



Taking the Pulse of our Community: 2020 *On The Table Macon*, virtual edition.

2020 Community Outlook:

Despite the enormous challenges that 2020 brought, **80% of participants feel hopeful about the future** of our community, with 79% of respondents feeling our community is the “perfect place” for people like them. While 55% report that community residents have shared goals and priorities, slightly less than half (46%) believe that our community provides opportunities for everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the overall assessment of quality of life, however. Nearly 20% of respondents report that overall quality of life is better than one year ago, while 41% report a downturn on this dimension.

Top areas that have gotten *better* compared with the previous year:

Public parks, trails and green spaces (43% reported this has gotten better)

K-12 education (33%)

Private sector leadership (33%)

Variety of arts and cultural offerings (30%)

These represent many of the classic benefits of community life – shared recreation spaces, strong schools, and opportunities for creative enjoyment. A strong business community is also recognized.

Top areas that have gotten *worse* compared with the previous year:

Poverty (58% reported gotten worse)

Physical health of residents (53%)

Crime and public safety (53%)

Job availability (46%)

Race relations (42%)

Crime and public safety are big concerns, as is race relations. Physical health, job availability and poverty are also perceived trouble spots, likely made worse by the global pandemic.

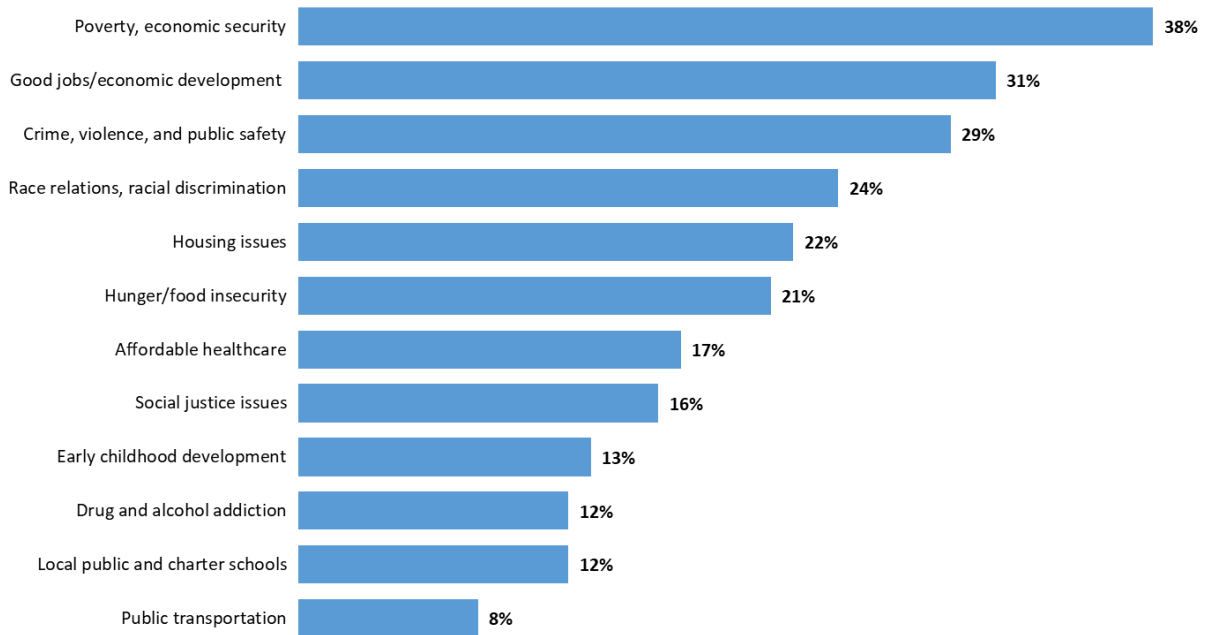
Priority issue areas:

Priority issues were identified by assigning a weighted score for each respondent’s most highly-ranked issues. There were 16 issue areas to select from. Headline: The highest-ranked issue was selected as the top priority by a wide margin, even compared to #2. #2 and #3 were tied for 2nd-place.

#1 Poverty, economic security, and upward economic mobility [58% of respondents felt that poverty issues were getting worse compared with one year prior]

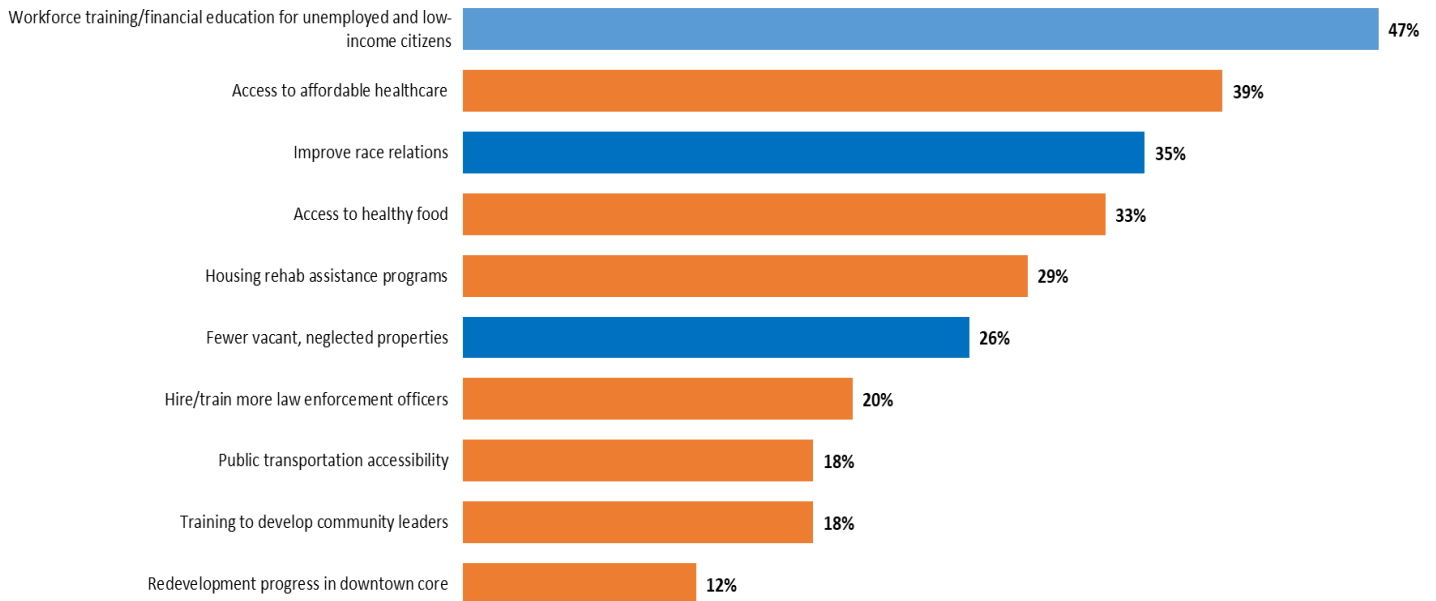
#2 Good-paying jobs and economic development [19% perceive better job availability; 35% say stable in this dimension; 46% say prospects are worse]

#3 Crime, violence, and public safety [53% feel that crime and public safety is worse than one year prior; 37% report stability in this area]



Path to change:

Participants were asked to rank the relative effectiveness of 12 different strategies to enact change in our community.



*Note – blue bars represent top three strategies identified in 2019 OTT.

About the participants:

Participants (n=323) for the On The Table virtual survey were: 71% female, 51% Black or African-American, 42% White, 51% adults under the age of 50, 72% do not currently have children at home, 63% have lived in their community for 11 or more years, 22% have a high school education or less, 25% have an undergraduate degree, and 41% hold graduate degrees. Participants hailed from more than 40 different zip codes, with the most common (in rank order) being 31204, 31201, 31210, 31211, and 31217.

In terms of engagement, more than 80% of respondents indicated they were either very or somewhat involved in community and neighborhood activities. Survey respondents also report that the 2020 virtual *OTT* helped them to better understand how to take action in our community (65% said so), 60% spoke with at least one person they didn't already know, and the same portion noted they learned about important issues in our community. Half of participants were first-time *OTT* participants. Most importantly, fully 92% of respondents said reported they were likely to take action in our community.