



Greater Dubuque Development Corporation  
2018 Community Perceptions Survey

**Executive Summary**

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# *Introduction*

This report presents results from a second 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 wave was conducted September of 2017, and is referenced in key comparisons in the material below. The 2018 survey of 502 Dubuque residents was conducted 9/17/18-9/27/18 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 from 2017 and 2018 provides a picture of the community across time.

Included in this report are some of the major findings from the survey results for 2018 and some key comparisons across the two survey years.

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

- 75% Say Dubuque is heading on the Right Track
  - 17% say Dubuque is heading in the Wrong Direction
  - 9% say they are Unsure

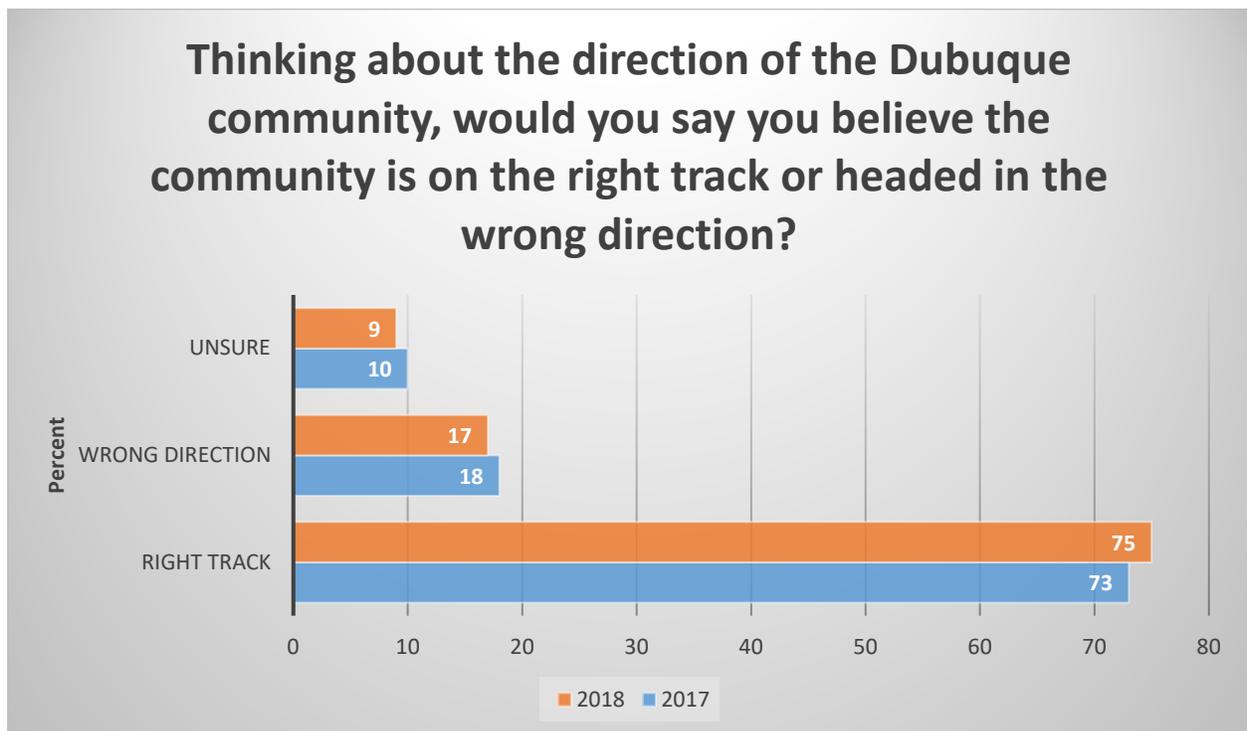


Figure 1.1 Direction of Community

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.

- 79% Agree/Strongly Agree that Dubuque is a good place to live
  - 13% Neutral
  - 7% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  
- 74% Agree/Strongly Agree Dubuque is a good place to work
  - 16% Neutral
  - 8% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  
- 78% Agree/Strongly Agree that Dubuque is a good place to raise a family
  - 13% Neutral
  - 8% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  
- 64% Agree/Strongly Agree with statement that Dubuque is a safe place to live
  - 24% Neutral
  - 11% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

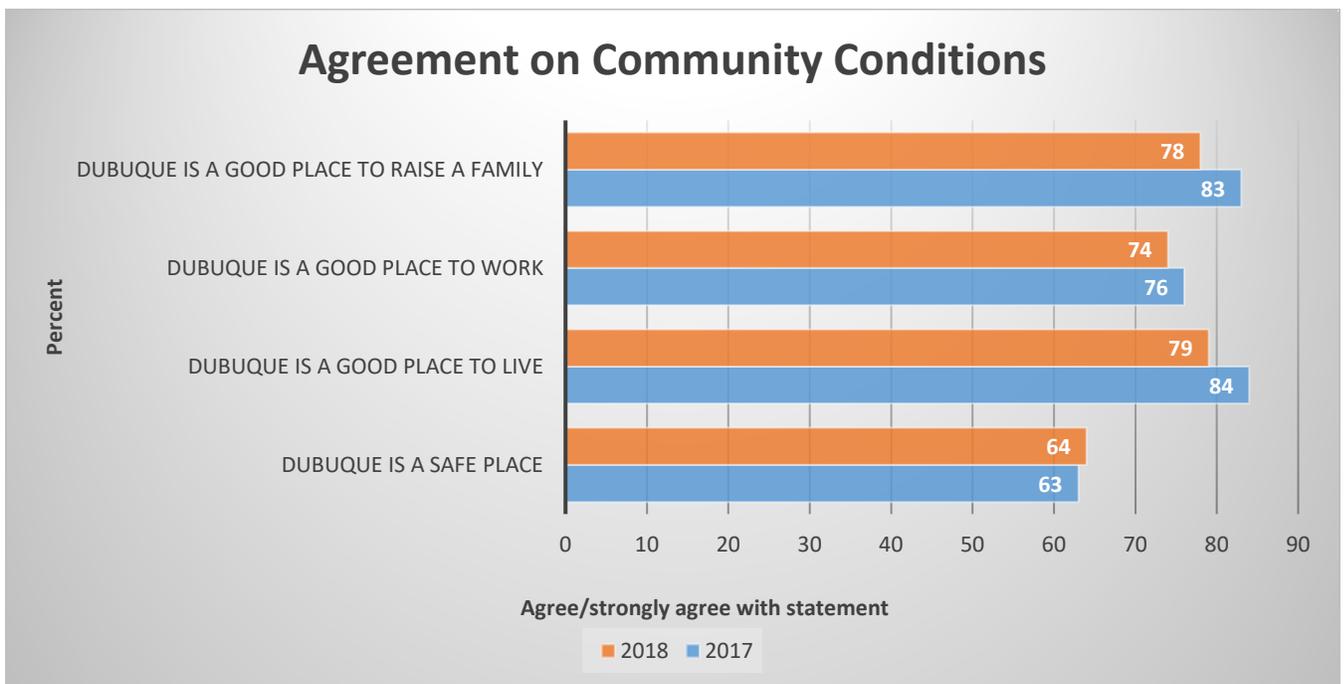


Figure 1.2 Agreement with Statements on Community Conditions

**Comment:** Dubuque residents continue to hold favorable views of their community, and there is little change observed from 2017 to 2018, and what differences are observed fall within the margin of error of both surveys.

## 2. Area/Neighborhood Findings

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

- 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. 37% indicated that in an average month they went to the Westend 10+ times for such things, 16% indicated going to the Northend 10+ times, and 17% to Downtown 10+ times.

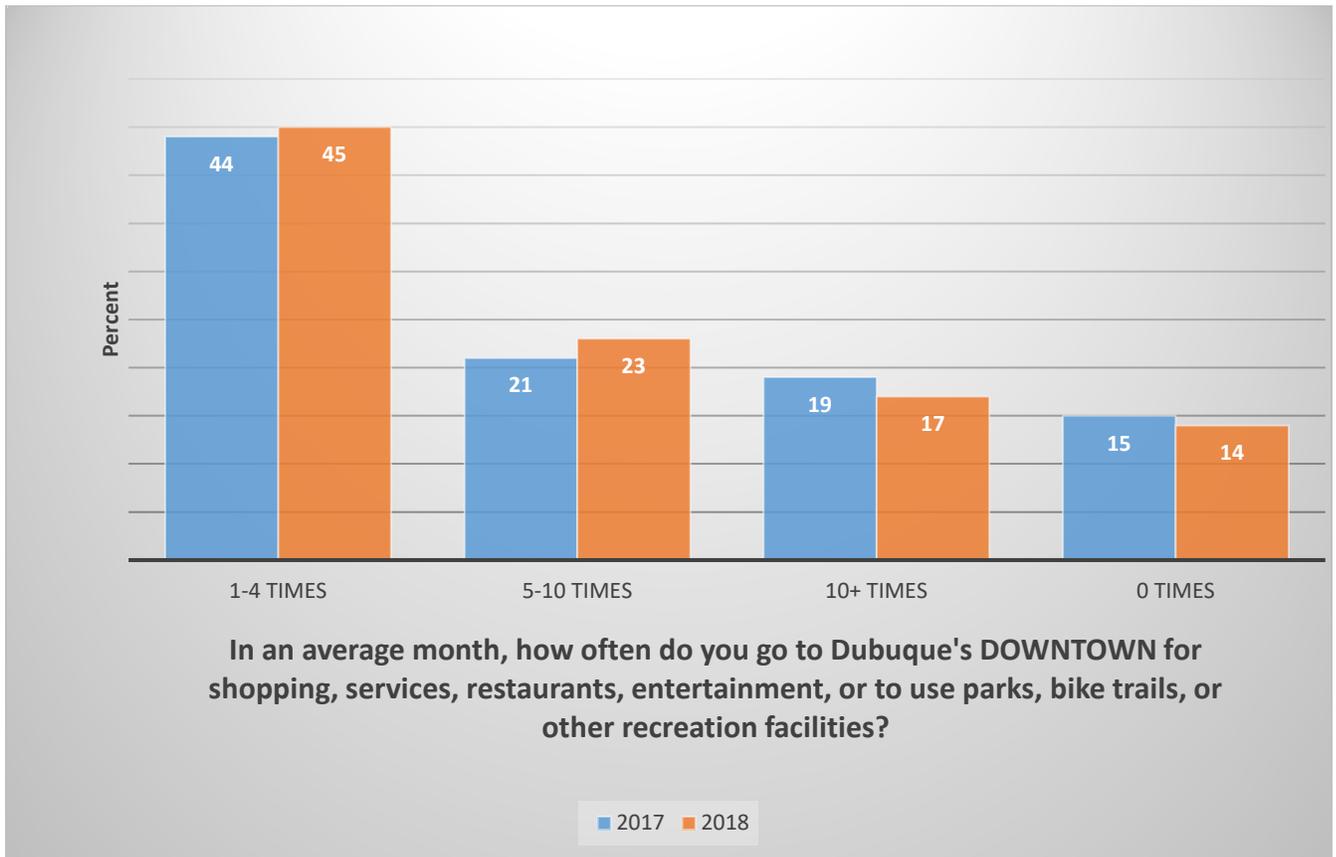


Figure 2.1 Monthly Frequency of Downtown shopping, services, etc.

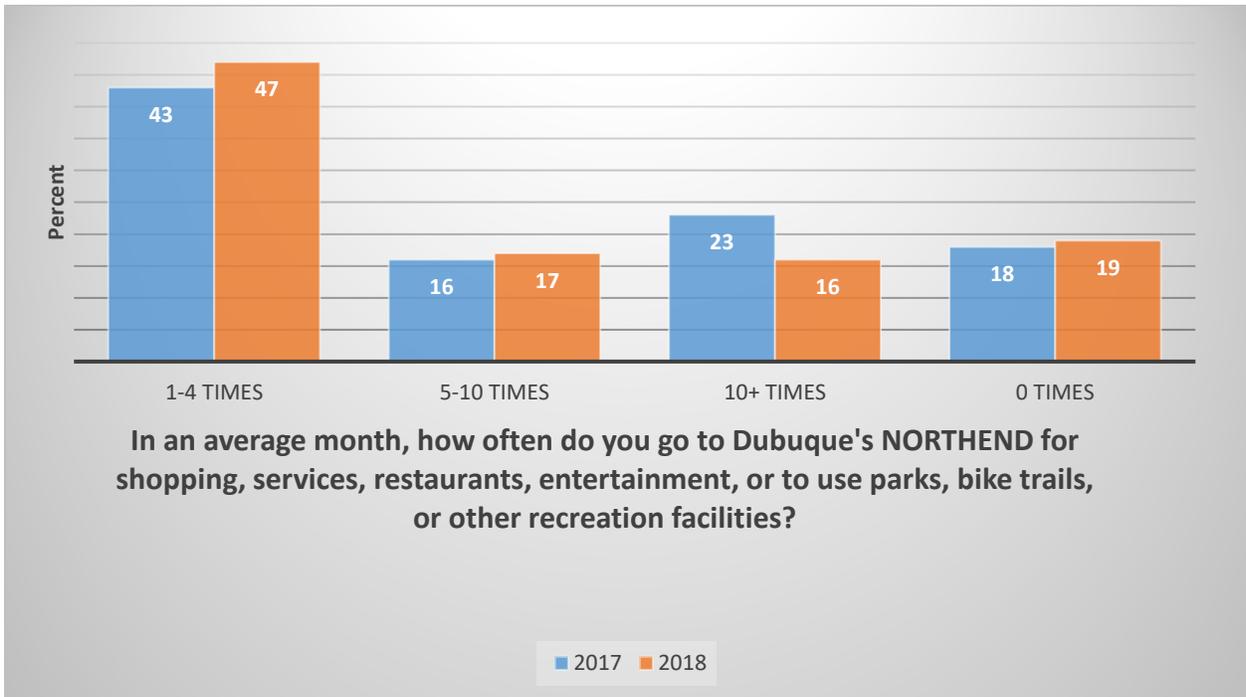


Figure 2.2 Monthly Frequency of Northend shopping, services, etc.

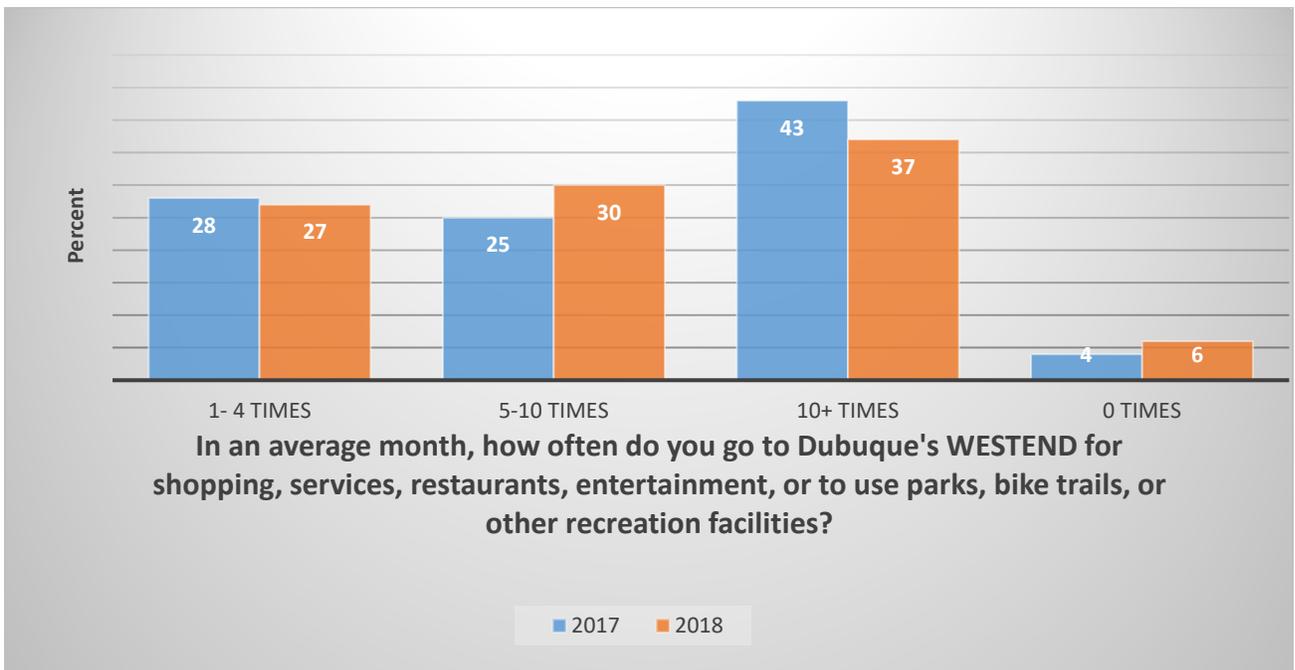


Figure 2.3 Monthly Frequency of Westend shopping, services, etc.

- People overwhelmingly tend to feel safe in their own neighborhood, with 96% saying they feel very safe or safe in their neighborhood (51% feel very safe, 45% feel safe). Overall, this is a 2% increase from 2017, but it should be noted that there was a 5% reduction in the very safe rate, and a 7% increase in the safe rate. 4% indicated they feel unsafe, and 1% feel very unsafe. The conclusion remains that people overwhelmingly tend to feel safe in their own neighborhoods, and changes should be considered in light of the margin of error
  
- When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “I feel safe in the [Downtown/Northend/Westend],” respondents reported feeling safest in the Westend.
  - 90% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Westend
    - 4% disagreed, and 6% were unsure
  - 61% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Northend
    - 25% disagreed, and 14% were unsure
  - 51% agreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Downtown
    - 37% disagreed, and 12% were unsure

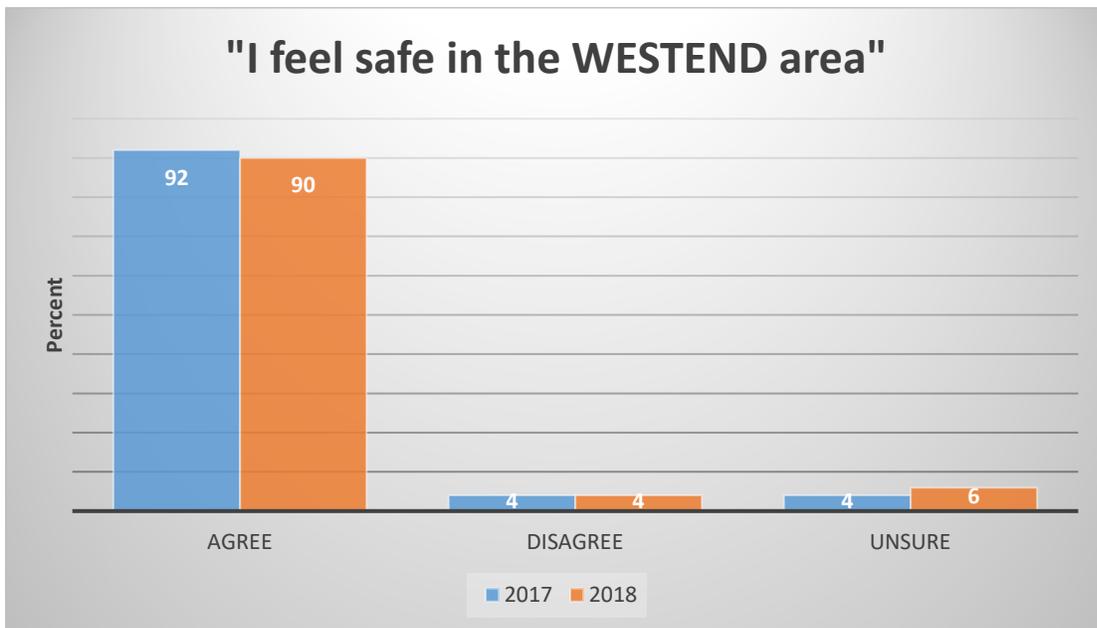


Figure 2.4 Agreement with statement “I feel safe in the Westend area”

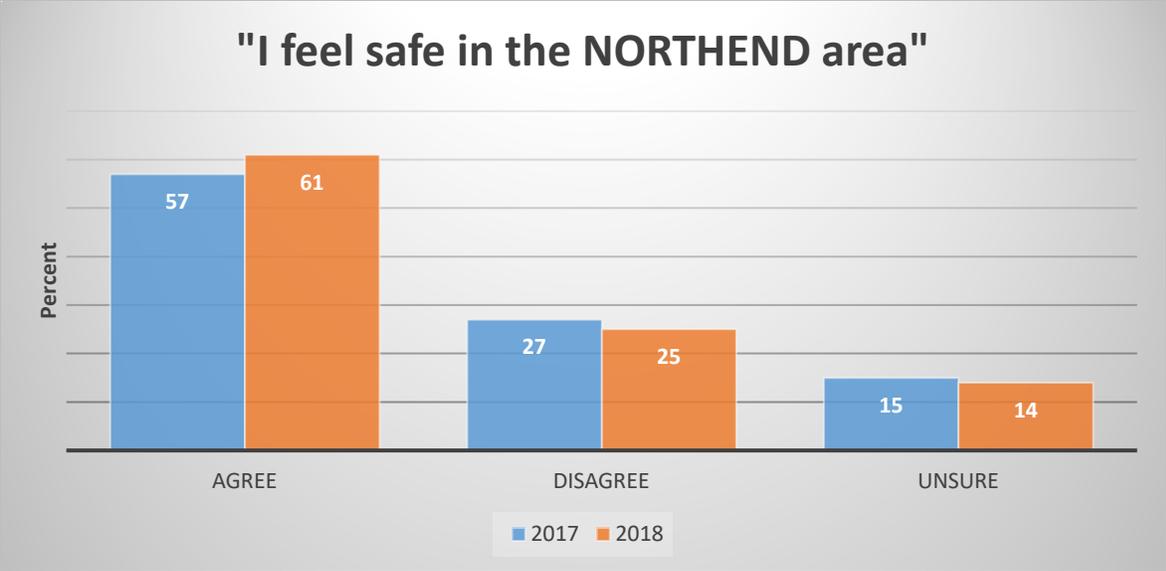


Figure 2.5 Agreement with statement “I feel safe in the Northend area”

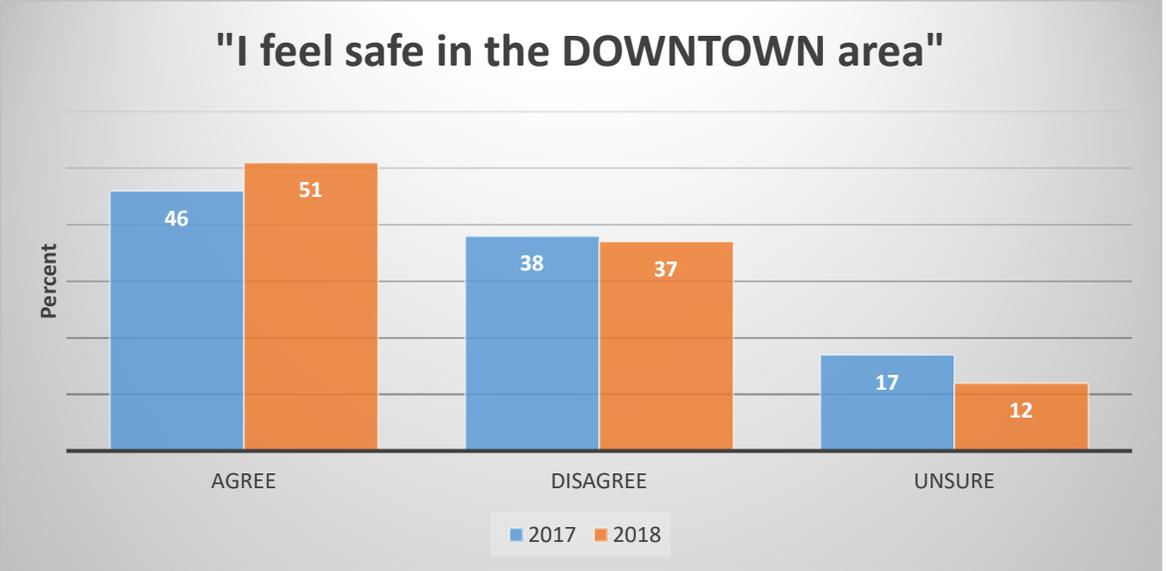


Figure 2.6 Agreement with statement “I feel in the Downtown area”

### Select additional findings:

- 43% of those saying crime is a big or moderate problem in their part of the community come from the Northend and Downtown (note: 34% of total respondents in 2018 identified this at such a level of problem)
- 81% of those saying a lack of services is a big or moderate problem in their part of the community come from the Northend or “another part” of the community (note: 21% of total respondents in 2018 identified this at such a level of problem)
- Northend residents more likely than other areas to report a lack of shopping opportunities as a big problem.
- Other than Northend residents, majorities (albeit small majorities) of residents in the other areas agree with the statement that they feel safe in the downtown area. And even Northend residents are more likely to agree with the statement that they feel safe in the Downtown area than disagree. **Comparing this to 2017 data, that previous survey did not yield majorities feeling safe in the downtown area from any of the geographic sections.**

**Comments:** In terms of frequency of visits for shopping, etc., the Westend remains the most visited. Perceptions of safety continue to be most pronounced for the Downtown area. However, turning to a crosstabulation of the data by area of residence and neighborhood a more nuanced picture emerges. There is definitely, for instance, a distinction between one’s own neighborhood and consideration of a general area of the community. After all, 96% of downtown residents feel very safe or safe in their neighborhood, but only 57% of downtown residents agree with the statement that they feel safe 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.

- 71% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Diversity is beneficial to our community.”
  - 10% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
  - 17% Neutral
  - 2% Unsure

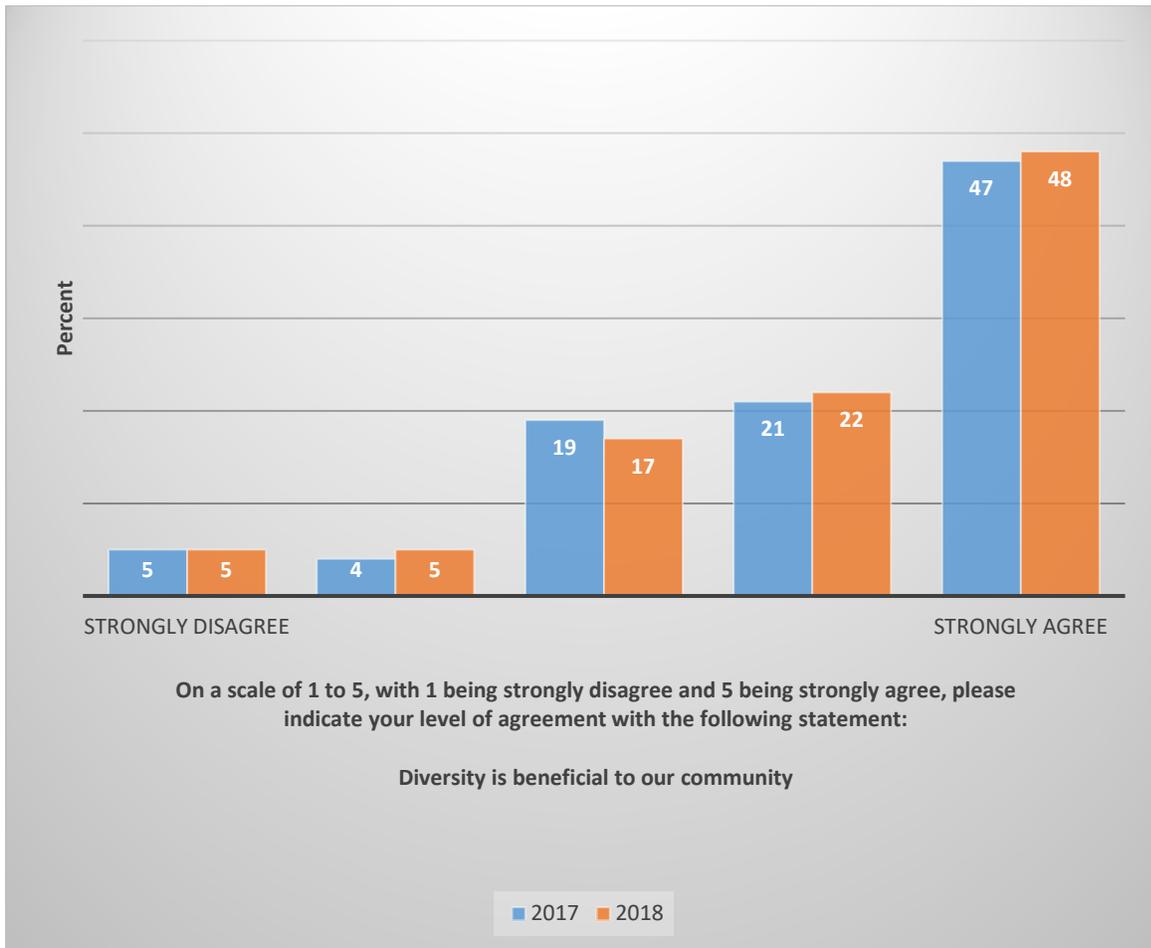


Figure 3.1 Agreement with “Diversity is beneficial to our community”

- 53% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Dubuque is a welcoming community to people of different backgrounds.”
  - 19% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
  - 26% Neutral
  - 2% Unsure

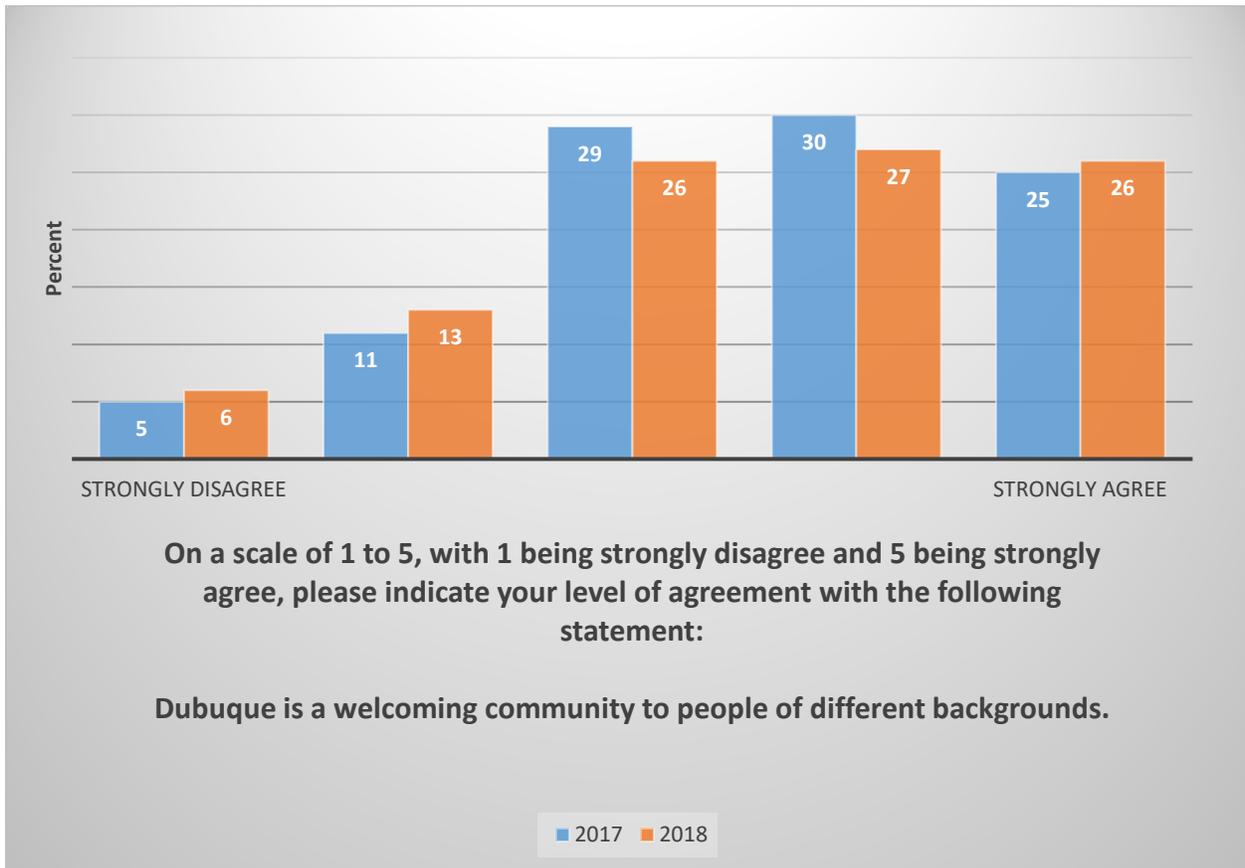


Figure 3.2 Agreement with “Dubuque is a welcoming community to people of different backgrounds”

- 49% Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement “Dubuque is an inclusive community.”
  - 16% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed
  - 32% Neutral
  - 3% Unsure

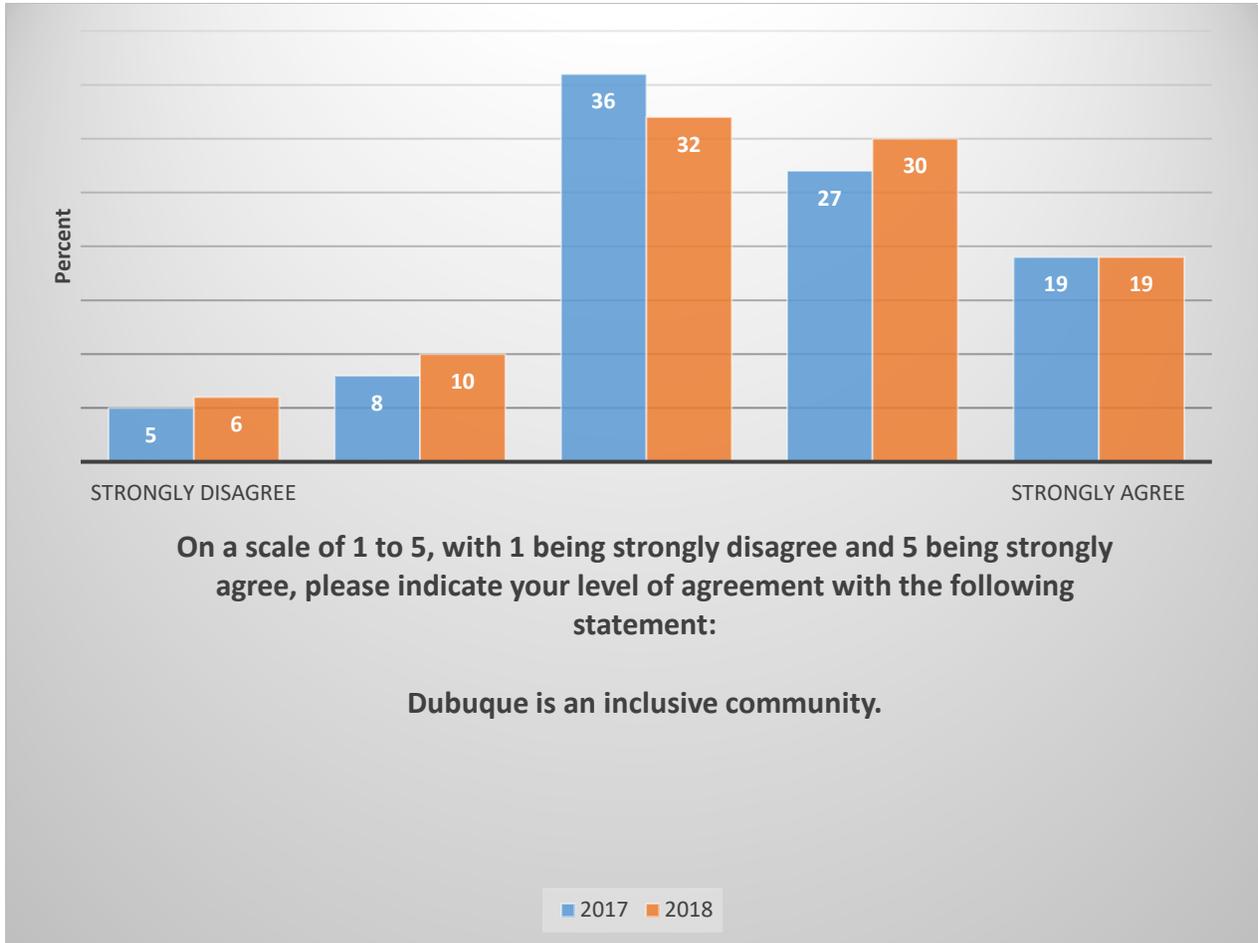


Figure 3.3 Agreement with “Dubuque is an inclusive community”

**Comments:** Opinion on diversity, as measured, shows stability across survey years. As with the previous year, respondents report strong support for the beneficialness of diversity. Perceptions of Dubuque’s performance in being inclusive, however, is more mixed.

## 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, 36% said race relations, 16% limited employment options, and 23% said poverty.
- When asked to choose from a list of issues “what is the biggest challenge in their neighborhood?,” limited employment options, race relations, and substandard housing were the top 3 issues selected. However, the most popular response to the question was unsure/don’t know.

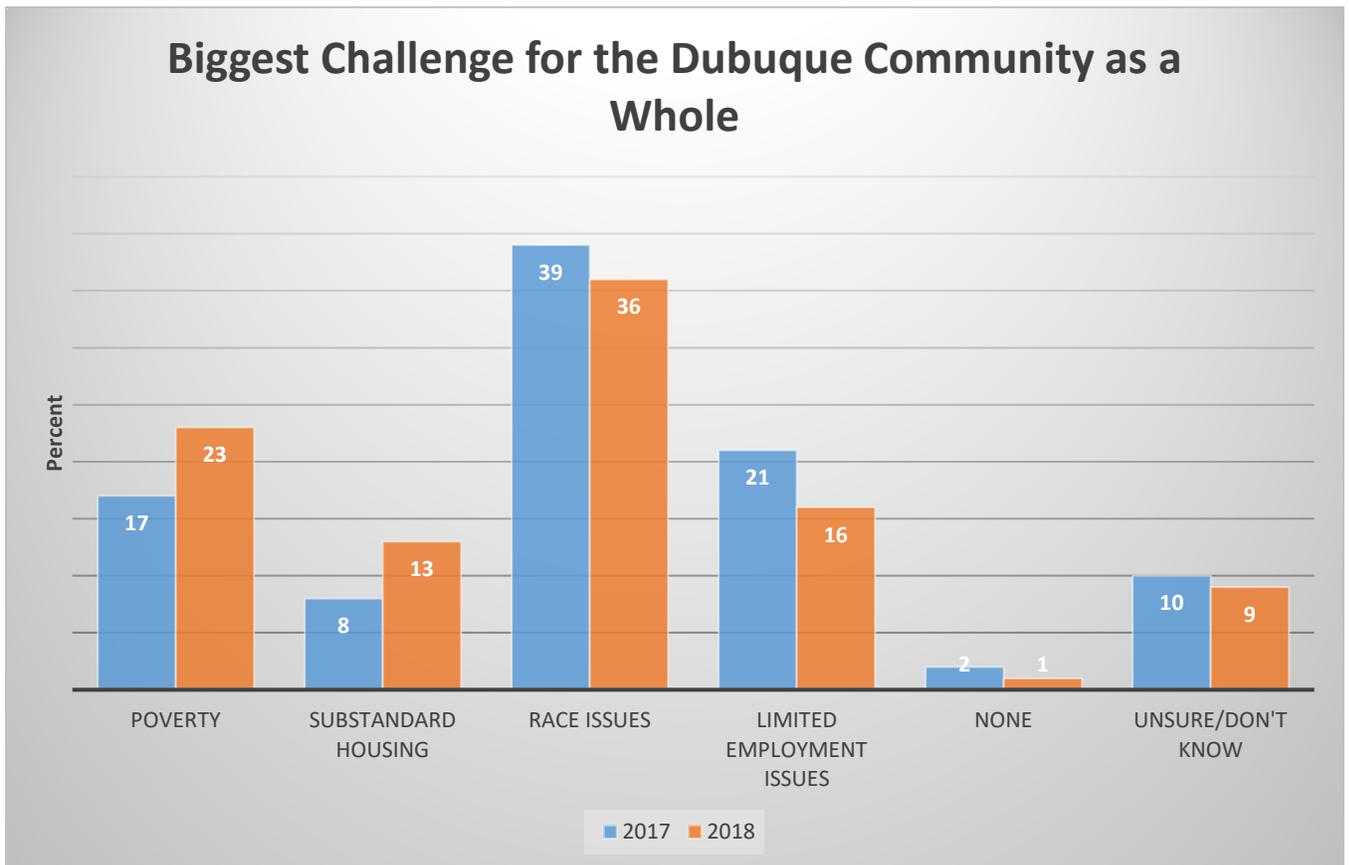


Figure 4.1 Biggest Challenge for the Dubuque Community

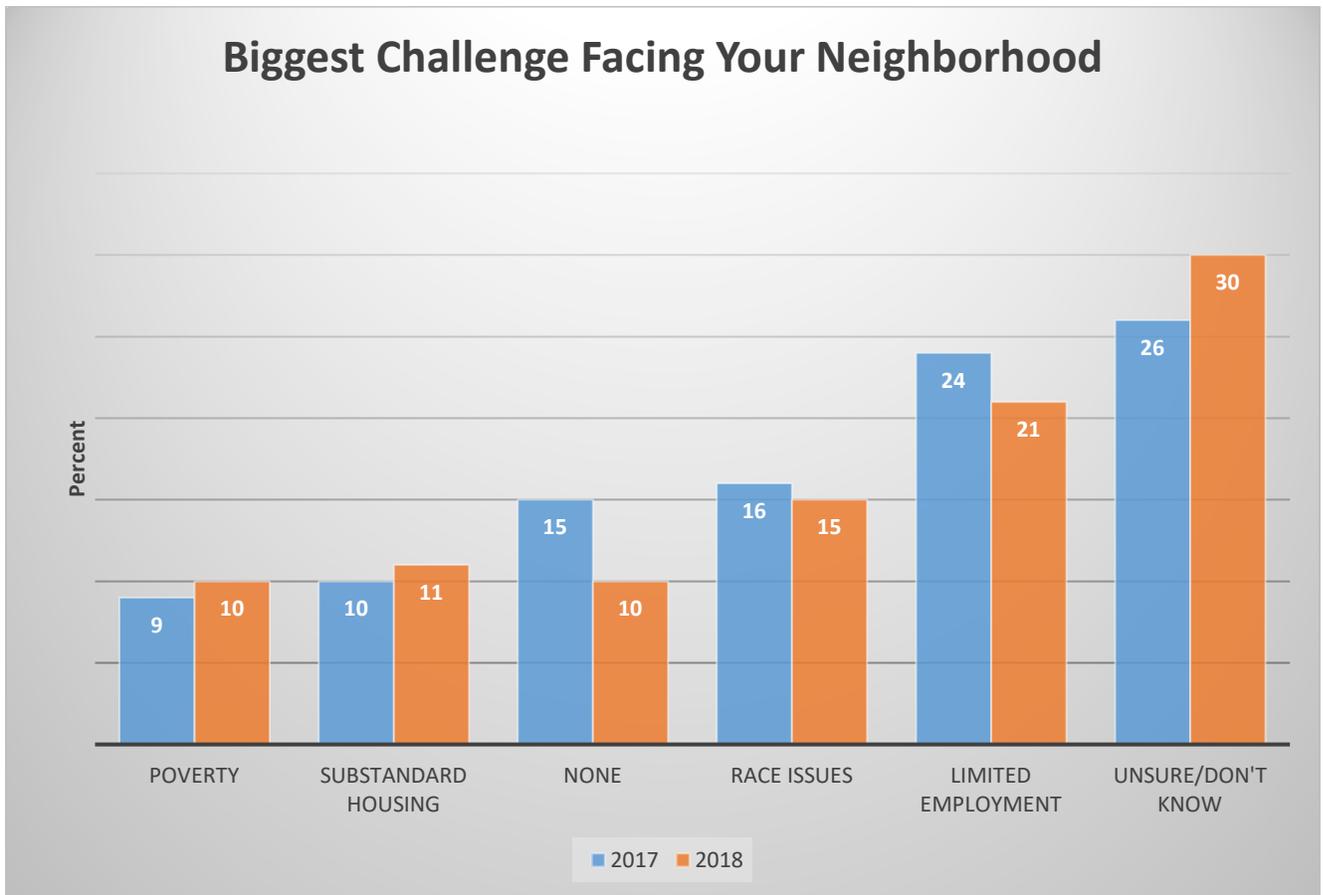


Figure 4.2 Biggest Challenge to Your Neighborhood

- Comparisons between the 2017 and 2018 study reveal that the top three challenges to neighborhoods identified remained the same in both the Northend and Downtown. Excluding those responding “don’t know/unsure” or “none,” the following are the top three challenges to neighborhood identified by people in those areas.
  - **Northend: limited employment options, race relations, and substandard housing.**
  - **Downtown: poverty, race relations, and substandard housing.**
  - For those residing in **another part of Dubuque** the top three in 2018 were **limited employment options, poverty, and substandard housing.** Two of these three (limited employment options and poverty) were the same as in 2017. The Westend is a bit of an outlier as “don’t know/unsure” and “none” represent more than 50% of the responses. Limited employment options is the only response with a substantial percentage, and this is similar to the results from the 2017 survey.

## 5. Race Relations in Dubuque

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “the community has been responsive to race relation issues.” 48% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 19% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 28% Neutral, and 5% Unsure

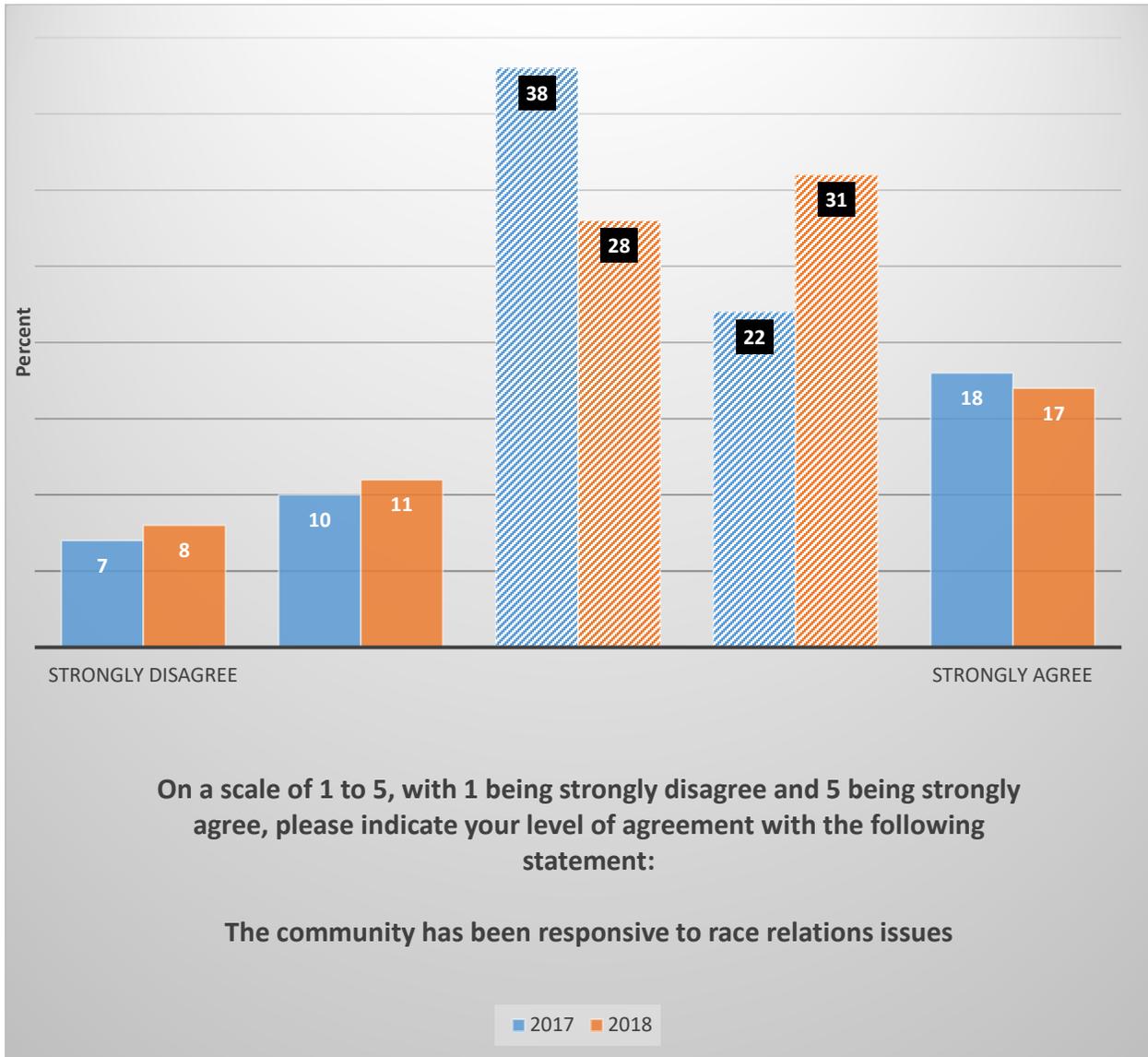


Figure 5.1 Agreement with statement “the community has been responsive to race relations issues”

**Note: shaded elements in Figure 5.1 reflect a difference year-to-year that is beyond the margin of error for the 2017 and 2018 polls. As such, there has clearly been significant improvement in the perception of the community’s responsiveness to race relations issues.**

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are improving.” 40% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 25% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 30% Neutral, and 5% Unsure

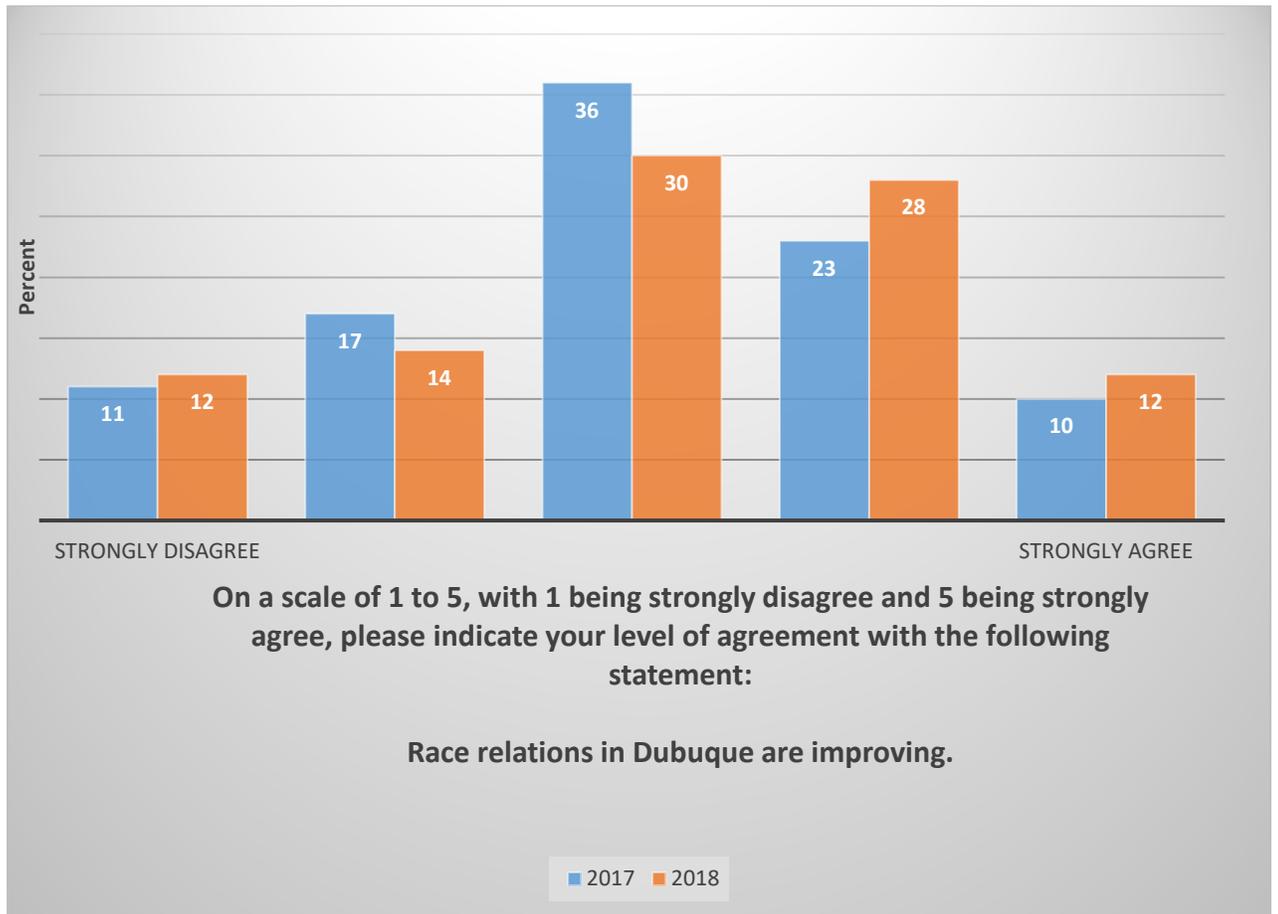


Figure 5.2 Agreement with statement “race relations in Dubuque are improving”

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are getting worse.” 42% said they disagreed/strongly disagreed, 25% say they agreed/strongly agreed, 28% Neutral, and 5% Unsure.

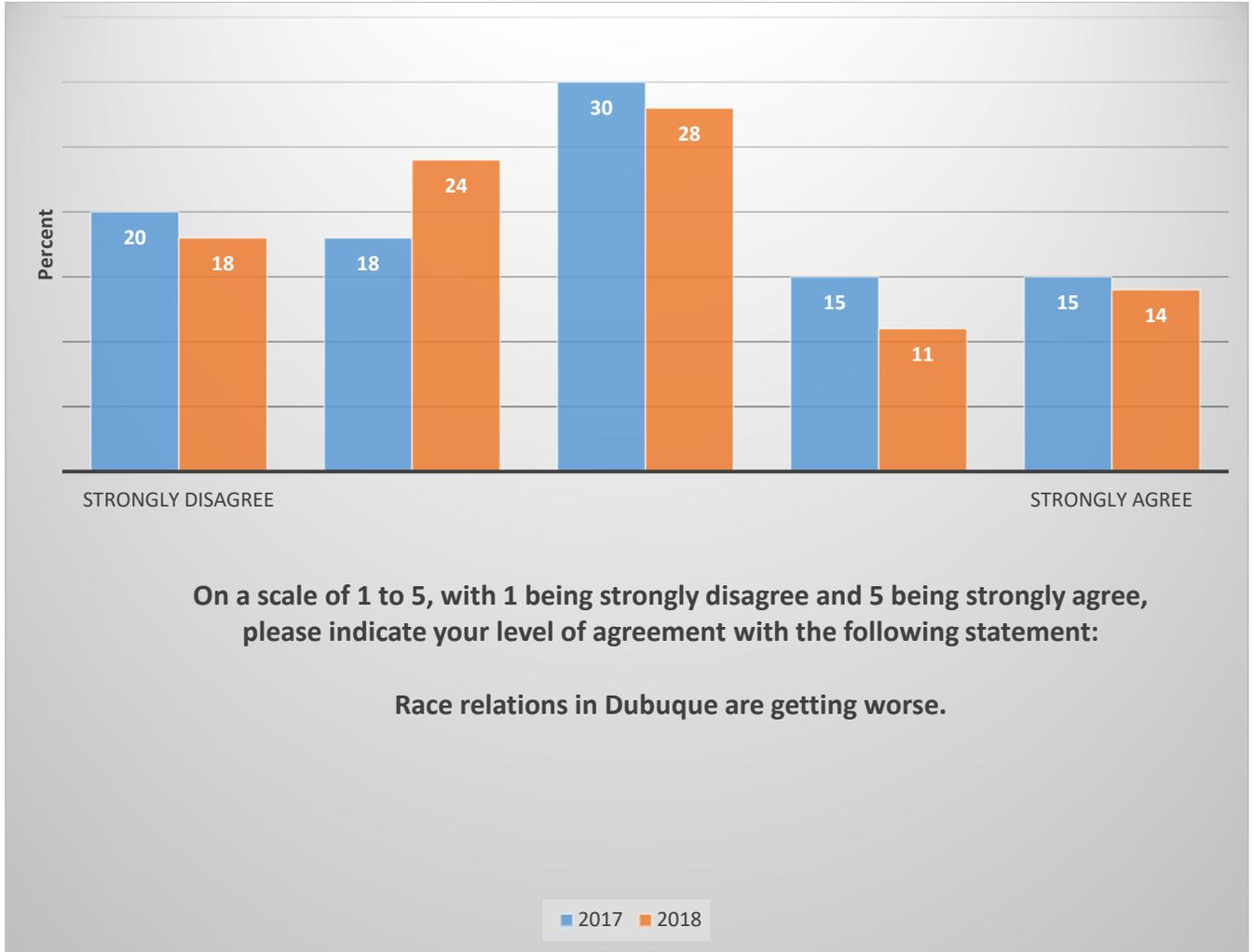


Figure 5.3 Agreement with statement that “race relations in Dubuque are getting worse”

- Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the statement “race relations in Dubuque are good.” 25% said they Agreed/Strongly Agreed, 33% Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed, 38% Neutral, and 4% Unsure

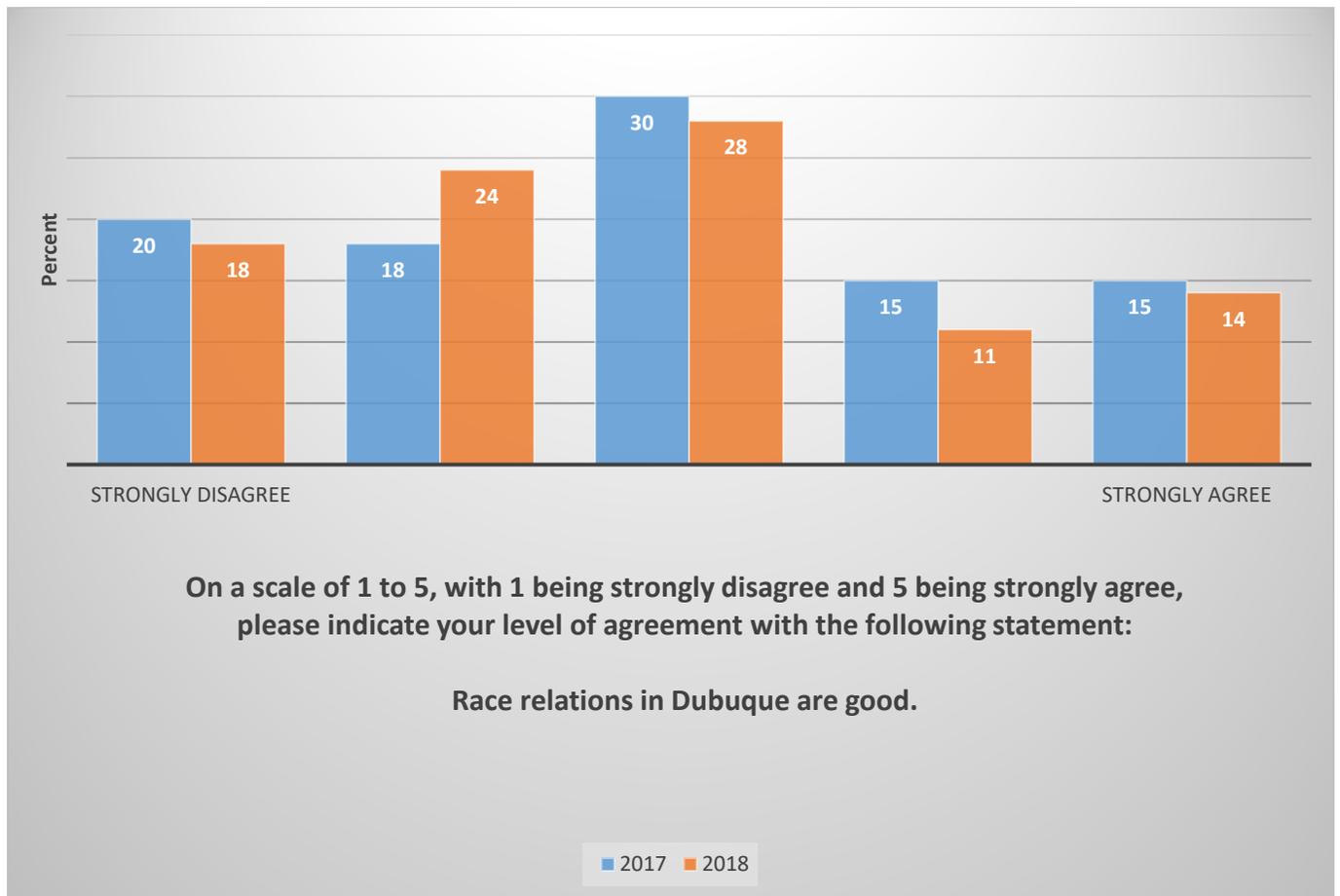


Figure 5.4 Agreement with statement “race relations in Dubuque are good”

# *Conclusion*

The 2018 survey in comparison to the 2017 study reveals durability and continuity in public opinion. People still see the community heading in the right direction, and assessments of the community as a good place to work and the general impression of safety in the community are stable year-to-year. People continue to overwhelmingly feel safe in their own neighborhoods, and utilization of various section of the community for shopping, etc. are likewise largely unchanged across the two years.

Views on diversity also demonstrate stability, and changes within responses regarding Dubuque as a good place to raise a family and a good place to live are within the poll's margin of error. While there is little change in overall perceptions regarding race relations, there has been real and significant improvement in the perception of the community's responsiveness to the issue.

Trends should be read with caution as the data is the product of a sample and comes with a margin of error. Due to the limits to generalizability from smaller subsamples (e.g., African-Americans, residents of particular sections of the community), caution should be employed when looking through the crosstabs as well.

This said, a few items for further consideration include:

- Differences persist in views of one's own neighborhood from the community at large, as manifest in perceptions of safety.
- The Downtown area remains the section of the community which is most problematic in terms of general perceptions of safety.
- There is stated support for diversity, as well as a perception that the community has been responsive in addressing race relations, but room for growth remains.

# *Appendix A*

## **Methodological Note**

The 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 502, and was conducted 9/17/18-9/27/18. 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 58 % cell phone and 42% landline. The survey was administered with live professional callers using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing system. Sample and calling provided by Braun Research, Inc. Results were targeted and post-sample weights applied to approximate demographic variables (race, sex, and age) for the population. The 2016 U.S. Census American Community Survey 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 crosstabulations may indicate slight variation.