

Conversation Guide

Public Safety

In both the 2017 & 2018 On the Table surveys, citizens indicated that crime, violence & public safety are among their most critical issues for our community to address. While Columbus has experienced a decrease in Part 1 crimes overall over the past four years (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft), murders and rapes have risen. Of course, any crimes are a concern for us as citizens.

Are there things we can do together to make the Chattahoochee Valley safer for all?

In selecting this topic, your Table will discuss the current state of public safety and how citizens might partner with government to maximize both the impression and the reality of public safety. Here are statistics to keep in mind:

- As of December 2018, the number of Part 1 crimes had decreased by 43% since 2009.
- The number of Part 1 crimes in 2018 was the lowest since 1983. For 2019, they are trending toward an additional estimated 8% decrease from 2018.
- Every Part 1 crime category has decreased since 2010 except for murder and rape.
- Murders increased from 15 in 2010 to 30 in 2018 and rapes increased from 37 in 2010 to 63 in 2018.
- During that same 8-year period, burglaries decreased 60%, larceny decreased 30% and robberies decreased 20%.

Here are a few resources to help you learn more about this issue:

- Columbus Police Department's 2017 Annual Report (tinyurl.com/yyul679r)
- Columbus Police Department's 2018 Police HR Survey (tinyurl.com/y2uxoydv)
- Lessons on Community Policing from the National Police Foundation (tinyurl.com/yxe3y1r3)

How might we work together to affect public safety?

Here are some suggested questions for your discussion:

1. What brought you to this table?
2. On an average day, how safe do you feel in our community? Are there specific places where you feel less – or more – safe?
3. Looking at the statistics on this page, what are your hopes for our community from a public safety perspective, now and in the long term?
4. How do you think your feelings about public safety are influenced by social media or news stories?
5. What positive qualities or characteristics of our community could we leverage to strengthen public safety?
6. How might government and/or public safety officials better promote and/or enforce safety in the community?
7. Are there specific things that ordinary citizens – even we as a group – might do to improve public safety in our community? Is there one step we might be ready to take, individually or collectively, based on our conversation? (See the Take Action worksheet to help you plan your next steps.)
8. Share one important thing we've accomplished here.