

DMNA

Public Safety Perception Survey Results Highlights

February 20, 2021

Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Public Safety Task Force



Public Safety Perception Survey

Results Highlights

Key Findings:

- 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.

Summary and Conclusions

The Public Safety Task Force (PSTF) seeks to advance the following five principles, adopted by the DMNA Board on July 6, 2020.

- **A Clear Accountability for Oversight of Police & Public Safety**
- **MPD Reform & Reinvention**
- **A Continuum of Safety Strategies**
- **An Undeniable Role for Law Enforcement**
- **Working Toward a Broad Consensus on the Path to a Safer City for Everyone**

With these in mind and in response to the heightened debate about public safety and the role of police in Minneapolis during 2020, the PSTF sent a survey to downtown residents beginning December 2020. The intent was to give DMNA community residents a larger voice in the policy decisions that affect their neighborhood and lives. After first asking residents about their perceptions of current community safety conditions and how these conditions have affected their lives, the survey asked residents to express their views on the progress city leaders had made in creating a safer city, how police accountability should be structured, and what roles law enforcement should play in community interactions. The survey was distributed, using a Survey Monkey application, through condominium and rental residential buildings in the DMNA neighborhood, between December 22, 2020 and February 9, 2021. A total of 1,129 completed surveys were received.

The key findings of the survey are:

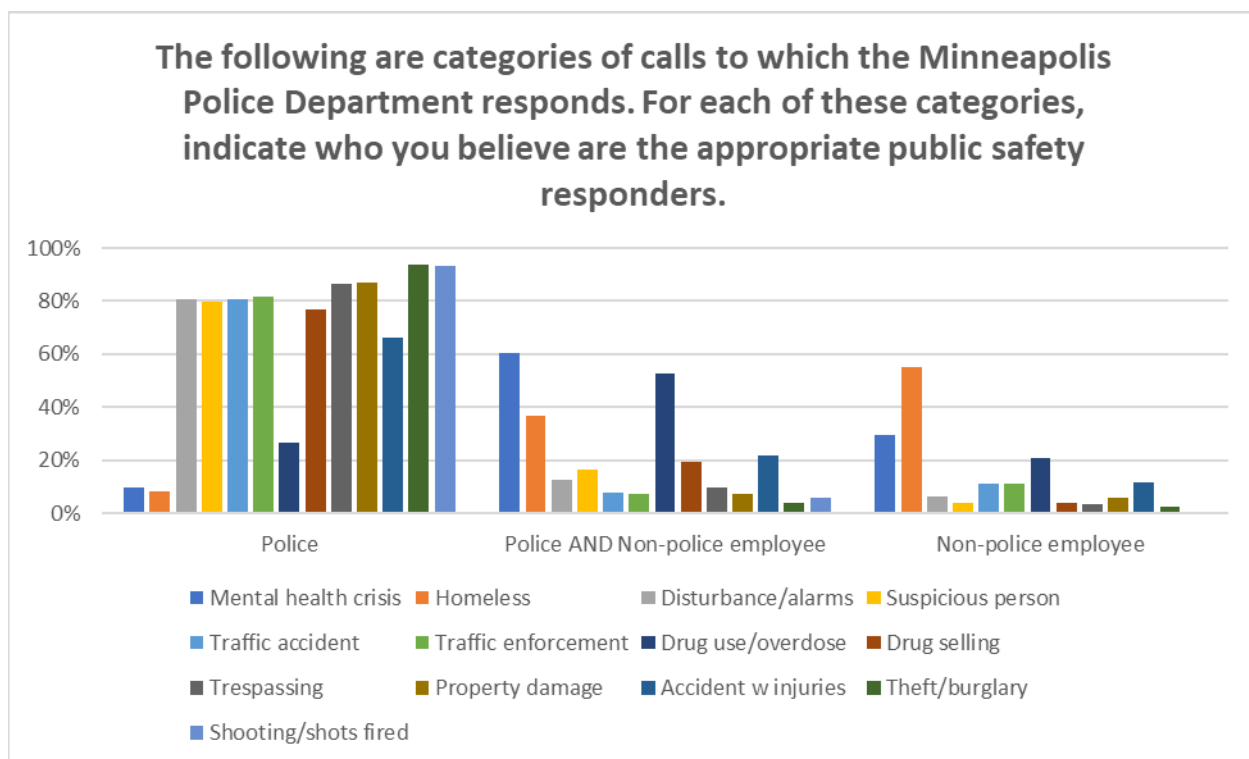
- **Downtown residents are highly dissatisfied with city leadership on public safety policies.**
- **Among city leaders, residents view Chief Arradondo as being most effective in responding to community safety issues.**
- **Residents overwhelmingly believe that MPD should report to the Mayor, and not 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.**

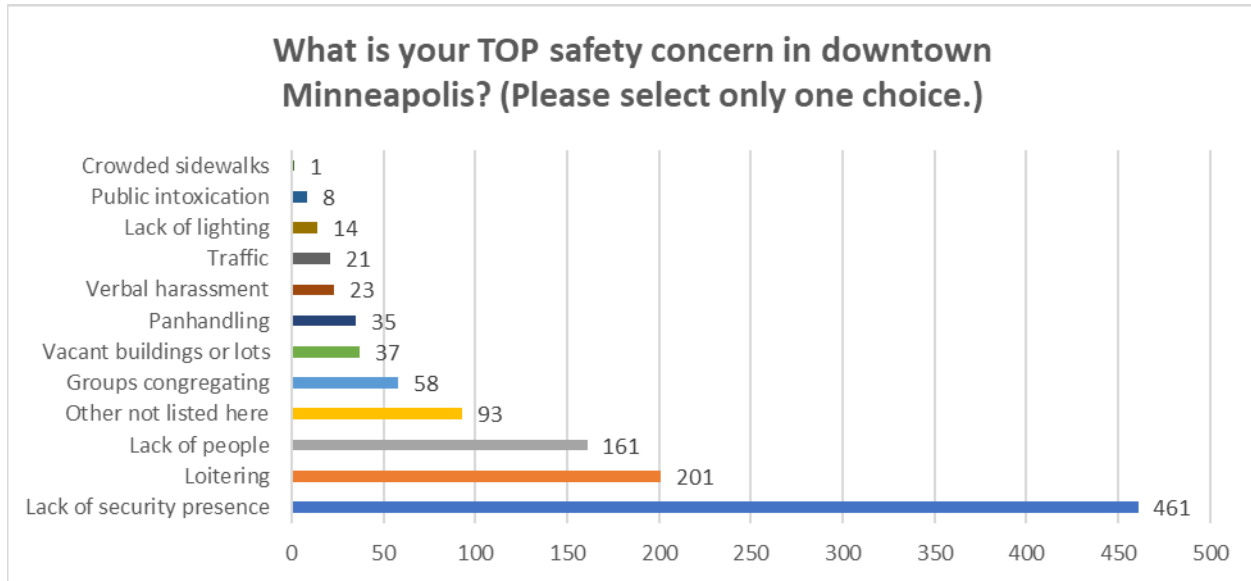
Summarized Findings

Downtown residents are clear in their view that accountability for MPD should reside with the Mayor (74%) compared to the City Council (26%). Regarding the importance of the general level of police resources, the lack of security presence was the most often cited concern for residents, when asked to select their top safety concern in Minneapolis. Residents are twice as satisfied with MPD Chief Arradondo's response to the current crisis compared to the City Council. Chief Arradondo scored the most favorable rating for his dealing with the crisis, with a weighted 4.84 on a 1-10 scale, compared to Mayor Frey at 3.60 and the City Council at 2.38. Prospectively, downtowners are either not so confident (32%) or not at all confident (39%) the City of Minneapolis will enact plans to resolve the public safety issues it faces. It is clear from the survey that public safety policies will be highly important in residents' voting decisions in the November elections. Using an importance scale of 1-10 (1=not at all; 10=highly important), 90% of residents assigned

importance scores of 8 to 10 for the City Council election, with 71% assigning a score of 10. For the Mayoral election 88% assigned scores of 8 to 10, with 68% assigning a score of 10.

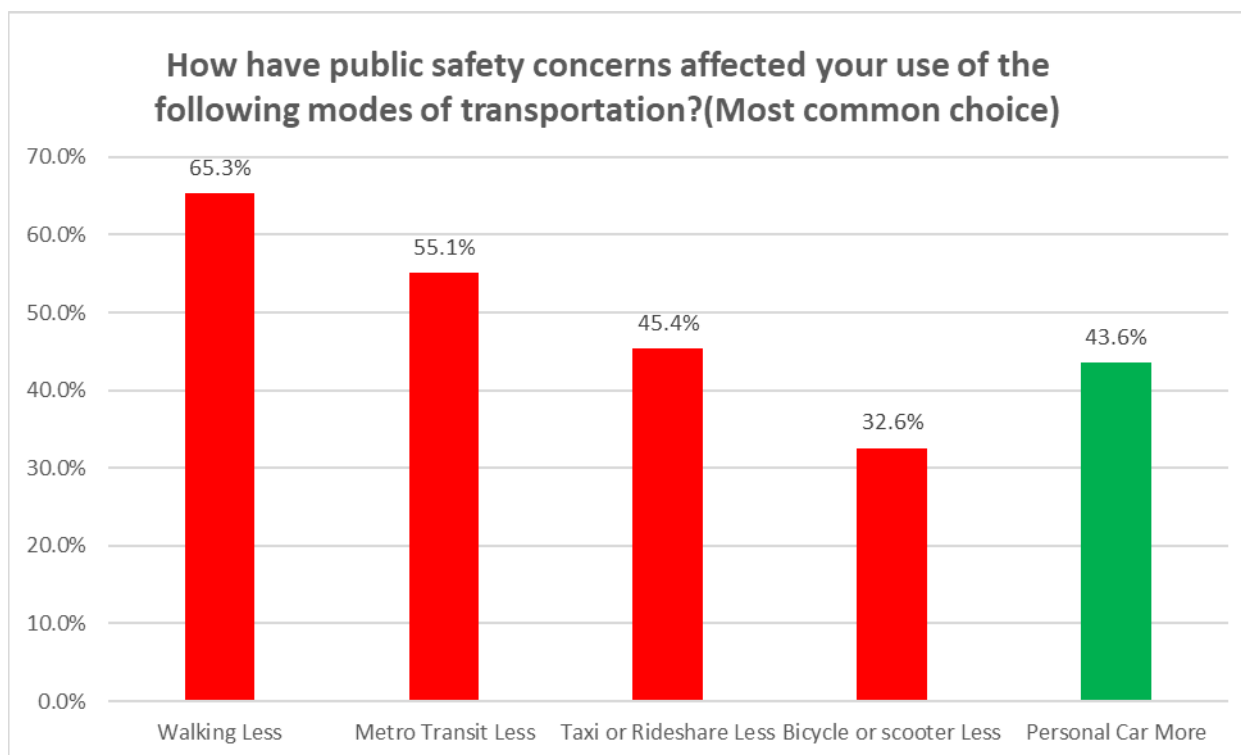
We asked residents to consider 13 different calls currently responded to by law enforcement and asked whether police should respond alone, as a team with a non-police employee (social worker, mental health professional, etc.) or with a non-police employee alone. When given these choices of responders, just homelessness (55%) was considered by most as appropriate for a non-police employee solo response. A combined team was considered appropriate for mental health crisis (60%) and drug use/overdose (53%). Of the other ten types of calls, most residents favored an MPD only response by an average of 83%. Not only do downtowners view additional staffing as positive but have a wide range of response situations for which they believe MPD is best suited as primary responder.





The last year has seen dramatic changes in the daily lives of all residents of Minneapolis, not just the downtown community. That said, the large footprint of commercial office buildings within the DMNA boundaries has been very susceptible to the pandemic-induced work-from-home phenomenon. The effects of Covid19 have also taken their toll as numerous retail and restaurant establishments, which catered at least in part to office workers, have been closed for many months. We are very conscious what this narrowing of destination choices means for discretionary spending downtown, especially in combination with a desire to self-isolate to avoid virus exposure. Nevertheless, we asked residents how public safety may have contributed additionally to changes in their mobility and spending patterns, not just reduced choice near their homes. Downtowners said their spending on restaurants, shopping, and entertainment inside Minneapolis had decreased (66%) while they increasingly traveled outside of the city for these types of expenditures (61%). The use mix of transport modes has also changed with residents opting for increased self-isolation in their own vehicles (43%) while decreasing use of public, non-motorized or shared vehicles. Of these modes, walking has decreased the most (65%).

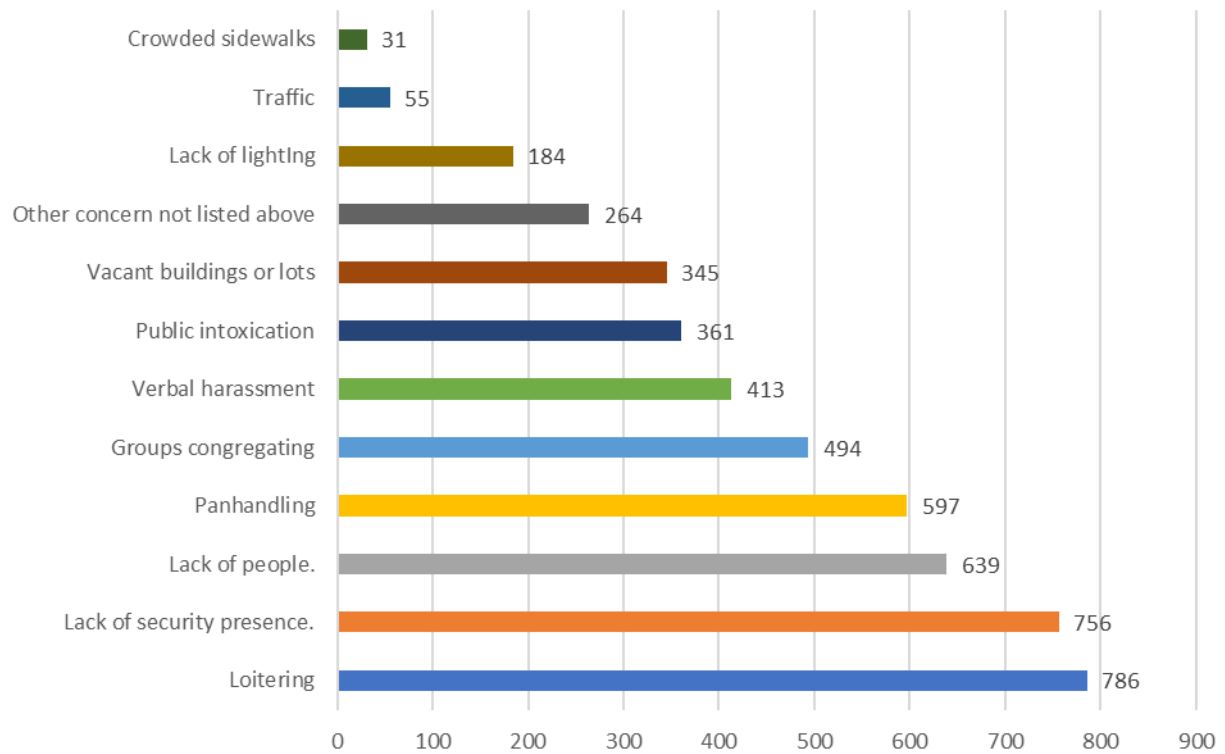
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We asked downtowners' perceptions of overall public safety this past year and while most respondents felt much less safe in their neighborhood (51%), several of the reasons (vacant buildings, lack of people, loitering) are likely driven at least in part by the pandemic's effects on the economy and shift in work patterns. Another top reason for a feeling of less safety remains the lack of security presence, possibly due to the low staffing levels MPD is carrying at present. Mobility patterns have changed downtown, with certain areas being avoided. Again, the pandemic's effects on daytime density and shuttered commercial choices likely contributes to the feeling of insecurity in certain areas.

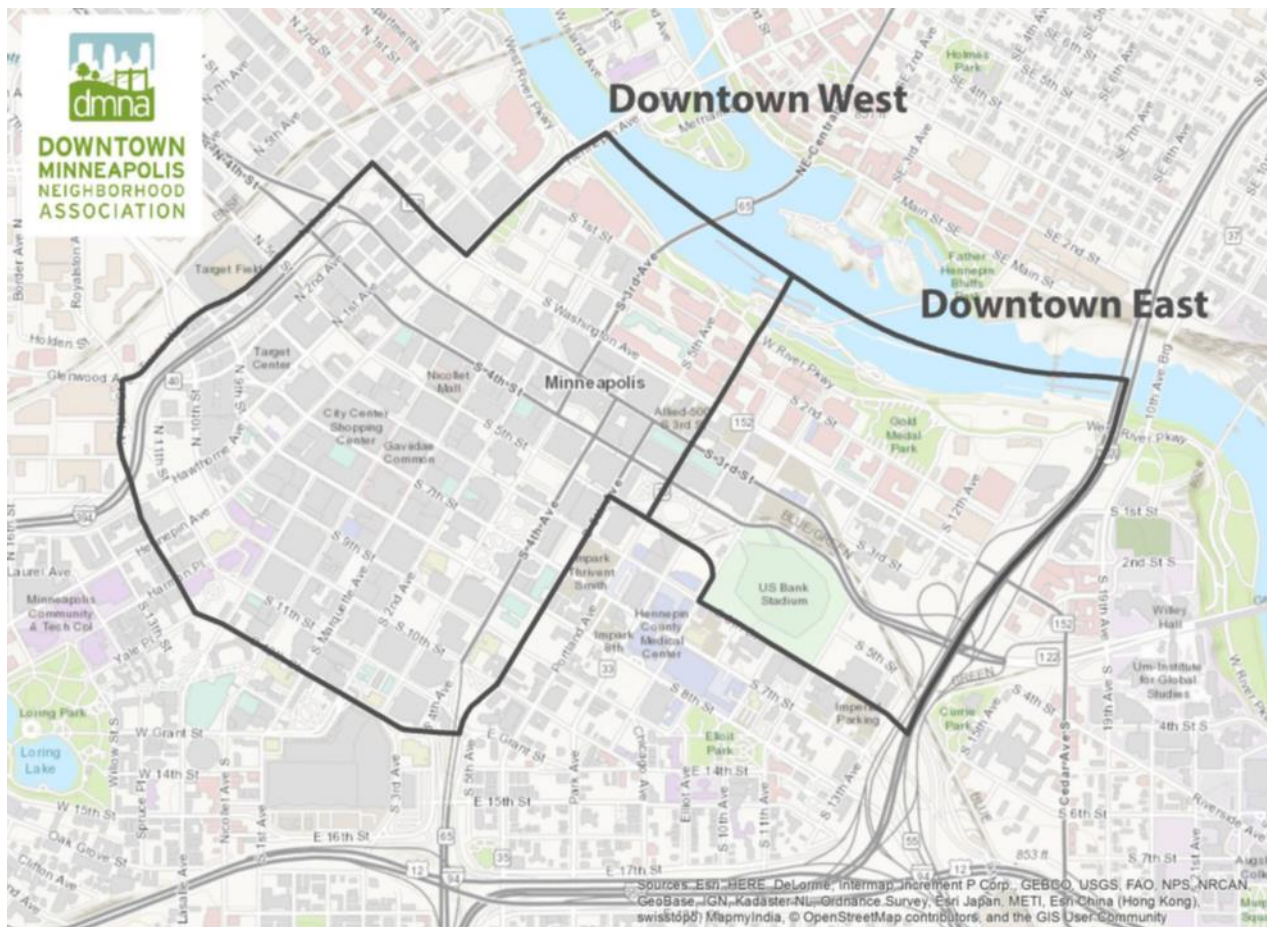
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What, if anything, has made you feel unsafe in downtown Minneapolis this year? (Please select all that apply.)



Appendix 1.

DMNA Geographic Boundaries and Public Safety Survey Resident Footprint

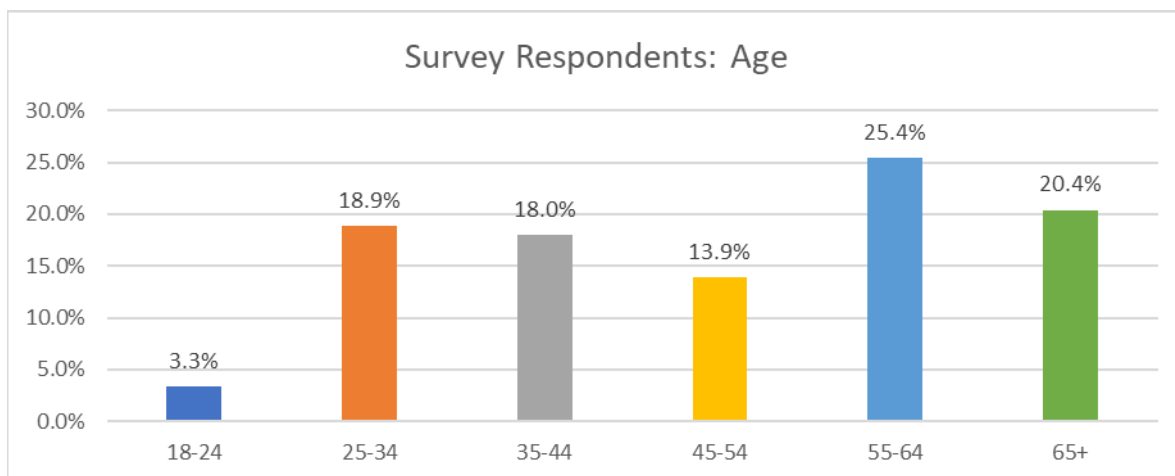


Appendix 2. Survey Methods

Sample

The survey was designed for residents of downtown Minneapolis. Rather than simply posting the survey link on the DMNA website, the PSTF elected to distribute it directly through residential buildings. We began with a list of all condominium buildings within DMNA boundaries, and worked directly through HOA boards, providing each board with a web link and QR code, and asking each board to determine its preferred method of distribution to residents. Renters within these building were included in the survey distribution. The survey for this wave of the sample opened on December 22, 2020 and closed on January 17, 2021.

We engaged in a proactive effort to ensure that people in downtown rental units had access to the survey: assembling a list of rental buildings within the DMNA boundaries and contact information for the property managers of those buildings; offering managers the same distribution options as in the HOA buildings; and conducting a follow-up campaign in which all those managers were contacted by telephone or additional emails, to encourage distribution of the survey to their residents. The survey for this second wave of the sample opened on January 19th and closed on February 9th, with a one week-extension given to those buildings in which survey distribution had been delayed. Renters (from both waves) represent 31% of sample respondents.



Respondent gender breakdown was: 51% male, 48% female, 1% other.

Race and ethnicity:

White	904	86%
Asian	40	4%
Multi-ethnic	33	3%
Other (none more than 2%)	27	3%
Black or African American	27	3%
Hispanic or Latino	24	2%
Total	1055	100%

Survey Design

The survey consists primarily of fixed-choice questions but also includes several open-ended questions, addressing three categories of information described at the top of the first page of the survey (public safety conditions, changes made in response to these conditions, assessment of city leaders' responses).

The introductory material on the first page also includes three instructional notes to contextualize the focus of the survey. The first acknowledges the effects of the COVID pandemic on daily life and asks respondents to focus on the separate or additional effects resulting from public safety issues. This focus is reinforced by the phrasing of individual questions throughout the survey. (For example: "Have you altered how you live, act, or travel in the city due to safety concerns?") Responses to open-ended questions demonstrate that respondents are fully capable of distinguishing public safety and pandemic effects. The second and third instructional notes define the scope of this survey versus anticipated future research efforts by the PSTF.

Two of the survey questions (#3 & 4) are borrowed, with permission, from the annual perception survey conducted by the Downtown Improvement District. Despite the difference in research samples, these questions allow us to make a rough comparison on

the changes that have taken place in the perceptions of safety in downtown Minneapolis. For example, in the question that asks for respondents' top safety concern, the most often cited response by downtown residents was "lack of security presence." This choice was selected by 41% of our respondents, compared with 20% of respondents in the DID 2019 survey and just 9% in the DID 2018 survey. We also measured changes in safety perception in our opening two questions. Question #1 asks downtown residents about how safe they feel in their neighborhood now, as compared to a year ago. Question #2 asks the same question in reference to downtown Minneapolis generally.

Our question on police calls (#20) makes use of current MPD 911 call categories, in a manner similar to that used in a question in the City's Transforming Community Safety survey. The question itself is problematic, in the sense that who responds to a crisis situation is not something that can be left to citizens' opinions. Still, citizens' views on the issue can provide a useful contribution to the public safety debate. While the City's question asks survey-takers to indicate *someone other than the Minneapolis Police Department* who should respond to calls, our question brings law enforcement back into the calculation, asking 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. Our question, we believe, leads to a more accurate picture of survey-takers' views.

The survey also includes several open-ended questions, asking respondents to elaborate on their views. These data are being analyzed through qualitative methods to further interpret the quantitative findings, by adding detail to specific findings (e.g., areas of downtown that residents are avoiding) and identifying thematic patterns in residents' views on public safety. These data will also provide a starting framework for any subsequent focus group or interview research. Open ended questions are marked as "analysis in process" in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3. Survey Questions and Results

1. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood now, as compared to a year ago?

Much less safe	572	50.8%
Somewhat less safe	358	31.8%
No change	162	14.4%
Feel somewhat safer	12	1.1%
Feel much safer	8	0.7%
NA	15	1.3%
Total	1127	100.0%

2. How safe do you feel in Downtown Minneapolis generally, as compared to a year ago?

Much less safe	726	64.5%
Somewhat less safe	278	24.7%
No change	107	9.5%
Somewhat safer	12	1.1%
Much safer	3	0.3%
Total	1126	100.0%

3. What, if anything, has made you feel unsafe in downtown Minneapolis this year?
(Please select all that apply.)

Loitering	786	71.56%
Lack of security presence	756	68.99%
Lack of people	639	58.07%
Panhandling	597	54.13%
Groups congregating	494	45.05%
Verbal harassment	413	37.71%
Public intoxication	361	32.94%
Vacant buildings or lots	345	31.38%
Other concern not listed	264	23.94%
Lack of lighting	184	16.51%
Traffic	55	4.95%
Crowded sidewalks	31	2.84%
Total	4925	

4. What is your TOP safety concern in downtown Minneapolis? (Please select only one choice.)

Lack of security presence	461	41%
Loitering	201	18%
Lack of people	161	14%
Other not listed here	93	8%
Groups congregating	58	5%
Vacant buildings or lots	37	3%
Panhandling	35	3%
Verbal harassment	23	2%
Traffic	21	2%
Lack of lighting	14	1%
Public intoxication	8	1%
Crowded sidewalks	1	0%
Total	1113	100%

5. Can you describe any other conditions or issues that have affected your view of public safety in Minneapolis? *Analysis in process.*

6. Do you have friends or relatives who are now unwilling to visit you downtown, due to public safety concerns?

Yes	763	68%
No	354	32%
Total	1117	100%

7. Can you describe any specific concerns they have expressed? *Analysis in process.*

8. Have you altered how you live, act, or travel in the city due to safety concerns?

Yes	927	82%
No	198	18%
Total	1125	100%

9. If you answered yes above, what changes have you made? *Analysis in process.*

10. How have these changes affected the amount of money you spend on restaurants, shopping, or entertainment in the City of Minneapolis?

Significantly decreased	732	66%
Somewhat decreased	215	19%
No change	153	14%
Somewhat increased	10	1%
Significantly increased	4	0%
Total	1114	100%

11. Are you spending more of your restaurant, shopping, or entertainment dollars (restaurants, movies, etc.,) outside the City of Minneapolis?

Yes	688	61%
No	433	39%
Total	1121	100%

12. Have you considered moving out of Minneapolis due to public safety concerns?

Yes	708	63%
No	412	37%
Total	1120	100%

13. Can you elaborate on why you have considered moving? *Analysis in process.*

14. Are there areas of the city that you are now avoiding because of public safety concerns?

Yes	918	82%
No	203	18%
Total	1121	100%

15. If you answered yes above, please list the areas of the city that you are avoiding:
Analysis in process.

16. How have public safety concerns affected your use of the following modes of transportation?

	Use More	Use Less	No Change	NA/Never Used	Total
Metro transit	1%	55%	17%	27%	100%
Personal car	43%	18%	33%	6%	100%
Taxi or ride Sharing	10%	45%	32%	13%	100%
Bicycle or Scooter	6%	33%	29%	32%	100%
Walking	9%	65%	25%	1%	100%

17. How satisfied are you with the response to the public safety crisis of the following city officials? Use a scale of 1-10 (1 = not at all satisfied; 10 = highly satisfied). Rating 1 and 10 only shown below.

	1	10	Wgt Avg 1-10
Mayor Frey	326	31	3.60
City Council as a Whole	628	11	2.38
Your Council Member	583	33	2.59
MPD Chief Arradondo	142	109	4.84

18. How confident are you that the City of Minneapolis will enact plans to resolve the public safety issues in Minneapolis?

Not at all confident	438	39%
Not so confident	365	32%
Somewhat confident	243	22%
Very confident	61	5%
Extremely confident	17	2%
Total	1124	100%

19. Who should be responsible for managing the Minneapolis Police Department, and held accountable for its actions?

Mayor	811	74%
City Council	279	26%
Total	1090	100%

20. The following are categories of calls to which the Minneapolis Police Department responds. For each of these categories, indicate who you believe are the appropriate public safety responders. The choices are law enforcement as primary, a combination of law enforcement and social workers (or other non-police employees), or social workers and others as primary.

	Law Enforcement	Combination	Social Worker	Total
Mental health crisis	110	674	333	1117
	10%	60%	30%	100%
Homeless	89	408	618	1115
	8%	37%	55%	100%
Disturbance/alarms	901	145	71	1117
	81%	13%	6%	100%
Suspicious person	887	183	46	1116
	79%	16%	4%	100%
Traffic accident	906	87	125	1118
	81%	8%	11%	100%
Traffic enforcement	911	82	122	1115
	82%	7%	11%	100%
Drug use/overdose	295	590	235	1120
	26%	53%	21%	100%

(Continued)	Law Enforcement	Combination	Social Worker	Total
Drug selling	858	217	43	1118
	77%	19%	4%	100%
Trespassing	967	111	40	1118
	86%	10%	4%	100%
Property damage	975	79	67	1121
	87%	7%	6%	100%
Accident w injuries	740	246	132	1118
	66%	22%	12%	100%
Theft/burglary	1047	44	27	1118
	94%	4%	2%	100%
Shooting/shots fired	1041	68	8	1117
	93%	6%	1%	100%

21. In the next election (on November 2, 2021), the Mayor and all Council Members will be on the ballot. How important are public safety policies to your decision about whom you will vote for? Use a scale of 1-10 (1 = not at all important; 10 = highly important).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Mayor	15	4	2	4	25	27	54	118	105	761	1115
	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	5%	11%	9%	68%	100%
Council	17	2	2	3	23	21	46	98	112	788	1112
	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	4%	9%	10%	71%	100%

22. If you could deliver one message about public safety to your City Council Member, what would that be? *Analysis in process.*

23. What City Council Ward do you live in? (Find My Ward)

Ward 3	693	63%
Ward 7	133	12%
Other	135	12%
Unsure	147	13%
Total	1108	100%

24. What is your connection to downtown? (Please select all that apply.)

Own commercial property DT	20
Own a business downtown	49
Live downtown (rent)	332
Work downtown	370
Live downtown (own)	609

25. If you live downtown, what is the name of your residential building? *Analysis in process.*

26. How old are you? *See Appendix 2.*

27. What is your gender? *See Appendix 2.*

28. What is your race or ethnicity? *See Appendix 2.*

29. Would you be interested in being part of an online focus group on public safety in Downtown Minneapolis? If so, please provide your email address here: *Not released.*