



Greater Dubuque Development Corporation 2019 Community Perceptions Survey

Data Results

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Public Opinion Survey Center

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Introduction

This report presents results from a third wave of a random sample live-caller telephone public opinion survey commissioned by the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (GDDC). The survey is part of their efforts in economic and community development. The first two waves were conducted September of 2017 and 2018. Both are referenced in key comparisons in the material below. The 2019 survey of 500 Dubuque residents was conducted 9/17/19-10/02/19 and captured opinion of the Dubuque community on topics such as the direction of the city, challenges and opportunities for the community, perceptions of safety, and other important issues such as race relations. The survey provides a rich source of data, and a snapshot of public opinion on a number of key issues. Comparison of the data across the years provides a picture of the community across time.

Included in this report are some of the major findings from the survey results for 2019 and some key comparisons across the three survey years.

1. *General Impressions of Dubuque and Quality of Life Measures*

- 69% Say Dubuque is heading on the Right Track
 - 15% say Dubuque is heading in the Wrong Direction
 - 16% say they are unsure

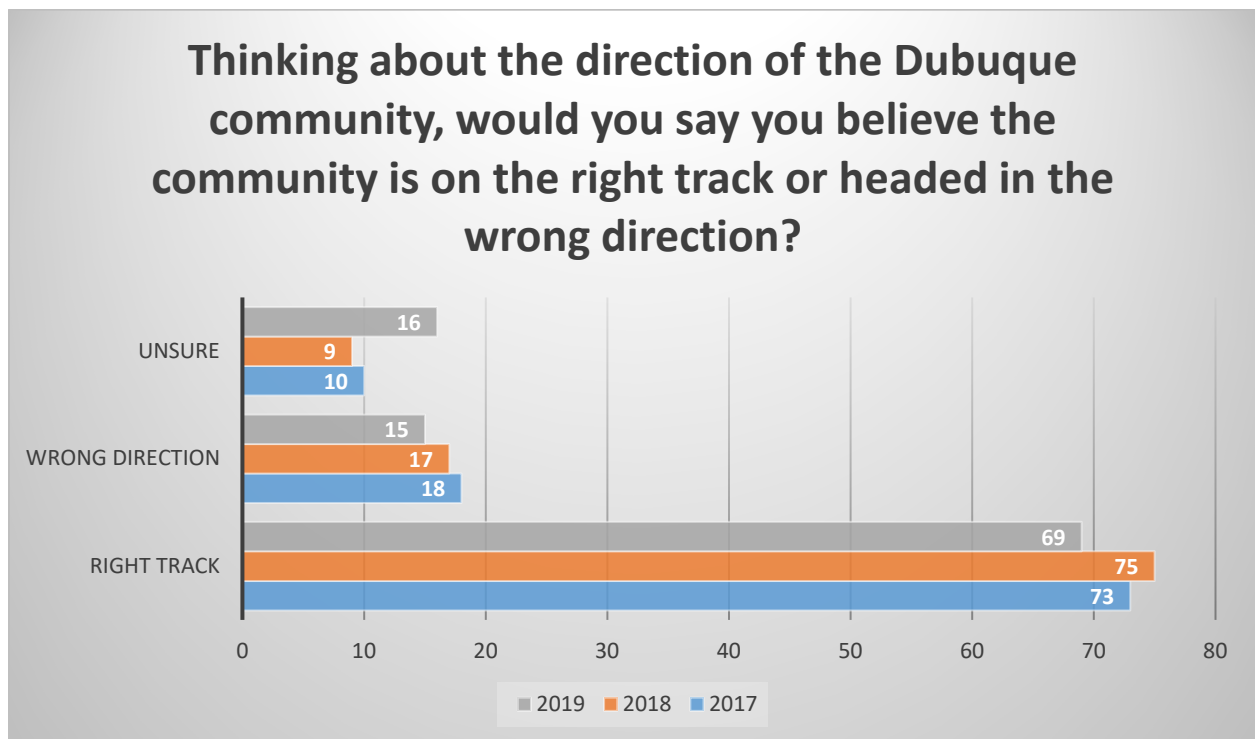


Figure 1.1 Direction of Community

Note: due to rounding (or exclusion of unsure/don't know in some graphics), percentages might not add to 100%

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with several statements about Dubuque. A response of a 3 is reflective of a more neutral position to the statement. Figure 1.2 provides a summary of the affirmative responses.

- 77% Agree/Strongly Agree that Dubuque is a good place to live
 - 16% Neutral
 - 7% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

- 70% Agree/Strongly Agree Dubuque is a good place to work
 - 19% Neutral
 - 7% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

- 81% Agree/Strongly Agree that Dubuque is a good place to raise a family
 - 10% Neutral
 - 8% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

- 65% Agree/Strongly Agree with statement that Dubuque is a safe place to live
 - 25% Neutral
 - 11% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

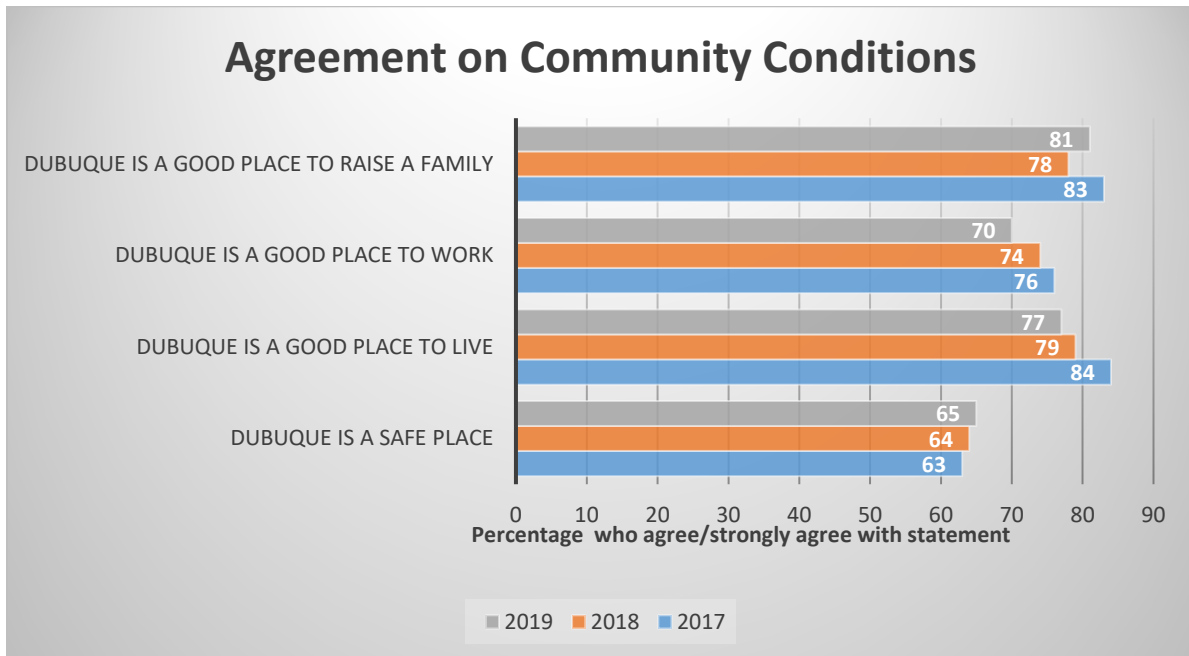


Figure 1.2 Agreement with Statements on Community Conditions

Comment: Dubuque residents continue to hold favorable views of their community, and the variation across the years falls within the margin of error of the surveys. Safety remains the only category with agree/strongly agree rates below 70%. However, as noted in the next section, a community-wide 94% of respondents say they feel safe in their own neighborhood.

2. Area/Neighborhood Findings

Residents were asked about their frequency of going to different parts of the community for shopping and other opportunities and their perceptions of safety in their own neighborhoods.

- In terms of frequency of going to parts of the community for “shopping, services, restaurants, entertainment, or to use parks, bike trails, or other recreation facilities,” the community’s Westend remains the most visited. 40% indicated that in an average month they went to the Westend 10+ times for such things, 17% indicated going to the Northend 10+ times, and 15% to Downtown 10+ times. These findings are virtually unchanged across the three survey years.

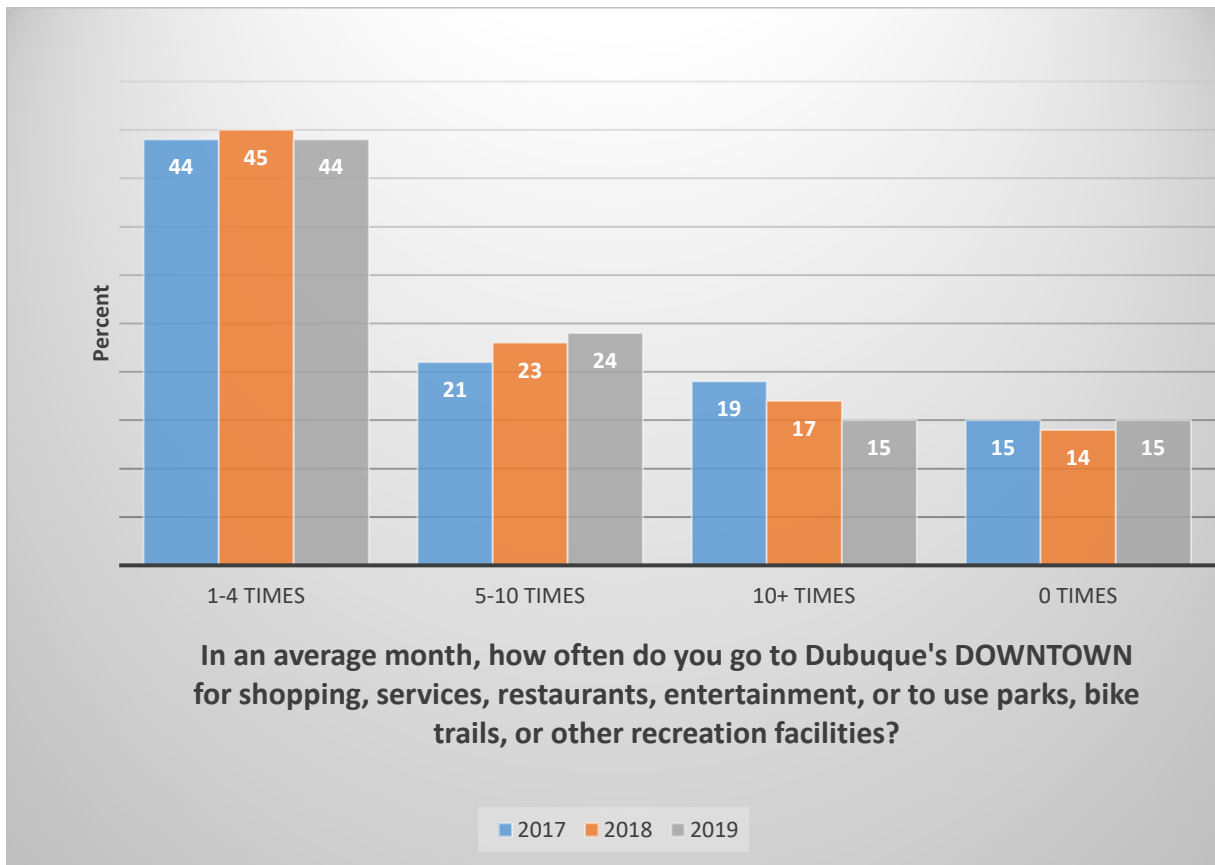


Figure 2.1 Monthly Frequency of Downtown shopping, services, etc.

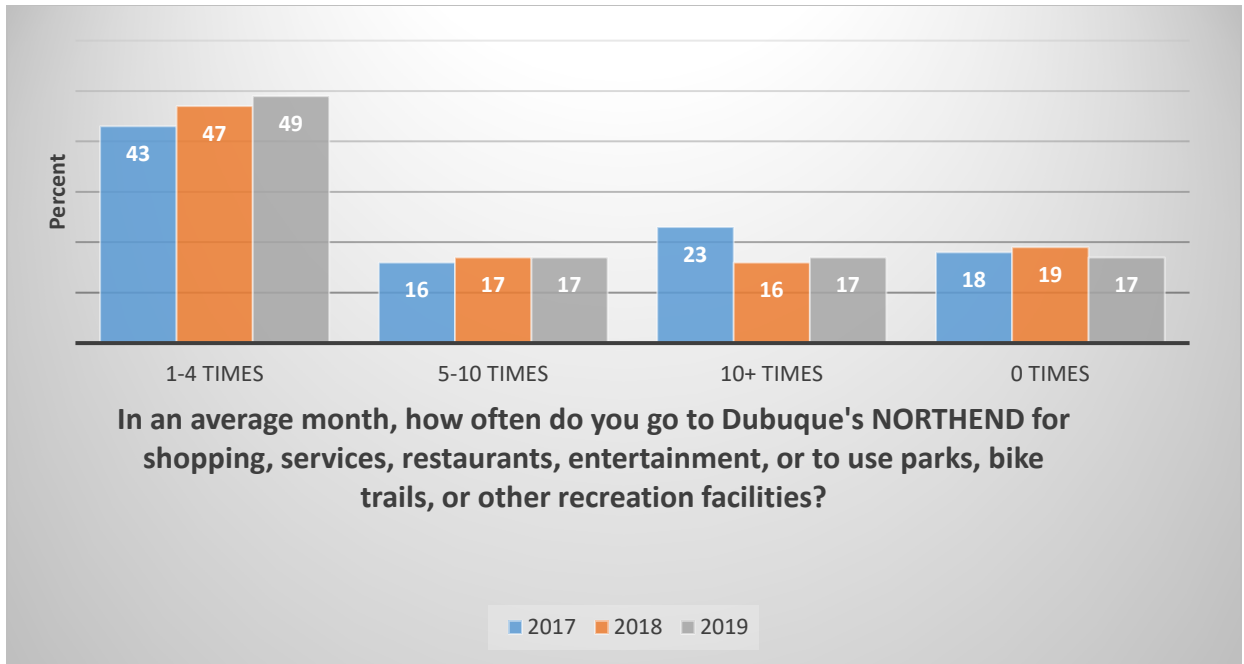


Figure 2.2 Monthly Frequency of Northend shopping, services, etc.

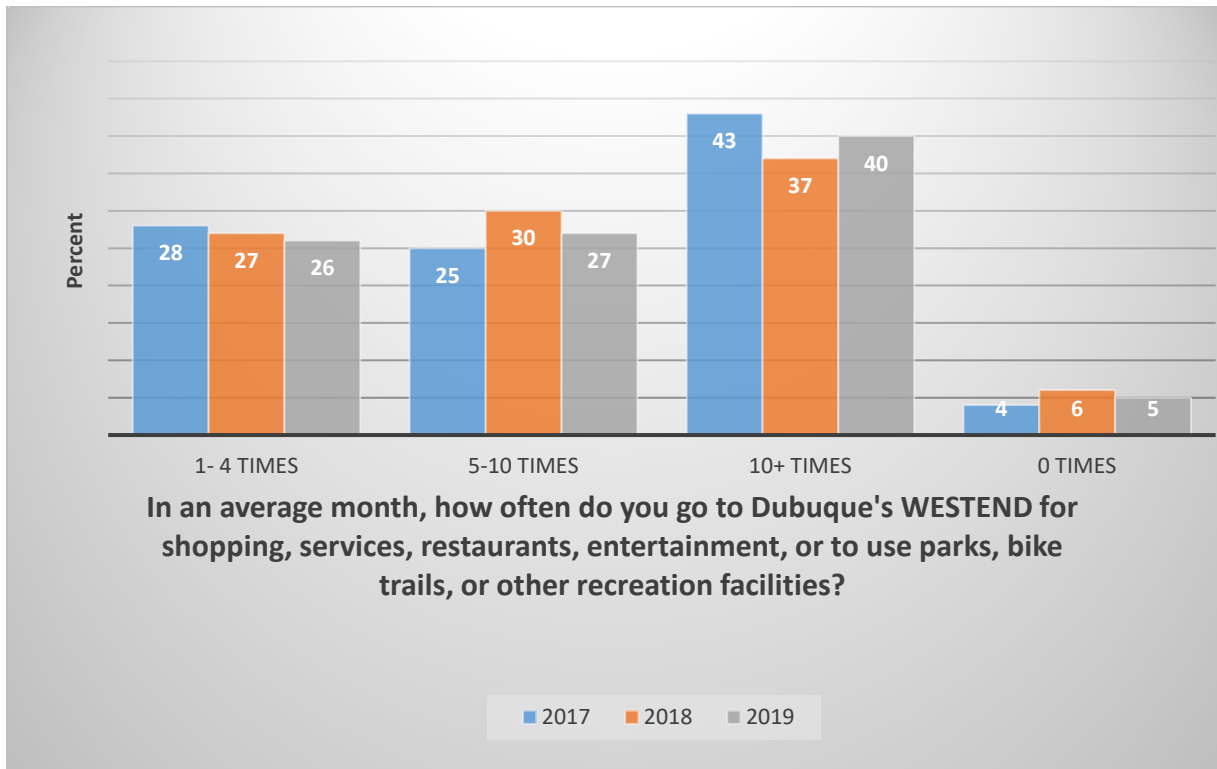


Figure 2.3 Monthly Frequency of Westend shopping, services, etc.

- People overwhelmingly tend to feel safe in their own neighborhood, with 94% in the current survey saying they feel very safe or safe in their neighborhood (52% feel very safe, 42% feel safe). 4% indicated they feel unsafe, and <1% feel very unsafe.
- 84% of Downtown respondents in the current study indicated they feel very safe or safe in their neighborhood (that percentage slips to 67% when asked about feeling safe in the downtown area generally). 90% of those in the Northend said they feel safe or very safe in their neighborhood, and 96% and 97% respectively of those in the Westend or “Another Part” indicated they feel very safe or safe.
- When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “I feel safe in the [Downtown/Northend/Westend],” 2019 respondents reported feeling safest in the Westend.
 - 92% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Westend
 - 2% disagreed, and 6% were unsure
 - 65% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Northend
 - 18% disagreed, and 17% were unsure
 - 50% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Downtown
 - 36% disagreed, and 13% were unsure

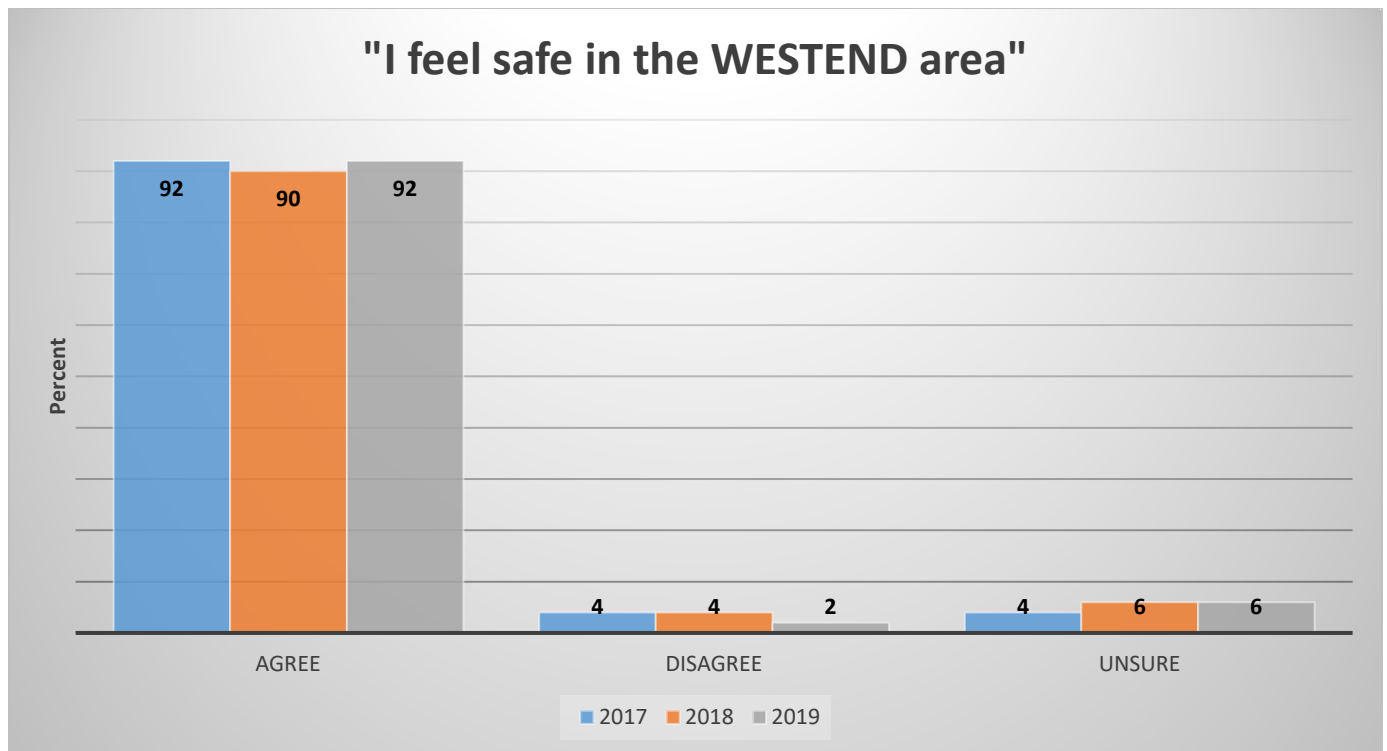


Figure 2.4 Agreement with statement “I feel safe in the Westend area”

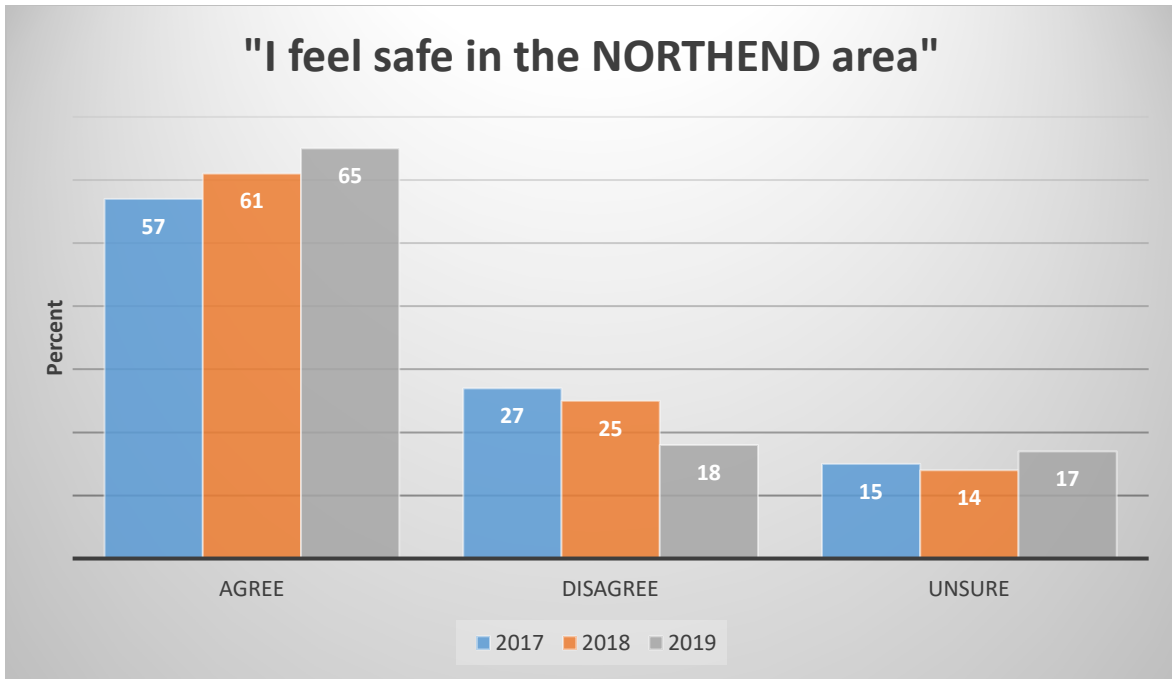


Figure 2.5 Agreement with statement “I feel safe in the Northend area”

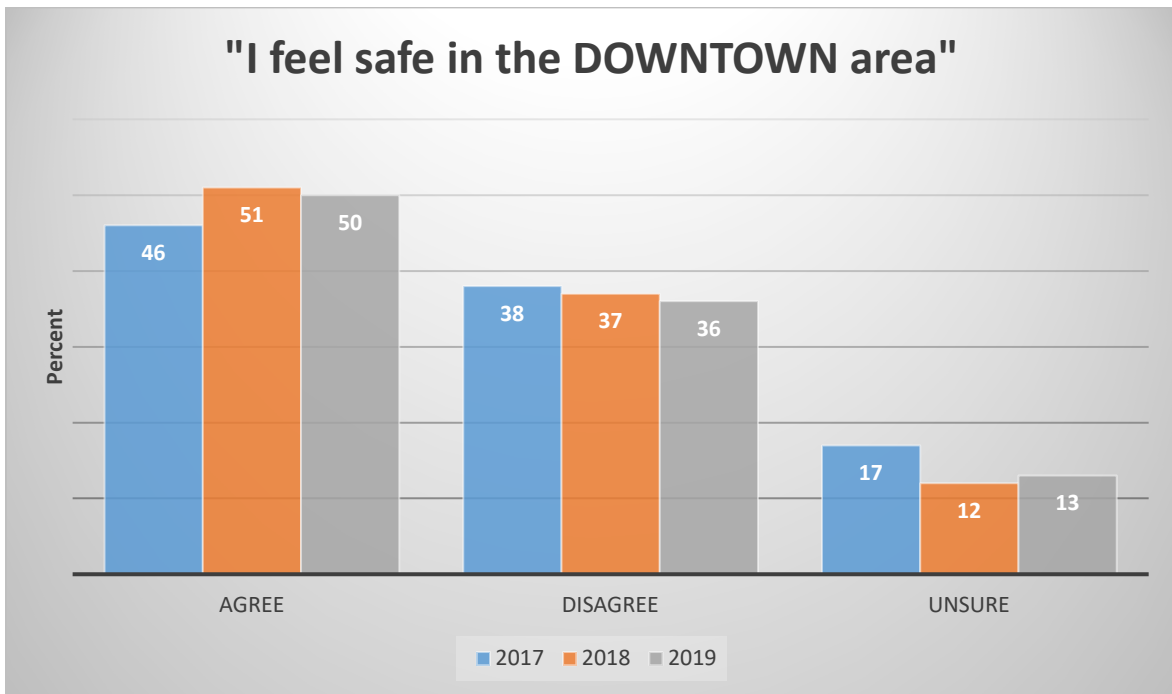


Figure 2.6 Agreement with statement “I feel in the Downtown area”

3. Diversity and Dubuque

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with several statements about Dubuque and the issues of diversity and inclusion. A response of a 3 is reflective of a more neutral position to the statement.

- 67% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Diversity is beneficial to our community.”
 - 11% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
 - 20% Neutral
 - 1% Unsure

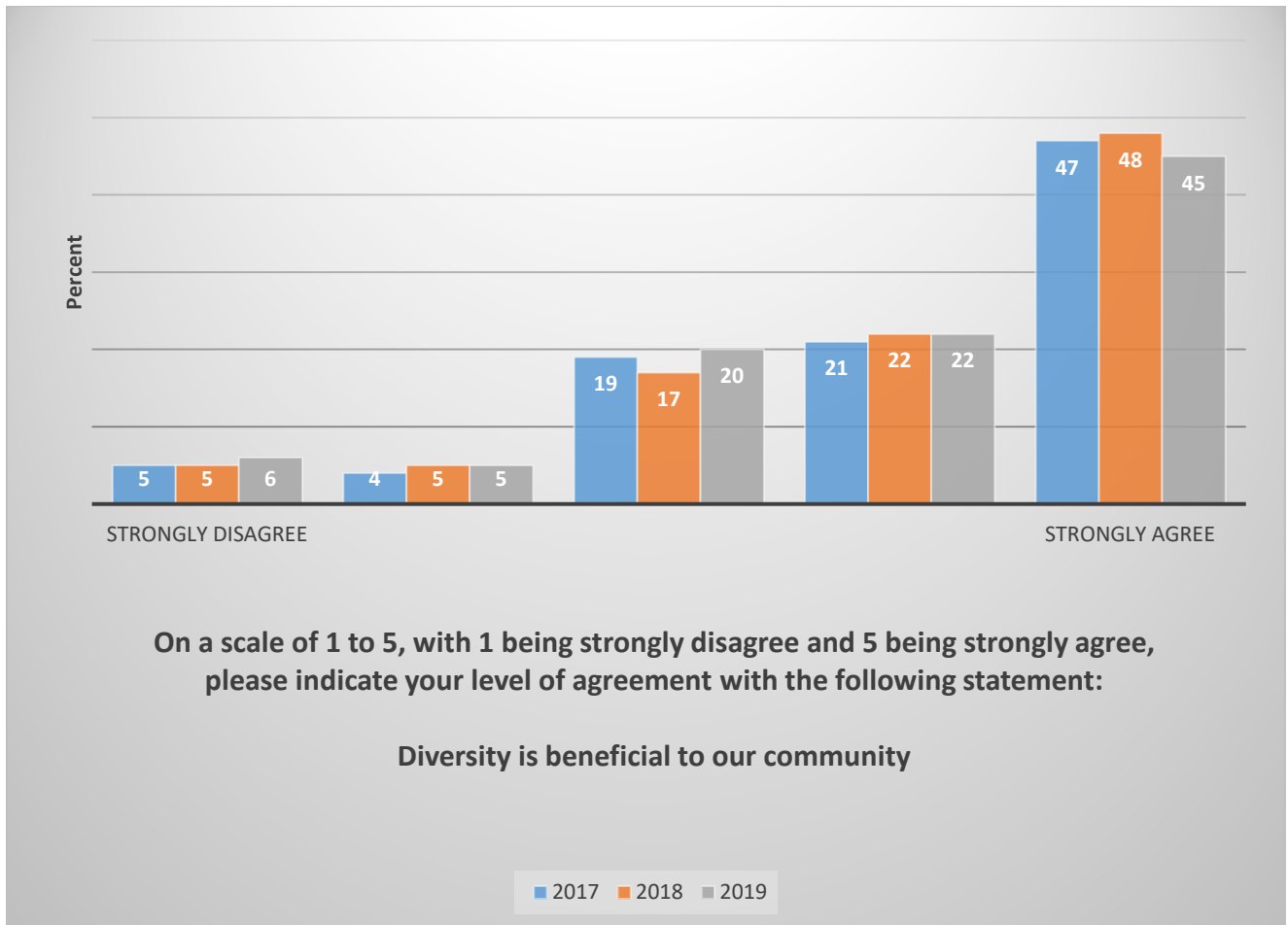


Figure 3.1 Agreement with “Diversity is beneficial to our community”

- 55% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Dubuque is a welcoming community to people of different backgrounds.”
 - 19% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
 - 25% Neutral
 - 2% Unsure

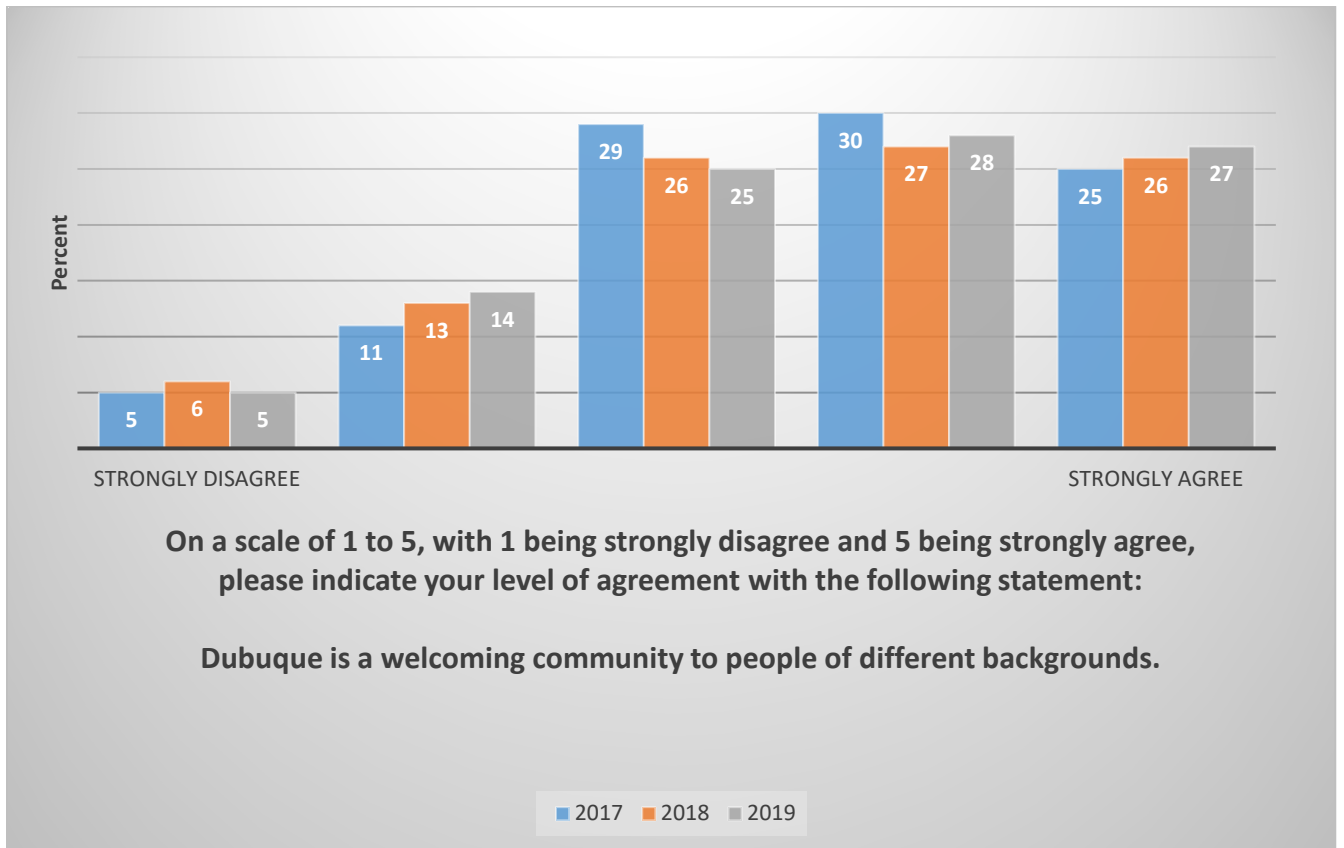


Figure 3.2 Agreement with “Dubuque is a welcoming community to people of different backgrounds”

- 45% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Dubuque is an inclusive community.”
 - 13% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
 - 35% Neutral
 - 8% Unsure

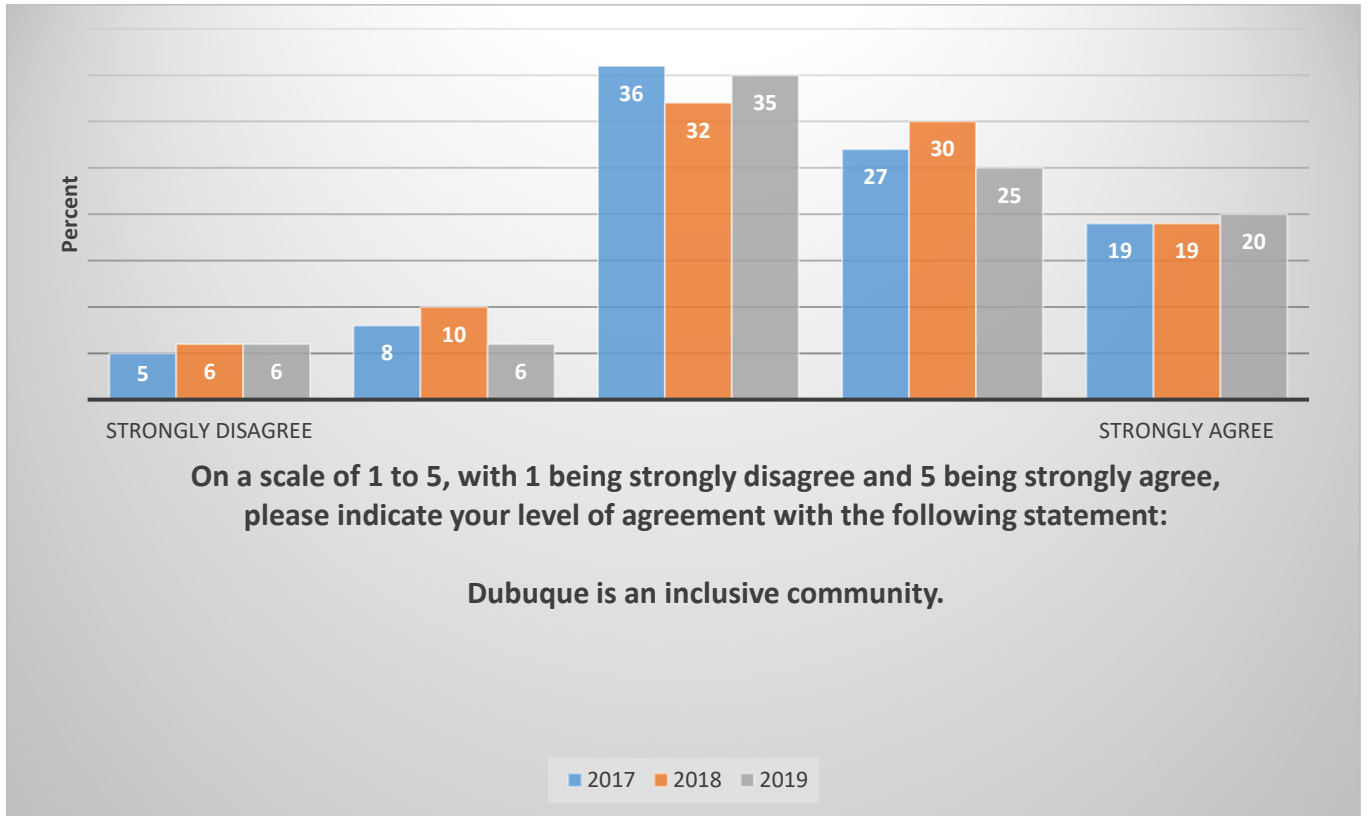


Figure 3.3 Agreement with “Dubuque is an inclusive community”

4. *Challenges for the Community and Neighborhoods*

- When asked to choose “the biggest challenge facing the community as a whole,” from a list of issues provided, 31% said race relations, 22% poverty, 17% substandard housing, 16% limited employment options.
- When asked to choose from a list of issues “what is the biggest challenge in their neighborhood?” limited employment options, substandard housing, and poverty were the top 3 issues selected. However, the most popular response to the question was unsure/don’t know.

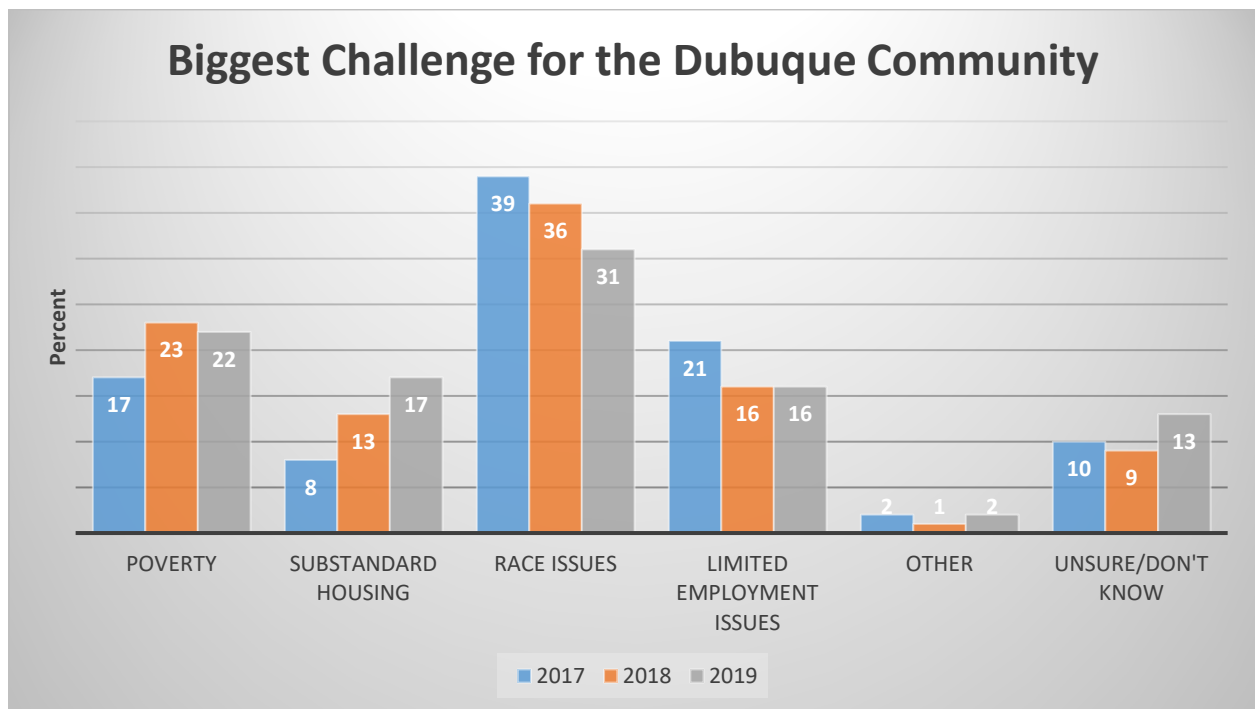


Figure 4.1 Biggest Challenge for the Dubuque Community

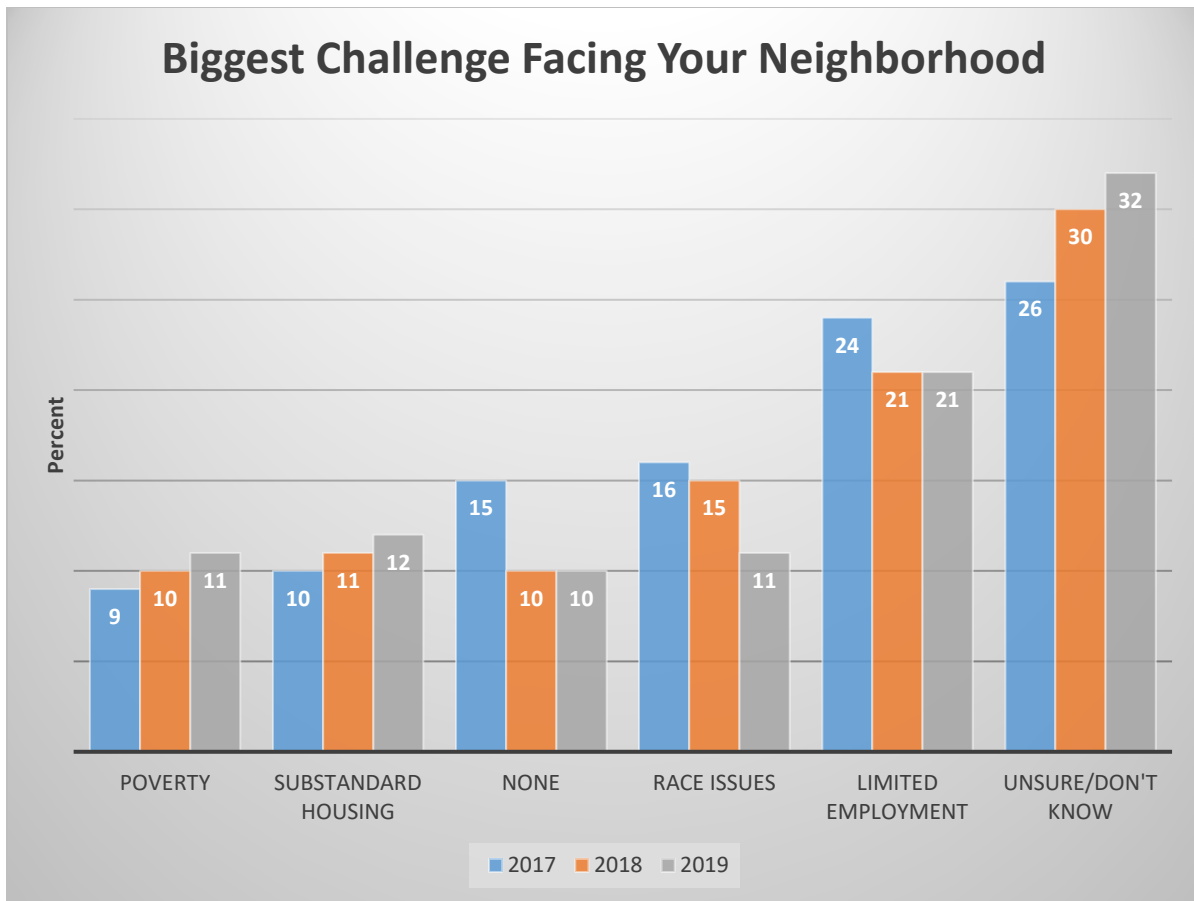


Figure 4.2 Biggest Challenge to Your Neighborhood

Select additional findings:

- 9% of all respondents indicated crime was a big problem in their neighborhood, with 68% saying crime was either not a problem at all or only a minor problem.
- Substandard housing was identified as the biggest challenge by people in the Northend (21%) and Downtown (33%)—followed by limited employment options and poverty. However, the subsample size is relatively small (e.g., 114 respondents from Northend), so caution should be employed when looking at these crosstabulations. And in all sections of the community, other than Downtown, the most popular response to the question of the biggest challenge to their neighborhood was “unsure/don’t know.”

5. Race Relations in Dubuque

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “the community has been responsive to race relation issues.” 51% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 16% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 27% Neutral, and 8% Unsure

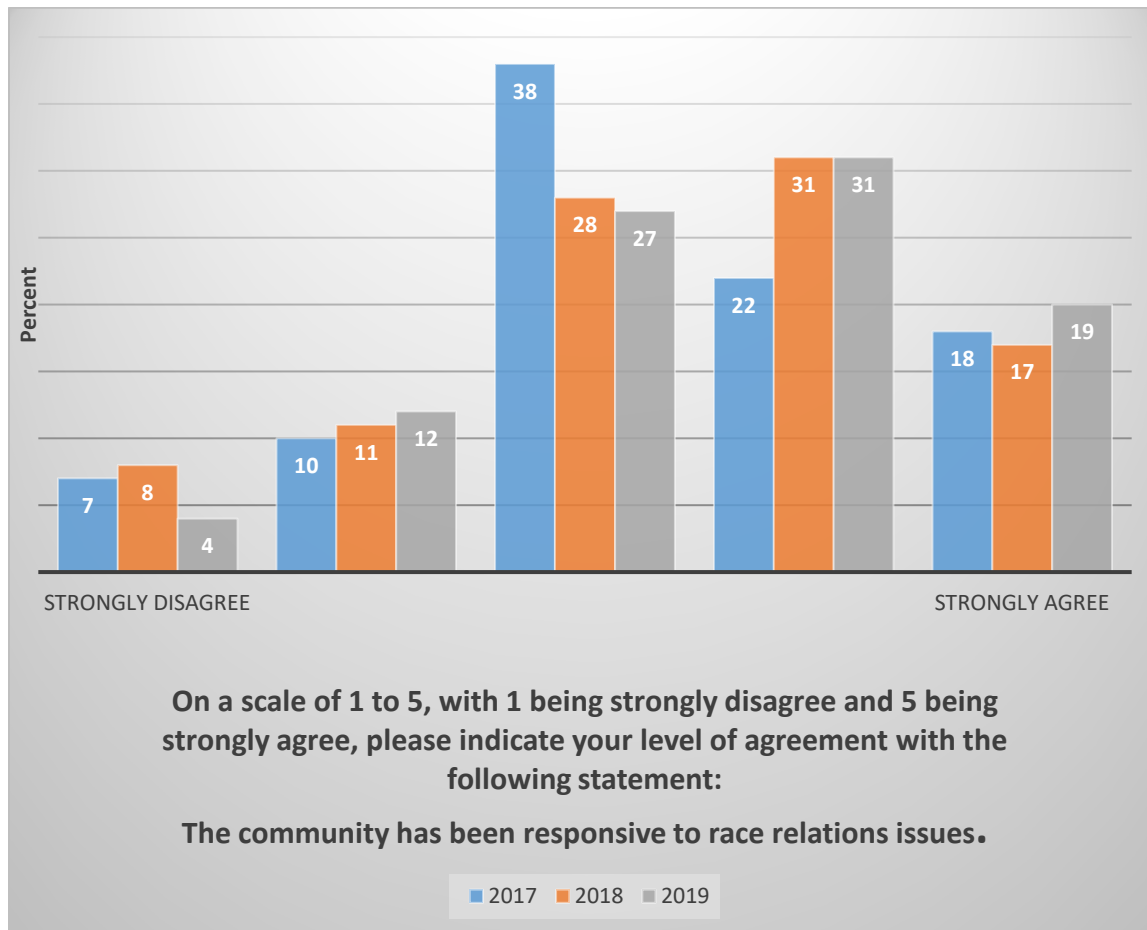


Figure 5.1 Agreement with statement “the community has been responsive to race relations issues”

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are improving.” 45% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 20% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 29% Neutral, and 6% Unsure

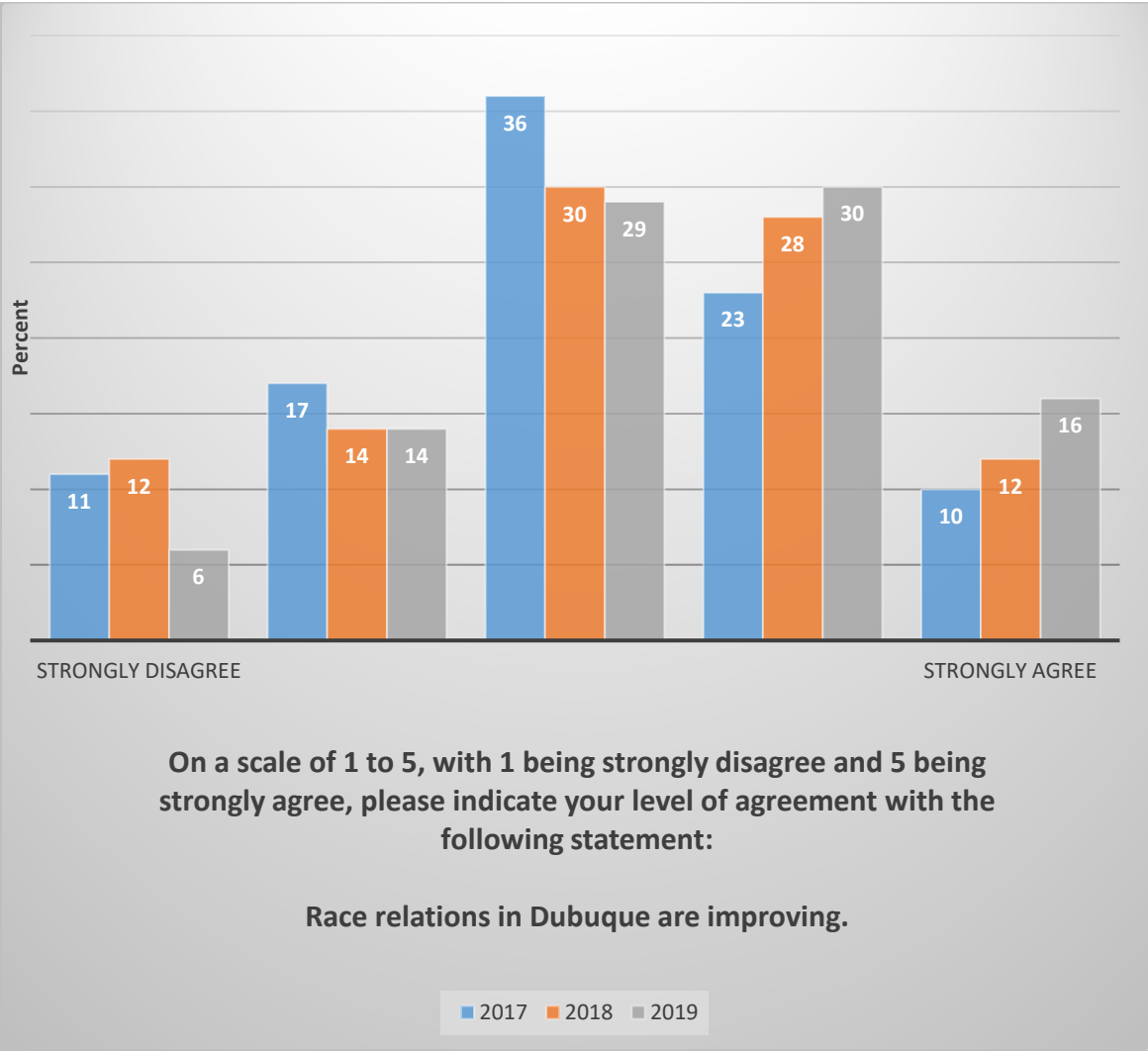


Figure 5.2 Agreement with statement “race relations in Dubuque are improving”

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are getting worse.” 46% said they disagreed/strongly disagreed, 24% say they agreed/strongly agreed, 26% Neutral, and 4% Unsure.

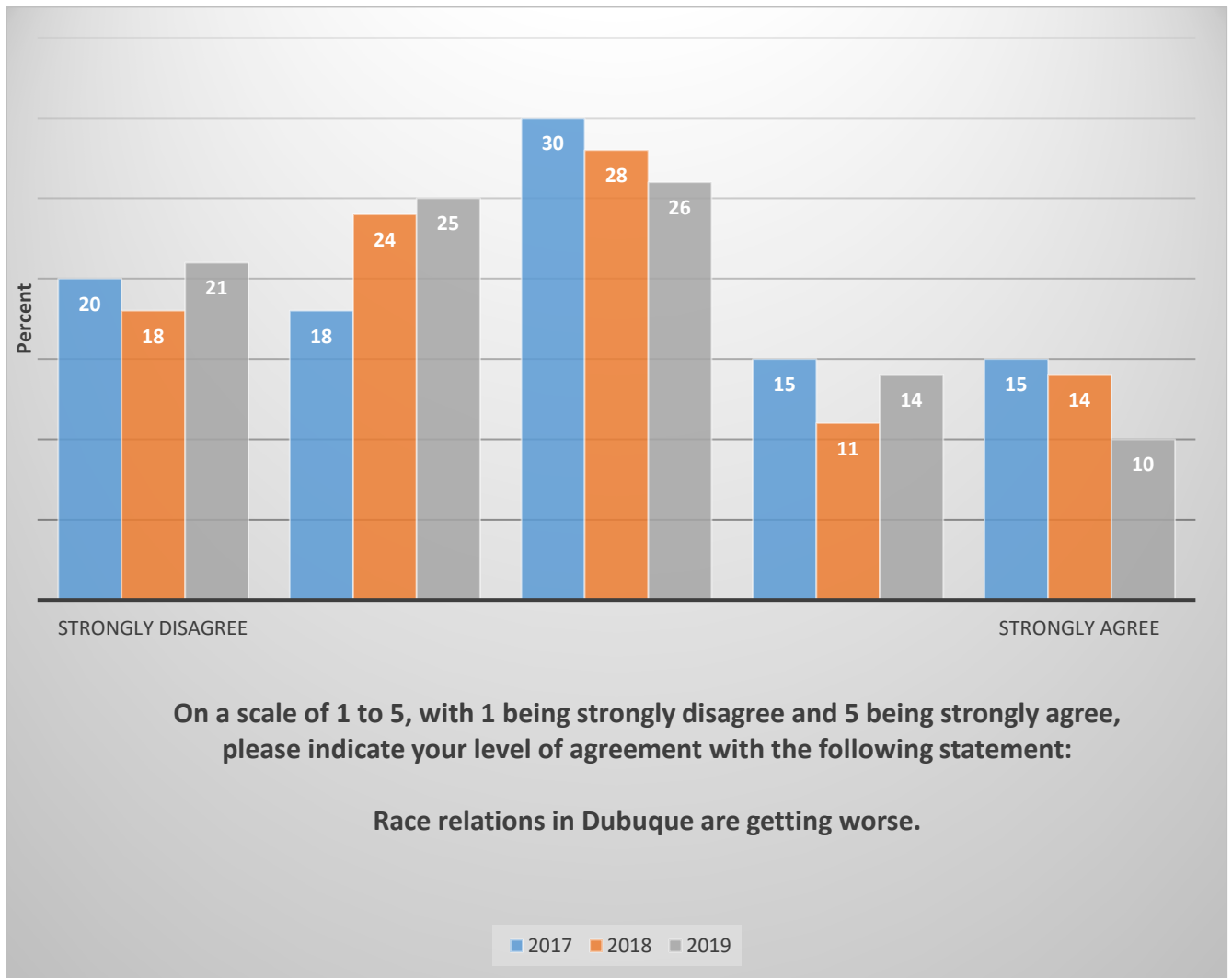


Figure 5.3 Agreement with statement that “race relations in Dubuque are getting worse”

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are good.” 32% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 25% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 41% Neutral, and 3% Unsure

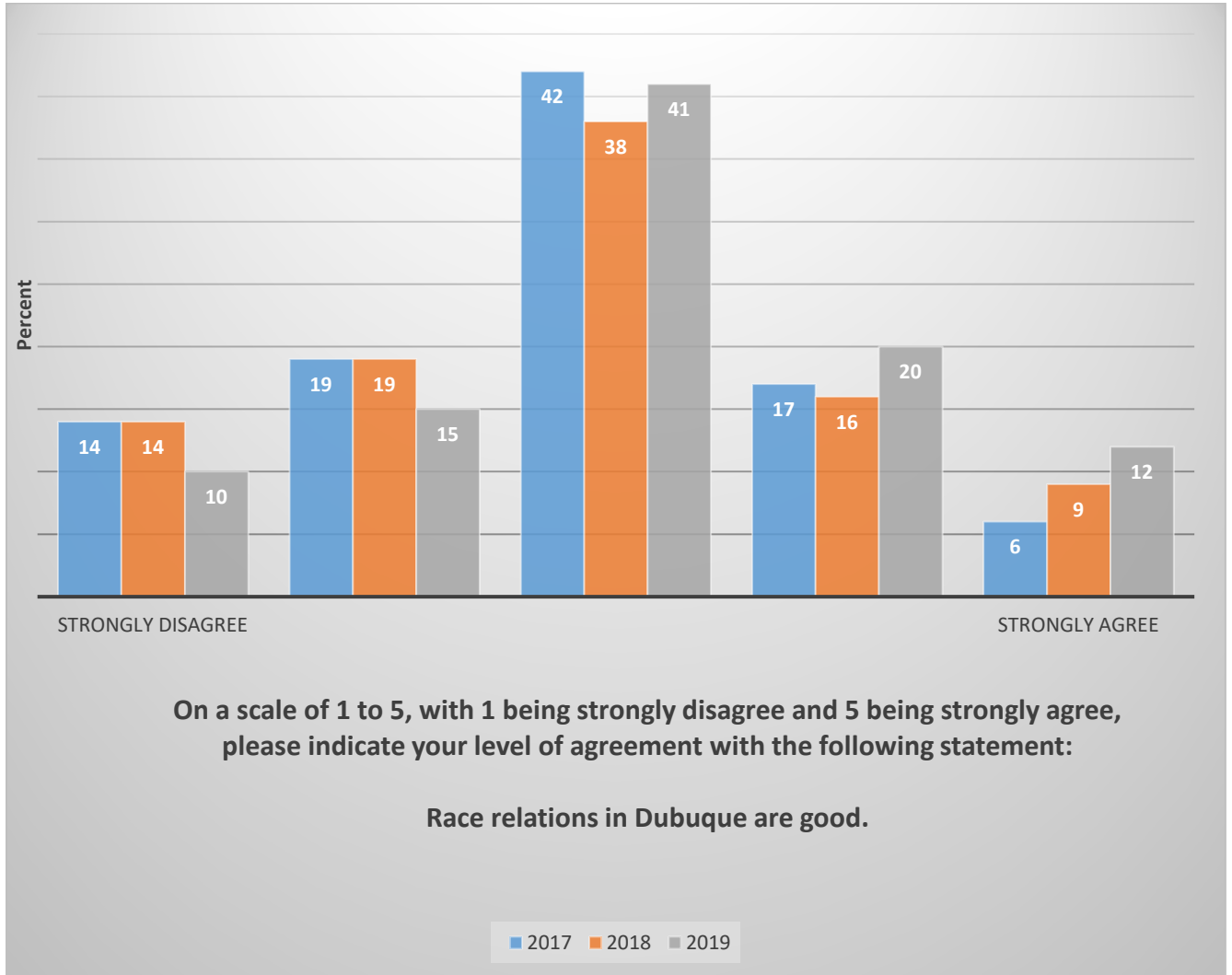


Figure 5.4 Agreement with statement “race relations in Dubuque are good”

- From the first survey year there has been growth in the percentage of respondents saying they agree or strongly agree with the statement that “race relations are improving.” In 2017 33% indicated their agreement with the statement, while in 2019 that number is 46%. The general trend on the subset of race relations questions is positive, but the limited size of some of the subsamples (e.g., non-Whites) is important to note.

Conclusion

Across the three years of surveys there is significant continuity to the perceptions within the community. For example, the community is generally seen positively (e.g., as a place to raise a family). Other similar findings include the utilization of particular areas of the community, as well as finding the Downtown area has the lowest levels of perceived safety. People continue to overwhelmingly feel safe in their own neighborhoods, but variation in assessment of areas can be clearly seen in the results.

As with prior years, there is stated support for diversity, and there have been some positive trends regarding race relations (particularly in comparison to the baseline year of 2017).

Beyond the similar trends across the three years, some noteworthy items arise in the 2019 survey. For instance, the concern over substandard housing for the whole community increased from 2017 (beyond the margin of error for the surveys).

Any trends revealed in comparisons across the three years should be read with caution as the data are the product of sampling and come with a margin of error. Small subsamples limit the generalizability of the results for that subgroup.

Appendix A

Methodological Note

The 2019 survey was limited to resident adults of the City of Dubuque, Asbury, and Key West. Questions on the instrument were developed in collaboration with the GDDC. The total number of respondents surveyed was 500, and was conducted 9/17/19-10/02/19. The sample was split between a Random Digit Dial (RDD) and listed sample (i.e., commercially available lists of households within the target area). The final sample reflected 60% cell phone and 40% landline. The survey was administered with live professional callers using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing system. Sample and calling provided by Braun Research, Inc. Post-sample weights applied to approximate demographic variables (age, race, sex, ethnicity—Hispanic/White Alone, and geographic distribution—Dubuque v. Asbury) for the population. The U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimate data was used for weighting/targeting purposes. A geographic target was employed to approximate distribution of the area's population within U.S. Census tracts (as indicated in last U.S. Census). Results from the full sample have a margin of error of +/- 4%. Margins of error for subsamples will be larger. In addition, some subgroups are very small, and caution should be exercised when extrapolating results for these populations in isolation. Also, please note that due to the weighting and rounding procedures, total counts within cross tabulations may indicate slight variation.