Prosper Insights & Analytics: July Data Show Consumers Recalibrating as Cost Pressures Ease

Consumer mood rebounds while spending plans remain resilient, creating selective opportunities across value, housing and membership-driven categories

Prosper Insights & Analytics

WORTHINGTON, OH, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Prosper Insights & Analytics' July 2026 Consumer Snapshot shows a U.S. consumer who remains cautious about the broader economy but is feeling somewhat better personally as immediate cost pressures begin to ease. While consumer confidence declined in July, consumer mood improved, gas-related cutbacks moderated, and forward spending plans remained slightly above year-ago levels.

Consumer confidence fell to 39.4% in July from 40.9% in June and 41.4% a year ago, remaining below historical pre-pandemic levels. However, Prosper's Consumer Mood Index rose to 101.2 from 99.6 in June, moving back above its historical baseline. Although mood remains below last July's 102.9, the divergence suggests consumers feel somewhat better about their personal circumstances than they do about the overall economy.

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> *Phil Rist, EVP Strategic Initiatives at Prosper Insights & Analytics*

Some cost pressures also eased during the month. Awareness of price increases moved slightly lower across most categories, with awareness of higher gasoline prices declining 4.6 percentage points from June. The share of consumers saying their standard of living has decreased improved to 32.4%, down from 35.6% a month earlier.

Gas prices continue to influence household behavior, but their impact moderated from June. In July, 35.1% of adults said fluctuating gas prices would cause them to drive less, compared with 36.6% in June, while the share spending less on groceries because of gas fell to 21.7% from 25.1%. Both measures remain elevated compared with last July, however, and only 27.7% said gas prices had no major effect on their spending, versus 38.5% a year ago.

Shopping discipline also loosened as some of these pressures eased. The share saying they are becoming more practical and realistic in their purchases declined to 37.4% from 41.4% in June. Similarly, those focusing only on what they need fell to 41.8% from 43.1%. These shifts do not indicate a return to carefree spending, but they suggest fewer consumers feel compelled to tighten their budgets further.

Prosper's 90-day Spending Score came in at 82.37, slightly below June's 83.07 but just above 82.17 in July 2025. Despite weaker economic confidence and continued gas-related trade-offs, consumers are not forecasting a broad spending contraction. Instead, major purchase intentions point to continued rotation: vacation travel plans are lower than last year, while intentions for major home improvements, home purchases and vehicle purchases have increased.

Membership trends continue to highlight the importance of value and convenience. Amazon Prime membership stands at 59.0%, up from 58.7% in June but below 60.2% last July. Walmart+ membership stands at 27.3%, slightly below June's 27.8% but well above 22.3% last year and 19.4% two years ago. The longer-term rise in Walmart+ reinforces the growing role of membership platforms as both loyalty ecosystems and household cost-management tools.

"July's data show consumers recalibrating rather than retreating," said Phil Rist, EVP Strategic Initiatives at Prosper Insights & Analytics. "Economic confidence softened, but mood improved, gas-related pressure moderated, and spending plans remained slightly ahead of last year. Consumers are still careful, but they appear less compelled to tighten further. That creates opportunities for companies that combine emotional appeal with clear value, convenience and practical benefits."

For Wall Street asset managers, July supports a constructive but selective consumer outlook, with potential resilience in value-led retail, membership ecosystems, housing-related categories and businesses that help consumers manage everyday costs. Companies dependent on discretionary traffic, impulse spending or fuel-sensitive experiences may face greater pressure.

For consumer brand CMOs, the message is to balance aspiration with justification. Consumers may be feeling better and loosening strict spending discipline, but they continue to expect pricing clarity, convenience and demonstrable value. The July consumer is neither withdrawing nor spending freely—the consumer is carefully recalibrating.

For a 5 minute audio briefing, listen to Prosper's podcast on Spotify.

To learn more about Prosper's 'Demand DNA' macro forecast signals, send an email to info@goProsper.com

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Prosper Insights & Analytics helps organizations identify market change before it becomes visible in transactions, revenues, or economic reports. For more than 20 years, Prosper has measured the drivers of future consumer behavior—including intentions, expectations, confidence, emotions, and purchase plans—to generate predictive demand signals for financial services, retail, technology, and marketing organizations. www.ProsperInsights.com

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