



MEMORANDUM

Summary & Observations of the 2018 Community Survey

December, 2018

In the spring of 2018, the City of Mounds View conducted an opinion survey as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, receiving 845 responses to 15 questions (below), totaling 55 pages. The intent of this Memorandum is to provide a summary of the 845 responses, including observations of themes, and to provide some context of issues raised.

1. *Please choose the top three factors you like most about Mounds View?*

- 51% *Access to highways*
- 45% *Schools*
- 45% *My neighborhood and/or neighbors*
- 43% *My house*

Observations:

Themes from open-ended responses include liking; **large wooded lots**; and **proximity** to destinations.

Each family has its own story of why they moved to Mounds View, but it is likely that the city's location and school district is why families came, and chose to stay because of their neighborhood and home.

Much of western and northwestern Mounds View was platted prior to World War II as large acreage lots. Over the years these lots were split, but many today consist of a half-acre, twice the size of modern suburban lots. This is one important characteristic that separates Mounds View from other suburbs.

According to the Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors, in 2018, Mounds View homes sold within an average of 35 days (47 days within the 16-county metro area).¹ This is one indication that Mounds View is a desirable place to live.

The Mounds View School District has consistently performed well, and is perhaps the greatest attribute to the community.

¹ Minneapolis Area Realtors, [Local Market Update – October 2018](#). Accessed December 12, 2018.

1% (6) of respondents did not answer Question #1.

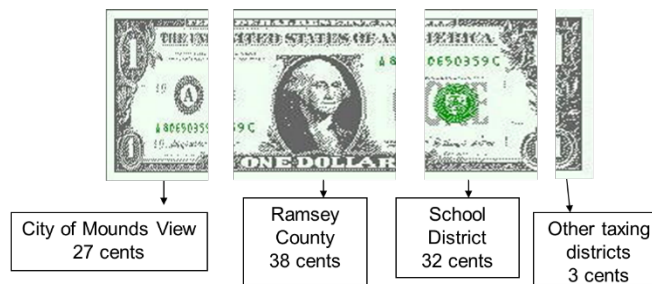
2. **Please choose the top three factors you like least about Mounds View?**

- 46% *Level of Property Taxes*
- 40% *Traffic on local roads (not US 10/I-35W)*
- 14% *Distance from family*
- 14% *Distance from job*

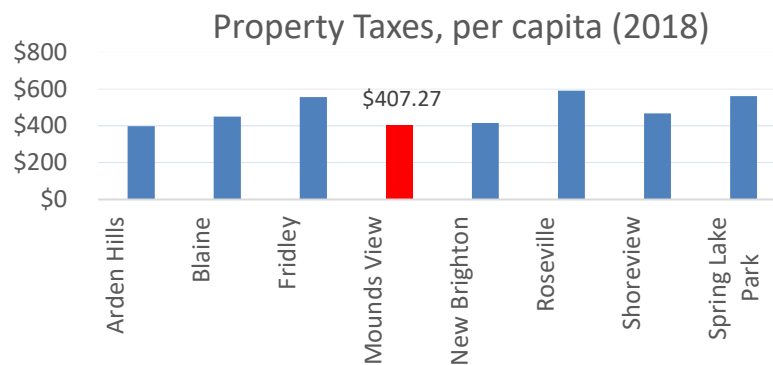
Observations:

Themes from open-ended responses (11 pages) include disliking; **vacant businesses**; **lack of restaurants, retail and entertainment**; amount of **apartments**; **low-income housing**; lack of **sidewalks and trails**; and **unkempt properties**.

Regarding *Property Taxes*, within Mounds View, for every dollar paid in property taxes, it is divided by:



Per capita², Mounds View’s property tax levy remains one of the lowest in the area:



Although the percentage of respondents (46%) who responded property taxes are their greatest dislike, this is consistent with other research. According to the Pew Research

² “Per Capita” is the measurement used by the Minnesota State Auditor. The City also uses this measurement for its financial reporting to remain consistent.

Center, when asked if the amount you pay in federal taxes bothers you, 53% of Americans polled said they are bothered “a lot” or “some”.³

Regarding *Traffic* and *Empty Businesses*, Mounds View’s slogan once was “*Gateway to the North*”. These days, “the gateway” has moved up I-35W. US Highway 10 has also moved from present-day County Road 10 (Mounds View Boulevard). After the US Highway 610 bridge across the Mississippi River was completed, average daily traffic (ADT) on County Road 10 decreased from 43,000 ADT in 1999, to 21,000 ADT in 2015⁴. With this decrease, many auto-dependent businesses closed (e.g. restaurants and gas stations), and remain empty today.

Today, Mounds View is home to ten restaurants and two take-out restaurants⁵, a 15-screen movie theater, franchised and independent retail and service businesses. Together, these are amongst the approximately 140 known businesses located within the city.

The city is divided by Mounds View Boulevard, and as such, businesses are spread-out from one end to the other, with no concentrated downtown or city center. Mounds View is a product of its past with many of its pre-World War II businesses conducted from homesteads scattered throughout the community along Highway 10, County Road H2, and the western neighborhoods.⁶ The community never had a downtown. The lack of a city center and businesses to support one, was a reoccurring theme throughout the 2018 Community Survey.

Regarding *Apartments* and *Low Income Housing*, there are 1,435 apartment units, representing 27% of total households in the city. According to the Census⁷, 32% of all households are rented (single-family and multi-family). This compares to:

	% of households	Median monthly gross rent, or costs (with mortgage)		% of households who pay more than 30% of income toward housing	
	Renter Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied
Arden Hills	13%	\$1,308	\$1,873	54%	19%
Blaine	15%	\$1,077	\$1,505	43%	21%
Fridley	38%	\$904	\$1,376	47%	26%
Mounds View	32%	\$869	\$1,430	48%	24%
New Brighton	38%	\$879	\$1,684	49%	25%
Roseville	38%	\$924	\$1,585	52%	33%
Shoreview	19%	\$1,157	\$1,658	49%	21%
Spring Lake Park	26%	\$905	\$1,363	57%	24%
Average	27%	\$1,002	\$1,559	50%	24%

³ Pew Research Center. [Federal Tax System Seen in Need of Overhaul](#). March 19, 2016.

⁴ MnDOT Traffic Volumes

⁵ The Mermaid, Moe’s, RJ Riches, Arepa Bite, Burger King, McDonalds, Pink Flower, Subway, Taco Bell, Tony the Sandwich King, Little Caesars, Dominos.

⁶ Larson H., Idamae Larsen, Carol Baumgartener (1976). *Mounds View; A History* (pp. 19) Mounds View, MN. Mounds View Bicentennial Commission.

⁷ 2016 American Fact Finder

Affordable housing is “generally” defined as housing in which not more than 30% of household income is paid toward housing expenses. But another way to think about affordability is what percentage of households are financially stressed (households that pay more than 30% of income toward housing). Compared to neighboring cities, Mounds View is about average. A lower percentage spent on housing expenses means more discretionary spending towards other things, like eating out at restaurants (there are 19 restaurants along the Lexington Ave & I-694 corridor, in Arden Hills/Shoreview).

5% (43) respondents did not answer Question #2.

3. *Would you recommend to a friend that they move to Mounds View, and why?*

81% *Yes, move to Mounds View*
9% *No, don't move to Mounds View*

Reasons Why [if yes]?

84% *Location*
80% *Schools*
73% *Neighborhood*
64% *Ideal for children*
45% *Ideal for seniors*

Observations:

Although there was a clear majority of positive opinions to the yes/no question, about 2/3's of the open-ended responses were negative. Answers given were similar to those provided for Questions #1 #2, and #4.

Although only 45% of respondents stated Mounds View is ideal for Seniors, only 5% stated that the community was “bad” for Seniors (32% had no opinion, and 18% did not answer this part of the question).

1% (10) of respondents did not answer Question #3.

4. *What is one thing you would change in Mounds View?*

Observations:

There were 18 pages of open-ended responses. Responses had five major themes, with several sub-themes (below):

1. Mounds View Boulevard (179 comments)
 - More restaurants, grocery stores, retail
 - More general businesses
 - Corridor is blighted (empty businesses, appearance)

2. Parks & Recreation (97 comments)
 - Opinions on specific parks
 - Better walkability, pedestrian crossing on Mounds View Blvd.
 - Community Center facility & programming for youth/seniors
 - Neighborhood engagement (need more)

3. High Density Housing (87 comments)
 - Apartments, (no more low income residential)
 - Mobile Home Parks (get rid of)

4. Traffic & Road Maintenance (70 comments)
 - Speeding Enforcement
 - Pot Holes
 - Improved traffic signals, turning lanes
 - Allow Overnight parking

5. Neighborhood Appearance (35 comments)
 - Enforce zoning codes

Regarding *Mounds View Boulevard*, there is a clear desire for more restaurants and grocery stores (majority of comments were in favor of more restaurants).

Aside from Aldi at Mounds View Square (small grocery store), there are a number of large grocery stores within proximity of Mounds View, including Hy-Vee in Spring Lake Park (opening in 2019). Other grocery stores include: Cub Foods in Blaine, New Brighton, and Shoreview, Byerly's in Arden Hills, and Festival Foods in Circle Pines. Smaller grocery stores include Fresh & Natural Foods, Kowalski's, and Trader Joe's all in Shoreview, and Seoul Food in Fridley.

A large grocery store like Hy-Vee, requires about 10 acres of land. Within Mounds View, this would only fit on sites occupied by the Movie Theater, Mermaid, and Mounds View Square. There may be potential for a smaller grocery store (e.g. *Hy-Vee Express*) or grocery cooperative, but, there is a lot of competition.

Regarding *empty businesses and appearances*, there are a number of empty businesses along Mounds View Boulevard, some more noticeable than others. If it is the community's priority for these properties to be occupied or redeveloped, it will require patience until the private sector invests in them, or if the City is to provide assistance, then the City must be funded to do so. Mounds View levies \$50,000 per year for business subsidies, and thus, may take ten to twenty years to save enough to purchase one of these blighted properties for redevelopment.

Regarding *Parks and Recreation*, comments were scattered regarding which specific improvements should be made. There is support for additional sidewalks and trails,

specifically; (1) complete the trail along Mounds View Boulevard, and (2) sidewalk or trail along Spring Lake Road with connections to Lakeside Park in Spring Lake Park, in addition to other segments where trails or sidewalks do not connect to others.

There is clear support for a splash pad and/or swimming pool (Splash Pad is under construction), and support for additional activities at the Community Center. There were a number of comments that the Mounds View Community Center should be more like Shoreview's (indoor pool & playground), and New Brighton's (indoor playground). Shoreview recently remodeled its building at a cost of \$13 million.

There is additional demand for a dog park, disc golf, pickle ball courts, and mountain bike trails. Ramsey County operates a 13-acre off-leash dog park in Shoreview on Lexington Avenue, about two miles from Mounds View. A disc golf course is located at Silver View Park. Pickle Ball has been incorporated into tennis courts, when reconstructed. Ramsey County has proposed (not funded) to construct a single-track mountain bike trail along Rice Creek, south of County Road H in Mounds View, and adjacent to Irondale High School. When Ramsey County's *Rice Creek North Regional Trail Master Plan* is funded and implemented, it will create a significant amenity to area residents.

Regarding *Traffic & Road Maintenance*, comments were specific in enforcing speed limits, traffic signals (waiting time), and general road conditions. MnDOT synchronized the traffic signals on Mounds View Boulevard during the summer of 2018. The City has reconstructed about 80% of its streets within the past ten years, and will reconstruct the others in the near future. There were a number of complaints specific to Long Lake Road (reconstructed in summer of 2018) and Silver Lake Road (both county roads). The City has no ability to change the speed limits on county roads.

29% (247) of respondents did not answer Question #4.

5. What businesses or conveniences would you frequently use (e.g. weekly) if in Mounds View?

69% *Gas station*
 63% *Full-service (large grocery store)*
 59% *Family sit-down restaurant*

Observations:

Types of businesses suggested (in addition to the above), which are not currently located within Mounds View include:

Arts-theater, hardware store, miniature golf, microbrewery, malt shop, buffet restaurant, non-discount retail, volume discount retail, gun club, large fitness center, post office, medical clinic, sporting goods store, bottle shop, grocery co-operative, pet supply, credit union.

Many of these businesses are located near Mounds View, e.g. Beisswenger's in New Brighton, Kohl's in Blaine, Capra's Sporting Goods in Blaine. Medical clinics are concentrated in Blaine, Coon Rapids, and Fridley (Alina, Concentra, and North Memorial).

2% (13) of respondents did not answer Question #5.

6. Other than voting, how often do you or members of your household use the Mounds View Community Center. (YMCA)?

72% *Not at all*
18% *4-6 times per year*

Observations:

The Mounds View Community Center is owned by the City, and leased to the YMCA, and to a private daycare operator. The YMCA is conducting a Community Healthy Living Index (CHLI). The results of this survey will assist the YMCA in their programming.

1% (5) of respondents did not answer Question #6.

7. How frequently (weather permitting) do you or members of your household use Mounds View trails?

27% *Not at all*
19% *4-6 times per year*
19% *Twice or more per week*

0% (2) of respondents did not answer Question #7.

8. If frequently using the trails, why?

64% *Exercise/Recreation*

34% (286) of respondents did not answer Question #8.

9. Are there any additional parks & trail amenities needed?

Observations:

There were 11 pages of open-ended responses. Responses had three major themes, with several sub-themes (below):

1. Trail Connections, various locations (40 comments)
 - Complete trail along Mounds View Blvd.
 - Trail along Spring Lake Rd, & connection to Lakeside Park
 - Trail along Co Rd H
 - Trail along Co Rd J
2. Benches, garbage cans, drinking fountains along trails and at parks (25 comments)
3. Splash Pad/Swimming Pool (18 comments)

[Splash Pad is scheduled to open at City Hall Park by summer, 2019]

68% (573) of respondents did not answer Question #9.

10. **Do you think Mounds View has too much, about right, or too little of the following?**
(lead answer is provided below):

	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	No Opinion
Affordable Apartments	38%			
Luxury Apartments				34%
Apartments for Families				35%
Apartments for Singles/Couples				34%
Townhomes		38%		
Single-Family, < \$151,500		39%		
Single-Family, \$151,500-\$185,000		49%		
Single-Family, \$185,000-\$236,000		50%		
Single-Family, > \$236,000		35%		
Assisted Living		43%		
Family Sit-Down Restaurants			72%	
Family-Casual Restaurants		38%	39%	
Fast Food Restaurants		40%		
Retail/Service Businesses			51%	
Medical Clinics			54%	
Parks & Open Space		64%		

Observations:

There is opposition to additional affordable apartments, and a shortage of restaurants, retail, and medical clinics.

As noted in Question #2 Observations (table), Mounds View has a higher percentage of renter occupied households compared to neighboring cities, as well as lower rents. Lower rents likely correspond to the age of apartment buildings, many of which were built in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In 2017, the City approved a 60-unit apartment building

consisting of affordable housing. In 2019, a 120+ unit apartment building is planned (market-rate rents).

1% (11) of respondents did not answer Question #10.

11. What is your primary source of information regarding the City of Mounds View?

- 59% *Mounds View Matters*
- 32% *Sun Focus*
- 31% *Neighbors (word of mouth)*

The City's use of social media and multi-media (e.g. FaceBook, Next Door, Twitter, city website, cable TV), has been ineffective as a means to communicate with residents, in comparison to traditional print media.

1% (7) of respondents did not answer Question #11.

12. Are You:

- 95% *Mounds View resident (homeowner)*
- 2% *Mounds View resident (renter)*
- 2% *Mounds View Business employer/employee*

Observations:

Considering that 32% of Mounds View residents are renters, but only 2% of survey respondents were renters, the results of this survey are not representative of the population.

The community survey was distributed through; (1) Spring 2018 *Mounds View Matters* quarterly newsletter, distributed to all Mounds View addresses; (2) April 2018 Utility Bills, distributed to all property owners (e.g. excludes renters and manufactured home owners); and (3) was available via the City's website.

1% (12) of respondents did not answer Question #12.

13. If you live in Mounds View, when did you move into your current home?

Observations:

Percentage of respondents were proportional, meaning responses equally represent different generations of Mounds View residents (long-term residents, and new residents).

2% (16) of respondents did not answer Question #13.

14. Age of household members?

Observations:

Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondent households had school-aged children, and 65% of respondent households had persons aged 65 or older.

Of the 832 respondents who answered this question, 12 households (1%) consisted of three generations (under age 24, age 25 - 64, and over age 65). Twenty-six households (3%) consisted of two generations, in which at least 20 years separated household members (excludes those under age 24, and over age 65). It's reasonable to assume these households consist of adult children moving home with their parents.

2% (13) of respondents did not answer Question #14.