



## 2023 CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
From: Michelle Leise, Community Engagement Facilitator  
Meeting Date: July 24, 2023  
Agenda Item Number: 11.E.

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**Title** – Discuss the First Draft of the 2023 Red Wing Community Survey and Provide Feedback to Staff.

**Purpose** – The purpose of this item is for Council to discuss the attached draft survey by the Morris Leatherman Company and discuss potential additions and subtractions. The goal is to finalize the survey by the end of August so it can be conducted with the public in September.

**Recommended Action:** No action is necessary. For discussion and feedback purposes only.

### **Attachments**

- 1) Draft 1 of the 2023 Red Wing Community Survey

### **Alignment with 2019 Strategic Plan**

- Strategy #62: Continue to find ways for the public to give input into the decisions that affect them.

### **Background**

The City Council expressed an interest in conducting a scientific community survey this year to assist in upcoming strategic planning, and if timely, the 2024 budget. Red Wing last conducted scientific community surveys in 2005, 2013, and 2017. These past three surveys have all been conducted by the Morris Leatherman Company from Minneapolis, and the City has been very pleased with its work.

At the Council's June 26, 2023, meeting, Council members voted unanimously to work with the Morris Leatherman Company (MLC), and at the July 10, 2023, Council meeting, Council members unanimously approved the contract. Council expressed these reasons for choosing the Morris Leatherman Company:

- MLC can guarantee demographic results that equal or are extremely close to the percentages of Red Wing's overall population;
- MLC has a trusted track record with Red Wing;
- MLC can supply comparisons to how our community answered the same questions in the past;
- MLC can share how Red Wing compares to other Minnesota cities with similar demographics on specific questions that Red Wing and MLC agree upon;
- MLC's method draws out answers from residents that are more detailed and in-depth and often provide reasons why someone feels a certain way.

The Morris Leatherman Company uses the phone method, calling a random sample of landlines and cell phone numbers and ensuring all demographic groups and geographic wards are represented. While fewer surveys utilize the phone method today, Peter Leatherman, who has conducted the last three surveys for Red Wing, uses this method because he believes it is the most representative and accurate.

Interviewers call the representative sample of phone numbers many times (sometimes as many as 20 times) and leave messages so respondents can call back and either answer the survey right away or schedule a future time. Using the call method, the interviewers make sure that each demographic group is accurately represented by its percentage in the Red Wing population (age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic area, rent/own, etc.).

MLC uses a random, scientific sample of residents and provides a statistically significant result with a margin of error of plus or minus 5% of the entire population 95% of the time, which means getting responses from roughly 400 people. (These were the same parameters for the other survey company that was considered, as well.)

When the City publicizes the survey throughout the community, we will share this phone number so residents will hopefully be looking for it on their phones. No mailers specifically from MLC are sent. The City, however, will publicize the survey in multiple ways, including an insert with the utility bill, on social media, the newspaper and radio, our online newsletter (City Beat), and at events like River City Days and Night to Unite. Not everyone will be randomly chosen for the survey, but it will be helpful to publicize it so residents know this is a trusted project (not a scam) and that by completing it, they will be helping their community.

The survey that was conducted in 2017, and the results, were published in the Council packet of the June 26, 2023, meeting. More information on MLC is at [morris-leatherman.com/](http://morris-leatherman.com/).

## **Discussion**

Based on the feedback that has been provided by Council so far, a number of questions have been added to the 2017 survey. These questions have been highlighted in yellow in the attached survey draft. Below are summaries of the new questions:

Questions #65 through #69 focus on asking if residents would support or oppose paying more in their city property taxes to maintain and/or improve city services, and asks what service(s) they would cut if necessary, along with what city services they would like to add or improve.

Questions #70 through #73 ask if people would support or oppose the City providing financial incentives to different types of development initiatives including housing, manufacturing, and retail.

Question #5 is an often-asked question in other cities, and staff felt this would be a good addition to Red Wing's survey because it shares how people are feeling overall about where Red Wing is headed into the future.

Questions #28, #30, and #31 ask about people's perceptions related to the amount of job/career opportunities in Red Wing, along with their thoughts on the amount of big-box stores and small retail businesses.

Questions #47 and #49 provide options for feedback on new or expanded city departments.

Questions #79 and #80 ask if residents would like more interaction with their mayor and Council, and if so, how people would like that to happen.

Question #109 is highlighted, but it is not an entirely new question; it is simply clarified. This is a question about where employed people work (in Red Wing, outside of Red Wing, or work from home). Since many people now work at home, this question was reworded.

Questions #127 and 129 are demographic questions that were not asked in the past in Red Wing, but are frequently asked in other cities. The first asks about race and ethnicity; the second asks about gender identity.

To make room for the new questions, two items have been removed in this first draft. Question #71 from the 2017 survey asked if residents think the City should recognize climate change in its future policies. The City currently does this consistently and plans to continue based on research and evidence. Question #83 from the 2017 survey asked residents about their screen time. This can be added back in, but it was removed from this first draft to leave enough space for economic questions that seemed to be of particular interest to the Council.

Staff will take the Council's feedback at the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, and in consultation with the Morris Leatherman Company, incorporate that input and bring back a revised draft of the survey to the August 14 Council meeting. The Council will be asked to finalize and approve the survey questions (at the latest) at the August 28 meeting.

MLC will use an aggressive timeline to conduct the survey with residents in September,

starting immediately after the Labor Day holiday weekend, and get results to City Council in early October.

**Financial Plan and Impact** – The cost for the Morris Leatherman Company survey services will not exceed \$28,000. The funds will come from internal labor costs that have been saved this year due to staffing shortages across the city organization. This plan was approved at the July 10, 2023, City Council meeting.

**Recommended Action** - No action is necessary. For discussion and feedback purposes only.