



Detroiters' Views on Crime and Policing

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Overview

Despite improvement in real crime rates in the city, Detroiters regularly experience crime and many fear that they will be victims of crime. Crime is the number one reason residents cite for considering a move from the city. And, they are not confident in the ability or likelihood that the police will respond to crimes effectively. Residents say they would be willing to report crimes to the police and those who encounter the police generally describe their interactions as positive, but they don't believe that police will take the time to listen to their concerns or explain the decisions that are made. As a result, there is ambivalence about the job police are doing.

Majority worry they will be a victim of a crime

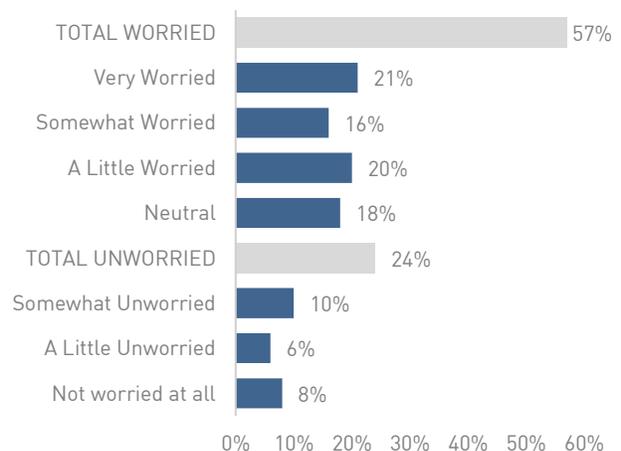
More than half of Detroiters say that they are worried about being a victim of crime with 2 out of 10 expressing that they are very worried about the possibility. Conversely, less than a quarter (24%) express being unworried about being a victim of crime.

Many experience serious crimes in their neighborhoods

While crime rates in Detroit are steadily declining, many report serious crimes occurring in their neighborhoods. For example, almost all Detroiters [92%] report that at least one "serious crime" occurred in their neighborhoods during the past year, including 56% who report that a theft/breaking and entering occurred, 51% who report an auto theft, 42% who report a violent physical attack, and 41% who report a drug-related crime

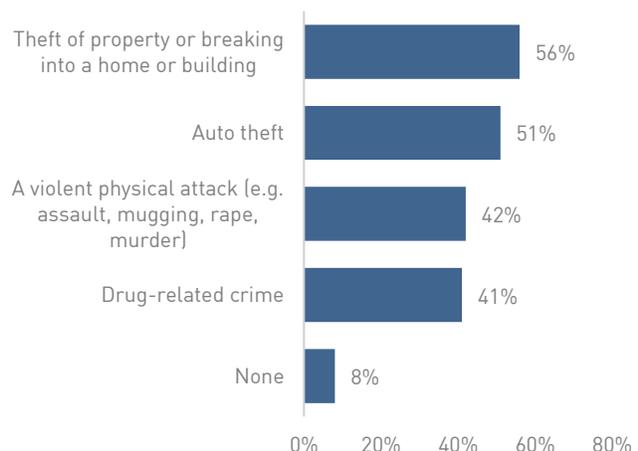
57% worried about being a victim of crime

Thinking about all types of crime, in general, how worried are you about being a victim of crime?



92% had a serious crime happen in their neighborhood

Which, if any of the following serious crimes have occurred in your neighborhood in the past 12 months?



Nearly a quarter of Detroiters have called the police to discuss a crime

Half of Detroit residents have not had any contact with the police in the past year. For those who have, the most common reason for contacting the police was to report a crime or provide information about a crime (24%). Having non crime-related interactions with police officers were less common, with 13% reporting interacting with police in the context of a casual conversation or community activity, and 10 percent calling the police for general help or information. Only 9% of Detroiters reported being stopped by the police for speeding or some other traffic violation.

Interactions with the police tend to be positive

While cities across the country assess their police-community relations, Detroiters tend to be upbeat in their perceptions of the police. Of those who have come into contact with the police, nearly 40 percent say the interaction was positive (39%), compared to 24 percent who assess their interaction as neutral and 13 percent who describe it as negative. Of those who stated the experience was negative (13%), only 3 percent said it was very negative. A quarter (24%) did not give a rating of their experience.

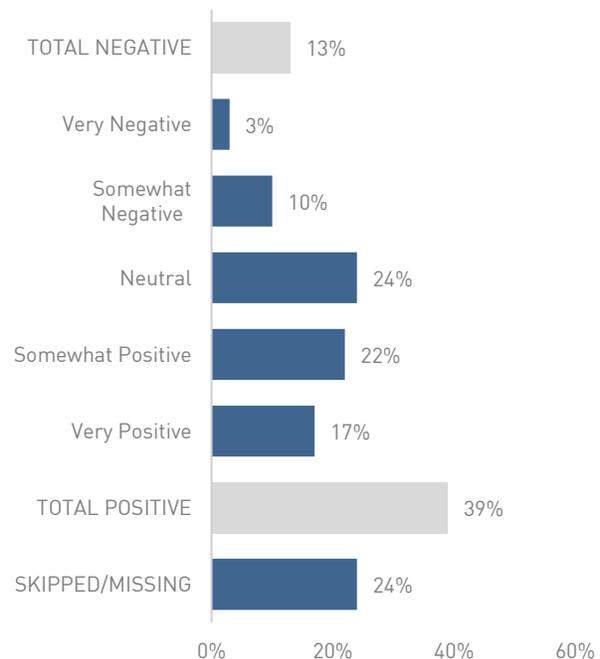
50% have not had any contact with police in the past year

In the past 12 months, what contact, if any, have you had with your local police department

I called the police for general help or to ask for information	10%
I reported a crime or wanted to give information about a crime	24%
The police stopped me for speeding or other traffic violation	9%
The police asked me about my involvement in a crime or arrested me	2%
Someone called the police on me	2%
I had a casual conversation with a police officer or participated in a community activity with the police	13%
I have not had contact with my local police in the past 12 months	50%
Other:	8%

Of those who have had contact with the police, 39% describe it as positive.

How would you describe the contact(s) you have had with local police in the past 12 months? (AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH POLICE, N=354)



Detroiters ambivalent about police performance

Although Detroiters express comfort interacting with the police and a willingness to call the police to report a crime [73%], they hold mixed perceptions of the police’s performance in many areas.

- The plurality of citizens (42%) agree that the police are doing a good job of protecting them in their neighborhoods, compared to 18% who disagree and 36% who neither agree nor disagree.
- Detroiters also lean toward positive evaluations of whether police in their neighborhoods can be trusted (37% agree, 18% disagree) and whether they are responsive when called for help (41% agree, 28% disagree).
- Detroiters are less convinced, however, that police treat all neighborhoods equally. Only 32% agree that police protect their neighborhood and treat its residents the same as they do in other neighborhoods, while 24% disagree and 41% are neutral.
- Residents also give mixed ratings on whether police explain their decisions to people they deal with (25% agree, 23% disagree) and whether they take time to listen to people (33% agree, 21% disagree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	TOTAL DISAGREE	TOTAL AGREE
If a crime occurred in my neighborhood, I would report it to the police.	2%	5%	17%	37%	36%	7%	73%
I think the local police are doing a good job of protecting me in my neighborhood.	7%	11%	36%	32%	10%	18%	42%
Police protect my neighborhood and treat its residents the same as they do in other neighborhoods.	11%	13%	41%	23%	9%	24%	32%
The local police are very responsive when I or my neighbors call them for help.	10%	18%	28%	33%	8%	28%	41%
The police in my neighborhood take time to listen to people.	9%	12%	42%	25%	8%	21%	33%
The police in my neighborhood can be trusted.	8%	10%	41%	29%	8%	18%	37%
The police in my neighborhood explain their decisions to people they deal with.	9%	14%	46%	20%	5%	23%	25%

Acknowledgements

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About the Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study

The Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study (DMACS) is a University of Michigan initiative, designed to regularly survey a broad, representative group of Detroit area residents about their communities, including their experiences, perceptions, priorities, and aspirations. DMACS' mission is to create the knowledge infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making by diverse actors. This is accomplished through an innovative online survey and web platform that provides timely, accessible data and analysis, and integrates with other information about the people and places across the region.

Survey Methodology

N=714 Detroit residents. Interviews were administered online as well as using paper and pencil between October 2016 and January 2017. Respondents were recruited via mail, phone, and in-person from a representative address-based sample of the city. The margin of sampling error for a random sample survey of this size is 3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The data have been weighted using a raking procedure by age, education, sex, and race to match Census estimates for the City of Detroit.