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## Public Safety Survey

### A Closer Look #1: Renters and Homeowners

**March 5, 2021**

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



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# Public Safety Survey

## A Closer Look: Renters and Homeowners

### Analysis Summary and Conclusion:

- Large majorities of both renters and homeowners agree on public safety conditions, official responses to them, and policies.
- Both renters and homeowners 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 renter and homeowner respondents support the six key findings of our survey report, with similar levels of agreement.**

The DMNA Public Safety Task Force works to encourage and inform community participation in the ongoing debate about public safety in Minneapolis. The survey it recently conducted was designed 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. But 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 first in a series of brief articles to examine the survey findings in greater detail. The focus here is on possible differences in viewpoints between renters and homeowners. The task force engaged in a proactive effort to ensure that the survey reached people living in downtown rental units, as described in Appendix 2 of our survey report. Although the response rate of renters was undoubtedly lower than that of owners, the proactive effort clearly had a positive outcome, resulting in a sample in which 31% of respondents are renters.

We expected that renters would have somewhat different views than owners for a number of reasons, including our assumption that renters would on average be younger than owners. The data show this assumption to be generally correct, although there are both renters and owners in all age categories. Among renters, the percentages are: 18-24 (10%), 25-34 (36%), 35-44 (19%), 45-54 (9%), 55-64 (15%) and 65+ (11%). For homeowners: 18-24 (1%), 25-34 (11%), 35-44 (14%), 45-54 (15%), 55-64 (31%) and 65+ (28%).

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While our assumption that the rental subsample would be younger was correct, our expectation that renters and homeowners would have different views on downtown public safety was largely incorrect. Although small (and sometimes surprising) differences do exist on a few individual questions, **large majorities of both renters and homeowners agree on public safety conditions, official responses to them, and policies.** This agreement can be illustrated by presenting the six key findings in the [survey report](#) and examining renters' and owners' responses to the associated survey questions.

## Leadership

**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.**

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. The scores given by both renters (R) and owners (O) are directly parallel to the full sample finding. For Chief Arradondo, R=4.42; O=5.12. For Mayor Frey, R=3.45; O=3.89. For the City Council, R=2.74, O=2.41. In both subsamples, as in the full sample, residents are twice as satisfied with Chief Arradondo's response, as compared to the City Council's.

Responses to another question reinforce these findings. When asked how confident respondents are that the City of Minneapolis will resolve the public safety issues (Q18),

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71% of the full sample reported being “not at all confident (39%) or “not so confident (32%). Renters reported even less confidence than owners, with 73% selecting these two categories, compared with 66% of owners.

## 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. A strong majority (63%) of renters endorsed MPD accountability with the Mayor, and an even larger percentage of owners (79% ) endorsed this position.

## 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 to the calls 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 of both subsamples are remarkably similar. As in the full sample, only homelessness was considered by most as appropriate for a non-police employee to be the primary responder (R=54%, O=58%). A combined team was considered appropriate for mental health crisis (R=59%, O=60%) and drug overdose (R=52%, O=55%). As in the full

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sample, most residents favored MPD as the primary responder for the other ten types of calls, by large majorities (averaging over 80%). Both renters and homeowners view additional staffing as positive but view MPD as best suited as a primary responder in a wide variety of response situations.

## Safety Concerns

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

“Lack of security presence” was the most selected top security concern (Q4) by both renters (33%) and owners (45%). “Loitering/people hanging out” was the second most often selected choice by renters (23%). For owners, the next most selected choice was essentially split between “lack of people” (17%) and “loitering” (16%).

## 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 virtually identical among renters and owners. In the full sample, 83% 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. For renters, 80% felt less safe in their own neighborhoods, and 88% less safe downtown. For owners, 82% felt less safe in their neighborhoods, and 90% less safe downtown.

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Changes in the uses of transportation modes (Q16) in the renter and homeowner subsamples are similar: usage is less in all categories, except for use of a personal car, which has increased. On the assumption that more renters are likely not to own a car, it is surprising that renters reported a greater increase in personal car use (47%) than did owners (43%), and a greater decrease in walking (R=67%, O=61%).

Both renters (65%) and owners (62%) report that their spending in Minneapolis has “significantly decreased” due to safety conditions (Q10). Another 18% of renters and 23% of owners report that their spending has “somewhat decreased.” Similarly, 64% of renters and 56% of owners report that more of their spending on restaurants, shopping, and entertainment (Q11) takes place outside of the city of Minneapolis.

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## Conclusion

**Renters and homeowners share a unified downtown community view on public safety issues in Minneapolis.**

Subsample data for the questions reviewed in this article (and for the other survey questions) clearly indicate that both **renters and homeowners share a unified downtown community view on public safety issues in Minneapolis**. We will present the results of other subsample analyses in future articles.