



# Baltimore in Depth

## A Closer Look at the 2011 Baltimore Citizen Survey Results

City of Baltimore/Department of Finance/Bureau of the Budget and Management Research

The 2011 Citizen Survey asked 1,786 respondents a series of questions to gauge their satisfaction with the services offered by the City of Baltimore and the quality of life in the City. This report focuses on citizens' perception of **safety and police protection**.

### Safety

Citizens were asked about their ratings of safety in Downtown and in their neighborhoods in the Citizen Survey. Neighborhood safety in the nighttime was the most highly rated, followed by Downtown safety in the daytime, neighborhood safety in the nighttime, and Downtown safety in the nighttime.

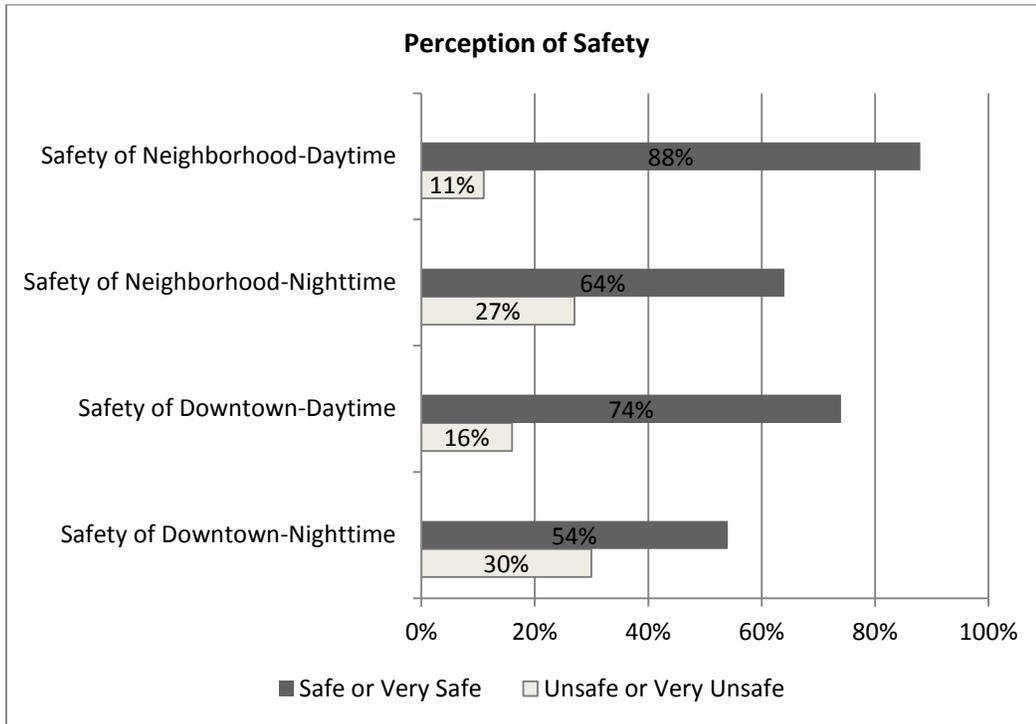


Chart 1: Safety Ratings

Northern districts' residents were more likely to rate neighborhood safety as good or excellent than other district respondents, while Central district residents were more likely to rate Downtown safety highly. For Downtown safety in the nighttime, the Central and Southeastern districts received the highest ratings whereas the Northwestern and Southern districts received the poorest ratings, with the Northwestern district having lowest percentage of respondents rating it as excellent or good (23%).

### **Key Findings:**

Demographics characteristics of those who were more likely to rate police protection as poor:

- Females
- 18 to 24 years old
- Blacks
- Southern and Northeastern district residents
- Income under \$25,000

Those who rated police protection as poor were:

- More likely to be unsatisfied with City services
- More likely to rate Downtown and neighborhood in the daytime and nighttime as unsafe or very unsafe

### **Other Findings:**

- Northern districts' residents were more likely to rate neighborhood safety as excellent or good
- Respondents' perception of property crime and drivers disobeying traffic laws closely matched crime data

For neighborhood safety at night, the Northwestern district received the best ratings, with the highest percentage of respondents rating neighborhood safety in the nighttime as excellent or good (73%) whereas the Western district received the poorest ratings, with the lowest percentage of respondents rating it as excellent or good (49%).

Perception of safety in neighborhoods and Downtown declined since 2009. The percentage of those who thought their neighborhoods were safe or very safe dropped by 5% in 2011 compared to 2009. Those who thought Downtown was safe or very safe dropped by 13% in 2011 compared to 2009. The age group of 18 to 24 was more likely to Downtown safety during the night and neighborhood safety as unsafe or very unsafe than all other age groups.

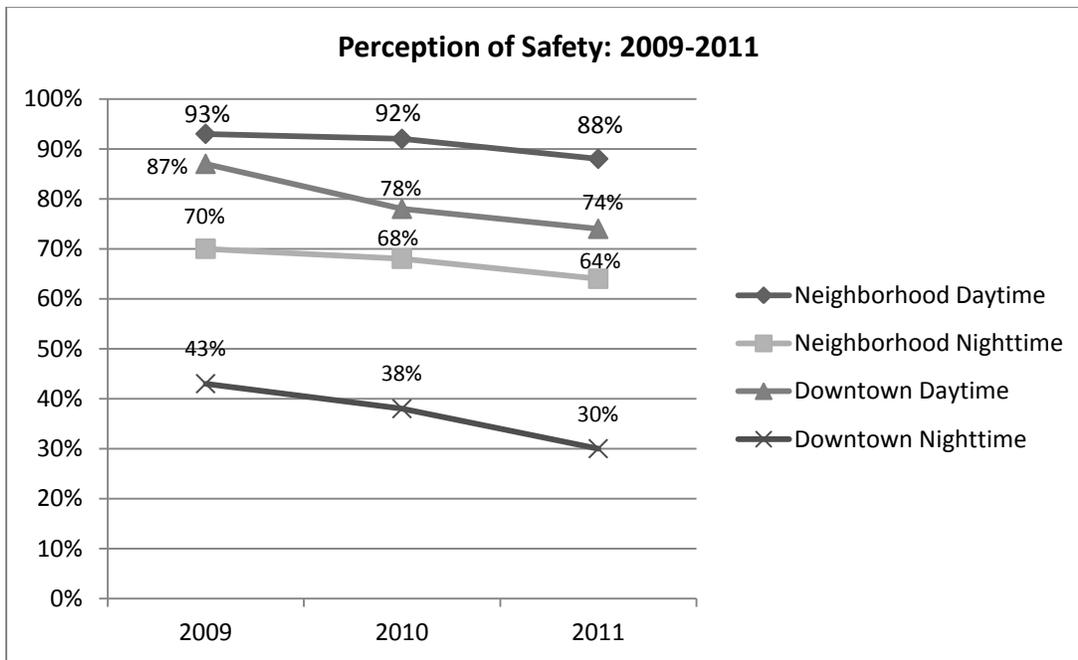


Chart 2: Perception of Safety: 2009-2011

While the citizens’ perception of safety declined since 2009, crime data suggests otherwise. In 2010, total number of crimes (including violent and property crimes) decreased by 3% and represents a 42% decrease compared to the 2000 total. In addition, violent crime decreased by 4%, property crime decreased by 3%, homicide decreased by 6%, and shootings decreased by 7% in 2010. The total number of arrests decreased by 37% since 2005 resulting in nearly 40,000 fewer arrests.

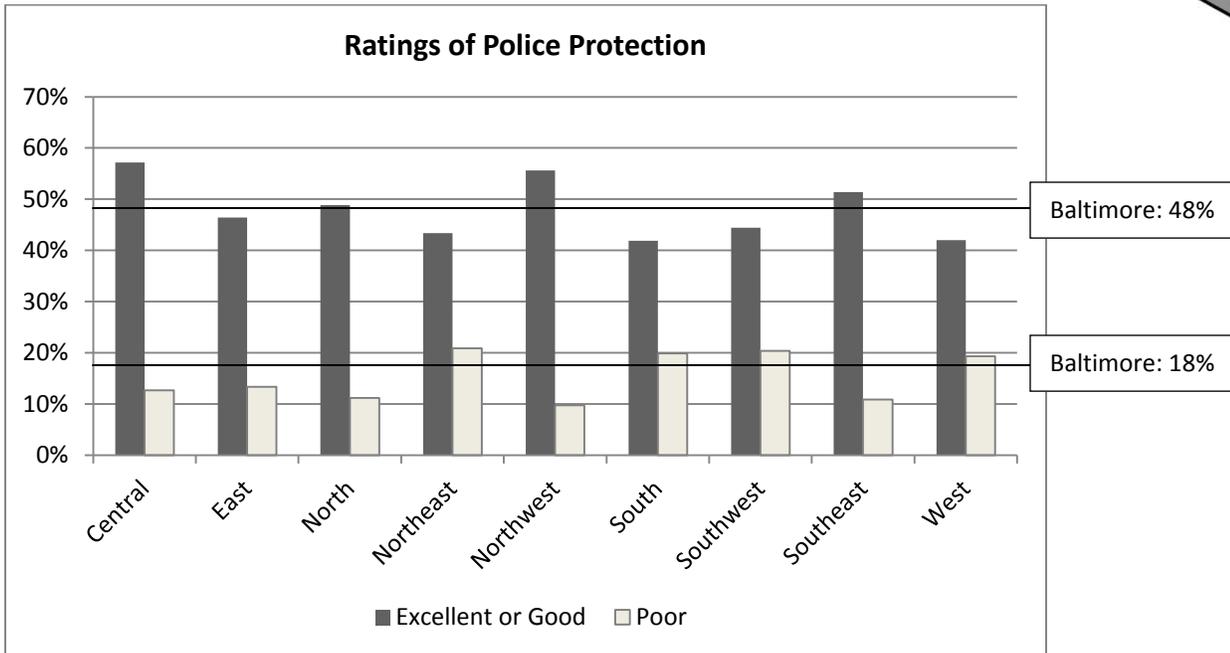
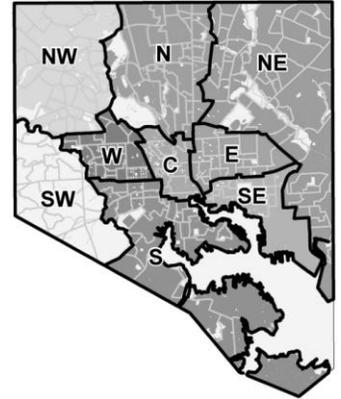
When compared with other major east coast cities, Baltimore made gains in public safety and protection. While Baltimore’s crime rate dropped in 2010, New York City had a 4.6% increase in violent crime and Philadelphia’s property crime increased by 4%. In addition, Philadelphia experienced a 1.3% increase in homicides, homicides in New York increased by 13.8%, and Boston saw a 46% increase in murders. Newark, New Jersey and Wilmington, Delaware also had increases in violent crime and homicides.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1999 and 2009, Baltimore had the greatest drop in overall crime and property crime of the 20 most populous cities.

<sup>1</sup> Cities’ crime statistics are obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation at the U.S. Department of Justice

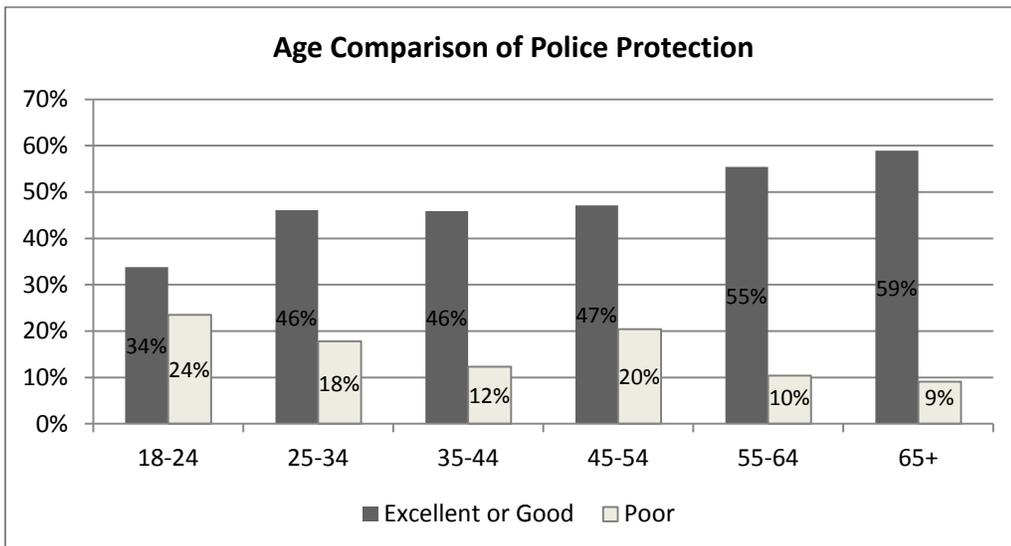
**Police Protection**

Forty-eight percent (48%) of respondents thought police protection was excellent or good while 18% thought the police protection was poor, as shown in *Chart 3*. The Central and Northwestern districts received the best ratings, with the Central district having the highest percentage of respondents rating police protection as excellent or good (57%). The Northeastern and Southern districts received the poorest ratings, with the Southern district having the lowest percentage of respondents rating it as excellent or good (42%).



*Chart 3: Ratings of Police Protection—by districts*

The age group of 65+ is the age group that is most likely to rate police protection as excellent or good whereas the age group of 18 to 24 is age group that is the least likely to rate police protection as excellent or good.



*Chart 4: Ratings of Police Protection—by age*

**Safety Issues Related to Quality of Life**

Citizens were asked about the seriousness of violent crime, property crime, illegal drug use, and drivers disobeying traffic laws in the 2011 Citizen Survey. Violent crime and illegal drug use were viewed similarly, with 89% of respondents who thought they were serious or very serious, while property crime and drivers disobeying traffic laws were viewed as less serious, with around 56% of respondents who thought they were serious or very serious.

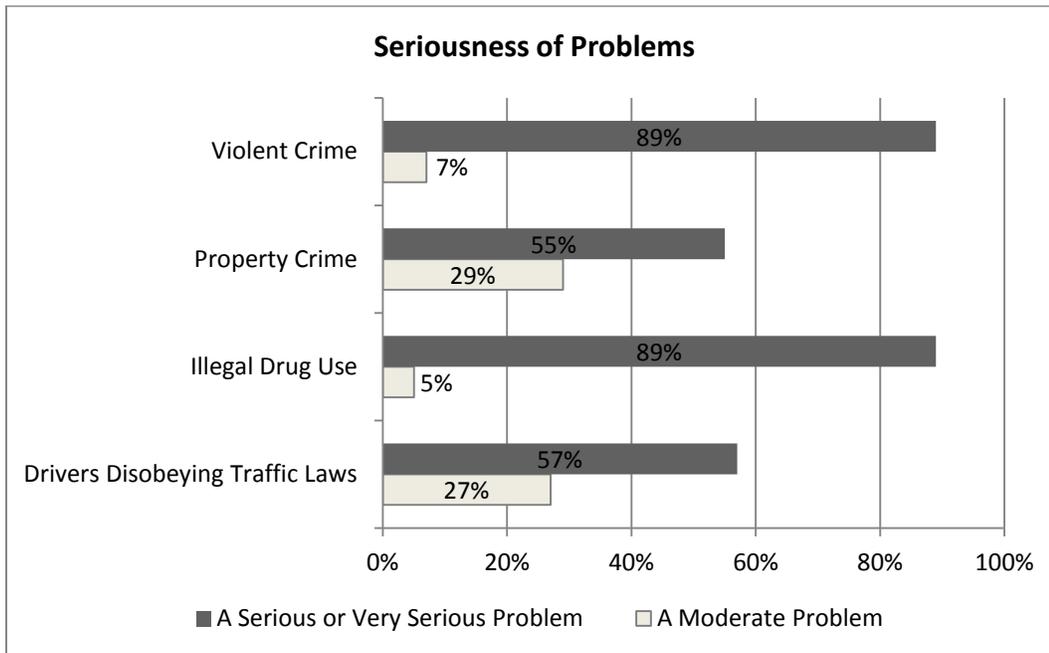


Chart 5: Seriousness of Problems

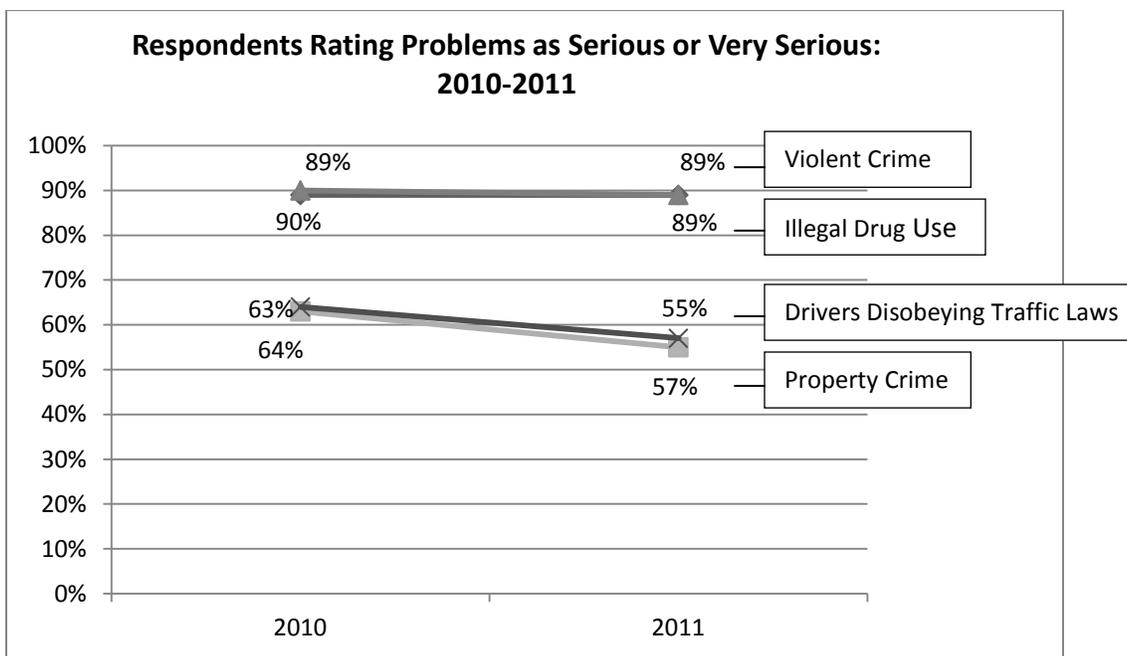


Chart 6: Seriousness of Problems: 2010-2011

The ratings for violent crime and illegal drug use remained stable compared to 2010, whereas the ratings for property crime and drivers disobeying traffic laws improved, with a decreased percentage of respondents rating them as serious or very serious.

Citizens' perception of property crime and drivers disobeying traffic laws closely matched performance data. The number of property crimes decreased by 3% in 2010. The drop in property crime matched the improvement in citizens' perception as the percentage of respondents who thought property crime was a serious or very serious problem decreased in the 2011 Citizen Survey.

Citizens' perception of drivers disobeying traffic laws also matched performance data. Total red light camera citations decreased by 16% from 149,342 in 2011 to 125,678 in 2010, which corresponded with the improved citizens' perception of drivers disobeying traffic laws.

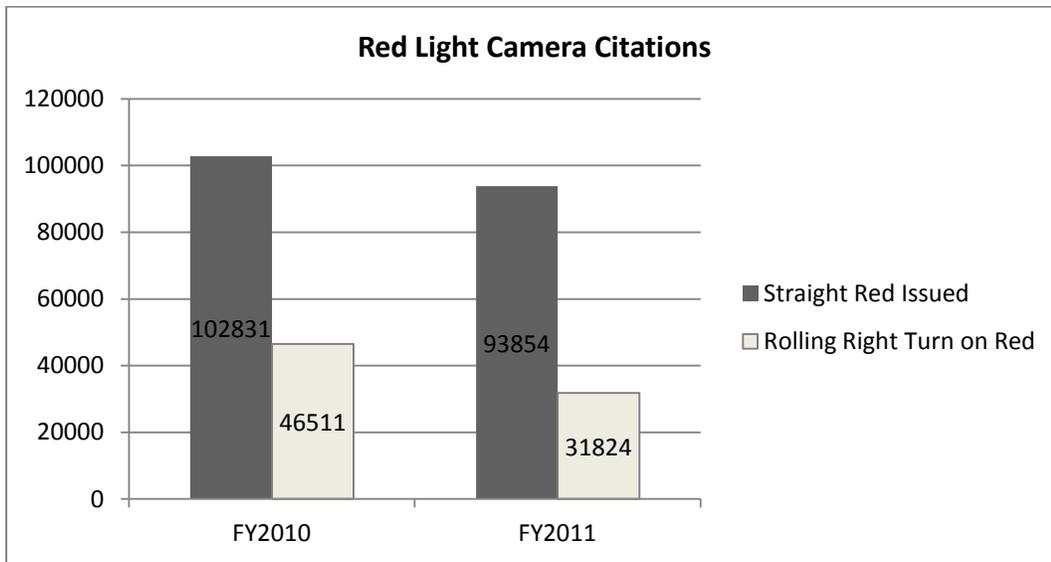


Chart 7: Red Light Camera Citations: FY2010-FY2011