



Staying or Leaving? Detroiters' Perceptions of Their Neighborhoods

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Overview

For years, Detroit's population has been on the decline, as a steady stream of residents has left the city. To stop and reverse this decline, it is essential that policy makers and civic leaders understand the forces motivating residents to leave. According to DMACS, the most common reasons for residents to consider moving away from the Detroit metro area are crime and access to job opportunities. Moreover, those who are staying are typically doing so out of economic circumstances.

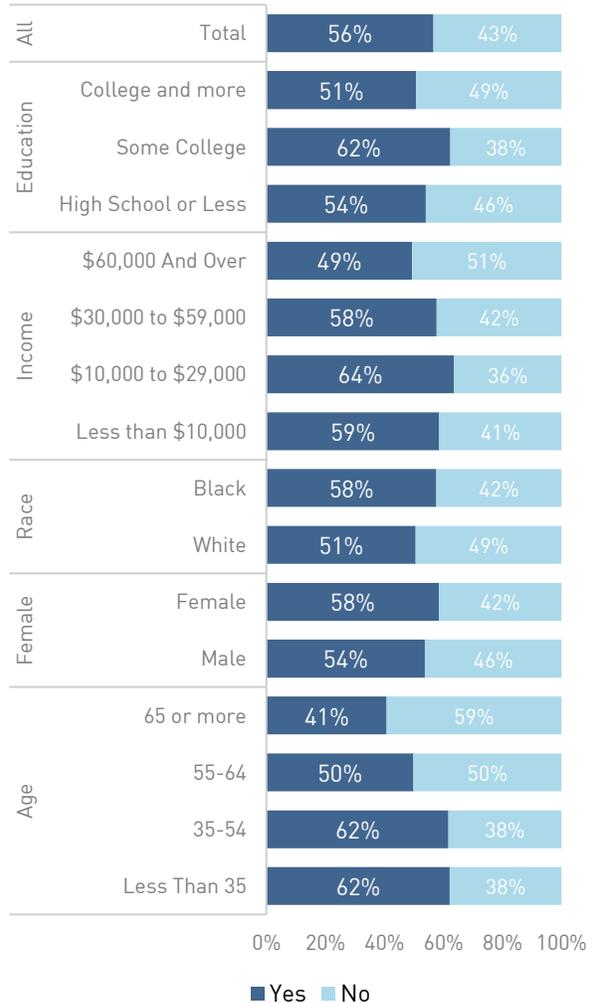
Majority of Detroiters have thoughts of leaving

A majority of Detroiters have had thoughts, in the past several months, about leaving the place where they live (56%). Younger Detroiters in particular are more likely to have thought about leaving with a little more than 60 percent of Detroiters ages 35 under and those between the ages of 35 and 54 indicating they have thought about leaving. In contrast, only half of those age 55 to 64 have recently considered leaving and the proportion is even lower for those 65 and older (41%).

Thinking about leaving is common across major population groups, including majorities of men and women, and across race and education groups.

56% have thought of moving

Over the past several months, have you had thoughts about moving from the place where you live now?



Majority cite crime as reason to move from their neighborhoods

Among Detroiters who said they were having thoughts of moving, concerns with public safety [69%] were the most common reason for wanting to move. Crime is the top reason that Detroiters would leave the city with more than 60 percent of Detroiters citing crime and safety as a factor for moving (69%).

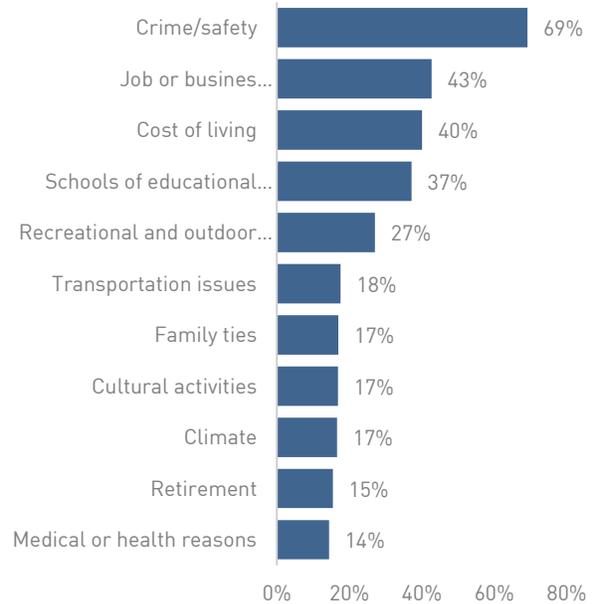
Economic opportunity and affordability are the second and third most common reasons for moving as slightly more than 40 percent of Detroiters said the availability of jobs or business opportunities would be another reason to move, while 40 percent say the cost of living is a reason for moving.

Some of the least frequently cited reasons for moving include medical or health reasons (14%), retirement (15%), and the climate (17%).

While more than 3 out of 10 Detroiters cite schools as a reason for moving (37%), views differ across groups. Support for leaving to pursue school or educational opportunities is highest among adults younger than 35 (48%). And adults with a college degree (40%) are more likely to support leaving for educational opportunity and/or schools than adults a high school degree or less (35%).

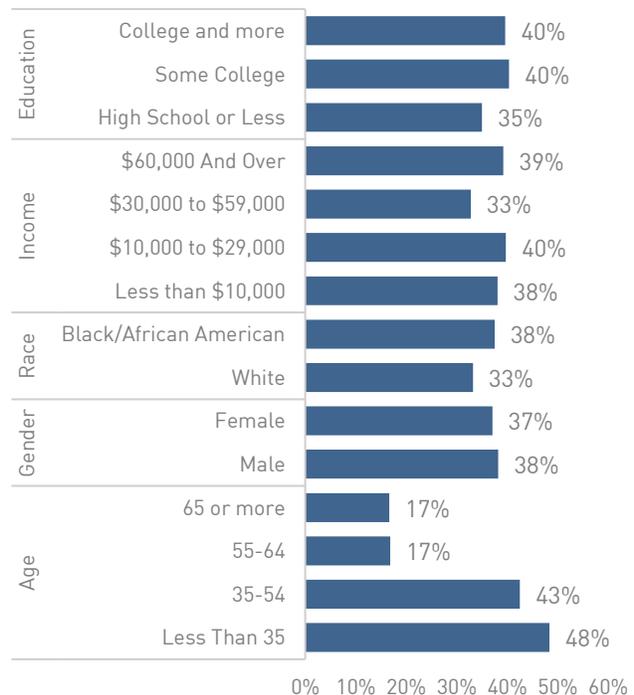
63% say crime and safety is a reason to consider moving

Which of these are reasons that you would consider moving from where you live now?



48% of those under 35 say educational opportunities is reason to consider moving

Of those who cited school or educational opportunities as a reason to consider leaving



Main reason for not moving is that it's too costly

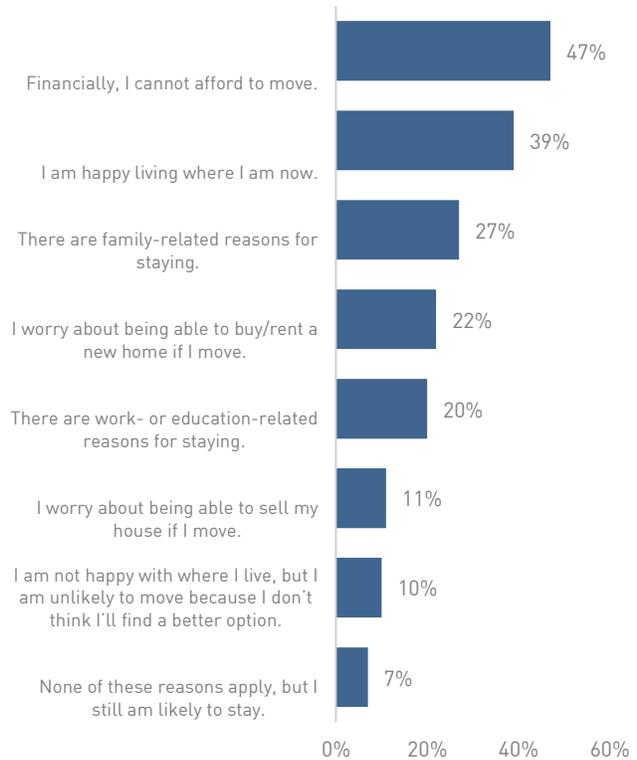
Being unable to afford moving is a key factor that keeps Detroiters in the city. Forty-seven percent say one reason they stay is that they cannot afford to move, and 22 percent worry about being able to buy or rent a home if they were to move. Thirty-nine percent say they are happy where they are now.

Detroiters mixed on how their neighborhoods rank compared to the rest of the metro area

Detroiters are ambivalent about the state of their neighborhoods in comparison to other areas in the metro Detroit area. When asked to compare their neighborhoods to other neighborhoods in the metro Detroit area, 32 percent of Detroiters thought their neighborhood was a better place to live, 34 percent thought it was a worse place to live, and 29 percent thought it was about the same.

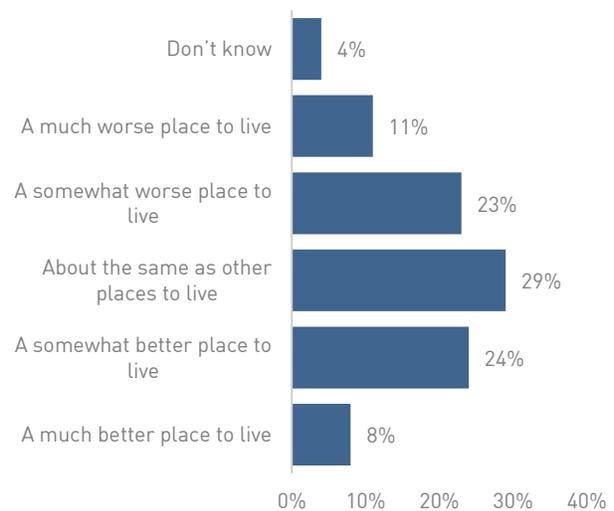
47% say they cannot afford to move out of Detroit

Which of these are reasons that you would stay where you live now?



32% of Detroiters rank their neighborhood as better place to live than elsewhere in the metro area

Thinking about your neighborhood as a place to live, how do you think it compares with other neighborhoods in the metro Detroit area?



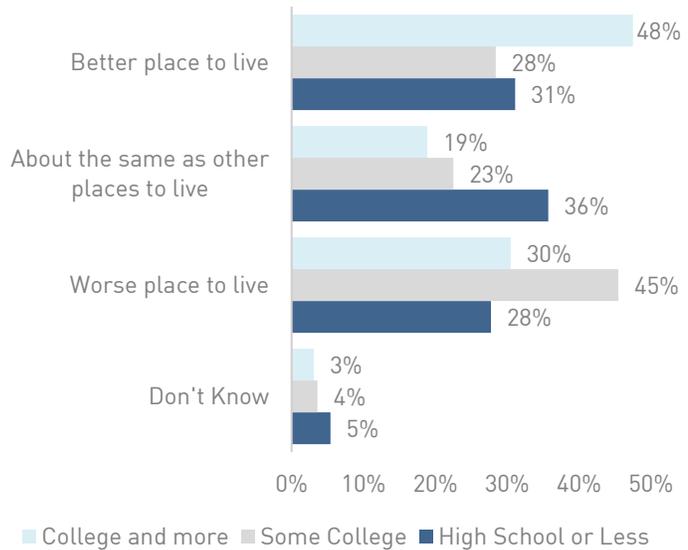
College educated Detroiters prefer their neighborhood to the metro Detroit area

Detroiters with a college degree are significantly more likely to think their neighborhood is a better place to live in comparison to other neighborhoods in the metro Detroit area. Nearly half with a college degree say their neighborhood is a better place to live (48%) compared to adults with some college experience (28%) and those with a high school degree or less (31%).

Detroiters with some college are more likely to view their neighborhood as a worse place to live compared to other neighborhoods in the metro area (45%). Meanwhile, those with a high school degree or less express ambivalence towards their neighborhoods, with nearly a third saying it is better (31%) or worse (28%).

48% of college educated Detroiters rank their neighborhood as better place to live than elsewhere in the metro area

Thinking about your neighborhood as a place to live, how do you think it compares with other neighborhoods in the metro Detroit area?



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.