

THE CHARLESTON FORUM



APRIL – MAY 2021

Prepared for:
The Charleston Forum

Prepared by:
The Center for Research & Public Policy, Inc.

THE CHARLESTON FORUM TRI-COUNTY SURVEY 2021





Introduction



The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is a national research and public policy think tank working within six distinct disciplines: Market, Social, and Public Policy Research as well as Public Opinion, Political and Direct Democracy Research.

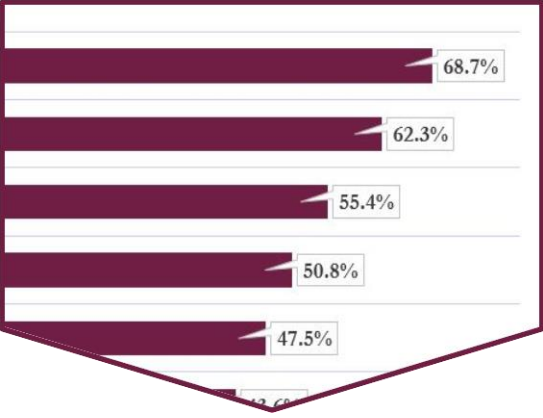
The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results to a residential survey on behalf of The Charleston Forum. The survey was conducted to collect resident input on race relations across topics including policing, the judicial process, education, economic opportunity, housing, public history symbols and willingness to engage in community discussions on race relations.

Introduction

The survey included the following areas for investigation:

- Quality of life and standard of living
- Status of current race relations
- Support and opposition of policing / criminal justice conceptual strategies
- Support and opposition of economic / housing conceptual strategies
- Support and opposition of education / school conceptual strategies
- Support and opposition of symbol (monuments, memorials, names buildings, roads, etc) conceptual strategies
- Willingness to pay more in taxes for conceptual programs / strategies
- Opinions on economic opportunities across different races
- Willingness to engage in community efforts / discussions on race relations
- Demographics

Introduction



Methodology

Using a quantitative research design, an online survey was completed among **700 residents** living within Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley counties in South Carolina April 16 – May 16, 2021.

Survey design input was provided during a project initiation meeting and subsequent sessions with CRPP which included The Charleston Forum leadership.

Statistically, a sample of **700** completed surveys has an associated margin for error of **+/- 3.7%** at a 95% confidence level.

Results throughout this report are presented for composite data – all **700 cases**.

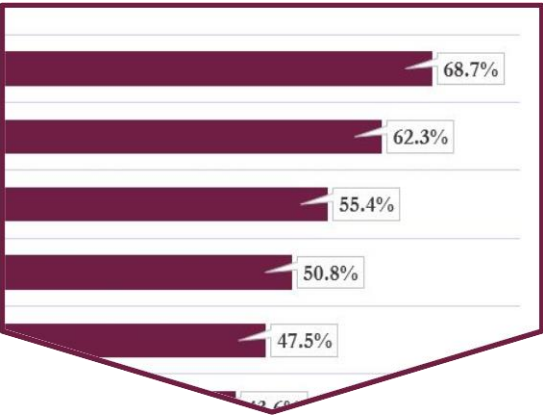
Methodology

Survey design at CRPP is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias.

All facets of the study were completed by CRPP's senior staff and researchers. These aspects include: survey design, sample plan design, pretest, computer programming, fielding, coding, editing, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis, and report writing.

CRPP programmed the online survey instrument. This was followed by a pre-test and soft launch prior to full and random broadcast of the survey to qualified panel members.

Methodology

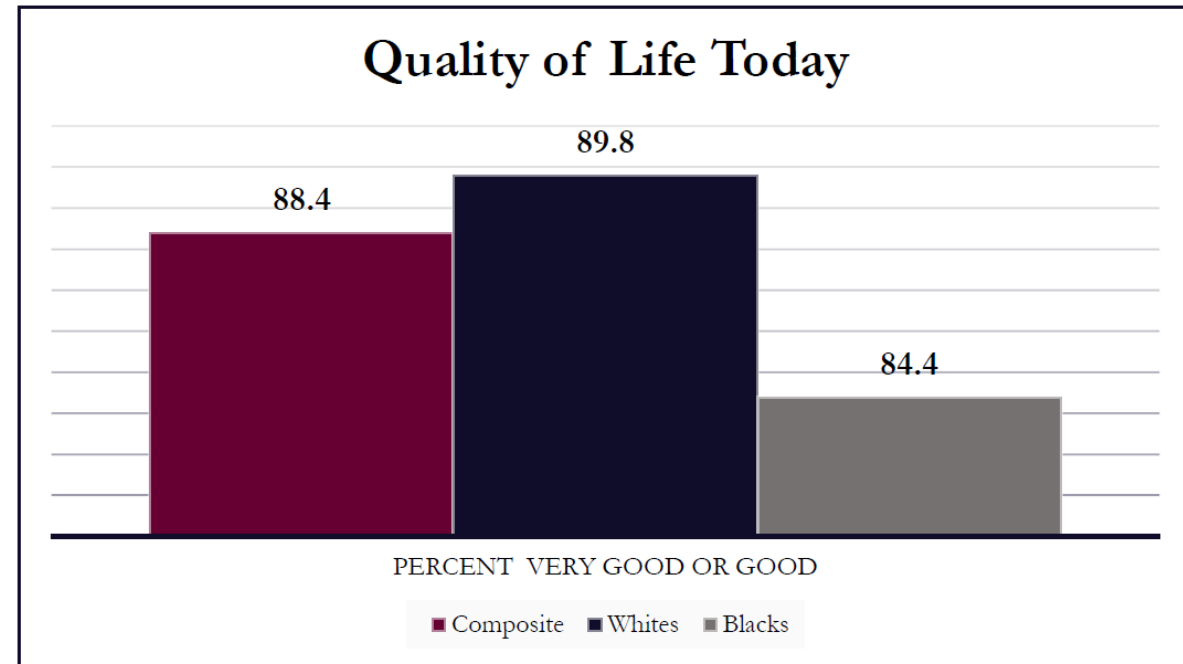


Summary of Findings



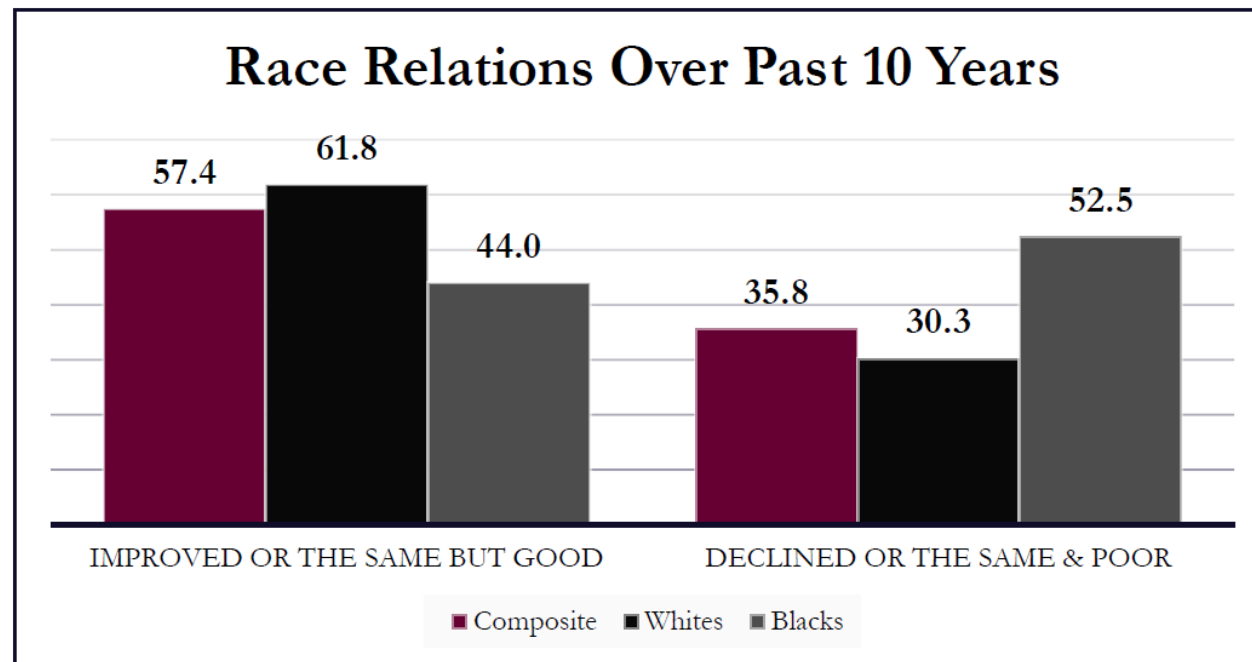
ON QUALITY OF LIFE & STANDARD OF LIVING

Impressively, 88.4% of all residents surveyed reported a very good (32.6%) or good (55.9%) quality of life living in the Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties, South Carolina.



Quality of Life	2021			2020		
	Composite	Whites	Blacks	Composite	Whites	Blacks
Very good	32.6	34.7	22.7	28.5	30.8	24.7
Good	55.9	55.1	61.7	61.3	61.4	61.4
Cumulative: Very good and Good	88.4	89.8	84.4	89.8	92.2	86.1
Poor	8.3	7.7	12.1	6.2	5.3	6.6
Very poor	2.4	1.7	2.8	2.4	1.5	4.8
Unsure	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.6	1.1	2.4

Overall, almost three-fifths, 57.4%, suggested that race relations over the past 10 years had either improved (20.1%) or was the same but good (37.3%). Comparatively, in 2020, 68.2% of residents indicated that race relations have either improved or is the same but good.



Race Relations Over Past 10 Years	2021			2020		
	Composite	Whites	Blacks	Composite	Whites	Blacks
Improved	20.1	23.2	9.2	23.7	26.5	13.9
The same but good	37.3	38.6	34.8	44.5	45.4	42.8
Cumulative: Improved or The same but good	57.4	61.8	44.0	68.2	71.9	56.7
The same but poor	22.9	18.2	38.3	17.9	15.7	24.7
Declined	12.9	12.1	14.2	7.7	6.6	12.0
Unsure	6.9	7.9	3.5	6.2	6.7	6.6



ON POLICING & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed conceptual strategies related to law enforcement that, if implemented, may help achieve goals for police officers to treat everyone fairly and evenly. The following table holds the cumulative totals, in declining order, for those strongly or somewhat supporting each statement.

Law Enforcement Conceptual Strategies	Composite [Strongly or Somewhat Support]	Whites [Strongly or Somewhat Support]	Blacks [Strongly or Somewhat Support]
Requiring continuing education/training for officers on issues of fair/even treatment	86.9	88.3	80.9
Implementing consequences for officers who fail to use their respective body cameras	85.4	88.5	80.9
Building and implementing more comprehensive “de-escalation training” along with interpersonal skills training	84.7	88.5	75.2
Hosting community gatherings, during non-emergent times, for officers and residents	81.1	85.6	70.9
Creation of a regional training center focused on issues of fair/even treatment in our community	80.9	83.7	72.3
Centralizing an excessive force use (and other complaints) database outside the local police department allowing others to better evaluate an officer applicant/candidate	72.7	72.7	78.0
A periodic racial bias audit for agencies with publication of results	65.1	64.3	73.0

Respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed conceptual strategies related to the criminal justice system that, if implemented, may help achieve goals for the justice system to treat everyone fairly and evenly.

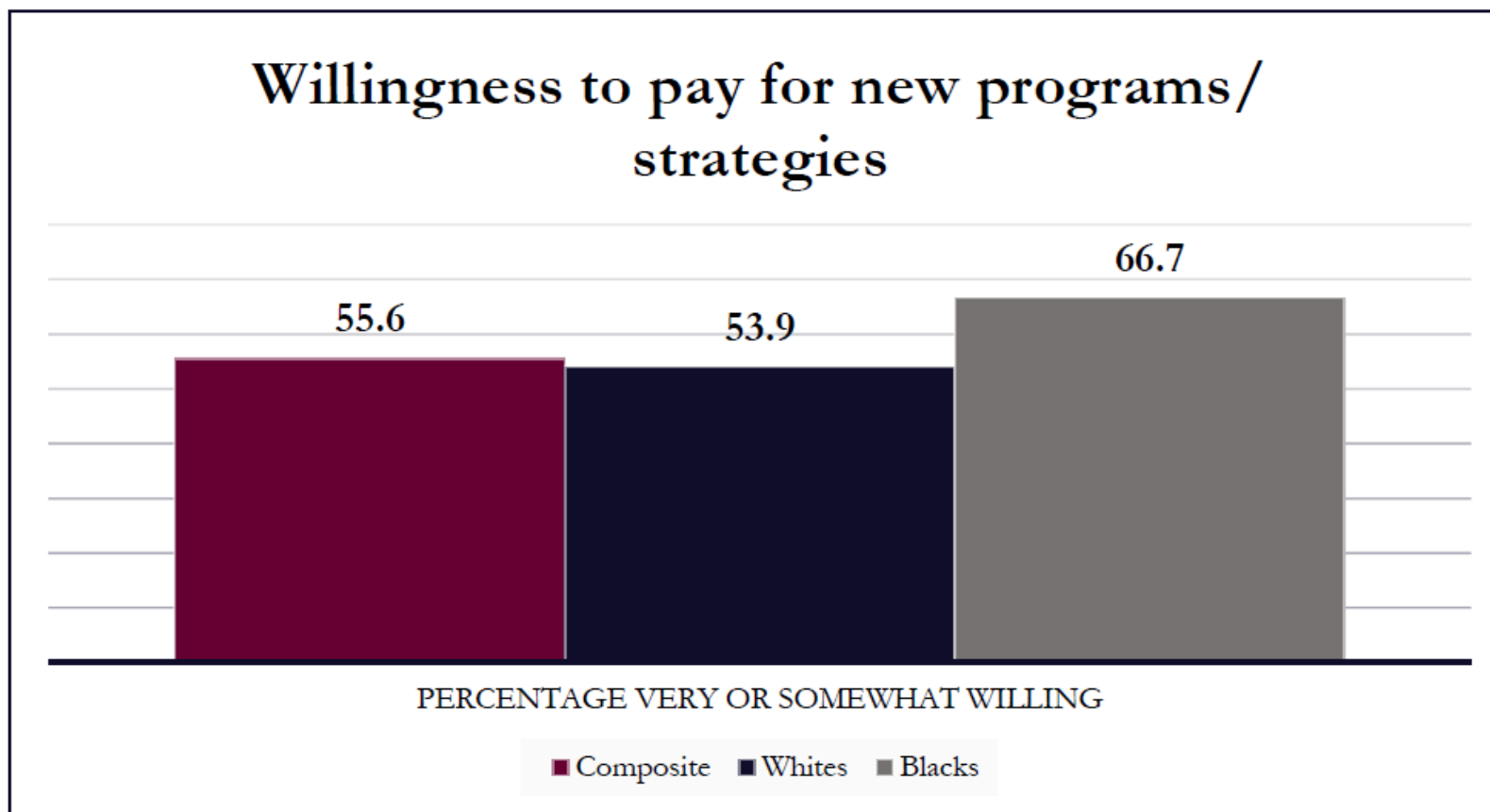
The following table holds the cumulative totals, in declining order, for those strongly or somewhat supporting each statement.

Criminal Justice System Conceptual Strategies	Composite [Strongly or Somewhat Support]	Whites [Strongly or Somewhat Support]	Blacks [Strongly or Somewhat Support]
County funding/financing of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council that brings together leaders from the community, law enforcement, judicial system and behavioral health professionals in an effort to address challenges in the system and make improvements to our criminal justice system	79.0	80.6	81.6
Bail/bond system reform so non-violent offenders are not held in jail after demonstrating an inability to pay a fine, fee or bail	74.4	72.0	85.8
Implementation of pre-trial service programs to provide support for individuals least likely to get to court when required and to stay arrest-free while waiting for resolution of charges	72.4	71.2	78.7
Public/taxpayer funding of re-entry programs that have demonstrated success at reducing recidivism for people who had been incarcerated	67.9	69.3	68.8
Periodic racial bias audit for offices of prosecutors/solicitors with publication of results	67.1	66.0	75.2
Decriminalization of certain non-violent criminal offenses	63.7	62.8	69.5
When disproportionate enforcement occurs against black and brown people, Solicitors should enact policies to balance the prosecution of charges with the overall population proportion	53.3	46.1	77.3

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with two statements relating to police departments and court decisions. The following table holds the cumulative totals for those strongly and somewhat agreeing with each statement.

Statements	Composite: Strongly & Somewhat Agree	Whites: Strongly & Somewhat Agree	Blacks: Strongly & Somewhat Agree
Police departments in the tri-county area need to develop programs in collaboration with the black and brown communities within their jurisdictions to build trust and confidence	84.1	82.5	90.1
Because fines, fees, bail amounts, time away from work impact lower income and some minority families disproportionately, these factors should be considered in any court decision	64.6	61.4	75.9

Just over one-half of respondents, 55.6%, expressed they would be very (21.6%) or somewhat willing (34.0%) to pay more in local or regional taxes to accomplish new policing and criminal justice programs / strategies.





ON OVERALL WILLINGNESS TO PAY

Throughout previous sections of the survey, respondents were asked to express their willingness to pay an increase in local or regional taxes to accomplish different program and strategy goals. The following table is a combined list of the questions and results for comparison of the cumulative totals, in declining order, by very or somewhat willing to pay.

Willingness to pay an increase in local or regional taxes to accomplish....	Composite [Very or somewhat willing]	Whites [Very or somewhat willing]	Blacks [Very or somewhat willing]
... Education and school programs / strategies	63.1	60.5	77.3
... Economic opportunity programs / strategies	57.6	56.8	63.1
... Policing and criminal justice programs / strategies	55.6	53.9	66.7
... Symbols and history programs / strategies	46.7	42.6	63.1

Thank you for the opportunity to present!



Any Questions?