelve percent since the last study, while 46% have a closer connection to their “neighborhood,” up 16% in two years. Five percent report a closer connection to the “School District”; eight percent, half the 2018 level, to their “church; fifteen percent, a 10% increase from the 2018 level, to their “workplace”; and, 21%, unchanged since the last study, to their “family and friends.”

Intermediary institutions and social precincts are replacing geography as cohesive forces. An almost-unanimous 98% feel “welcomed” in the City of Roseville.

In thinking about a city’s quality of life, 32%, down 7% in two 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.” Twenty-two percent believe “lower taxes” and 12% feel the same about “better roads” as aspects of the city which need to be fixed or improved in the future. Nine percent cite “more public transit.” But, 33%, an increase of 16% in two years, think there is “nothing” or are unsure about anything needing fixing or improving. Fifty-three percent, an increase of 12% since the 2018 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. Fifteen percent would like to see “more sidewalks,” and 12%, almost double the 2018 level, would like to see “more affordable housing.”

Community Characteristics:

In assessing the one or two most important characteristics of a high quality of life community, 52%, down seven percent since the last study, point to “low crime rate” and 43% choose “good school system.” This continues the order of the top two choices two years ago. Twenty-seven percent pick “well-maintained properties” a 13% increase from 2018. There are five

characteristics moderate percentages consider to be of least importance: “sense of community,” chosen by 20%, “variety of shopping opportunities,” at 18%, “community events and festivals,” at 13%, and “job opportunities” and “well maintained properties,” at 10% each.

When examining the number or quantity of various community characteristics, majorities of residents think Roseville has “about the right amount” of 8 of 12 discussed. In the four cases where opinions are more skewed in one direction or the other, residents split about the city having “too many” and “too few” affordable rental units and think Roseville has “too few” condominiums, townhomes and assisted living facilities for seniors. The 10 attributes posting higher levels of agreement about sufficient current numbers are: market rate rental units, affordable owner-occupied housing, “move up” housing, higher cost housing, parks and open space, trails and bikeways, service and retail establishments, and entertainment and dining opportunities.

Eighty-six percent, unchanged from the 2018 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 stay 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, 14% would like to see expanded choices affordable housing.

City Services:

In evaluating specific city services, the mean approval rating is 84.3%, an insignificant 1.5% decrease over the 2018 level. If we consider only residents holding opinions, the mean score is a higher 88.2%, well within the top 25% of summary ratings in the Metropolitan Area. Over 95% rate fire protection, emergency medical services, sewer and water, building inspections, animal control and code enforcement as either “excellent” or “good.” Between 90% and 94% favorably rate police protection and drainage and flood control. Between 74% and 81% similarly rate 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 72%; however this is 14% increase from the 2018 study. This service rating is now above the Metropolitan Area norm of 60%.

Property Taxes:

Roseville residents became less tax hostile during the past two years. Forty-six percent, a seven percent decrease since the last study, think their property taxes are “high” in comparison with neighboring suburban communities, while 35% see them as “about average.” Seventy-eight percent, a seven percent decrease, view city services as either an “excellent” or a “good” value for the property taxes paid; this endorsement level continues to place Roseville within the top quartile of Metropolitan Area suburbs. While 50% of the sample would support an increase in their city property taxes to maintain city services at their current level, 29% would oppose an increase under these circumstances; this split reverses the 2018 majority, 35%-51%, opposing this type of tax increase.

Solid majorities endorse the City continuing to invest in long-term infrastructure projects. By a 93%-6% margin, residents support investing in city roads. An 89%-8% majority favors investments in water and sewer pipes, and an 72%-23% majority feels the same about city buildings. An 84%-15% majority is in favor of continued investment in pedestrian pathways, and a 80%-17% majority endorses continued investments in bikeways. Overall, the average change in support in comparison with the 2018 study is an insignificant -2.4%, reflecting the stable consensus in favor of long-term investments during the past two years.

City Government and Staff:

Respondents give the Mayor and Council a job approval rating of 84%, virtually unchanged in two years, and a disapproval rating of 10%. The current eight-to-one approval-to-disapproval rating of the Mayor and City Council remains among the top decile of ratings in the Metropolitan Area suburbs.

Citizen empowerment is still high but shows a decline in the two-year interim between studies. The number of residents -- 33% -- who feel they could not have a say about the way the City of Roseville runs things is at the suburban norm. This level of alienation is 7% higher than the 2018 level. It is important to note that uncertainty on this question increased from 3% to 19% and probably reflects the current environment in which the City operates during the pandemic.

Residents award the City Staff a job approval rating of 83% and a disapproval rating of only three percent. Both the absolute level of approval and the 27-to-1 ratio of approval-to-disapproval are also among the top in the Metropolitan Area suburbs.

Neighborhoods and Businesses:

Ninety-five 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 two years, 51% think the appearance of Roseville “remained about the same,” while 32% see an “improvement,” and sixteen percent, a “decline,” a ten percent increase from the 2018 study. Code enforcement is also highly rated: 87% award this service either an “excellent” or “good” rating; nine percent are more critical, focusing on “messy yards” and “rundown homes.” Only 44% are aware Roseville offers a housing program for residential home improvements and foreclosure protection.

Garbage Collection:

By a narrow 26%-33% margin, residents oppose 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; seven percent strongly favor this change, while 11% strongly oppose it. A very large 42% are unsure, an increase of 20% during the past two years.

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

Curbside Recycling:

Seventy-seven percent participate in the curbside recycling program by separating recyclable items from the rest of their garbage. The 23% who do not participate indicate they “rent,” “don’t have enough waste,” and “they have no interest.” Most program participants, 82%, put their recyclables out for collection every two weeks; fifteen percent do so monthly. By a 37%-48% split, participants oppose a change to a weekly collection schedule for recyclables.

By a 39%-33% margin, residents narrowly oppose a curbside collection program for compostable waste for an additional fee. The main reasons for opposition are the “additional cost,” “smell,” and “attracts wildlife,” while the main reason for support is “general environmental benefits.” If a curbside collection program for compostable waste were available, 33%, unchanged from two years ago, of the households surveyed would be at least “somewhat likely” to participate; but, using standard market projection techniques, only 11% would participate in the new program.

Forty-nine percent of residents are aware of the drop-off site to recycle food scraps and other organic waste which opened last fall. Among this 49%, fifty-five percent had not used the drop-off site. About 22% of all residents report using the facility a couple of times a month. Among the 51% not aware of the drop-off site, only 24% indicate they would be likely to use it.

Public Safety:

In rating the seriousness of public safety concerns in the City of Roseville, 31% think “traffic speeding,” an increase of 12%; and 17% feel “residential crimes,” an increase of 12%; are the greatest concern. Eleven percent each feel similarly about “youth crimes and vandalism” and “break-ins and theft from automobiles.” Only three percent consider none of these as serious concerns, one-tenth of the level in the survey taken four years ago.

Eighty-three percent rate the amount of police patrolling in their neighborhood as “about the right amount,” while 15% think it is “not enough,” and two percent see “too much.”

Parks and Recreation:

Ninety-seven percent rate the park and recreation facilities in Roseville as either “excellent” or “good.” Only two percent are more critical. Among the City’s recreational facilities, 35% most frequently use “trails,” 34% most often use “neighborhood parks,” and 11% most frequently use “athletic facilities.” Nineteen percent, a decline of 9% since 2018, of the City’s households do not use any of these facilities. Eighty-nine percent highly rate the upkeep and maintenance of Roseville City Parks; six percent are more critical in their judgments.

Thirty-eight percent report household participation in a city-sponsored park and recreation program. A large majority, 83%, have no suggestions for offering new or expanding current park and recreation programs.

Forty-five percent report household members use the trail system at least once per week; twenty-seven percent do so several times a monthly or just monthly; and, 9% are less frequent trail users. Nineteen percent report no one in their household uses the trails at all. In prioritizing expansions or improvements of the City’s trail system, 34% pick “construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and parks,” while 31% choose the “construction of additional trails for exercise within parks.” Twenty-nine percent choose “construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and shopping and business areas.”

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June 2020

Eighty-one percent, a decrease of eight percent since the 2018 study, are aware of the City's park buildings and the new Cedarholm Community building. Thirty-eight percent of the sample visited or used one of the new park buildings. Ninety-nine percent of park building visitors rate their experience as either "excellent" or "good," and an emphatic 99% would consider using one of the new park buildings 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 Items:

The City newsletter and the City website are the most often indicated primary sources of information about the community, at 39% and 23%, respectively. Social media ranks third, at 17%. The "grapevine" is relied upon by nine percent of the sample, double the 2018 level. Preferred sources of information about City Government and its activities are somewhat different from the existing communications pattern. This time, the City publications and newsletters are at the top of the list at 26%. Twenty percent each choose "mailings to their home" or "city website."

Eighty-two percent receive the "Roseville City News," and 92% of this group regularly read it. The reach of the publication is 75% of the community's households, unchanged from two years ago. The newsletter's effectiveness as an information channel is moderately rated: eighty-four percent highly rate its effectiveness in keeping them informed about activities in the city.

Social media usage among Roseville residents remains stable compared to 2018. Seventy-eight percent use "e-mail," 55% use Facebook, and 63% access the "City website." Forty-two percent use "YouTube," 39% tweet, and 43% use "Nextdoor." And, 10% report using other social media sites. Over 60% of the users of four social media sources would be likely to use each to obtain City information: the "City website," at 100%, "Nextdoor," at 93%, "Facebook," at 73%, and "e-mail," at 63%.

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

Conclusions:

The key issue in 2018 facing decision-makers was addressing perceptions about "rising crime," particularly "drugs" and "youth crimes and vandalism." Concerns about crime in Roseville had

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June 2020

started to erode 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. The City has done a good job stemming the concern around crime. In 2018, 20% said “drugs” were the greatest public safety concern in the city, this has declined by more than half to 9%. Since 32% 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.

In 2018, judgments of City property tax levels had become more negative, and created a more limiting factor in using additional funds to maintain and augment services. While 46% still see their property taxes as “high,” this is a statistically significant seven percent decrease from two years ago. A corresponding 15% 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.

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 the lack of condominiums, townhomes, affordable owner-occupied housing and 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 continues to be the “crown jewel” in the City’s quality of life. Usage is still higher than expected viewed against the demography of the community. The new park buildings 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-four percent support the construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and parks, 31% favor the construction of additional trails for exercise within parks, and 29% would prioritize the construction of trails connecting neighborhoods and shopping and business areas.

Information levels about City Government activities are still high in comparison with neighboring communities. Positive ratings of the Mayor, City Council and City Staff remain near the top of the Metropolitan Area. “Roseville City News,” the City’s 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 19% “city booster” core, the City possesses a large reservoir of goodwill which has served it well over the challenging first half of 2020.