

The **MORRIS LEATHERMAN** Company

CITY OF LITTLE CANADA 2018 RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

Findings and Implications

Residential Demographics:

The typical adult resident has lived in the city for 11.0 years. Thirty percent moved there during the past five years, while 31% resided there for more than twenty years. Twenty-six percent of the households contain seniors; in fact, 17% of the households are composed exclusively of senior citizens. Twenty-six percent of the households contain school-aged children or pre-schoolers. The typical Little Canada adult resident is 49.3 years old. Twenty-one percent are under 35, while 20% are 65 years old or older. The typical adult resident has post-secondary educational experience, albeit short of college graduation. While 23% report high school education or less, 46% graduated from college. As things now stand, 18% expect to move from Little Canada during the next five years; but, 73% have no plans to move within the next ten years, if ever.

Six percent of the residents own or manage a business in Little Canada, and 20% report household members employed in Little Canada. Women outnumber men by two percent in the sample.

Sixty-five percent own their present residences. Thirty-five percent live in the Northeast Quadrant of the City of Little Canada, while 32% percent reside in the Southwest Quadrant. Seventeen percent reside in the Northwest Quadrant of the community, and 16% live in the Southeast Quadrant.

General Quality of Life Issues:

Eighty-seven percent of the residents have no intention to move from Little Canada within the next ten years. Only three percent intend to leave during the next two years, while four percent think they will move in the next two-to-five years, and seven percent, in the next six-to-ten years.

Forty percent of the City rate their quality of life as “excellent,” while another 56% rate it as “good.” Only four percent rate their quality of life lower. The 40% “excellent” rating again places the community within the top quartile of Metropolitan Areas suburbs.

“Convenient location” and “quiet and peaceful” are the most liked aspect of living in Little Canada, both at 17%. “Friendly people” and “small town ambience” follow at 14% and nine percent respectively. “Close to family,” at eight percent, “parks and trails” or “close to job,” each at seven percent, and “safe community,” at five percent, round out the list.

In assessing the most serious issue facing the community, 14% point to “rising crime rate” and eight percent cite “high taxes.” “Too much growth” follows at five percent. Seventeen other issues are raised, but none meet the five percent threshold of statistical significance. In addition, no problem is mentioned by more than 20%, the cut-line indicating a “very serious issue.” Boosters – residents who feel there is no serious issues facing the community – are 23%, four times the suburban norm and an increase of five percent in seven years.

A very high 92% think things in Little Canada are generally headed in the right direction. A solid 88%, up seven percent in seven years, view the sense of community among residents in Little Canada as at least “somewhat strong;” thirty-four, almost triple the 2011 level, see it as “very strong.” When asked what they feel the closest connection to, 48%, down 17% since the last study, point to their “neighborhood.” Twenty-nine percent, a seven percent increase, cite the “City of Little Canada as a whole,” and 12%, over twice as high as the 2011 study level, feel closest to the “School District.”

Three aspects of the community are suggested by moderate percentages of residents to be fixed or improved in the future: seven percent each post “pedestrian safety” or “street maintenance,” while six percent feel the same about “rising crime.” Thirteen percent are “unsure,” while 24% think “nothing” needs to be fixed or improved in the future.

Two aspects of the community are suggested by moderate percentages of respondents as currently missing and which, if present, would greatly improve the quality of life for residents: “retail opportunities,” at 16%, and “recreational facilities,” at seven percent. But, 12% are “unsure,” and 43% think “nothing” is currently missing from the community.

Seventy-nine percent think the City does a good job of seeking input from residents; seventeen percent disagree. Similarly, 73% think they can have a say about the way the City of Little Canada runs things; twenty-three percent disagree. Residents older than 55, owners or managers of Little Canada businesses, and over 30 year residents are most apt to feel unempowered; also, residents seeing high taxes as the most serious issue facing the community feel the same way.

Development and Redevelopment:

Next, community characteristics were considered. Respondents were asked to rate each of 10 characteristics on their adequacy in Little Canada. Residents could indicate there were currently “too much or too many,” “about the right amount or number,” or “too few or too little.” The table below shows each characteristic.

	<i>Too Few/ Too Little</i>	<i>Too Many /Too Much</i>	<i>About Right</i>
Affordable rental units	20%	18%	57%
Luxury rental units	16%	10%	59%
Higher cost housing opportunities	9%	10%	76%

	<i>Too Few/ Too Little</i>	<i>Too Many /Too Much</i>	<i>About Right</i>
Condominiums and townhouses	13%	11%	74%
Starter homes	26%	2%	67%
Assisted living for seniors	16%	3%	67%
One-level housing for seniors maintained by an association	20%	3%	64%
Service and retail establishments	25%	1%	74%
Entertainment establishments	25%	1%	73%
Dining establishments	26%	2%	72%

In each of the 10 characteristics, a majority of respondents think the City of Little Canada has “about the right amount or number.” But, in four cases – “starter homes,” “service and retail establishments,” “entertainment establishments” and “dining establishments” – “too few or too little” is indicated by about one-quarter of the sample. Similarly, 18% think there are “too many or too much” “affordable rental units.”

By a 61%-32% majority, residents support the City providing financial incentives to attract specific types of development.

Respondents were reminded the City does not patrol neighborhoods to enforce housing and property maintenance codes, but it does respond to and investigate citizen complaints. By a 59%-38% majority, residents support the City taking a more active approach to property maintenance and code enforcement. Between 75% and 86% think the code enforcement on five nuisances is “about right:” junk cars, yard maintenance, storage of garbage, recycling and composting cans, storage and parking of vehicles, boats, and trailers on residential properties, and exterior home maintenance, such as siding, roofs and windows. On each type of nuisance, though, between 10% and 21% regard the enforcement level as “not tough enough;” specifically, “yard maintenance” posts the highest negative ratings.

Eighty-nine percent rate the general condition and appearance of properties in their neighborhoods as either “excellent” or “good;” eleven percent, though, rate them as “only fair” or “poor.” Negative neighborhood primarily stem from “rundown properties” in their neighborhoods.

City Services:

When asked about property taxes in Little Canada compared with nearby areas, 38% feel they are “high,” while 54% reported they are “about average;” seven years ago, 43% thought their property taxes were comparatively “high” and 38% saw them as “about average.” Even so, by a 73%-17% majority, eight percent higher than the previous study, residents oppose increasing city property taxes if it were needed to maintain city services at current levels. Opponents cite two service areas for cuts instead: “street sweeping,” at 25%, and “wildlife management,” at 22%. Similarly, by a 68%-24% majority, residents oppose an increase in their city property taxes to

improve and enhance current city services. The minority of supporters point to three services they would like to see improved or enhanced: “more police patrolling,” at 19%, “street repair,” at 18%, and “trails,” at 11%. By a very high 11-to-1 margin, residents rate the value of city services favorably by a 90%-8% judgment. The eight percent unfavorable rating is about one-half the Metropolitan Area suburban norm.

When only the opinions of residents providing ratings of a service are considered, the percentage of favorable ratings ranges between 89% and 99%. The table below arrays each service with the percentage of informed respondents who rate it as either “excellent” or “good.” The percentages in parentheses indicates the change, where applicable, from the favorable rating posted seven years ago.

City Service	Favorable Rating
Fire response	99% (+2%)
Maintenance and upkeep of parks and trails	96% (-1%)
Wildlife management of deer, turkey and geese	96% (-1%)
Garbage and recycling collection	98% (+2%)
Canadian Days celebration	99% (+3%)
Snow plowing of streets	97% (+3%)
Police protection	96% (+3%)
Snow plowing of sidewalks and trails	96% (+3%)
Code enforcement	94% (+2%)
Street sweeping	99% (+7%)
Code enforcement	94% (+2%)
Building inspections	99% (+8%)
Snow plowing of sidewalks and trails	96% (+5%)
Traffic enforcement	93% (+5%)
Street lighting	92% (+5%)
Recreation programs for adults	96% (+11%)
Recreation programs for children	94% (+3%)
Animal control of dogs and cats	99% (+16%)
City street repair and maintenance	89% (+13%)

The mean favorable percentage for all city services is 96.0%, about 12% higher than the

Metropolitan Area suburban norm. Favorable service percentages shaded in blue highlight near-unanimous ratings; service percentages bordered more boldly indicate a minimum 10% increase since the last study. Critics of the City’s efforts on street- and sidewalks/trails-related services focus on four streets: “Labore Road,” “Rice Street,” “Sylvan,” and “Lexington Avenue.” The two main concerns behind unfavorable evaluations are the inadequacy of street lights and the lack of adult sports programs.

The table below shows each service with the percentage of respondents who consider it to be “essential.”

City Service	Essential Rating
Fire response	80% (+17%)
Police protection	78% (+15%)
Snow plowing of streets	71% (+36%)
Garbage and recycling collection	60% (+25%)
Traffic enforcement	59% (+15%)
City street repair and maintenance	57% (+17%)
Snow plowing of sidewalks and trails	53% (+37%)
Street lighting	40% (+14%)
Street sweeping	38% (+19%)
Code enforcement	37% (+26%)
Building inspections	34% (+23%)
Maintenance and upkeep of parks and trails	33% (+23%)
Recreation programs for children	26% (+17%)
Recreation programs for adults	22% (+16%)
Canadian Days celebration	20% (+8%)
Animal control of dogs and cats	19% (+14%)
Wildlife management of deer, turkeys and geese	13% (+4%)

The average essential rating given to the 17 city services is 46.6%. In every case, the percent rating a city service as “essential” increases between 4% and 36% above the 2011 levels.

Public Safety:

Twenty-percent, down 26% in seven years, believe there are unsafe areas in Little Canada where they would be afraid to walk alone at night. Of those who feel they are not safe 29% percent specifically point to Rice Street.

The most often-cited public safety concern is “traffic speeding,” cited by 22%. Seventeen percent point to “youth crime and vandalism,” while 16% indicate “residential crimes, such as burglary and theft.” Thirteen percent see the greatest public safety concern as “drugs.” Fifteen percent, about one-half of the 2011 level, think there are no public safety concerns.

Sixty-six percent think crime in Little Canada has “remained about the same” during the past five years; but, 26%, down ten percent in seven years, think it “increased.” Seventy-four percent think the amount of patrolling the Sheriff’s Department in their neighborhood is “about right.” On the other hand, 25% think there is not enough patrolling in their neighborhood.

Parks and Recreation:

Few residents express dissatisfaction with the current mix of recreational or sports facilities and city-sponsored recreational programs. Specifically, nine percent disagree about the mix of recreational or sports facilities, and eight percent disagree about the mix of city-sponsored recreational programs. Critics of the current mix of city-sponsored recreational programs would like to see more youth and adult sports programs.

Sixty-eight percent, a 19% increase since the 2011 study, report household members either “frequently” or “occasionally” use city trails. In fact, 33%, up 14%, of the household members use the trails “frequently.”

By a 71%-20% majority, residents think the City does not need more meeting room space for community and school district use. Intense opposition outnumbers intense support by four-to-one. If a property tax increase were required, support slips to 15%. By a 59%-26% majority, respondents do not believe the community needs an outdoor gathering space for festivals and events. This time, intense opposition outnumbers intense support by two-to-one. If a property tax increase were required, support drops to 22%.

The typical resident would support a property tax increase of \$2.92 per month or \$35.04 per year if a bond referendum were needed to fund the construction of these two projects. But, a large 31% would not support **any** property tax increase for these purposes, as opposed to 27%, who would support \$6.00 per month or \$72.00 per year.

Communications:

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents rate the overall performance in communicating key local issues to residents as “excellent” or “good;” eleven percent are more critical. The positive rating is among the top six communities in the Metropolitan Area suburbs.

Thirty-nine percent report their primary source of information about Little Canada City government and its activities is the City Newsletter. Twenty-five percent similarly regard the “City Website.” Eleven percent rely upon “local newspapers,” while nine percent each use “word of mouth” or “social media.” Thirty-eight percent also report their preferred method to receive information about the City is through the “City Newsletter,” followed by the “City website,” at 23%, “local newspapers,” at 11%, “social media,” at eight percent, and “e-mail,” at seven percent.

Seventy-eight percent recall receiving the City’s official newspaper, “The Roseville Little Canada Review;” sixty-one percent are regular readers of the newspaper. Seventy-six percent recall receiving the city newsletter, “Le Petit Canadien,” during the past year. Ninety-three percent of this group report members of their household regularly read it, establishing a readership of 71% of the city’s households. Ninety percent feel the newsletter is “effective” in keeping them informed about activities in the community. Seventy-two percent think that six times per year is the “right” frequency, but 25% would like to see the newsletter published more often.

Fifty-one percent of the sampled households currently subscribe to cable television, while 24% subscribe to satellite television, and 24% have neither. Among cable subscribers, 21% watched City Council and Commission Meetings on Channel 16. Twenty-one percent watched Community programming on Channels 14 and 15, and 11% watched local educational programming on Channels 18, 19, or 20. The reach of cable television, though, is somewhat lower than the Metropolitan Area suburban norm.

Fifty percent of city visited the City of Little Canada’s website. Ninety-nine percent rate the content of the City’s website highly, and 97% rate the ease of navigating the site similarly. Sixty percent are aware Little Canada webstreams City Council Meetings on its website; but, only 30% have watched a webstreamed City Council Meeting. Seventy-seven percent are also aware of the “Notify Me” option on the website, which lets residents sign up to receive notifications and alerts from the city.

Seventy-one percent use Facebook; seventy-nine percent of these users are likely to use Facebook to obtain information about the City of Little Canada. Sixty-two percent use YouTube; sixty-six percent are likely to use it as a source of city information. Twenty-nine percent tweet; sixty-six percent are likely to use Twitter to obtain city information. Twenty-six percent Instagram; fifty percent of this social media users are likely to use it for city information. Twenty-three percent

access Next Door; ninety-six percent are likely to consider Next Door as a source of city information.

Concluding Thoughts:

City residents are much more satisfied with their community than seven years ago. The quality of life rating is stronger, confidence remains solid, sense of community is stronger, impressive positive ratings of city services are posted, and closer connection to the entire community developed. The key issues facing decision-makers center are on rising crime and public safety issues, street maintenance and targeted redevelopment.

There are four implications decision-makers and staff may wish to bear in mind:

- City service ratings are among the highest in the Metropolitan Area. To maintain these very high city service ratings, in tight budget times, the City may need to act to protect several services from major reductions. Three of the highly rated services are also generally regarded as “core services:” police protection, fire response, and snow plowing of city streets. To maintain these services at current levels, residents would support a reasonable property tax increase; in fact, in view of concerns about public safety and rising crime rates, residents would support a property tax increase to improve and enhance police protection, especially focused on traffic speeding and youth crimes/drugs.
- Preferences for future housing development center on generational issues. There are good levels of support for increasing the number of starter homes for young families, as well as one-level housing maintained by an association or assisted living for seniors. And, more similar to an exurban community than a second-ring suburb, residents would also support additional restaurants, entertainment establishments, and service and retail offerings in the city. A broad majority supports financial incentives to attract specific types of development, if it proves necessary.
- The park and recreation system in Little Canada is very well-regarded by residents. High levels of household satisfaction with both facilities and programs are outstanding. But, there is little appetite for additional meeting space and an outdoor community gathering space if a property tax increase were required.
- A significant part of the consistent positive increase in support for City government and its operations is attributable to the exceptional job in communicating with residents; but the almost 50-50 split in written word/ mailing preferences compared with electronic media will require the City to undertake both channels for the near future. As more young families move into the community, this balance will undoubtedly shift more to the electronic side over the next decade.

Once again, Little Canada is among the most smoothly functioning suburbs within the Metropolitan Area. And, the City has one key advantage many other suburbs do not possess: a very large reservoir of good will from past actions, as well as solid confidence in the way present issues are being addressed and confidence in the ways the City will address the future.

Methodology:

This study contains the results of a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected adult residents of the City of Little Canada. Survey responses across the community were gathered by professional interviewers between August 7th and 22nd, 2018. The non-response rate was 5.0%. The average interview took 24 minutes. In general, random samples such as this yield results projectable to the entire universe of adult Little Canada residents within $\pm 5.0\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.