

Falcon Heights – St. Anthony Village potential police partnership

Summary of survey responses

April 16, 2024

Response rate

Falcon Heights survey: 233 total responses

- Residents (229) – This is an overall response rate of 4.3% based on population (5,369).
- Non-residents (4) – This includes those operating a business or working in Falcon Heights.

St. Anthony Village survey: 222 total responses

- Residents (193) – This is an overall response rate of 2.1% based on population (9,257).
- Non-residents (29) – Based on information shared in their responses, many of the non-residents that completed the St. Anthony Village survey are residents of the City of Lauderdale, which currently contracts with St. Anthony Police Department (SAPD) for police services.

Benefits

Both surveys included an open-ended question asking what potential benefits community members see in a renewed police partnership between the cities of Falcon Heights and St. Anthony Village.

Common top themes across audiences include increased SAPD capacity, financial benefits for both cities, and proximity between SAPD service communities.

Several respondents expressed that they want more information from the Cities about the pros and cons they were weighing as they consider the decision.

Perceived benefits have been summarized into the categories below. Many responses identified multiple benefits and are counted in the tally for multiple categories. Other responses identified no benefits.

Benefits vary by audience:

Falcon Heights residents and non-residents

1. Proximity (64), including a contiguous area of service and better response times.
2. Increased capacity (63), including better use of services and gaining efficiencies through sharing resources.
3. Improved community engagement and relationships (45), including SAPD's community-focused work and better relations between the two cities.
4. Prior relationship/familiarity (44), including good past experiences with SAPD and familiarity with the community.
5. Financial (41), including cost savings of shared resources.
6. Aligned values (28), including the similarity in size of each community.
7. None (25).
8. Opportunity for a fresh relationship (16), recognizing SAPD's current training standards.
9. Need more information (2).

St. Anthony Village residents

1. None (84).
2. Financial (59), including reduced burden on St. Anthony Village taxpayers through increased revenues and cost savings due to shared administrative services.
3. Increased capacity (42) by adding officers, retaining employees, and improving hiring and promotional opportunities.
4. Proximity (8), including knowledge of crime activity across communities and improved inter-community relationships.
5. Policing style (7), including more participation in the broader community area.
6. Prior relationship/familiarity (4), including opportunities for reconciliation and showcasing positive changes.

St. Anthony Village respondents, non-residents

1. Increased capacity (15), including combined resources, improved conditions for SAPD staff and additional resources for emergency response.
2. Proximity (7), including knowledge of the community, shorter response times and ability to track local patterns.
3. Financial (4).
4. Unknown/do not want to comment as a resident of another community (3).
5. Prior relationship/familiarity (2).
6. Policing style (1).

Falcon Heights priorities

Falcon Heights residents were asked an open-ended question about what priorities the City should consider when exploring a potential police partnership with the City of St. Anthony Village.

Priorities have been summarized into the categories below to indicate common themes. Many responses identified multiple priorities and are counted in the tally for multiple categories.

Top

1. Increased level of service (83) through quicker response times, adequate staffing, community coverage and reliability.
2. Community-based policing (79) through communication and engagement, familiarity with community, relationship building and shared resources.

Medium

3. Increased visibility (50) through frequent patrols, presence in residential areas and high-crime spaces, dedicated officers and an ongoing presence where community members are at.
4. Cost (43), with a good value for residents and a solution that's sensible for both Falcon Heights and St. Anthony Village.
5. Racial equity practices and training (41) through diverse staffing and anti-bias training.
6. Trust, transparency and accountability (39) by maintaining standards for professionalism and accountability, use of force records, and data sharing.

Low

7. De-escalation training (26) including mental health training, harm reduction and non-confrontational methods.
8. Alternative and non-emergency response methods (23) including partnerships with social workers and mental health professionals.

Other priorities mentioned included partnerships with other cities (5), a desire for a long-term policing contract (5), decreased patrolling (4), non-militarization (2) and following task force recommendations (2).

Questions and concerns

Both surveys included an open-ended question asking what questions and concerns respondents have about a potential renewed police partnership.

Common top themes across audiences include SAPD staffing levels, cost, and trust across communities, city leadership and SAPD officers.

St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale residents expressed a great deal of support and appreciation for SAPD officers and the level of service they currently receive from the department. They want to be assured that a partnership would not result in less service, visibility and resources in their communities.

Falcon Heights residents noted several questions regarding SAPD training and policies, particularly changes made since 2016.

Questions and concerns have been summarized into the categories below with examples of common questions from respondents. Many responses identified multiple topics and are counted in the tally for multiple categories. Other responses included no questions or concerns.

Questions and concerns vary by audience:

Falcon Heights residents and non-residents

1. SAPD training, policies and racial equity practices (61)
 - What training do officers receive?
 - How does the department address racism, bias, de-escalation, etc.?
 - How do current practices align with the Falcon Heights Inclusion and Policing Task Force recommendations?
2. Staffing levels (31)
 - What will response times look like?
 - Will there be enough officers to cover the expanded area?
 - Will the level of coverage and service be similar to the previous partnership?
3. Policing style (31)
 - Is SAPD's approach consistent with Falcon Heights' values?
 - Will officers be present and build relationships in the community?
 - Will there be consistency in officers assigned to Falcon Heights?
 - How will SAPD patrol Falcon Heights?
4. Trust (19)

- How will you rebuild trust in the community – both Falcon Heights residents’ trust of the SAPD and St. Anthony Village and SAPD’s trust of Falcon Heights?
- 5. Cost (19)
 - How will costs compare to the current contract with the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office?
- 6. Fit (11)
 - Should other partnership options be explored instead, such as the Roseville Police Department?
- 7. City-police relationship (10)
 - Will SAPD officers be entrusted to do their jobs?
 - Will residents be open to SAPD officers?
- 8. Transparency (9)
 - What will accountability look like?
 - What data will be shared?

St. Anthony Village residents

1. Staffing levels (52)
 - Many respondents expressed concerns SAPD would be spread too thin due to understaffing and expanded coverage areas.
 - How would this affect service within St. Anthony?
 - How would incoming calls be prioritized?
 - How will new staff be recruited and hired?
 - Will they be responsible for the State Fairgrounds?
2. Community trust (31)
 - Many respondents were concerned about fair treatment and the well-being of SAPD officers working in Falcon Heights.
 - Others noted a lack of trust that the partnership won’t break down again, sharing general negative perceptions of how the Falcon Heights community views St. Anthony Village.
 - How does Falcon Heights feel about this?
3. Cost (25)
 - Many residents had questions about liability: Who assumes the risk if something happens? Shared burden across all three communities?
 - Will the extra cost of new officers be offset with payments from Falcon Heights?
 - How soon can we see tax savings?
 - Would this require additional funding from St. Anthony Village taxpayers?
4. Fit (17)
 - Are Falcon Heights crime rates above suburban averages in the metro?
 - What’s the benefit for St. Anthony Village?
5. Transparency (17)
 - Will Falcon Heights impose restrictions?
 - Residents expressed a concern for full transparency in City Council discussions.
 - Others need clarification from the City on benefits for St. Anthony Village.
 - Additional concerns noted accountability, oversight and authority across the partnership.
 -

6. SAPD perspective (11)
 - Residents noted it's important to prioritize the well-being and support of SAPD officers by engaging them in the decision process.
 - What do SAPD officers think of this partnership?
7. SAPD training, policies and racial equity practices (9)
 - What training has happened since the shooting?
 - What will both cities do to improve the quality of policing?
 - Residents expressed concerns about excessive use of force and ensuring racism is not present in the department.

St. Anthony Village non-residents

1. Staffing levels (6)
 - How will this affect Lauderdale, response times, etc.?
 - Will there be adequate staffing to maintain current service levels?
 - Will new officers be the same quality as current officers?
 - Will officers move between cities?
2. Fit/trust (4)
 - Can we be assured this is a long-term partnership?
 - Will SAPD officers feel trusted to do their jobs?
3. Cost (1)
 - How will liability be handled?
4. Training (1)
 - What changes have been implemented?
5. Police style (1)
 - Will non-violent crimes be ignored?