

# DMNA

## Public Safety Survey

### A Closer Look #2: Race and Ethnicity

**March 11, 2021**

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**Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association  
Public Safety Task Force**



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# **Public Safety Survey**

## **A Closer Look: Race and Ethnicity**

### **Analysis Summary and Conclusion:**

- **Survey analysis shows that the downtown community has a unified view across racial/ethnic lines on public safety issues.**
- **People of Color and white respondents support the six key findings of the survey, by large majorities and with similar levels of agreement.**

### **The six key findings are:**

- **Downtown residents are highly dissatisfied with city leadership on public safety policies.**
- **Among city leaders, residents view Chief Arradondo as being most effective in responding to community safety issues.**
- **Residents overwhelmingly believe that MPD should report to the Mayor, and not to the City Council.**
- **Residents strongly want law enforcement to have a central role in responding to public safety calls. Lack of police presence downtown is residents' top safety concern.**
- **Public safety perceptions have deteriorated from one year ago and contributed to observed changes in transportation, spending, and mobility.**

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## Background

**Large majorities of people of color and white respondents support the six key findings of our survey report, with similar levels of agreement.**

A survey was recently conducted DMNA Public Safety Task Force to provide an objective assessment of downtown residents' views on community safety conditions and city leaders' responses to them. Our [survey report](#) includes key findings, a high-level summary of results, methodological information, and detailed data for all quantitative questions. These data show that downtown residents have strong and consistent views on public safety conditions, city leaders' responses, and policy implications. The data also enables us to take a closer look at our results, including how response levels vary with the demographic characteristics of respondents.

This is the second in a series of brief articles to examine the survey findings in closer detail. In this article, we focus on how race and ethnicity are associated with respondents' views on public safety, an analysis that is particularly important because of the centrality of racial justice issues in the public safety debate in Minneapolis and throughout the United States. We examine the relationship between race/ethnicity and public safety views in our sample, in two ways: by comparing the views of people of color (POC) with those of white respondents or the full sample, and by providing results for specific race/ethnicity categories where relevant and statistically feasible. The aggregated POC category offers a larger base number for calculating percentages: of those respondents answering the demographic question, 151 (14%) are POC and 904 (86%) are white). The aggregated category is useful, but it can also mask differences that exist among the component groups; reporting specific category averages helps to correct this issue. Because of the limited number of respondents in these categories (20-40, with an average of 29), we will not offer categorical racial or ethnic generalizations from these data. The numbers are sufficient, however, to suggest shared viewpoints within these groups. See methodological notes (at the end of this article) for details on sampling and measurement.

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**The overall conclusion of this analysis is that large majorities of people of color and white respondents support the six key findings of our survey report, with similar levels of agreement.** Although there are some differences among specific POC race/ethnicity categories, the majority of these differences suggest stronger support for the key findings than among white respondents. We will demonstrate the analysis conclusion by examining how survey-takers from the subsamples responded to the survey questions associated with each of the key findings.

## Leadership

**Downtown residents are highly dissatisfied with city leadership on public safety policies.**

**Respondents from all race/ethnicity categories were most satisfied with Chief Arradondo's response to the public safety crisis and least satisfied with the City Council's response**

These findings draw primarily from Question #17, which uses a satisfaction scale of 1-10 (1 = not at all satisfied; 10 = highly satisfied) to rate officials' responses to public safety conditions. In the full sample, residents gave a weighted average of 4.84 to Chief Arradondo, 3.60 to Mayor Frey, and 2.38 to the City Council. We can use these averages as reference points for the satisfaction ratings given by respondents in the race/ethnicity categories.

- For Chief Arradondo, white respondents gave a weighted average of 4.91, while the aggregated responses from people of color led to a weighted average of 4.71. (Weighted averages from specific POC race/ethnicity categories are: Asian=4.16; Black=4.41; Hispanic=5.25; Multiracial=4.74; Other=4.65.)

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- For Mayor Frey, white respondents gave a weighted average of 3.70, while POC respondents gave an average of 3.48. (Specifics: Asian=3.37; Black=3.41; Hispanic=4.65; Multiracial=3.35; Other=2.53.)
  - For the City Council, white respondents reported a weighted average of 2.43, while POC respondents reported an average of 2.35 (Specifics: Asian=2.79; Black=2.31; Hispanic=3.13; Multiracial=2.0; Other=2.40.)

To summarize these statistics, respondents from all race/ethnicity categories were most satisfied with Chief Arradondo’s response to the public safety crisis and least satisfied with the City Council’s response. **As in the survey sample as a whole, respondents in both the aggregated POC and white subsamples are twice as satisfied with the MPD Chief’s response, as compared to the City Council’s.**

These conclusions are further reinforced by subsample responses to Question #18, which asks survey-takers how confident they are that the City of Minneapolis will resolve the public safety issues. In the full sample, 71% of respondents reported that they were either “not at all confident or “not so confident.” When these data are examined through the race/ethnicity categories, 70% of white respondents and 71% of aggregated POC respondents reported a lack of confidence. (The percentages within specific POC groups are: Black=81%; Multiracial=76%; Other=75%; Hispanic=63%; Asian=63%.) When combined with the results from Question 17 discussed above, the subsample analysis demonstrates that **both POC and white respondents are highly dissatisfied with city leadership on public safety policies.**

## Accountability

**Residents overwhelmingly believe that MPD should report to the Mayor, and not to the City Council.**

In the full sample, 74% of respondents indicated (Q19) that the Mayor should be responsible for managing MPD and held accountable for its actions. **The same**

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**overwhelming level of support for mayoral accountability is expressed in the POC (72%) and white (74%) subsamples.** (Mayoral accountability preference within specific groups: Black=85%; Hispanic=78%; Other=75%; Multiracial=71%; Asian=61%.)

## Roles

**Residents strongly want law enforcement to have a central role in responding to public safety calls.**

This key finding draws primarily from Q20, which asks survey-takers to indicate who they believe are the appropriate public safety responders for thirteen 911 call categories. For each call, we asked survey-takers to select whether the primary response should be from law enforcement, a social worker or other non-police employee, or a combined team of LE and non-police responders. The responses within all race/ethnicity groups directly parallel those in the full sample:

- Only homelessness was considered by most as appropriate for a non-police employee to be the primary responder, with majorities from specific groups averaging 56%.
- A combined team was considered appropriate for mental health crisis (with majorities averaging 63%) and drug use/overdose (with majorities averaging 51%).
- Most residents favored MPD as the primary responder for the other ten types of calls, by large majorities averaging over 80%.

To summarize: while there is general support for additional staffing on homelessness, mental health crises, and drug overdose, **MPD is viewed as the most appropriate primary responder in a wide variety of response situations, by survey-takers in the sample as a whole and across all race/ethnicity categories.**

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## Safety Concerns

**Lack of police presence downtown is residents' top safety concern.**

This key finding is based on Question #4, which we borrowed from an annual downtown Minneapolis perception survey. The question simply asks survey-takers what their top safety concern is in downtown Minneapolis, and presents them with a list of 12 response choices (see [survey report](#), Appendix 3 for details). **Lack of security presence was the most selected top security concern in the full sample (42%), and in every subsample, we have analyzed to date.** For the race/ethnicity groups, the percentages are: Asian 43%; Black=52%; Hispanic=42%; Multiracial=42%; White=39%; Other=40%.

## Impact of changing perceptions

**Public safety perceptions have deteriorated from one year ago and contributed to observed changes in transportation, spending and mobility.**

**Safety perceptions (Q1 & 2) are highly consistent among all race/ethnicity categories.** As reference points, 83% of the full sample reported feeling “much less safe” (51%) or “somewhat less safe” (32%) in their neighborhood, compared to a year ago. In downtown Minneapolis, 90% felt less safe than a year ago.

Similarly, 84% of respondents in the aggregated POC group and 82% of white respondents reported feeling less safe in their neighborhood, compared to year ago. In

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downtown Minneapolis generally, 88% of POC respondents and 89% of white respondents reported feeling less safe than a year ago.

When we examine the data within specific POC groups, the results for respondents' immediate neighborhood are: Asian=75%; Black=89%; Hispanic=79%; Multiracial=82%; Other=85%. The percentages for downtown Minneapolis generally are: Asian=85%; Black=89%; Hispanic=88%; Multiracial=88%; Other=90%.

Changes in the use of various transportation modes because of public safety concerns (Q16) add details to these findings. As in the full sample, usage is generally less in all of race/ethnicity categories. The one notable exception is an increase in use of a personal car. In the full sample, 43% of respondents reported increased usage. In the race/ethnicity subsamples, the percentages reporting increased usage are: Asian=38%; Black=60%; Hispanic=55%; Multiracial=41%; White=42%; Other=45%. Correspondingly, **large majorities in all categories reported that they are walking less because of safety concerns.** In the full sample, 65% of respondents indicated they walked less. In the subsamples: Asian=70%; Black=81%; Hispanic=63%; Multiracial=73%; White=64%; Other=70%.

Sixty-six percent of respondents in the full sample reported that their spending had "significantly decreased" due to safety conditions (Q10). Another 19% reported that it had "somewhat decreased," for a combined 85%. In the subsamples, the combined percentages for decreased spending are: Asian=78%; Black=74%; Hispanic=84%; Multiracial=91%; White=85%; Other=90%. **When asked whether they are spending more of their entertainment dollars (restaurants, movies, etc.) outside the City of Minneapolis (Q11), 71% of respondents in the aggregated POC group answered yes, compared with 59% of white respondents and 61% of respondents in the full sample.**

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## Conclusion

**The DMNA Downtown Public Safety Survey represents a unified downtown community view on public safety issues in Minneapolis.**

In another subsample analysis, we found that a large majority of both renters and owners agree on public safety conditions, official responses to them, and policies. In the analysis presented here, the data demonstrate that respondents across the race/ethnicity categories share this agreement as well, again by large majorities. These analyses clearly show that the key findings of **the DMNA Downtown Public Safety Survey represent a unified downtown community view on public safety issues in Minneapolis.**

## Methodological Notes

1. **Survey Population and Sample.** The respondents whose views we are measuring—the survey population—are the adult residents of condominium and rental apartment buildings in Downtown East and Downtown West. We do not know the exact number of people in these buildings or their demographic characteristics, and therefore cannot calculate the differential response rates of demographic groups within the survey population or their precise levels of representation in the sample. Because the downtown residential population has been growing rapidly in recent years, there are no definitive demographic reports available. The best available census data suggests that the downtown population (including children) is 62.5% white and 37.5% people of color (POC). In our sample, 86% of respondents identified as white and 14% as POC. To put this distribution in perspective, the City’s Transformation of Community Safety survey has reported that “BIPOC residents were underrepresented and white respondents were overrepresented” in its survey. This statement would appear to be true for our sample as well. One important difference between the two surveys, however, is that the City has not released any specific details of its survey results for individual questions or the demographic characteristics of its sample, while our survey has released all of this information.
2. **Measurement and Analysis of Race/Ethnicity.** We used a standard survey question which asks respondents “What is your race or ethnicity” and offers nine response categories. Demographic questions are typically optional, and

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some people prefer not to answer them; in our sample, 1,055 people (out of 1,129) answered this question, including 904 white and 151 POC respondents. In this analysis we examine the relationship between race/ethnicity and public safety views in two ways: by comparing the views of people of color (POC) with those of white respondents or the full sample, and by providing results for specific race/ethnicity categories where relevant and statistically feasible. Three categories (Middle Eastern/NorthAfrican, Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island) have too few people (a total of 7 in the three categories) to express results in categorical percentages, although these respondents are included in POC calculations. The other five POC categories range from 20 to 40 respondents (average=29). Percentages calculated for these specific groups suggest shared viewpoints within the groups, but we do not make categorical generalizations based on these numbers. For narrative efficiency, we use abbreviated category names in the analyses; the actual response choices listed on the questionnaire are: Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Multiracial or Multiethnic, and Another race or ethnicity.