



*Resolution
of the
Board of County Commissioners*

St. Louis County, Minnesota

Adopted on: June 23, 2026 Resolution No. 26-317

Offered by Commissioner: Boyle

Minnesota State Auditor's 2026 Performance Measurement Program Report

WHEREAS, Benefits to St. Louis County for participation in the Minnesota Council on Local Results and Innovation comprehensive performance measurement program are outlined in Minnesota Statutes § 6.91 and include eligibility for a reimbursement as set by state statute; and

WHEREAS, Any city/county participating in the comprehensive performance measurement program is also exempt from levy limits for taxes, if levy limits are in effect; and

WHEREAS, The St. Louis County Board has adopted and implemented ten of the performance measures, as developed by the Council on Local Results and Innovation, and a system to use this information to help plan, budget, manage and evaluate programs and processes for optimal future outcomes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the St. Louis County Board supports continued participation in the Minnesota State Auditor's Performance Measurement Program.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That St. Louis County will continue to report the results of the performance measures to its citizenry by the end of the year through publication, direct mailing, posting on the city's/county's website, or through a public hearing at which the budget and levy will be discussed and public input allowed.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the St. Louis County Board approves submission of the 2026 St. Louis County Performance Measurement Report found in County Board File No. 62613.

Commissioner Boyle moved the adoption of the Resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote:

Yeas – Commissioners Harala, Boyle, Grimm, McDonald, Musolf and Chair Jugovich – 6

Nays – None

Absent – Commissioner Nelson – 1

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of County Auditor, ss.

County of St. Louis

I, **NANCY NILSEN**, Auditor of the County of St. Louis, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in my office on the 23rd day June, A.D. 2026, and that this is a true and correct copy.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE at Duluth, Minnesota, this 23rd day of June, A.D., 2026.

NANCY NILSEN, COUNTY AUDITOR

By:

Clerk of the County Board/Deputy Auditor

Measures for Counties

St. Louis County Departmental Key Performance Indicators: 2026 Submission (2025 data, unless noted)

Overview

St. Louis County utilizes best practices in performance management and measurement. Annually, the County Board adopts the standard set of county performance measures proposed by the Minnesota State Auditor's Performance Measurement Program. Created by the Minnesota State Legislature's Council on Local Results and Innovation, this began as a standard set of ten performance measures for counties and ten performance measures for cities that would aid residents, taxpayers, and state and local officials in determining the efficacy of counties and cities in providing services, and measure residents' opinions of those services. Cities and counties that choose to participate in the new standards measure program may be eligible for reimbursement in Local Government Aid, and exemption from levy limits.

Participation in the Minnesota State Auditor's Performance Measures Program is voluntary; however, St. Louis County is well positioned to participate by virtue of its continued efforts in performance measurement and citizen surveys. Counties that choose to participate must officially adopt the corresponding performance benchmarks developed by the Council, and report on them in order to receive a new local government performance aid, reimbursed at \$0.14 per capita, not to exceed \$25,000.

St. Louis County incorporates performance data in budget and business planning discussions and efforts. Each department does a budget analysis, establishes goals, identifies continuous improvement projects, and develops strategies that guide them for the next three to five years. As part of the budgeting process, Administration's discussions with departments include (but are not limited) to the following:

- **Who Are You?** This includes a mission statement, primary lines of business (programs), organizational chart and significant trends and changes impacting the department.
- **What Do You Want to Achieve?** This includes a vision for the department and key initiatives aligned with St. Louis County's Strategic Plan.
- **What Resources Are You Going to Use?** Resource plans such as Finance Plan, Workforce Plan, Technology Plan, Purchasing Plan, and Space Plan.

St. Louis County continues to operate under its adopted 2016 Strategic Plan. The broader county-wide goals for a sustained business planning focus by departments' center on consolidating core organizational efforts and services in support of the following goals as defined by the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners:

1. Public Health and Safety
2. Sound County Infrastructure
3. Natural Resources Management
4. Community Growth and Prosperity

As the County strives for organizational excellence it is of paramount importance to continue to progress in linking departmental program and service initiatives to key organizational priorities and strategies.

Note: Several measures included in this report utilize results from St. Louis County's citizen survey. St. Louis County partners with other Minnesota counties to work with Polco-National Research Center on a statistically

valid and representative residential survey which is conducted every 2-3 years. This survey has been conducted in 2007, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2025. The 2025 survey response rate was 17% (4,900 households received a survey; 802 surveys were completed). Responses displayed in this report have been converted to a 100-point scale for ease of graphical comparison.

Contents

Measures for Counties St. Louis County Departmental Key Performance Indicators: 2026 Submission (2025 data, unless noted)	1
Overview	1
Public Safety – County Sheriff.....	5
Measure 1. Public Safety - Crime Rates	5
Measure 3. Public Safety – Deputy Response Time	8
Public Safety – Arrowhead Regional Corrections (ARC)	8
Measure 4. Public Safety – Recidivism	8
Public Works	9
Measure 5. Public Works – Total number of fatal/injury accidents.....	9
Measure 6. Public Works – Snow Plowing Time.....	10
Measure 7. Public Works – County Pavement Condition Rating (PCI/PQI).....	10
Measure 8. Public Works – Citizen Survey Ratings.....	12
Measure 9. Public Works – Average Bridge Sufficiency Rating	14
Public Health Human Services	15
Measure 10. Public Health & Human Services – General Life Expectancy	15
Measure 11. Public Health & Human Services – Tobacco & Alcohol Use	15
Measure 12. Public Health & Human Services – Work Participation Rate	15
Measure 13. Public Health & Human Services – Maltreatment.....	16
Measure 14. Public Health & Human Services – Child Support Program Cost Effectiveness.....	16
Measure 15. Public Health & Human Services – Low Birth Weight Children	17
Property Records, Valuation, Assessment.....	18
Measure 16. County Assessor – Assessment Ratio	18
Measure 17. County Recorder –Turn-around Time.....	18
Elections.....	19
Measure 18. County Auditor – Accuracy	19
Veterans Services.....	20
Measure 19. Veterans Service Office – Customer Service.....	20
Measure 20. Veterans Service Office – Dollars for Veterans’ Benefits	20
Measure 21. Veterans Service Office – Percentage of Veterans Receiving Benefits	20
Parks, Libraries.....	22
Measure 22. Parks/Libraries – County Parks, Recreational Programs or County Facilities.....	22

Budget, Financial Performance.....	24
Measure 24. County Auditor – Bond Rating	24
Measure 25. County Auditor – Debt Service per capita	24
Environment	24
Measure 26. Environmental Services – Recycling Percentage	25
Measure 27. Environmental Services – HHW and Electronics.....	25

Public Safety – County Sheriff

Department Goal: To protect and serve the citizens of the county and region with professionalism and pride.

Commissioner Priority Area: Public Health and Safety

Measure 1. Public Safety - Crime Rates

Current Performance: In 2025, St. Louis County (with a population of 200,500 according to the US Census Bureau 2025 population estimate) had 823 (vs. 927 in 2024) Part I offenses and 2,281 (vs. 2,072 in 2024) Part II offenses for a total of 3,104 offenses (vs. 2,999 offenses total in 2025).

Table 1 – Frequency of Crimes, by crime, by year

Crime	2024	2025
Part I, Theft	655	563
Part I, Burglary	97	100
Part I, Assault	96	74
Part I, Auto Theft	59	67
Part I, Rape	15	7
Part I, Robbery	3	4
Part I, Arson	1	5
Part I, Homicide	1	3
Part II, Other (Excluding Traffic)	469	505
Part II, Other Assaults	377	457
Part II, Disturbance	350	370
Part II, Vandalism	336	272
Part II, DUI	231	309
Part II, Fraud	105	126
Part II, Narcotics	78	85
Part II, Liquor Laws	27	31
Part II, Other Sex Offenses	27	20
Part II, Family/Children	23	18
Part II, Forgery/Counterfeit	20	41
Part II, Weapons	16	31
Part II, Stolen Property	9	10
Part II, Embezzlement	2	0
Part II, Prostitution	2	3
Part II, Gambling		1
Part II, Other		2

Table 2 – Frequency of Crime, summarized by Uniform Crime Reporting group

	2024	2025
TOTAL PART I	927	823
TOTAL PART II	2,072	2,281
TOTAL PART I & PART II	2,999	3,104

Chart 1 – Frequency of Part I Crimes

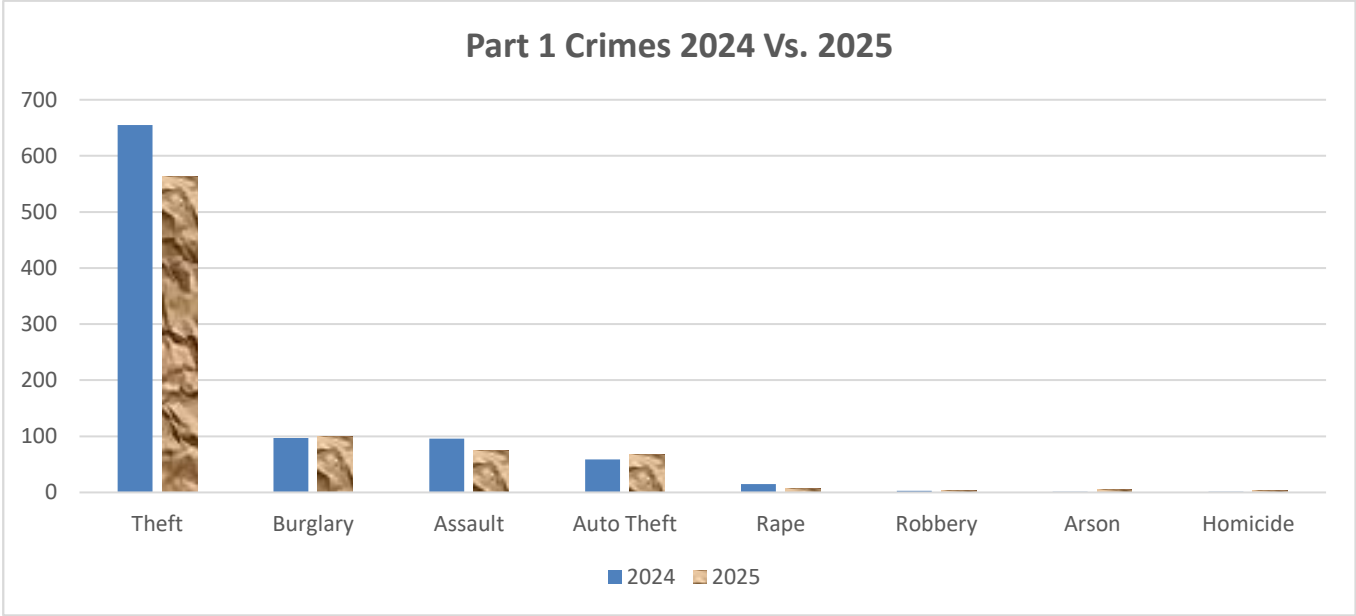
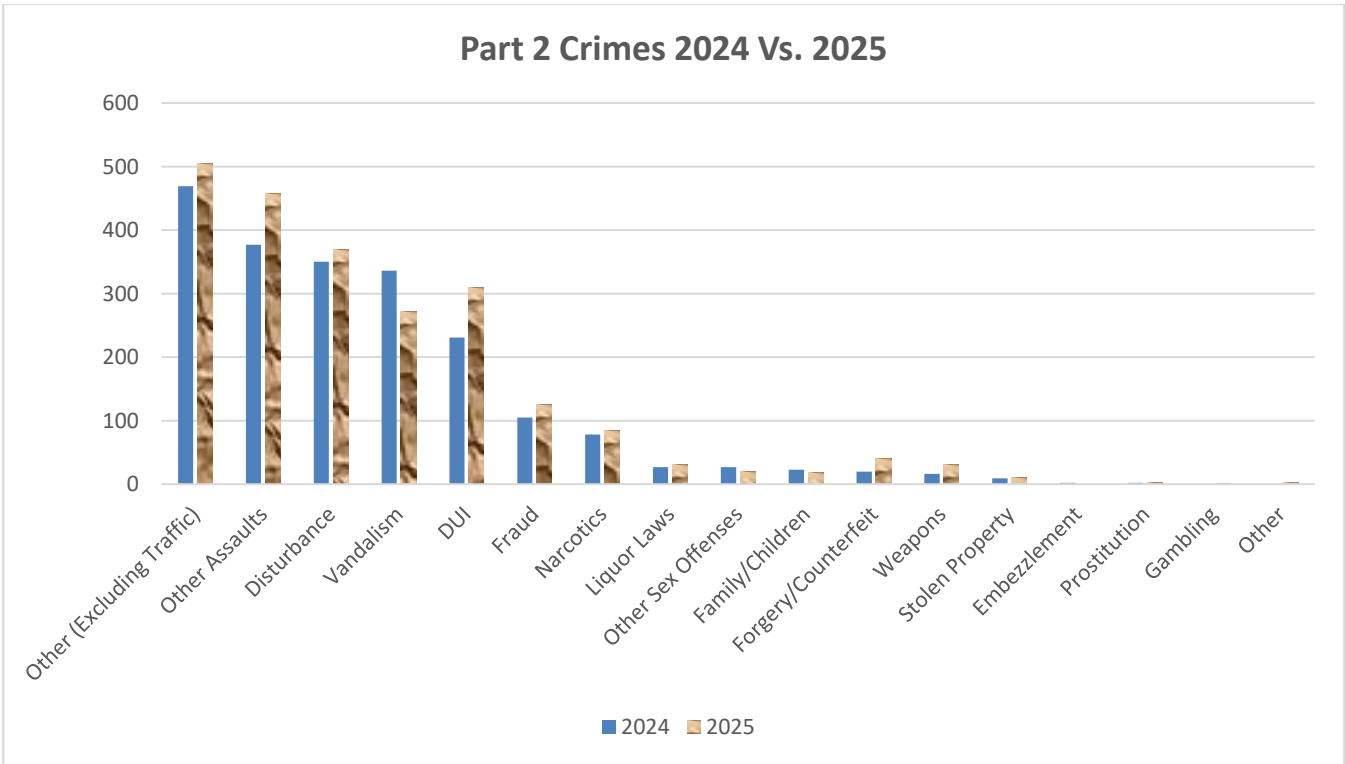


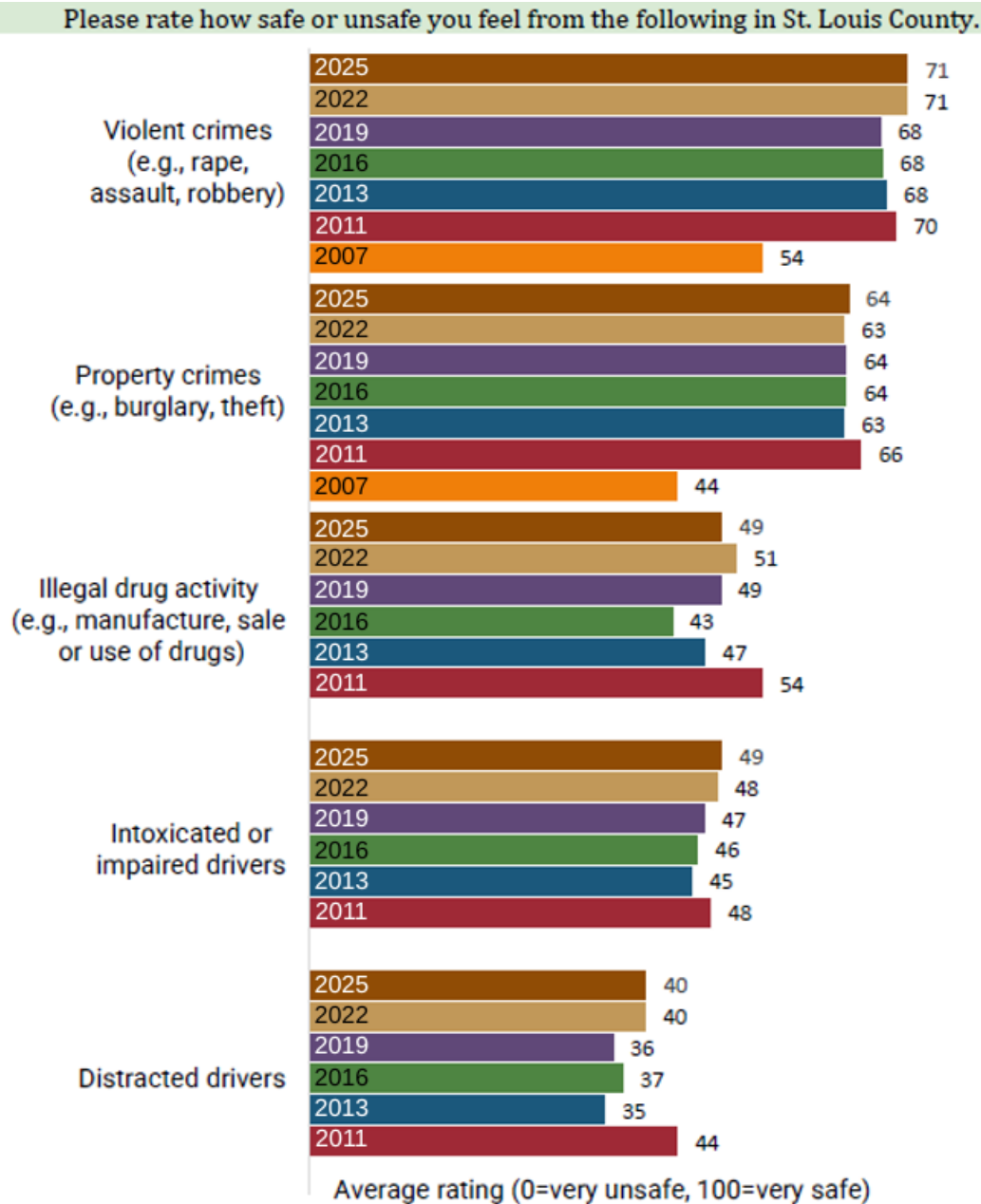
Chart 2 – Frequency of Part II Crimes



Measure 2. Public Safety – Feelings of Safety from Crimes

Current Performance: Residents felt the safest from violent (71 points) and property crimes (64). As shown below, ratings were similar to those given in past survey responses.

Chart 3 – Feelings of Safety



Measure 3. Public Safety – Deputy Response Time

Current Performance: The average response time from time of dispatch to first unit on scene computes to **13 minutes and 27 seconds** (compared to 14 minutes and 51 seconds in 2024). St. Louis County is unique compared to other Minnesota counties in that it is over 7,000 square miles in size, the type and quality of our roadways varies significantly throughout the county, and great distances between calls often requires extra time to respond, thus impacting the efficacy of this measure as a standard in St. Louis County as compared to other counties in the state.

Public Safety – Arrowhead Regional Corrections (ARC)

Department Goal: To use evidence-based practices to provide community corrections services in a five-county area of Northeastern Minnesota (St. Louis, Carlton, Cook, Koochiching and Lake Counties). ARC operates the (1) Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC), an institution for adult males, (2) Arrowhead Juvenile Center, a secure detention and treatment facility for juveniles, (3) Court and Field (probation and parole) services, and (4) contracted services for adult female offenders.

Commissioner Priority Area: Public Health and Safety

Measure 4. Public Safety – Recidivism

Current Performance: Arrowhead Regional Corrections’ goal is to maintain its client recidivism rate at 30% or lower, as defined by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC). The MN DOC defines recidivism as “a felony conviction within three years of discharge.” In 2025, the MN Northeast Region’s adult probation recidivism rate for a 2021 cohort was 15% (compared to 12% in 2024 with 2020 cohort). This region includes the five ARC counties as well as Itasca and Aitkin counties.

Data Source: 2024 and 2025 Minnesota Statewide Probation & Supervised Release Outcomes Reports (MN DOC).

In 2025 Arrowhead Regional Corrections completed a recidivism study of 1,371 adult clients who were discharged from probation in 2021. Only 8% of probationers were convicted of a new felony offense within three years of discharge from probation.

Data Source: Adult probation recidivism snapshot for the 2021 cohort, generated by Arrowhead Regional Corrections in 2025.

NOTE: This analysis uses updated methodology by considering all offenses within the recidivism window rather than only the first and by drawing from statewide supervision data rather than local court services tracking data.

Public Works

Department Goal: To provide a safe, well-maintained road and bridge system.

Commissioner Priority Area: Sound County Infrastructure

Measure 5. Public Works – Total number of fatal/injury accidents

Current Performance: St. Louis County experienced **2** fatal crashes (vs. 11 in 2024) and **25** major injury crashes (vs. 27 in 2024) on County State Aid Highways (CSAH), County Roads (CR) and Unorganized Township (UT) Roads in St. Louis County in 2025. The number of total fatal and injury-related crashes (not just those with serious injuries) was **121** in 2025 (vs. 145 in 2024) on CSAH, CR and UT roads within St. Louis County.

Chart 4 – Fatal Crashes on County Roads

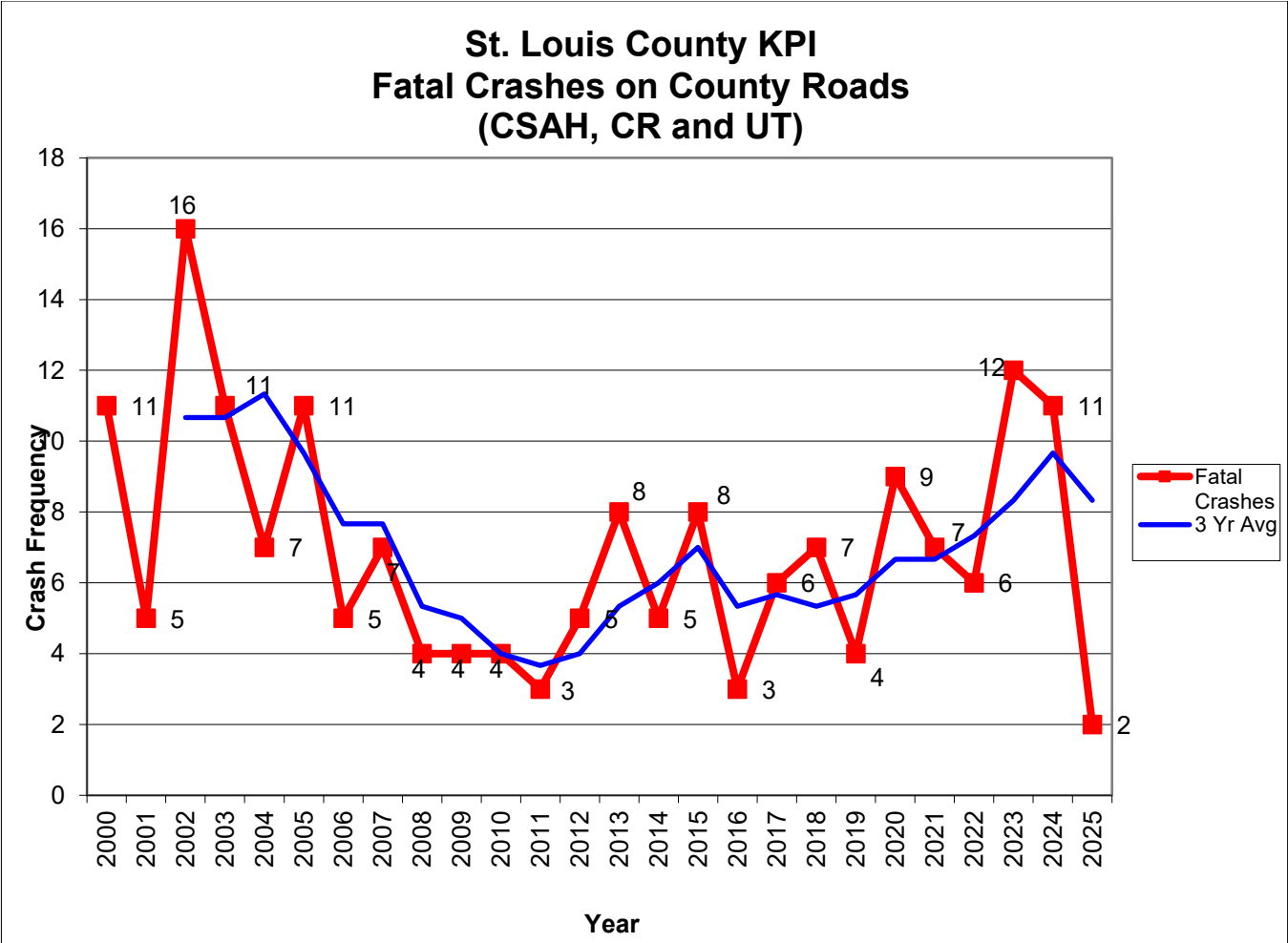
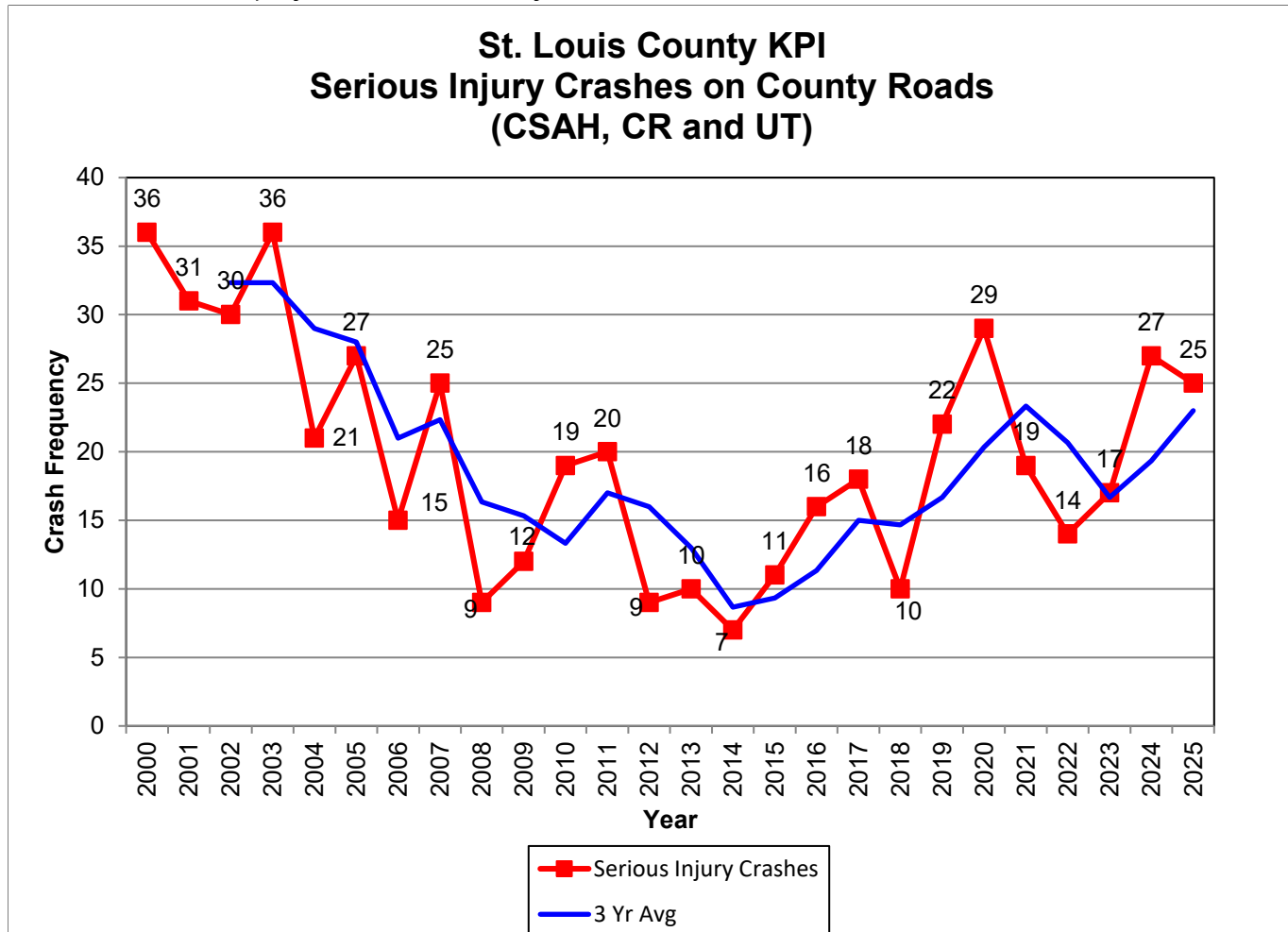


Chart 5 – Serious Injury Crashes on County Roads



Measure 6. Public Works – Snow Plowing Time

Current Performance: It takes the St. Louis County Public Works Department an average of **11.8 hours** (vs. 11.9 hours in 2024) to plow county roadways during an average snowfall event.

Data Source: Public Works. By using GPS/AVL software, St. Louis County is able to track its truck fleet, and gather tabular data as to location, travel time (overall, and while plowing), travel distance (overall, and while plowing), and material application amounts. In addition, the County is able to generate mapping showing the locations of its fleet and its movements at any given time.

Measure 7. Public Works – County Pavement Condition Rating (PCI/PQI)

Current Performance: To improve the overall pavement quality of the roads of St. Louis County jurisdiction (unorganized townships, county roads, and county state aid highways) to a level acceptable to the public, Public Works strives to maintain 75% of roadway miles with a Pavement Quality Index (PQI) of 2.90 or higher and the weighted average PQI for all mileage at 3.10 or higher. Pavements having a PQI of 2.90 to 3.20 are defined as being in "fair" condition. PQI's range from 0.00 (worst) to 4.0 (best).

The percentage of roadway miles with a PQI of 2.90 or higher is 89.2% (compared to 88.1% in 2024), which is over the target of 75%. The weighted average PQI for all mileage is 3.48 (vs. 3.46 in 2024), which exceeds the target of 3.10.

Chart 6 – Percent of County Paved Road System by Pavement Quality Ratings

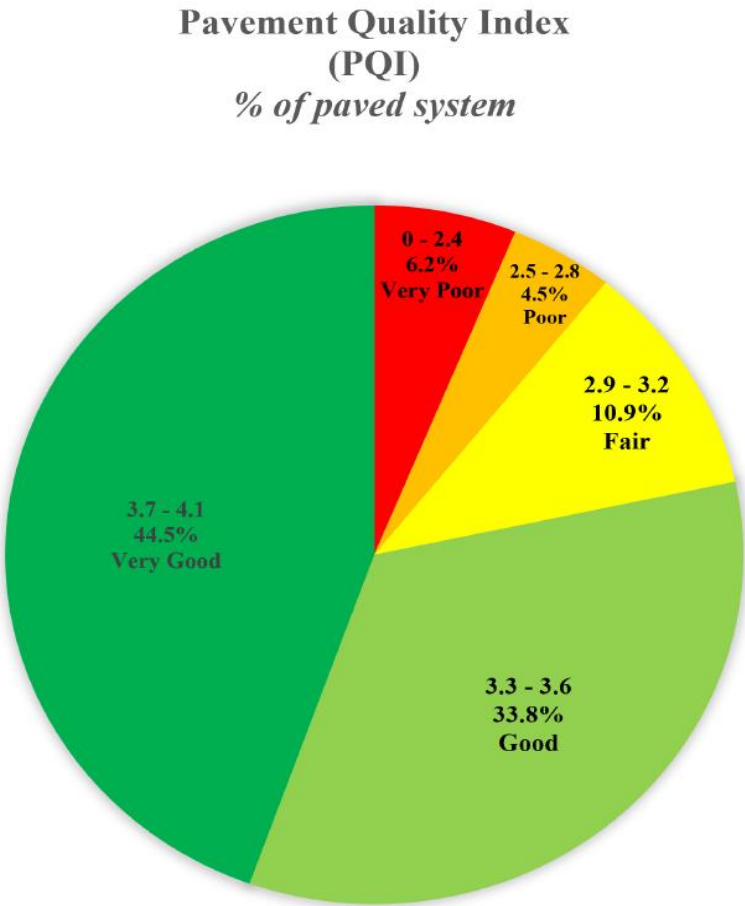
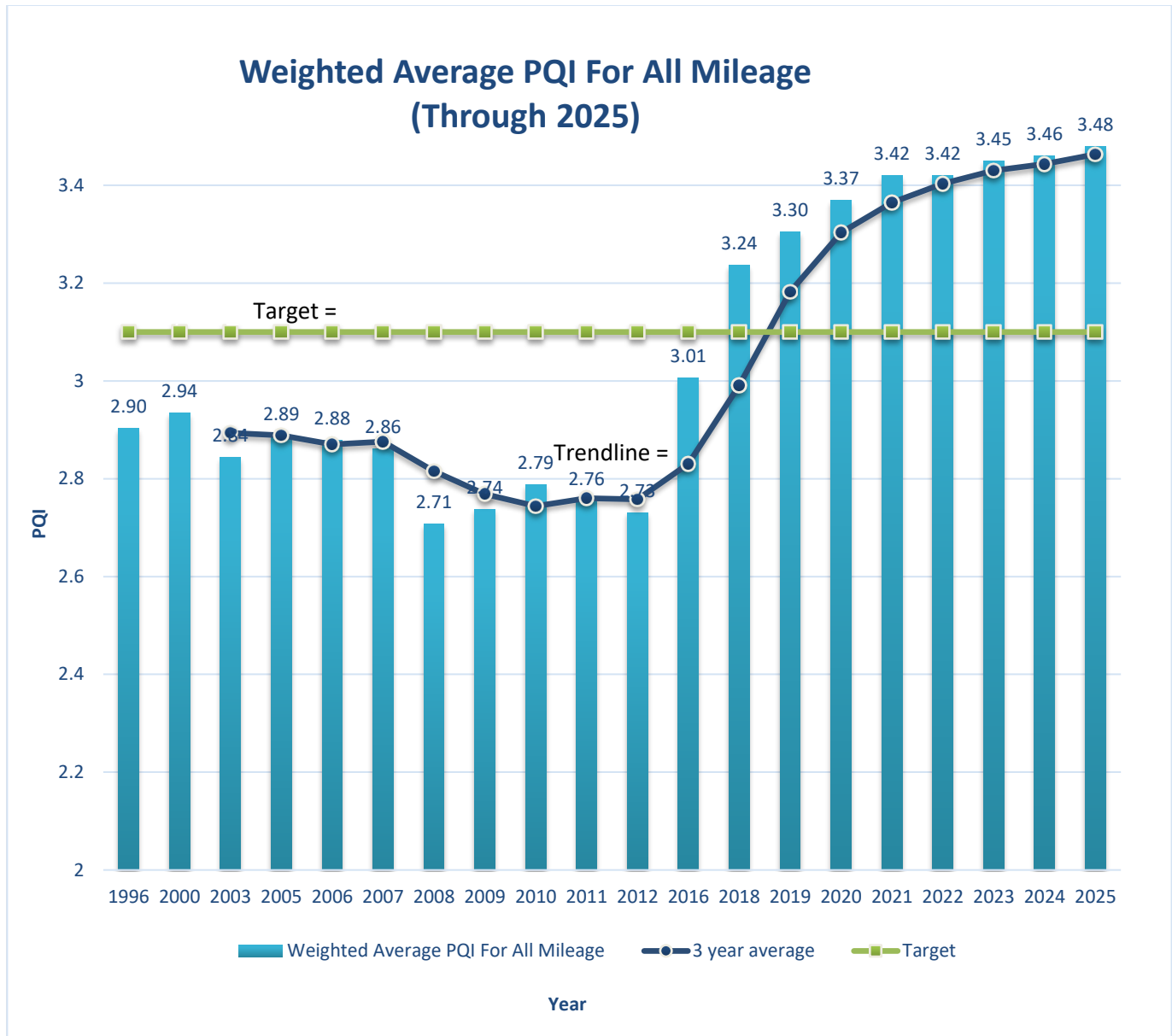


Table 3 - Weighted Average Pavement Quality Index by Road type, 2023 - 2025

	2025	2024	2023	2022
All Roads	3.48	3.46	3.45	3.42
CSAH Roads	3.52	3.51	3.51	3.48
County Roads	3.30	3.28	3.31	3.26
UT Roads	0.0	0.0	3.09	3.06

* No PQI data collected on UT roads in 2024

Chart 7 – Weighted Average Pavement Quality Index for all County Road Mileage



What Was Changed to Meet this Goal: The Department felt it was important to set targets that would reflect where the County's system should be. Since 2012, it has made significant progress toward its goal, and has now surpassed it. A shift toward doing more preservation projects (such as, mill and overlays, reclaim and overlays and bituminous overlays), along with more preventative maintenance (such as crack sealing, chip seals and micro-surfacing) has continued to push the numbers in the right direction. St. Louis County Public Works continues to implement a pavement management system and will further refine its use as well as continue to evaluate all potential sources of revenue and establish a new target.

Measure 8. Public Works – Citizen Survey Ratings

Current Performance: The condition of county roads and bridges was felt to be a moderate problem or had an average rating of 62 points in 2025 (vs. 64 in the 2022 survey). Ratings continued to improve with regard

to snow and ice removal on county road services and the maintenance of county roads—coming in at 60 (vs. 56 in 2022) and 50 (vs. 47 in 2022) respectively. The 2022 survey continued to separate snow and ice removal from general maintenance, which is reflected in the following chart. Maintenance was scored much higher than the national county benchmark.

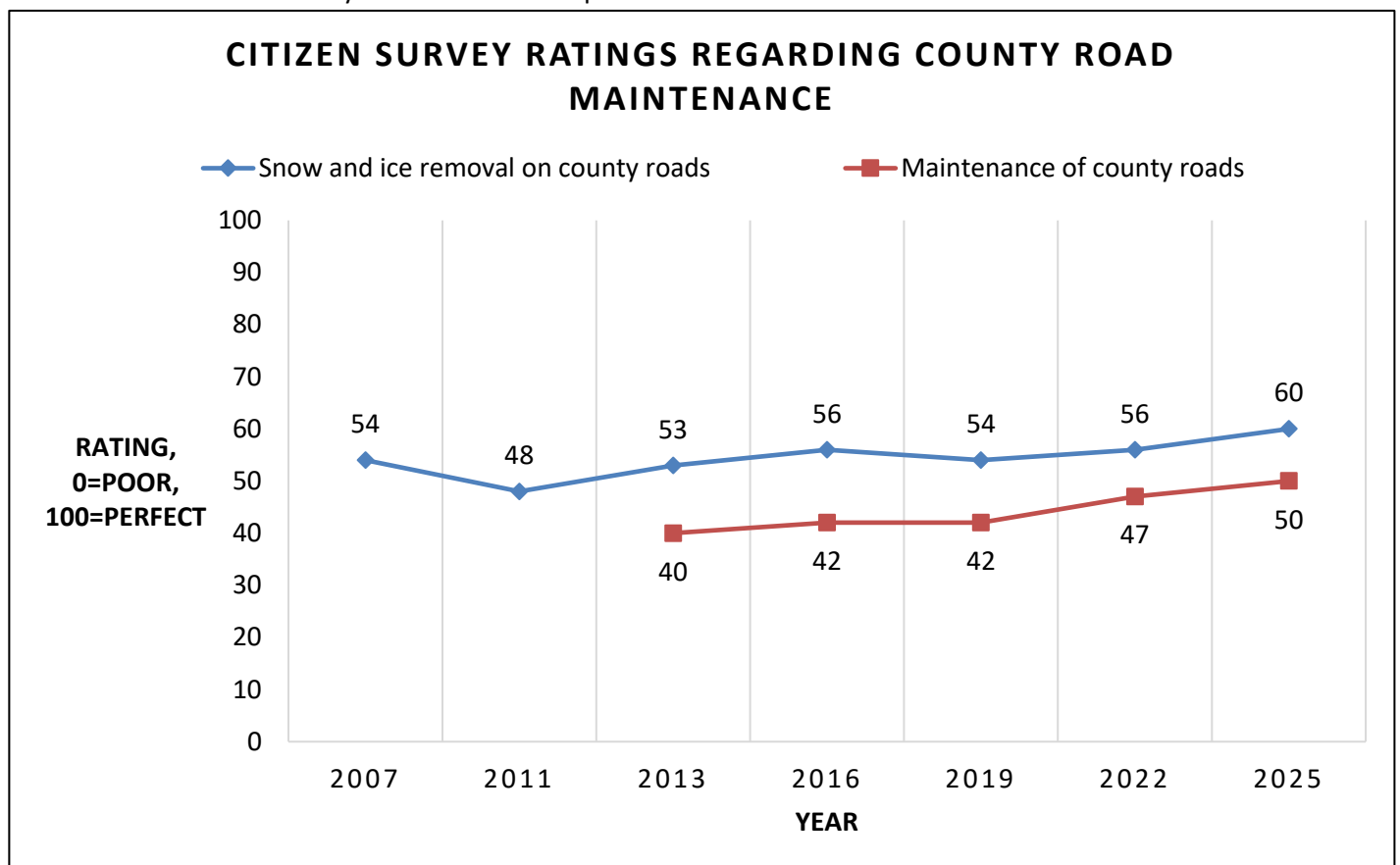
Table 4 – Citizen Survey Ratings regarding County Road Maintenance (scale: 0-100)

	2007	2011	2013	2016	2019	2022	2025
Snow and Ice removal on County Roads	54	48	53	56	54	56	60
Maintenance of County Roads*	n/a	n/a	40	42	42	47	50

*The “maintenance of county roads” was a new question in 2013.

Chart 8 – Citizen Survey Ratings regarding County Road Maintenance

*The “maintenance of county roads” was a new question in 2013.



Measure 9. Public Works – Average Bridge Sufficiency Rating

Current Performance: St. Louis County’s average bridge sufficiency rating is **92.79**—compared to 86 in 2024. Bridge condition data is derived from regularly required safety inspections performed by county staff. The inspections are performed in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Bridge Inspection Standards and the State of Minnesota Bridge and Structure Inspection Program. Bridge safety inspections are extremely detailed; however, the overall condition of each structure is categorized as Good, Fair or Poor. Bridge structures on county roads and highways are typically smaller in size, less structurally complex and serve different roles in the community when compared to bridge structures on the state or interstate highway system. Because of these differences, local agencies and MnDOT State Aid developed a new system of condition rating specifically tailored for the types of bridges owned by counties and cities. The Local Priority Index (LPI) is a 0 to 100 condition score derived from the safety inspection data.

Table 5 – Bridge Sufficiency Ratings by Year

	2023	2024	2025
Good	333, 55%	338, 55.6%	331, 54.6%
Fair	244, 40.3%	241, 39.6%	241, 39.8%
Poor	29, 4.8%	29, 4.8%	34, 5.6%
Total Bridges	605, 100%	608, 100%	606, 100%
Average Local Priority Index (LPI)	86	86	92.79

Public Health Human Services

Department Goal: Children will be born healthy, live a life free from abuse and neglect, and will have a permanent living arrangement. Parents will be emotionally and financially able to provide for their children. Our community will make healthy life choices; have safe food, water, and air.

Commissioner Priority Area: Public Health and Safety

Measure 10. Public Health & Human Services – General Life Expectancy

Current Performance: According to the County Health Rankings compiled by University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, St. Louis County has a life expectancy of 76.9 years.

Table 6 – 2025 Premature Deaths from Leading Causes in St. Louis County

Leading Causes of Death Under Age 75	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
Malignant neoplasms	747	136.3
Diseases of heart	372	67.9
Accidents	346	63.1
COVID-19	187	34.1
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	150	27.4

Data Source: [CDC WONDER](#)

Measure 11. Public Health & Human Services – Tobacco & Alcohol Use

Current Performance: According to the County Health Rankings compiled by University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, St. Louis County adults who smoke is 14.6%, while adults who binge drink or drink heavily account for 20%. The percentage of adults reporting marijuana use is 22%.

Table 7 – Adult rates of Tobacco and Alcohol use by year

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of adults who are current smokers	21%	21%	21%	18%	14.6%
Percentage of adults reporting binge or heavy drinking	25%	24%	24%	21%	20%

Data source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

Measure 12. Public Health & Human Services – Work Participation Rate

Current Performance: The department's work participation rate measures how effectively people are able to enter the workforce and gain economic self-sufficiency. PHHS's goal is that Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and Diversionary Work Program (DWP) participants will meet or exceed the state's expectation of a work participation rate of 38.9%. The 3-year Self-Support Index measures whether eligible adults are working an average of 30 or more hours per week or no longer receiving MFIP or DWP cash assistance during the quarter three years from a baseline quarter. This rate was **19.92%** in 2023; information from January of 2024 through

September 2024 reflects an average rate of 22.85%; fourth quarter numbers were not available at the time of this report. These figures are no longer shared by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Table 8 – Work Participation Rate of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and Diversionary Work Program (DWP) Participants by month

Month	Work Participation Rate
January	22.57%
February	21.53%
March	25.56%
April	24.80%
May	21.86%
June	22.95%
July	23.38%
August	20.96%
September	22.08%
October	N/A
November	N/A
December	N/A
Average*	22.85%

Data source: MN Department of Human Services. **Average reflects January through September 2024.*

Measure 13. Public Health & Human Services – Maltreatment

Current Performance: A key federal indicator of child safety by which states and counties are measured is the absence of child maltreatment recurrence. Maltreatment Recurrence federal performance measure (from DHS Child Welfare Dashboard): *Of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment report during the year prior, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment report within 12 months of their initial report?*

2025 county performance is 6%, compared to the state performance average of 3.9% and the federal performance standard of 9.1% or less

Table 9 – Maltreatment Recurrence by Year

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Minnesota	5.8%	5.8%	5.6%	5.5%	3.9%
St. Louis County	14.5%	16.5%	12.7%	15.3%	6.0%

Data source: [Child Welfare Data Dashboard / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)

Measure 14. Public Health & Human Services – Child Support Program Cost Effectiveness

Current Performance: Child support is money a parent is court-ordered to pay to their child’s other parent or caregiver for the support of the child. The support may be part of an interim, temporary, permanent, or modified court order. Cost effectiveness is the Return on Investment realized as a result of this activity in our County; it is the total dollars collected during the federal fiscal year divided by the total dollars spent for providing child

support services during the same year. It is also called the “Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (CSPIA) collections/expense ratio.”

Table 10 – St. Louis County Child Support PIA Collects/Expense Ratio

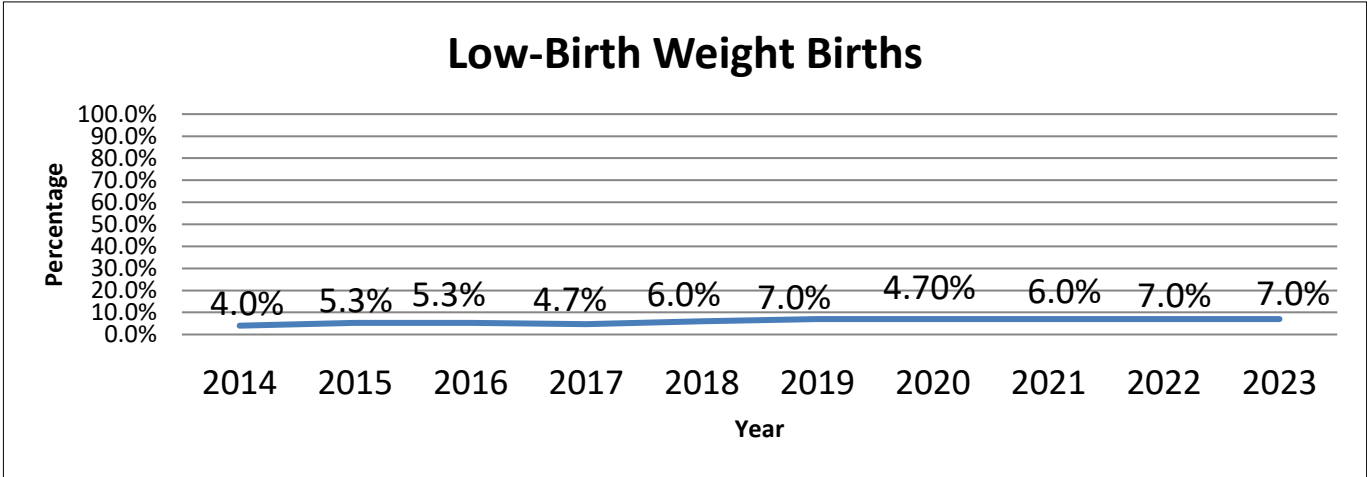
Year	Collection/Expense Ratio
2021	\$3.77
2022	\$4.05
2023	\$3.54
2024	\$3.58
2025	\$3.21

Data Source: 2025 Minnesota Child Support Performance Report

Measure 15. Public Health & Human Services – Low Birth Weight Children

Current Performance: Babies born with a low birth weight is recommended as a measure of life expectancy by the Council on Local Results and Innovation because these children have an increased risk of dying. Approximately half of the St. Louis County public health nurses provide home visits to high-risk maternal populations, seeing clients prenatally and post-partum, to provide support and education to prevent complications, including low birth weight. The most recent data available is from 2023, which reflected **7% of babies had low birth weights** (under 5 pounds, 8 ounces).

Chart 9 - Percentage of Babies with Low-Birth Weights, by year



Data Source: MN Dept of Human Services or www.countyhealthrankings.org

Property Records, Valuation, Assessment

Department Goal: Inspect, value, and classify - for property tax purposes – all taxable parcels with new construction on an annual basis. Assessments meet Department of Revenue standards for level and consistency.

Commissioner Priority Area: Effective and Efficient Government

Measure 16. County Assessor – Assessment Ratio

Current Performance: The median assessment level for all classes of property based on sales adjusted for local effort falls within the Department of Revenue’s acceptable range of 90% to 105% with a coefficient of dispersion less than 20 percent. This means that assessments should consistently fall within 90 to 105 percent of sales prices.

The following are statistics from the 2025 sales ratio report used for study year 2025 for St. Louis County provided by the Minnesota Department of Revenue. The current St. Louis County level of assessment ratio, median ratio, falls between 90-105% for 2025.

Table 11 - 2025 St. Louis County Sales Ratio Report for Taxes Payable

PROPERTY TYPE	MEDIAN RATIO	DOR Acceptable Range of 90-105%
RESIDENTIAL/SRR	95.20% (vs. 95.10% in 2024)	acceptable
COMMERCIAL	95.80% (vs. 95.84% in 2024)	acceptable

Data Source: 2025 Assessment Sales Ratio Study Final Sales Analysis for the State Board of Equalization

Measure 17. County Recorder –Turn-around Time

Current Performance: MN Statutes 357.182, Subd. 3 requires a 10-day turnaround for paper documents and a 5-day turnaround for electronic documents. All real estate transactions rely on documents recorded in the county recorder’s office. The average turnaround time for both paper and electronic was 2.93 days (vs. 2.09 days in 2024) for abstracts and 2.49 days for torrens (vs. 3.11 days in 2024), surpassing the requirement. The increase in electronic processing of documents allows the department to meet and surpass the turnaround time targets.

Elections

Department Goal: Maintain high election standards and public confidence in the election process in compliance with state and federal election laws (including the Help America Vote Act, HAVA).

Commissioner Priority Area: Effective and Efficient Government

Measure 18. County Auditor – Accuracy

Current Performance: There were not any state elections in 2025 so no post-election audits were performed. However, for the 2024 Post Election Review of Voting Systems, vote totals for the Offices of U.S. President & Vice President, U.S. Senator, and U.S. Representative District 8 were reviewed for six randomly selected precincts (Arrowhead, Cherry, Cook, Duluth P-17, Mountain Iron P-2, Unorganized Township P-14). To be within an acceptable range, the comparison must show that the results of the electronic voting system differed from the manual count of the offices reviewed by no more than two votes in a precinct where fewer than 1,200 voters cast ballots, three votes in a precinct where between 1,200 and 1,599 voters cast ballots, four votes in a precinct where between 1,600 and 1,999 voters cast ballots, or five votes in a precinct where 2,000 or more voters cast ballots. A total of 10,689 votes were hand counted by election judges, and all precincts were within the standard of acceptable performance.

Veterans Services

Department Goal: To help Veterans, service members, and their families secure and maximize benefits through accurate, compassionate, and efficient service.

Commissioner Priority Area: Effective and Efficient Government

Measure 19. Veterans Service Office – Customer Service

Current Performance: Voluntary customer satisfaction surveys are carried out by this office to ensure customer satisfaction. In 2025, a total of 48 surveys were completed. 47 out of 48 survey participants noted they would recommend the St. Louis County Veterans Service office to other veterans.

In St. Louis County’s 2025 Citizen Survey, respondents were asked to rate services to veterans. Of the 756 respondents, 347 or 46% of respondents indicated “don’t know,” 23 or 3% responded “Excellent,” 164 or 22% responded ‘Good,’ 133 (18%) responded ‘Fair’, and 89 (12%) responded ‘Poor.’

Measure 20. Veterans Service Office – Dollars for Veterans’ Benefits

Current Performance: Federal data is available up to Fiscal Year 2024 only; therefore, all dollar amounts reflect 2024 data. For VA Fiscal Year 2024, Federal direct benefits for St. Louis County Veterans were **\$103,608,674** and Federal indirect benefits were **\$83,225,179**. For Calendar Year 2024, the total State benefits received by St. Louis County Veterans were **\$146,280.12**.

Table 12 – Veteran’s Affairs (VA) Fiscal Year Federal and State Benefits total for St. Louis County

YEAR	AMOUNT
2017	\$111,000,000
2018	\$111,697,000
2019	\$123,618,000
2020	\$139,137,000
2021	\$141,313,000
2022	\$155,368,000
2023	\$164,204,000
2024	\$186,980,133

Data Source: [VA posted 2024 expenditure data released September of 2025.](#)

Measure 21. Veterans Service Office – Percentage of Veterans Receiving Benefits

The percentage of veterans receiving benefits measure was recommended by a 2008 report that is no longer available. There is currently no reliable data source for this measure. The number of claimant veterans is the closest piece of data that provides insight into veteran benefits.

Table 13 - Number of VA Claimant Veterans in St. Louis County

Year	Total
2017	15,704
2018	15,384
2019	15,068
2020	15,614
2021	15,036
2022	13,492
2023	13,542
2024	13,481
2025	13,916

Data Source: For years 2019-2023 [VA posted 2019-2023 expenditure data](#). In 2024 the VA quit including this data set in their report. The number of Veterans in St. Louis County for 2024 and 2025 has been pulled from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) 2024 and 2025 Annual Reports.

Parks, Libraries

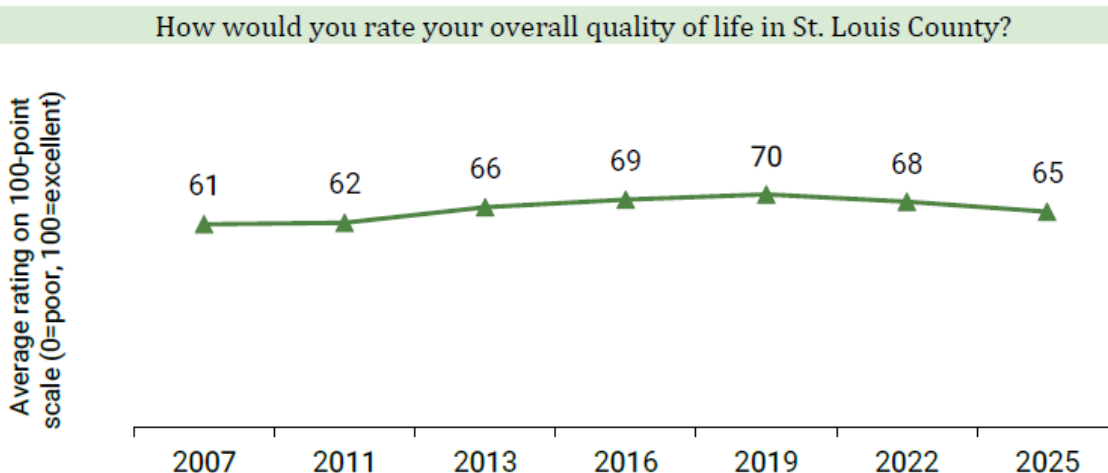
Department Goal: N/A – St. Louis County does not provide parks or libraries.

Commissioner Priority Area: Public Health and Safety; Community Growth and Prosperity

Measure 22. Parks/Libraries – County Parks, Recreational Programs or County Facilities

Current Performance: Although St. Louis County does not operate county parks, some of the 2025 Residential Survey Data speaks to general ratings in this area. The overall quality of life was given an average rating of 65 points, or close to “good.” Quality of life ratings given to St. Louis County were also similar to ratings given to other counties across the nation.

Chart 10 – Overall Quality of Life Rating, 2007-2025



Eight aspects of quality of life in the county were measured in the survey. As in previous years, recreational opportunities (71 points on the 100-point scale) and the county as a place to live (66) topped the list, with scores that were close to “good”. However, ratings for recreational opportunities saw a decrease from 77 to 71 points from 2022 to 2025, while the rating for St. Louis County as a place to live fell from 69 to 66 points.

St. Louis County does operate the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center (Depot), which is a landmark cornerstone of arts and cultural organizations that entertains, educates, inspires, and provides space for a diverse group of guests. The St. Louis County Depot provides new, engaging experiences; is a destination and a community center; and fosters community through education and entertainment that enhances the quality of life for visitors. Its vision is to provide welcoming space and foster connections for distinctive educational and cultural activity. In the 2025 residential survey, eight out of ten residents felt it was somewhat important, very important or essential to invest in the facility.

Measure 23. Arrowhead Library System (of which St. Louis County is a member) – Annual Visits

Current Performance: St. Louis County is a member of the Arrowhead Library System. As such, St. Louis County does not have direct authority for their services. However, the Arrowhead Library System provided the following statistics for consideration—2.78 visits per thousand in 2025 vs. 2.74 visits per thousand in 2024:

Public Library	2025 Population	2024 Library Visits	2025 Library Visits	Visits Per Thousand
Aurora	1,632	10,959	11,401	6.99
Babbitt	1,363	8,713	7,867	5.77
Buhl	964	3,506	3,413	3.54
Chisholm	4,700	16,204	15,505	3.30
Cook	536	7,087	5,457	10.18
Duluth	87,483	328,636	338,506	3.87
Ely	3,276	41,413	41,105	12.55
Eveleth	3,397	7,184	9,752	2.87
Gilbert	1,753	3,249	2,793	1.59
Hibbing	16,015	50,512	48,253	3.01
Hoyt Lakes	1,994	13,806	12,285	6.16
Mountain Iron	2,847	8,279	8,288	2.91
Virginia	8,304	41,613	42,640	5.13
ALS Bookmobile	64,091	4,773	3,689	0.06
TOTAL	198,355	545,934	550,954	2.78

Budget, Financial Performance

Department Goal: Provide professional finance and accounting services in keeping with best practices, ensuring that public dollars are used exclusively for authorized public purposes.

Commissioner Priority Area: Effective and Efficient Government

Measure 24. County Auditor – Bond Rating

Current Performance: In 2025, the County retained an AA+ credit rating from Standard and Poor's (S&P). This rating is just one step below the highest possible rating of AAA. The rating makes the County's debt offerings more attractive to investors and lowers the cost of borrowing.

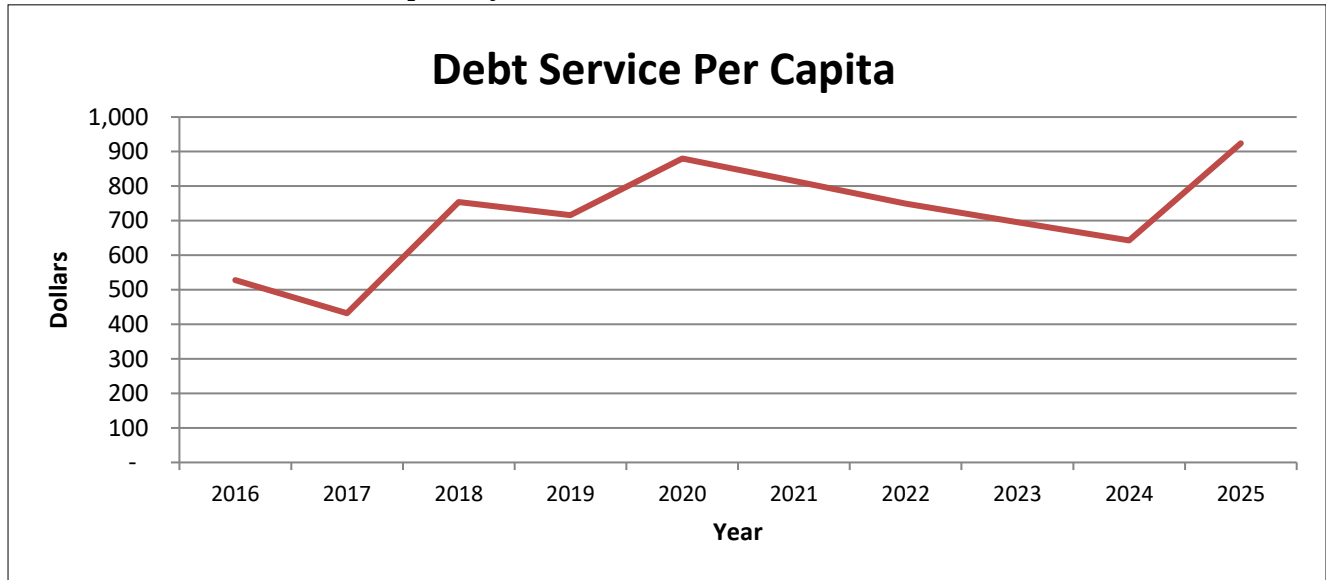
Data source: Standard & Poor's Ratings Services.

Measure 25. County Auditor – Debt Service per capita

Current Performance: **\$924 per capita** (vs. \$643 per capita in 2024)—St. Louis County’s debt levels are well below all established limits.

Please note: The bond sale in 2015 was to accelerate the County’s Transportation Improvement Plan and debt service payments are paid by the dedicated Transportation Sales Tax.

Chart 11 – Debt Service Per Capita, by Year



Data source: St. Louis County 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Environment

Department Goal: To act in a leadership capacity to ensure a sustainable integrated waste system. Further, to lead by developing public and private partnerships to focus resources on areas of greatest impact to the environment and economy of the County.

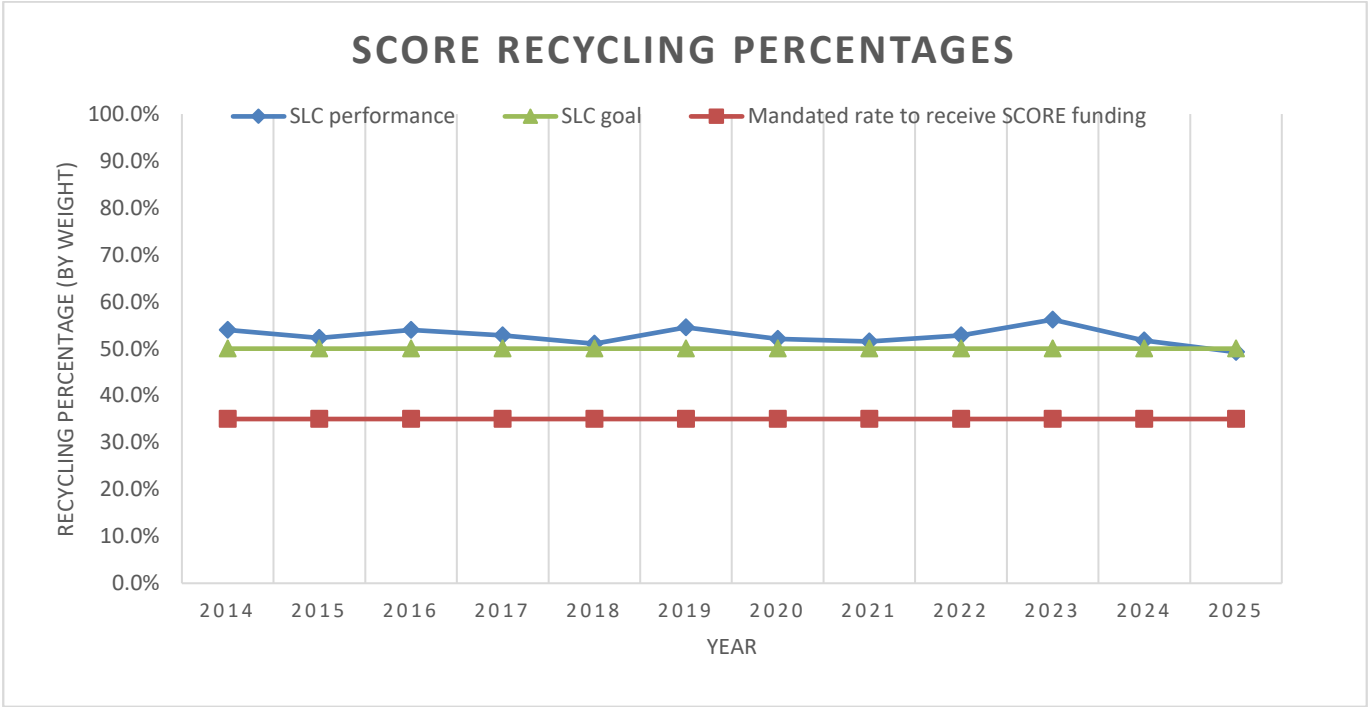
Commissioner Priority Area: Public Health and Safety; Viable Natural Resources and Ecosystem

Measure 26. Environmental Services – Recycling Percentage

St. Louis County Environmental Services works to maintain State of Minnesota Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) recycling levels at or above 50% of the total waste stream. The Environmental Services Department has received funding from the State of Minnesota for recycling programs through this fund. SCORE funds are generated through the State Solid Waste Management tax on garbage disposal. SCORE recycling tonnages are calculated annually. The mandated rate to receive SCORE funding for non-metro counties is 35%; the Department goal is 50% or higher.

Current Performance: 49.26% (vs. 51.74% in 2024)

Chart 12 – Percent of Waste Stream Diverted By Recycling, by year



Factors or Outside Influences Affecting Results – The County has not adopted an ordinance for mandatory recycling within the Solid Waste Management Area (SWMA). Current economic patterns influence the degree consumers manage their waste. Individual materials continue to get lighter as packaging industry standards evolve, thus reducing recordable weights. SCORE recycling percentage also is dependent on the number of respondents to County’s annual SCORE survey. In the Commercial and Industrial field, some of the iron mines in the area idled their operations. This decreased the amount of ferrous and nonferrous metals being recycled.

Changes to Meet Target for 2025 – The Environmental Services Department will continue public education efforts to encourage residents and businesses to recycle and reuse. Technical assistance is being provided to area schools and businesses to increase recycling rates.

Measure 27. Environmental Services – HHW and Electronics

Current Performance: 81.31 tons of Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW) were collected/managed in 2025, compared to 88.84 tons in 2024. This includes nickel-cadmium batteries, sealed lead acid batteries, fluorescent

tubes, and Product Exchange materials collected at the St. Louis County HHW facilities and remote collection sites. **2,566 households** utilized St. Louis County’s HHW collection network, compared to 2,553 in 2024.

The St. Louis County Environmental Services Department (ESD) provides a comprehensive solid waste management system for that part of St. Louis County outside of the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. The ESD works to maintain the number of customers utilizing free disposal at the thirteen HHW mobile collections, three business hazardous waste mobile collections and two year-round HHW collection facilities. The B-Clean Program disposed of approximately 11,028 pounds of commercially generated hazardous waste materials in 2025 compared to 7,951 pounds of hazardous waste materials in 2024.

Chart 13 – Households Utilizing St. Louis County’s HHW Collection Network

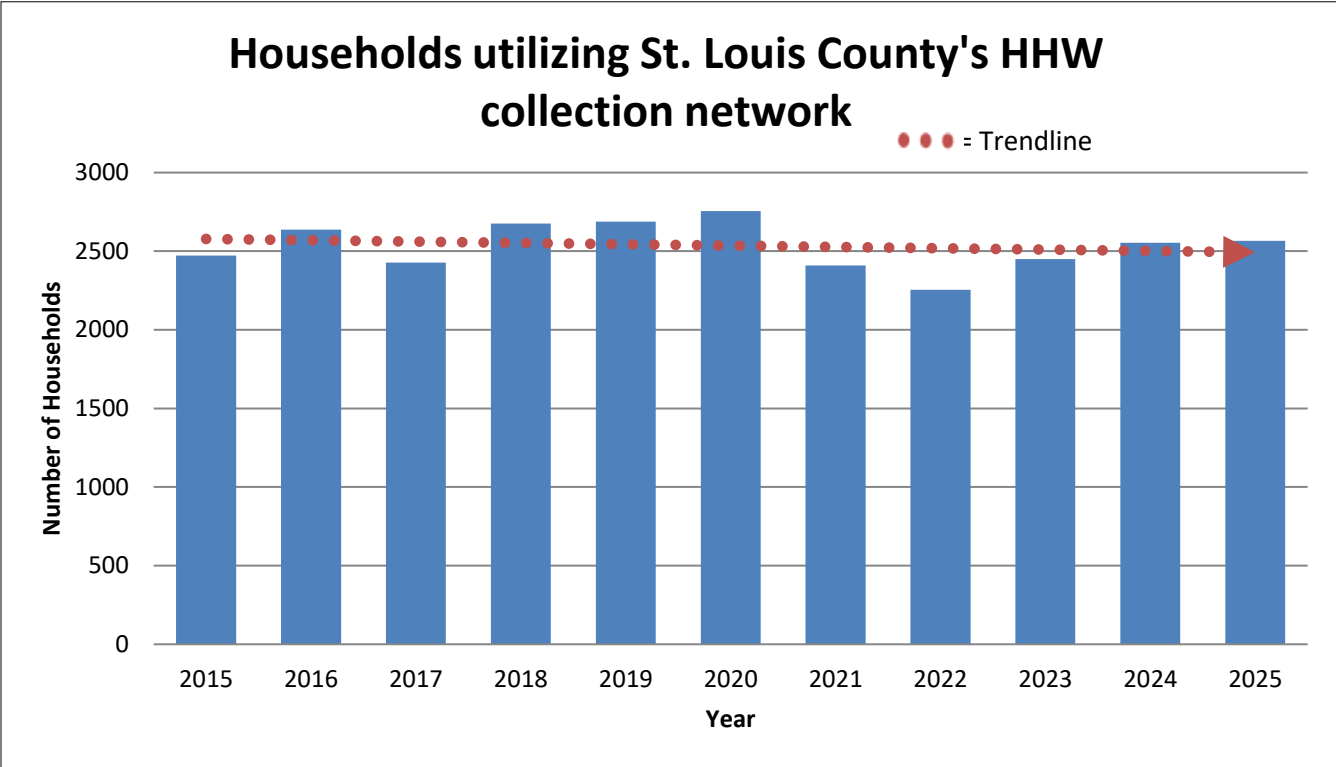


Table 14 – Number of Households Utilizing Household Waste Collection Network, by year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Households	2,473	2,638	2,427	2,676	2,688	2,756	2,410	2,254	2,449	2,553	2,566

Chart 14 – Hazardous Household Waste (HHW) Collection Statistics

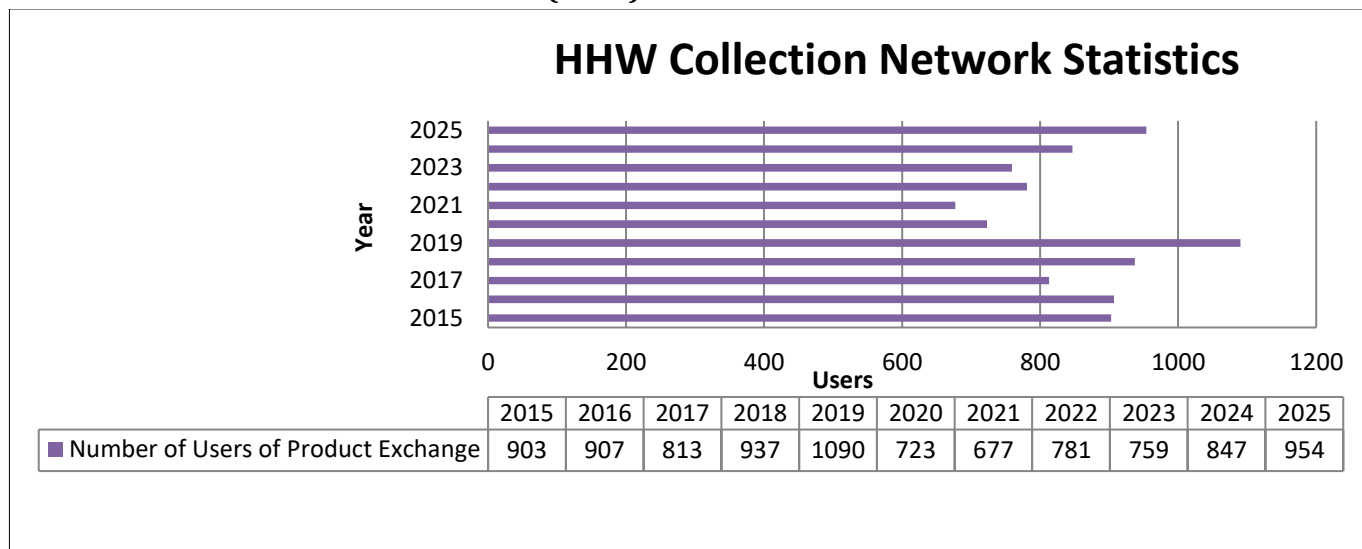


Table 15 – Number of Very Small Quantity Generators and Number of Minimum Quantity Generators

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQG)	16	23	13	15	6	8	1	12	9	3	4
Number of Minimum Quantity Generators (MQ)	1	5	18	28	43	27	22	32	20	18	30

Factors or Outside Influences Affecting Results – Environmental Services Department’s HHW program is free to all residential property owners within the department’s Solid Waste Management Area. Since the County’s adoption of the Minnesota PaintCare Program, businesses and homeowners have been utilizing free paint disposal opportunities through the HHW program and other local commercial vendors participating in the PaintCare program. In 2025, the Department received reimbursement of \$33,344.28 from the PaintCare Program to help offset collection, haulage and disposal costs associated with the department’s HHW program.

Changes to Meet Target for 2025 – The HHW collection facilities in Virginia and Hibbing were completely open to the public in 2025. The Department notifies citizens through the department’s webpage, Facebook and print and radio advertising. In 2025, a targeted radio advertisement was continued to address the increasing number of rechargeable batteries causing minor fires on the Regional Landfill’s working face, encouraging recycling and proper disposal of these items. The current goal would be to have additional targeted hazardous waste advertisements based on the wastes such as boat/snowmobile gasoline, and the residential/business customers. The Department will continue to conduct three summer Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) remote collections through the B-Clean program, in addition to year-round scheduled appointments at the HHW facility located at the Regional Landfill.

Current Performance: St. Louis County recycled 243,875 pounds of electronics compared to 235,000 pounds in 2024.

Measure – Make proper disposal of electronics an accepted practice by the public.

Performance Target – Increase the capture of waste electronics from the municipal solid waste stream by 1%.

Chart 15 – Pounds of Electronics recycled

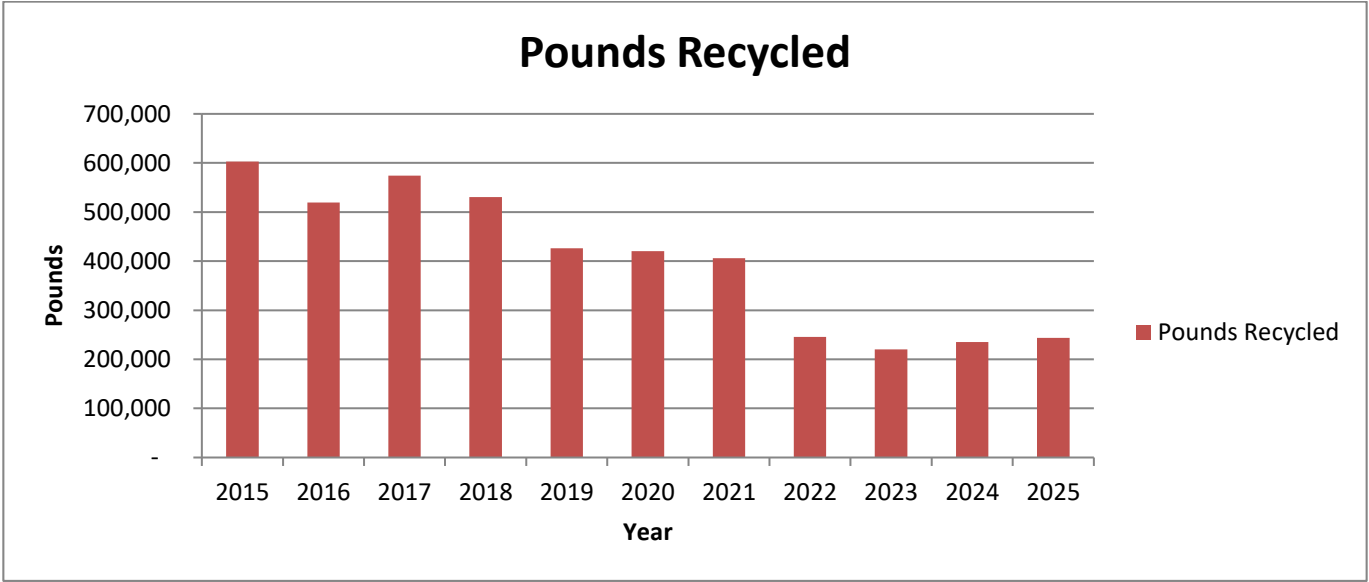


Table 16 – Quantities of Recycling, by Year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Pounds of Recycled	602,934	519,507	574,094	530,621	426,506	420,234	405,693	245,837	220,000	235,000	243,875
# of Loads Shipped				32	26	23	21	18	18	18	18

Factors or Outside Influences Affecting Results – State law mandates that commercial waste electronic and residential video display devices (e-waste) are banned from landfills and must be processed for recycling. The only collection sites for residential e-waste within the Environmental Services Solid Waste Management Area are provided by the department. Fees charged for the collection of e-waste are kept low to encourage proper disposal, resulting in haulage and processing costs subsidized by other solid waste program revenues. Continued use of effective advertising will ensure that electronics are recycled properly. E-waste manufacturers have made great progress in significantly reducing the weight and volume of video display devices, which is starting to show up in program totals. The program is continuing to see an increase in the screen size of flat screen televisions, which increases shipment preparation difficulties and reduces the number pieces in a shipping gaylord.

Changes to Meet for Target 2025 – One of the goals is to increase pounds recycled by 1% per year. With manufacturers producing a smaller lighter product this goal becomes harder to meet. The department added the goal of reducing the overall program cost of collecting, transporting, and recycling waste electronics. The performance table now includes the number of loads shipped since 2018. The decrease in number of loads

shipped illustrates reduced costs in collection, shipping, and recycling. While fluctuations will occur from year to year, the program should continue to see lower levels than the record pounds and trailer loads collected in 2014. The department will continue to explore recycling and transportation options to decrease costs.

Current Performance: St. Louis County had 52,829 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) buried at the Regional Landfill compared to 57,825 in 2024.

Measure – Reduce the annual tonnages of municipal solid waste (MSW) buried at the Regional Landfill.

Performance Target – Reduce annual tonnage of municipal solid waste by 2%

Chart 16 – Tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) buried at the Regional Landfill, by Year

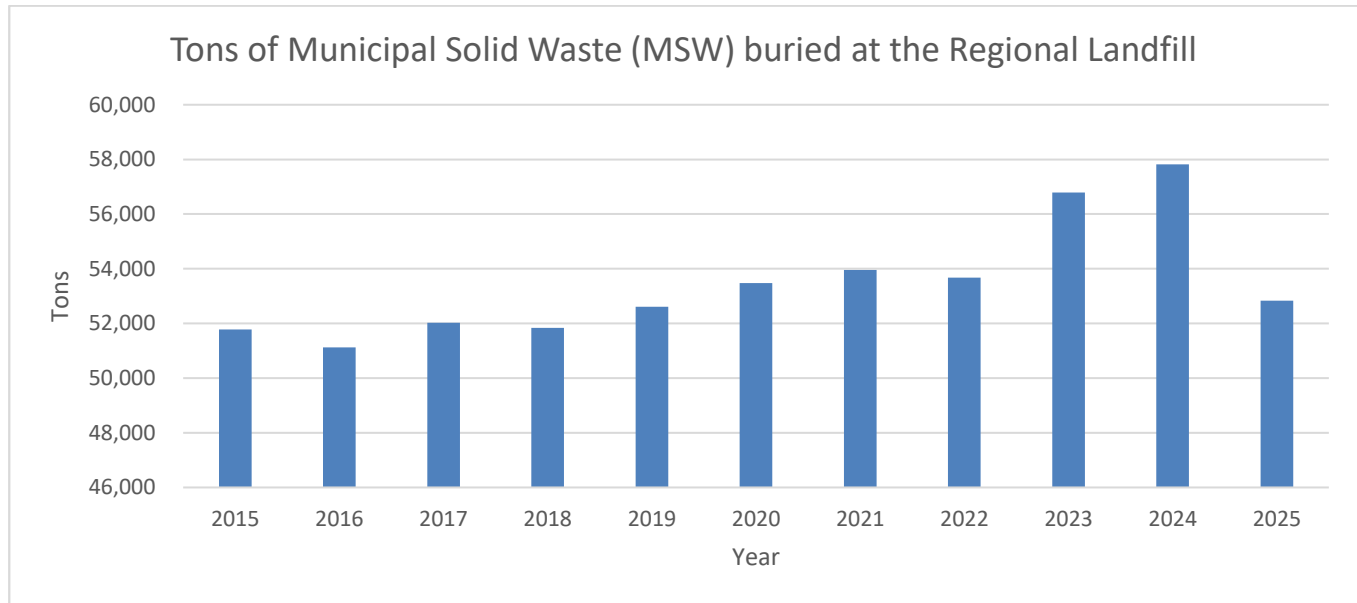


Table 17 – Tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) buried at the Regional Landfill, by Year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Tons	51,782	51,128	52,028	51,842	52,605	53,481	53,952	53,672	56,793	57,825	52,829

Factors or Outside Influences Affecting Results – Low tipping fees make reuse or recycling less attractive alternatives to landfilling. Landfill tonnages tend to reflect economic conditions and have remained relatively static since 2011, although activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to influence amounts for 2021. Extraordinary factors due to Covid-19 include citizens opting to dispose of recyclables as household garbage versus traveling to recycling drop-off locations, and based on increased customer transactions, customers spending more time at home led to more waste being delivered to their local transfer stations. Part of the increase in 2021 MSW appears to reflect an increase in households moving to the county from higher density areas of the state.

Continuing the trends as the Covid-19 pandemic has wound down, people transition from work-from-home arrangements back to working in offices. This has decreased the amount of home cleanouts that were prevalent during the early months of the pandemic.

Changes to Meet Target for 2025 – Continued communication through effective advertising and other public information programs directed toward reuse and recycling alternatives to landfilling. An increase in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) tipping fees in 2021 has had minimal impact on MSW tonnages. Also, constantly monitoring the viability and overall availability of local recycling markets for new waste streams i.e. e-waste, mattress recycling, and other special wastes recycling have resulted in some waste reduction. The Department continues to strive for excellent compaction rates to preserve airspace and extend the life of the landfill.

Completed in 2023, Environmental Services collaborated with surrounding counties and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) on a larger Regional Solid Waste Management Plan. In 2025, St. Louis County and WLSSD signed a contract to take waste from the WLSSD Management Area for a 10-year period beginning in 2026. This will significantly increase the amount of waste received at the Regional Landfill. Koochiching County also began delivering waste to the Regional Landfill in January of 2026.