

THE MORRIS LEATHERMAN COMPANY

Report of Findings 2023 City of Red Wing

City Demographics:

Twenty-eight percent of Red Wing residents report moving to the community within the past five years, while 33% have lived there for more than twenty years. The median residential longevity is 12.4 years, consistent with the near parity of more recent arrivals and long-term residents.

Seniors live in 29% of the community's residences, with 20% of the city's households composed exclusively of seniors. School-aged or pre-school children are found in 27% of the households. The average age of an adult resident is 48.8 years old. Forty-one percent of the population lies in the over 55-year age range. Fifty-three percent of the households report the presence of two non-senior adults. Women outnumber men by one percent in the sample.

Sixty-seven percent of the sample report owning their current residence. The median residential home value is \$258,000. Forty-eight percent are "financially insecure" – either their "monthly expenses are exceeding their income" or "meeting their monthly expenses but are putting aside little or no savings." Fifty-two percent, though, are "financially secure" – either "managing comfortably while putting some money aside" or "managing very well."

The typical resident has post-secondary educational experience, but is not a college graduate. Twenty-six percent have high school educations or less, while 43% are college graduates.

Seventy-eight percent of the sample self-classify as "White." Eight percent are "African-American," seven percent are "Hispanic-Latino," and four percent classify as "Native American." Two percent are "multi- or bi-racial," and one percent is "Asian-Pacific Islander."

Twenty-eight percent reside in Ward One, while 25% live in Ward Three; twenty-four percent live in Ward Two, and 22% reside in Ward Four.

Quality of Life Issues:

Red Wing citizens are content with their community. Eighty-eight percent rate their quality of life as "excellent" or "good," twenty-one percent say "excellent." This level of satisfaction is among the top quartile across the State of Minnesota.

When asked what they like most about the community, 19% each point to "close to job" or "close to family." Eighteen percent cite "small town ambience." Thirteen percent each cite "housing/neighborhood" or "river/natural ambience." "Friendly people," at nine percent, rounds out the list of statistically significant responses.

Five moderately serious issues facing the community were identified: “high taxes,” at 21%, “too much growth,” at 14%, “lack of jobs,” at 13%, “crime,” at 11%, and “lack of businesses,” at six percent. A very large “booster” group, at 23% of the sample, saw no “major serious issues” facing the community; this level of boosters is in the top decile across the State of Minnesota. Eighty-six percent think things in the City of Red Wing are headed in the right direction.

Eighty-five percent rate the City of Red Wing as either “excellent” or “good” as a place to raise children; eighty-eight percent rate the City the same way as a place to retire. Ninety-five percent rate the general sense of community among residents as either “excellent” or “good,” only five percent rate it lower. A nearly unanimous 96% feel accepted, valued, and welcomed in Red Wing, only two percent disagree.

Eighty-six percent would recommend living in Red Wing to others, while seven percent would not do so. Residents recommending Red Wing will do so because of its “small town ambience,” “sense of community,” “river and natural ambience,” “quiet and peacefulness,” “parks and trails,” “safeness,” and “abundance of activities.”

In looking at the connection to their neighborhood, 58% report they have frequent contact with one-to-three neighbors, 25% have frequent contact with four-to-eight neighbors, and six percent have frequent contact with more than eight neighbors. Only 12% have no contact with their neighbors. A comparatively high 19% report doing or receiving a “a lot” of favors from their neighbors. Fifty percent report “sometimes” receiving or doing favors for their neighbors, while 31% either “rarely” or “never” do.

A total of 25% point to four aspects of the community needing to be fixed or improved in the future: “improve city services,” “update parks and trails,” “no more high density development,” and “better road maintenance.” Twenty-two percent think there is nothing to be fixed or improved in the future and seven percent are “unsure.” Similarly, 27% point to five currently missing community aspects which would greatly improve the quality of life for residents: “more recreation programs,” “a recreation center,” “more job opportunities,” “more entertainment options,” and “more retail businesses.” This time 40% think there is nothing currently missing and nine percent are “unsure.”

Community Characteristics:

Respondents were read a list of 17 community characteristics; they were asked if Red Wing currently has too many or too much, too few or too little, or about the right amount of each one. In ten cases, fifty percent or more of the sample think the community has “about the right amount.” The table is arrayed from highest to lowest by the percent thinking there is “too few or

little.”

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Too Few</i>	<i>Too Many</i>
Mental health services	54%	0%
Affordable health care services	48%	1%
Job training programs	43%	2%
Job and career opportunities	37%	1%
Entertainment opportunities	36%	8%
Activities and locations for children, 12 years old and younger	34%	4%
Activities and locations for teenagers	34%	5%
Housing people can afford	34%	7%
Affordable childcare	31%	1%
Lifelong learning opportunities for adults	29%	2%
Preschool programs	28%	1%
Small retail businesses	24%	2%
Big-box retail businesses	21%	2%
Grocery store options	20%	1%
Dining opportunities	19%	6%
Trails and bikeways	12%	25%
Parks and open spaces	6%	25%

The major development deficits in the community are “mental health care services,” “affordable health care services,” “job training programs,” “job and career opportunities,” “entertainment opportunities,” “activities and locations for children, 12 years and younger,” “activities and locations for teenagers,” and “housing people can afford.” Each is rated as “too few or too little” by at least 34% of the sample. These can be further placed into types: “health and wellness,” “jobs,” “entertainment,” “activities and locations for children and teens,” and “affordable housing.”

Ninety-three percent of the sample are satisfied with housing opportunities for them and their families; only six percent report dissatisfaction, pointing to the lack of affordable single family housing and rental units.”

When informed Red Wing’s population grew very modestly between 2000 and 2020, fifty-six percent view population growth as “about right.” Twenty-six percent regard it as “too fast,” and 17% see it as “too slow.” But, by a 60%-30% majority, residents support City actions and policies encouraging greater population growth; it is noteworthy strong supporters and strong opponents are about equal, at eight percent versus seven percent.

Forty-six percent report household members attended an arts, history, or cultural event in Red

Wing during the past year. Among attendees, the four most popular are: “Festivals,” at 27%; “Arts and Craft Shows, at 13%; “the Stage Theater,” at 15%; and “concerts,” at nine percent. Non-attendees do not participate due to “age/health,” “no interest” or “no time.” By a 66%-14% majority, residents agree the City should make more arts and cultural experiences available to them. The only statistically significant event residents feel is missing is “diverse cultural events.”

City Services and Taxes:

City service ratings proved to be within the top five percent of Greater Minnesota cities. The table below lists the normalized ratings for each city service, which does not include the “don’t know/refused” category.

<i>City Service</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Garbage collection	100%	1%
Trail maintenance	99%	1%
Park maintenance	99%	1%
Fire protection	99%	1%
Recycling service	99%	1%
Ambulance service	99%	1%
Cemeteries	98%	2%
Library services	98%	2%
Community planning and zoning	98%	2%
Park security	97%	3%
Building and housing inspection	96%	4%
Outdoor recreational services and programs	96%	4%
Police protection	95%	5%
Sidewalk maintenance	94%	7%
Community engagement and communications	94%	6%
Water and sanitary sewer services	94%	6%
Accommodation and control of storm water run-off	93%	7%
Animal control	90%	10%
Snow plowing	78%	22%
Pavement repair and patching on city streets	75%	25%

Twelve city services register solid positive ratings, above 95%; the lowest rated service – “snow plowing” and “pavement repair and patching on city streets” – at 78% and 75%, respectively, are at the statewide norm. The average positive rating of the 20 city services is an exceptionally strong 94.2%, within the top decile across the State. If the two outliers are dropped from the

computation, the average positive rating of the remaining 18 city services is 96.2%, the highest across the State. When asked for the basis of negative ratings, five key rationales emerged: “poor street repair,” “slow response time,” “poor plowing,” “loose animals,” and “poor drinking water.” The five statistically significant criticisms account for 76% of the dissatisfaction.

A solid 84% percent think the value of city services for the property taxes they pay is “excellent” or “good.” Thirteen rate it lower. By a 74%-15% super-majority, with 12% unsure, residents favor an increase in city property taxes if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level. Among supporters, the median property tax increase is \$5.52 per month or \$66.24 per year. Instead, opponents suggest cutting “waste” or reducing “recreational programs.”

Sixty percent would oppose higher property taxes to improve current city services or offer new city services. Another 21% are “unsure.” No statistically significant responses were specifically identified as acceptable services for augmentation or change.

Compared with neighboring communities, 54% feel their property taxes are “high,” 37% see them as “about average,” and one percent views them as “low.” These ratings mean the property tax climate in Red Wing is “moderately hostile.”

Respondents were informed the city share of their property taxes is about 44%. They were then told the City of Red Wing could offer financial incentives to attract specific types of development. Respondents were asked if they would support or oppose offering financial incentives to attract four types of development. The responses are shown in the table below.

Type of Development	Support Tax Incentives	Oppose Tax Incentives
Retail businesses	78%	20%
Manufacturing businesses	78%	21%
Housing	73%	24%
Dining and entertainment establishments	63%	36%

Residents endorse financial incentives for the first three, shaded in green, by at least 3-to-1. Much less enthusiasm is found for financial development incentives in the case of “dining and entertainment opportunities.”

As an option to increase additional revenue, residents were asked about two approaches: a half-cent sales tax increase or opening a city-owned cannabis dispensary. By a majority of 66%-31%, with four percent uncertain, respondents support a one-half percent sales tax increase. By a plurality of 49%-39%, with 13% undecided, respondents support opening a city-owned cannabis dispensary; the latter option incurs significantly less support and more opposition than the

former. As a general question, all residents were asked if they support or oppose restricting the number of licenses to sell cannabis in Red Wing, based on State guidelines; by a 50%-40% split, with 11% undecided.

City Government:

A majority of 67% feel they could have a say about the way things are run in this community, beyond their vote. A comparatively very low five percent disagree; most disagreement stems from the view they will not be listened to.

Thirty-five percent feel they know “a great deal” or “a fair amount” about the work of the Mayor and City Council. Sixty-five percent, though, feel they know “very little” or “nothing” about their work. With a 71%-7% approval-to-disapproval rating, residents endorse the job of the Mayor and City Council; an unusually large 23% are unable to respond to this query. Approval ratings are based on: “no issues or problems,” “good development decisions,” “good communications,” and “good fire and police services.” Disapproval ratings stem from: “poor communications.”

City Staff:

Thirty-one percent report having “quite a lot” or “some” contact with Red Wing City Staff, 10% above the statewide norm. Seventy-five percent rate job performance of Red Wing City employees as either “excellent” or “good,” while 23% see it as “only fair” or “poor.” This rating is in the third quartile of Greater Minnesota communities.

By a uniquely high 86%-4% super-majority, respondents believe City Staff works in residents’ best interests. The very small percentage of negative responses stems from the “not listening to requests” and “being distinctly unhelpful.”

Sustainability:

Respondents were told “sustainability” is defined as the ability to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Ninety-six percent regard the City of Red Wings’ work to become more sustainable as at least “somewhat important,” forty percent see it as “very important.” Only four percent rate it less so. Ninety-six percent support continued efforts by the City to encourage the use of renewable energy for businesses and homes. Ninety-four percent support efforts by the City to preserve and conserve natural open

spaces; only three percent oppose these efforts.

Parks and Recreation:

A solid 88% feel the current mix of recreational facilities in the city sufficiently meets the needs of their household members. Among the 11% who regard them as insufficient, most see the need for a recreation center and more recreational opportunities for children. Reinforcing this satisfaction level is the 64% who report they do not regularly leave the City of Red Wing to recreate elsewhere because facilities were unavailable there. Those leaving go to lakes for aquatic or boating activities, to play in sports leagues, or attend a fitness center. All of the sample rate the parks and trails in Red Wing as either “excellent” or “good,” thirty-two percent rate them as “excellent.”

Public Safety Issues:

During the past two years, 46% think crime has “remained about the same.” Thirty-eight percent think it has “increased,” while 14% think it has “decreased.” Eighty-four percent generally feel safe walking in their neighborhood alone at night; fourteen percent do not, essentially because of lack of safety anywhere these days and rising crime in the city.

Six percent report members of their households were a victim of a crime in the community during the past twelve months.

The Red Wing Police Department is very highly regarded. The table below shows a list of five descriptions, followed by the percent of respondents who think the description is “very accurate,” the percent who think it is “somewhat accurate,” and the percent deem it “inaccurate.” In each case the percentage of residents thinking the description is “accurate” exceeds 88%.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Very Accurate</i>	<i>Somewhat Accurate</i>	<i>Not Accurate</i>
Respectful	52%	43%	3%
Trustworthy	52%	39%	4%
Making a positive impact in the community	42%	47%	6%
Professional	38%	59%	2%
Fair and consistent	37%	55%	4%

Ninety-five percent report “in case of an emergency, [they] know where to find information about what to do.” Only five percent do not.

Transportation Concerns:

Seventy percent of the sample work either full-time or part-time. Forty-four percent work at home or at locations in the City of Red Wing. Thirty-one percent do not currently work. Among residents working in locations within the city or outside of Red Wing, eighty-seven percent favorably rate the ease of getting to and from work and 13% rate the ease lower.

Twelve percent of workers outside of the home report household members ride public transportation on a regular basis. Ninety percent rate the quality of the transit service in Red Wing as either “excellent” or “good,” ten percent rate the service as “only fair” or “poor.” Non-transit service users cite “preference to drive,” at 71%, and “no need,” at 16%.

By a 96%-3% super-majority, residents rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Red Wing as “excellent” or “good.” The major reason for more critical ratings is “traffic congestion.”

Communications Issues:

The “City website” is pointed to by a large 29% as their principal source of information about city government and its activities. The “Red Wing Republican Eagle” follows at 25%, with social media,” at 14%, and “direct mail,” ranking next at 13%. “Word of mouth” follows at eight percent and “Channel 6” bottoms the list of statistically significant responses, at five percent. The communications network is not dominated by a single source of information.

If they could choose the best way to receive this type of information, 28% indicate they would use “the City Website,” 22% would rely on “local newspapers,” 19% prefer “mailings,” 13% would rely on “social media,” and six percent prefer “City Beat, the on-line newsletter.” Together, these five sources are preferred by 88% of the city’s households.

Ninety-three percent have access to the Internet.

Conclusions:

Demographically, Red Wing is a stable regional center City. Residents tend to be somewhat younger than the Greater Minnesota norm, more well educated than the average, and more financially secure. They highly value the small-town ambience, the natural beauty and local river vistas, and community connectedness. But, they are also concerned about the tax base and lack of economic development in the community. The City is still regarded as an exceptional place to both raise children and to retire to, a balance maintained by few other areas. In fact, a

“booster” core of citizens, 23% strong – those who see no serious issues facing the City – is present; this booster group is almost four times higher than the average percentage in the State.

The high expectations among residents about city services are exceeded across-the-board. The average positive rating of city services is a very high 94.2%. Even the bottom-rated services, “pavement repair and patching on city streets” and “snow plowing,” receive a positive rating of 75% and 78%, respectively, above the norm across the State.

Among residents expressing an opinion, 71% approve of the job of the Mayor and City Council; a somewhat high 23% do not have enough information to make a judgment. Widespread support is found on a number of City Council actions and emphases: efforts to make more arts and cultural experiences available to residents, sustainability initiatives, preservation and conservation efforts, sustainability, and transit services.

The economic development priorities of residents are typical of Greater Minnesota regional cities: health care and mental health services, job and career training and employment opportunities, entertainment options, activities and locations for children and teens, more affordable housing and starter homes for young families. Interestingly, while a majority of residents view the current growth rate as about right, most residents would support City actions and policies encouraging greater population growth.

In the last survey, there were two distinct groups of residents divided by Wards. Ward One and Ward Three contained people who were not as enamored with the City and its services. While still positive, they tend to be less intensely so. Wards Two and Four residents were more solid supporters of city efforts. They rated every aspect of City government activities and policies highly, consistently posting the most positive results in comparison with the other wards. This has changed in the interim between the two studies suggesting greater homogeneity in residential outlook. Ward One residents are more negative than people in other parts of the city; their negativity though is less acute than in the past. Again, as suggested in the previous study, it will be necessary for the City to enhance its communications in Ward One and try other ways to build closer relationships there.

The summary phrase reflecting the current mood of residents is “constrained suburbanization.” In other words, policies should focus on maintaining the “humanness” of a “small town,” but whenever possible, expanding suburban amenities at a greater pace. As suggested before, Community planning, for example, should aim more at attracting tax revenue-generators, in addition to attracting services and offerings. The additional funding would allow decision-makers to accelerate the attraction of suburban amenities without unduly triggering tax resistance.

Even with these changing preferences for the future, the City of Red Wing is still rated by its

*City of Red Wing
September 2023 Residential Study
Morris Leatherman Company*

residents as among the best run and functioning cities across the State of Minnesota.

Methodology:

This study contains the results of a sample of 400 randomly selected adult residents residing in the City of Red Wing. Professional interviewers conducted the survey by telephone between September 11th and 26th, 2023. The typical respondent took 17 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The non-response rate was 5.0%. The results of the study are projectable to all adult City of Red Wing residents within $\pm 5.0\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases. "Cellphone only" households were 51% of the sample, "landline only" households were 14%, and "both landline and cellphone" households were 35%.