


## SUMMARY

# ST. PAUL AREA CHAMBER 2022 CRIME PERCEPTIONS SURVEYS


## SURVEY

The St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with Rapp Strategies, Inc. and the Morris Leatherman Company to survey attitudes toward crime and its impact within the city of Saint Paul, MN. The study contains the results of a sample of 800 randomly selected adult residents in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and a balloon sample of 400 Saint Paul residents. Professional interviewers conducted the survey by telephone between August 3rd and 19th, 2022. The results of the metropolitan sample are projectable to all Twin Cities Metropolitan Area residents within 3.5% in 95 out of 100 cases. The results of the Saint Paul balloon sample are projectable to all Saint Paul residents within 5.0% in 95 out of 100 cases.

**01** ▶ **Key Takeaway:** Most respondents believe crime is a growing issue, but are split over whether the rise in crime is permanent.

 **PREVALENCE**  
 Nearly two-thirds of St. Paul residents say crime is an increasing problem.

- 65%** St. Paul residents and 62% of Metro-area respondents say that crime is an increasing problem in St. Paul.
- 61%** St. Paul residents who see crime as an increasing or significant problem say they know someone who has been a victim of crime in the city in the last three years.

 **SEVERITY**  
 A majority of St. Paul residents say crime is a significant but temporary problem.

- 51%** St. Paul residents say increased crime is a significant but temporary problem
- 25%** Think increased crime is a significant and permanent problem
- 21%** Think crime is not a significant problem at all

## PERCEIVED CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF CRIME IN ST. PAUL

Respondents who perceive crime as increasing OR identified crime as a significant issue were asked a series of questions about perceived causes of crime, safety in St. Paul, and how concerns about crime are impacting their activity (Metrowide: n=634, St. Paul Residents: n=314). The following takeaways reflect the attitudes of this subsample.

- There is consensus that the issue of rising crime extends beyond St. Paul, impacting the broader metro area and Greater Minnesota.
- Respondents associate crimes against people (e.g. robbery, assaults, carjacking) most closely with the increase in crime.
- St. Paul residents show more dissatisfaction with the city’s efforts to address crime than any other issue except the maintenance of public infrastructure. Sixty-two percent say the city is doing either a “fair” (51%) or poor (11%) job protecting residents from crime.

### 02 ► Key Takeaway: Crime is significantly impacting the likelihood of respondents to work, play and do business in St. Paul.

An overwhelming majority of St. Paul residents report that concerns about crime are changing which areas of the city they visit, where they choose to eat and drink, and where they choose to do business and receive healthcare. Crime is having similar impacts on residents of the surrounding metro but on a lesser scale, likely due to decreased proximity to the city.

|  | St. Paul respondents             |                                | Metro area respondents           |                                |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Crime strongly impacts decisions | Crime is a factor in decisions | Crime strongly impacts decisions | Crime is a factor in decisions |
| Visiting St. Paul neighborhoods                            | 37%                              | 83%                            | 35%                              | 79%                            |
| Choosing restaurants, bars, taprooms                       | 38%                              | 79%                            | 29%                              | 68%                            |
| Choosing where to shop, do business or receive health care | 26%                              | 64%                            | 19%                              | 55%                            |
| Going out for dinner/ drinks after events                  | 23%                              | 54%                            | 23%                              | 55%                            |

Other impacts (crime is a factor in decisions): Attending concerts/plays in St. Paul (52% St. Paul/45% Metro); interest in applying for jobs in St. Paul (48% St. Paul/40% Metro); attending Winter Carnival events (44% St. Paul/42% Metro); attending MN Wild games (38% St. Paul/41% Metro); attending Saints or Loons games (35% St. Paul/36% Metro); staying in St. Paul for state hockey tournament (38% St. Paul; 41% Metro).

### 03 ► Key Takeaway: Concern about safety is greatest during the evening.

While a majority of respondents reported feeling safe during the day, less than half reported feeling safe in St. Paul during the evening.

|                        | Feel safe downtown during the day |     | Feel safe downtown in the evening |     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
|                        | Yes                               | No  | Yes                               | No  |
| St. Paul respondents   | 63%                               | 23% | 43%                               | 39% |
| Metro-area respondents | 52%                               | 24% | 46%                               | 31% |

**04 ▶ Key Takeaway:** St. Paul residents widely agree that crime is impacting key drivers of economic vitality.

St. Paul residents believe that crime is having the strongest impact on property values and business prosperity in the city. Even for the issues with the least reported concern (recruiting employees and new business investment), nearly half of respondents believe crime is having some impact.

|                                   | Crime is having a strong impact | Crime is having an Impact |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Property values                   | 40%                             | 81%                       |
| Hospitality success               | 30%                             | 74%                       |
| New business interest in St. Paul | 27%                             | 67%                       |
| Tourism                           | 31%                             | 65%                       |
| Resident exodus                   | 20%                             | 60%                       |
| Recruiting employees              | 17%                             | 48%                       |
| Business investment               | 16%                             | 48%                       |

**05 ▶ Key Takeaway:** Respondents recognize that crime is a complex problem with many causes.

Respondents were asked to score a range of factors on a scale of 1 to 5 based on how likely they believe each factor to be a contributor toward increased crime. No single issue was identified by respondents as the primary cause of crime. Rather, respondents consistently identified a mix of social factors and challenges facing law enforcement as contributors to rising crime.

| Perceived cause of crime       | Metro-area respondents | Eastern suburban respondents | St. Paul respondents |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lack of mental health services | 4.20                   | 4.13                         | 4.05                 |
| Lack of family structure       | 4.12                   | 4.07                         | 4.06                 |
| Not enough support for police  | 3.96                   | 3.91                         | 3.74                 |
| Lack of homeless shelters      | 3.93                   | 3.71                         | 3.84                 |
| Not enough officers            | 3.92                   | 3.88                         | 3.67                 |
| Lack of jail space             | 3.91                   | 3.94                         | 3.69                 |
| Lenient judges/prosecutors     | 3.87                   | 3.90                         | 3.67                 |

## SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO CRIME

The following takeaways apply to the entirety of the survey’s sample, regardless of whether respondents perceive crime as rising or a significant issue in St. Paul.

### 06 ► Key Takeaway: Respondents agree with a multi-dimensional approach to mitigating crime.

Respondents showed strongest support for solutions that expand social and mental health services and reform police departments to root out “bad cops.” Solutions that focus on growing police forces and increasing compensation for officers received the least support.

|  | St. Paul respondents |       | Metro area respondents |       |
|--|----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
|  | Strongly Agree       | Agree | Strongly Agree         | Agree |
| More funding for social, mental health needed to address crime | 55%                  | 83%   | 48%                    | 80%   |
| Reforms should address bad cops, avoid impacting entire force  | 51%                  | 89%   | 45%                    | 86%   |
| Police need more support for police from mayor, city council   | 43%                  | 83%   | 42%                    | 80%   |
| Police need major reforms to rebuild community trust           | 43%                  | 80%   | 44%                    | 78%   |
| More officers needed on streets to slow the crime wave         | 34%                  | 65%   | 32%                    | 68%   |
| Police officers should be better supported with higher pay     | 31%                  | 64%   | 34%                    | 62%   |

### 07 ► Key Takeaway: Most St. Paul residents are hopeful about the City of St. Paul’s Plan to improve public safety.

While St. Paul residents are dissatisfied with the City of St. Paul’s efforts to control crime (62%), a majority (56%) express confidence in the city’s plan to improve safety.

- 17% of St. Paul residents said they were unsure about the success of the city’s plan, indicating that attitudes toward the city’s plan will depend on perceived changes in crime over the coming months.
- While 38% of St. Paul residents want more funding for police, a majority (52%) expressed a desire for police to use their funding more effectively. Only 4% want less funding, and 6% were unsure.



10 ▶

**Key Takeaway:** Employees are significantly changing their mobility and economic participation downtown due to crime concerns.

Over two-thirds of employees reported that their concern about crime is impacting their use of skyways, and choices for dining, shopping and healthcare. Widespread impact was also reported to participation in key events in St. Paul such as athletics events, the Winter Carnival, and concerts.

| Activity                                    | Crime is strongly impacting decisions | Crime is a factor in decisions |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Using skyways                               | 36%                                   | 74%                            |
| Choosing restaurants, bars, taprooms        | 35%                                   | 76%                            |
| Choosing where to shop, receive health care | 30%                                   | 69%                            |
| Attending after-work events/happy hours     | 25%                                   | 64%                            |
| Attending downtown concerts, theater        | 25%                                   | 64%                            |

11 ▶

**Key Takeaway:** There is broad agreement that crime is impacting resident retention, and business prosperity in St. Paul.

An overwhelming majority of employees believe that crime is having an impact on key measures of economic vitality. The most commonly agreed upon impacts include the exodus of residents from the city to surrounding suburbs, and decreased business interest within St. Paul.

| Issue                             | Crime is a major impact | Crime is having an impact |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Resident exodus                   | 41%                     | 82%                       |
| Hospitality sales                 | 35%                     | 80%                       |
| New business interest in St. Paul | 32%                     | 76%                       |
| Business investment               | 31%                     | 79%                       |
| Tourism                           | 30%                     | 78%                       |
| Property values                   | 28%                     | 73%                       |
| Recruiting employees              | 27%                     | 72%                       |
| Conventions                       | 19%                     | 65%                       |
| School attendance                 | 17%                     | 61%                       |

## CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Crime is significantly impacting respondents' day-to-day mobility and economic decision-making, in particular "where to go" for business and leisure.** This suggests that there is significant economic risk to areas of St. Paul that are perceived as "less safe", particularly if perceptions of crime continue to worsen.
- 2. Respondents are aware of the risk crime poses to the health of the city.** As indicated by overwhelming concerns about property values, hospitality sales, and new business interest, respondents are worried about the secondary effects of increased crime in St. Paul.
- 3. Perceptions that crime is increasing are likely being driven by personal experiences, given the large share of respondents who know someone who has been a recent victim of crime in St. Paul.** However, the limited share of respondents who believe the crime increase is permanent suggests that most people are hopeful that the increase can be successfully addressed.
- 4. While most respondents are not confident St. Paul is taking effective action to reduce crime, the significant share that remains "undecided" indicates either a lack of familiarity with the city's plan, or a desire to wait and see what level of progress is made.** Either way, this suggests that the next few years will be critical to city's ability to build trust in its ability to mitigate crime.
- 5. Given the diverse range of preferred solutions to crime, addressing it will require a multi-dimensional approach that emphasizes improvements to both social services and law enforcement.**
- 6. The attitudes of St. Paul employees who completed the separate online survey do not deviate substantially from those expressed in the scientific phone survey.** While the results cannot be considered representative of the city's workforce at large, this offers some indication that employees of St. Paul Area Chamber members share the same general attitudes toward crime's causes, impacts and required solutions.