



Highlights of the DMACS 2017 Study in MorningSide: Perceptions of Improvement, with Priority on Addressing Blight

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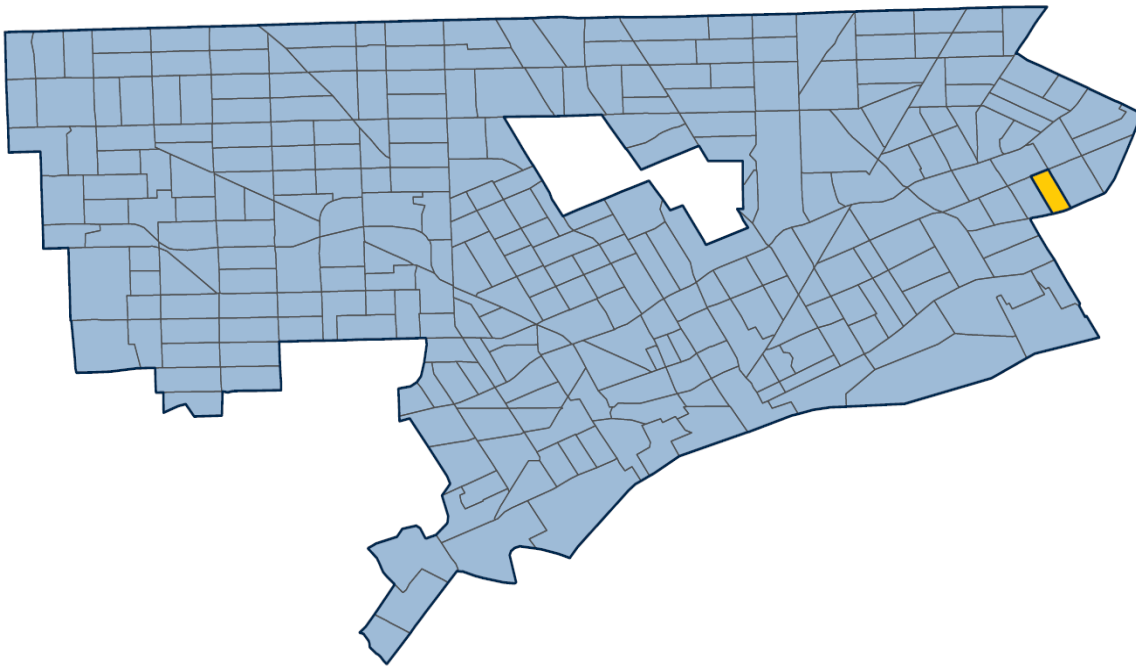
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Overview

In the summer of 2017, the Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study (DMACS) conducted a survey among 259 residents of Census Tract 5019 – an area of the MorningSide neighborhood of Detroit bordered by Mack on the South, Warren on the North, Balfour on the East and Bedford on the West¹. In the map of Detroit census tracts shown in [Figure 1](#), Tract 5019 is highlighted in yellow. The results reveal that **this portion of MorningSide is a pocket of relative satisfaction compared to the City of Detroit overall**, with a plurality seeing their neighborhood as improving. When considering further improvements, residents' top priorities are blight, crime, and schools.

Figure 1: Map of Detroit Showing Census Tract 5019



¹N=259 residents of Census Tract 5019. Field dates were June 23 – August 7, 2017. All households in the census tract were invited via letter to participate; non-respondents were contacted in-person to encourage participation. 22 interviews were completed via telephone in cases where respondents were unable to complete the survey online; all others were completed online. The data have been weighted by age, race, gender, and education, using a raking procedure to match the demographic composition of the tract. The margin of sampling error for a random sample survey of this size is +/- 5.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

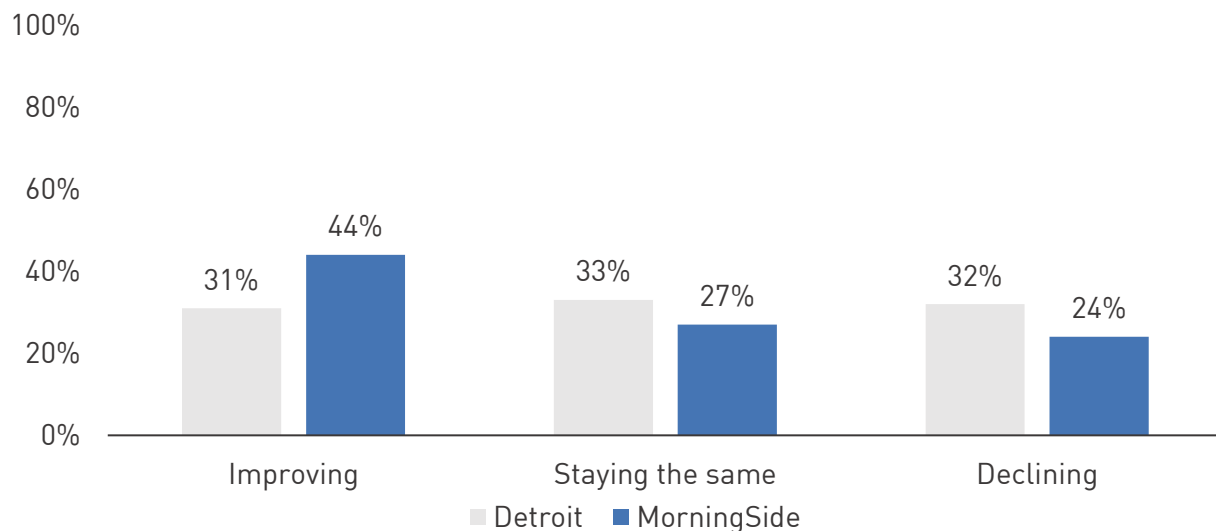
Key Findings

Residents of this portion of MorningSide are generally positive about their neighborhood – more so than Detroit residents overall.

DMACS' Fall 2016 study of the whole City of Detroit² found that half of Detroiters overall (49%) described themselves as “somewhat,” “mostly,” or “very” satisfied with their neighborhood as a place to live. In the section of MorningSide surveyed in 2017, however, over two-thirds (67%) report satisfaction with life in their neighborhood (the question options in MorningSide were slightly different; this analysis groups “slightly,” “moderately” and “extremely satisfied”).

Residents of this part of MorningSide also tend to see their neighborhood as getting better rather than worse – again showing more optimism than Detroiters overall. As illustrated in [Figure 2](#), over four in ten (44%) say the quality of life in their neighborhood is “improving,” while just a quarter say it is “declining.” In Detroit overall, in comparison, nearly equal numbers perceive improvement (31%) and decline (32%).

Figure 2: Thinking about the quality of life in your neighborhood, do you feel it is improving, declining, or staying the same?



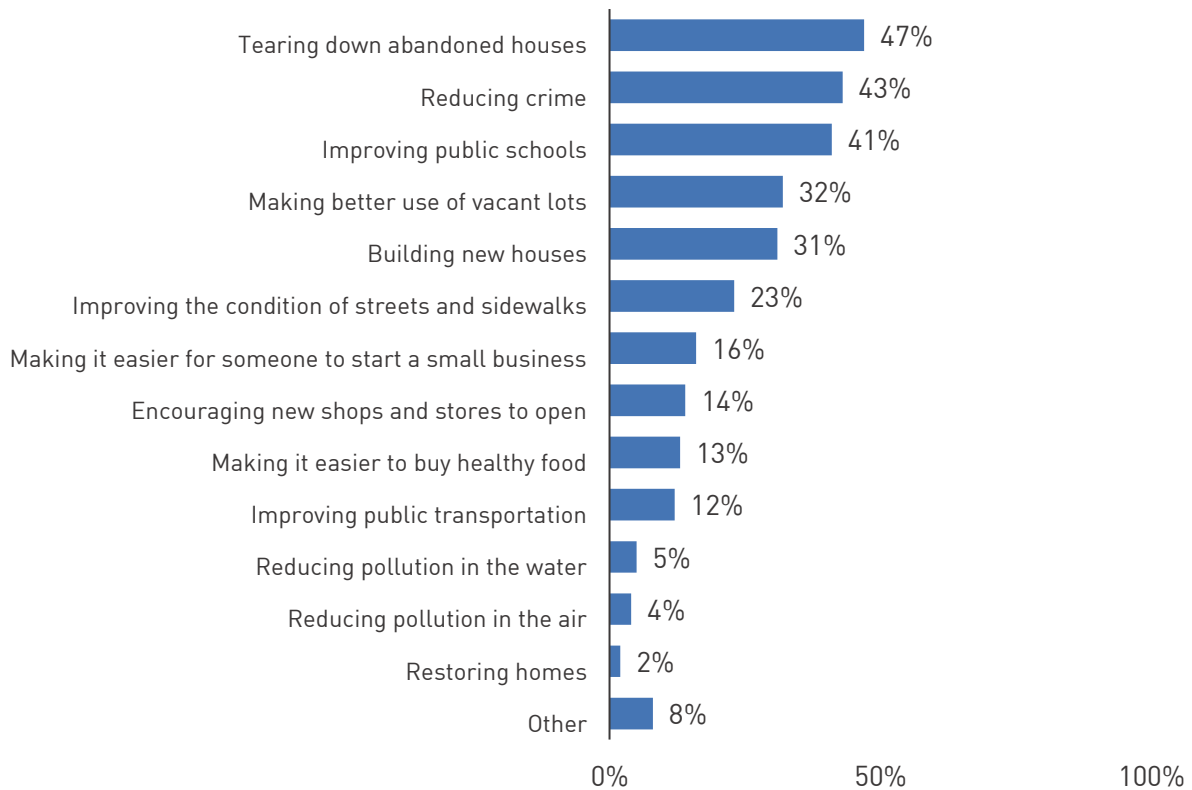
² N=714 Detroit residents. Interviews were administered online as well as using paper and pencil between October 2016 and January 2017. Respondents were recruited via mail, phone, and in-person from a representative address-based sample of the city. The margin of sampling error for a random sample survey of this size is 3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The data have been weighted using a raking procedure¹ by age, education, sex, and race to match Census estimates for the City of Detroit.

Top priorities for neighborhood improvement are blight, public safety, and education

Addressing blight and making use of abandoned property is a clear standout priority for those who live in this portion of the neighborhood. As [Figure 3](#) shows, out of a list presented, the top priority for change is “tearing down abandoned houses” (47% select as one of top three priorities), while “making better use of vacant lots” and “building new houses” are in the top five as well.

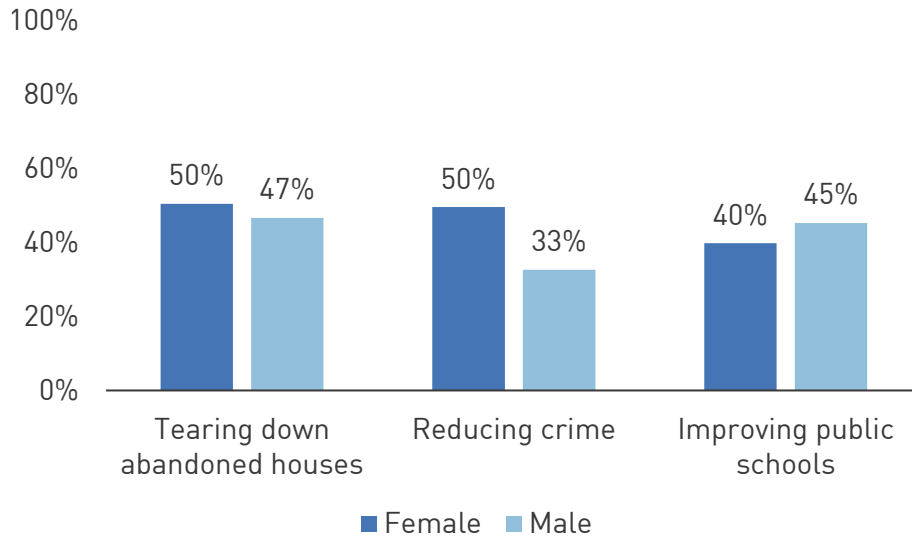
Reducing crime (43%) and improving public schools (41%) are also high priorities for residents, while issues such as reducing water and air pollution and improving public transportation are less frequently selected as a top-three priority.

Figure 3: We are curious about the kinds of changes you would like to see in your neighborhood. Please check your top three priorities from the following list.



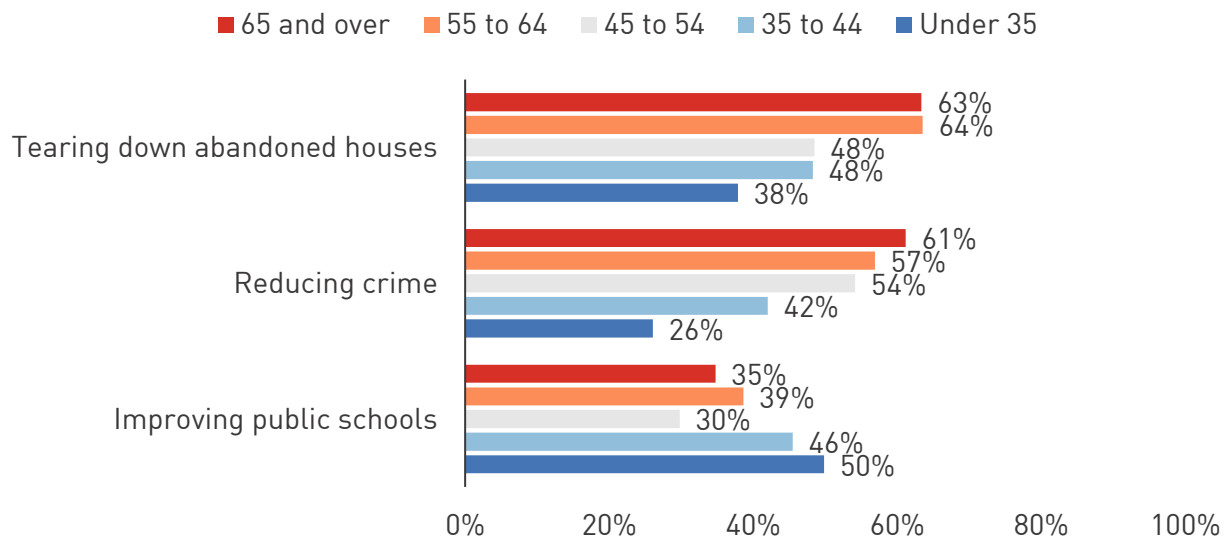
Priorities are not uniform across the community, however. For example, crime is a bigger priority for women (50%) than men (33%), though both groups put high priority on reducing blight and improving schools, as shown in [Figure 4](#).

Figure 4: Top Three Priorities by Gender



Priorities differ even more substantially by age. As shown in [Figure 5](#), for the youngest residents of the area, improving public schools is the most frequently-selected priority, and they place less urgency on crime and blight. For older residents, the reverse is the case, with high importance placed on crime and blight and much lower priority on improving public education.

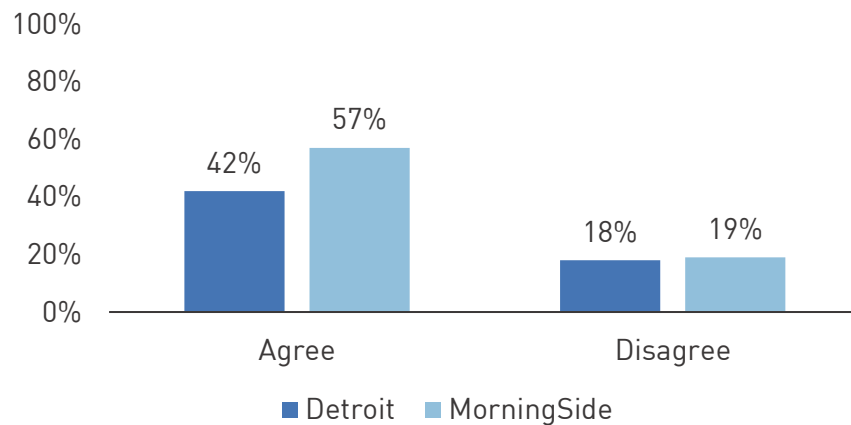
Figure 5: Top Three Priorities by Age



Concern about crime does not mean residents think police are doing a bad job.

We find more positive attitudes about police in the neighborhood than we do across Detroit as a whole. In the portion of MorningSide surveyed, a majority (57%) agrees “I think the local police are doing a good job in my neighborhood.” This compares to just four in ten in Detroit overall (42%) when asked a very similar question, as shown in [Figure 6](#). Even among those who say reducing crime is a top priority, a majority (54%) say the police in their neighborhood are doing a good job.

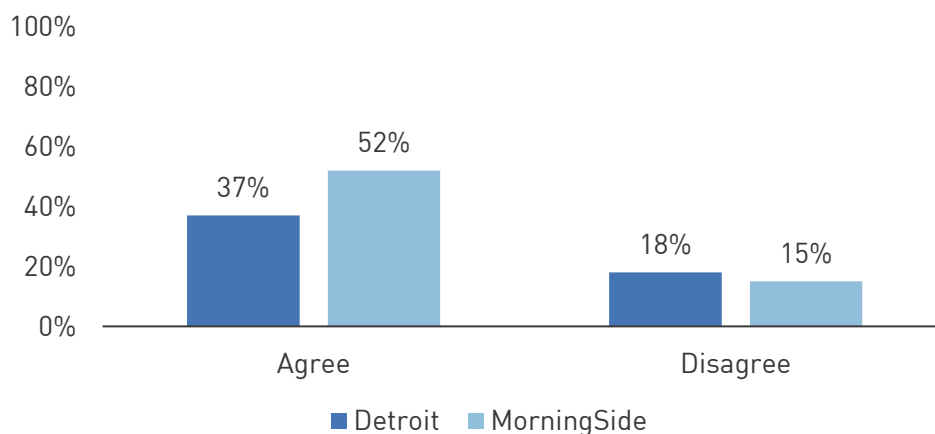
Figure 6: I think the local police are doing a good job in my neighborhood*



*Wording in Detroit: “I think the local police are doing a good job of protecting me in my neighborhood”

Residents of this part of MorningSide are also more trusting of the police than Detroiters overall. As [Figure 7](#) illustrates, half (52%) agree “the police in my neighborhood can be trusted,” compared to just 37% in Detroit overall.

Figure 7: The police in my neighborhood can be trusted



Acknowledgements

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