

CHAPTER 3

SECURITY

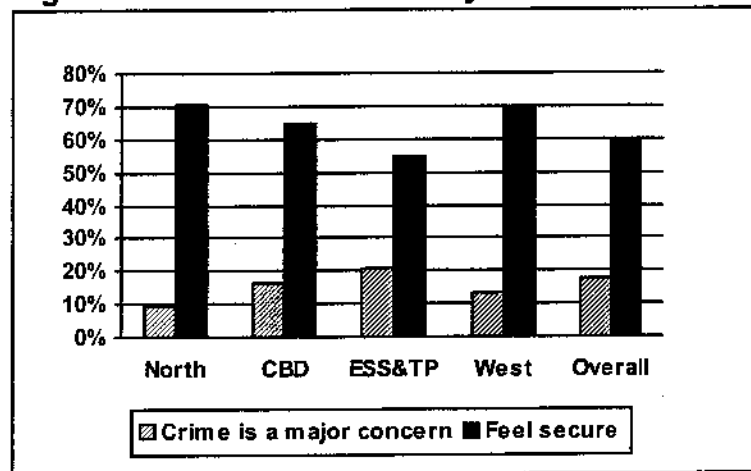
Sense of Security

- Given the emphasis on crime as a negative aspect of the area, it was reassuring to find that over 60 percent of area residents feel either “very” or “somewhat” secure walking in their neighborhoods after dark. Only about 10 percent said that they were “very worried.” Although we don’t have benchmarks, staff suspects that this level of sense of security would be fairly typical of most metropolitan areas in the context of the current level of concern about crime nationwide. It is also consistent with national reports that people are frequently

worried about crime in general but perceive their neighborhoods as safe. About 70 percent felt “very” or “somewhat” secure in the North and West Silver Spring Planning Areas. East Silver Spring and Takoma Park residents were the least comfortable about their safety, only 55 percent were “very” or “somewhat” secure, while 12 percent were “very worried.” The CBD fell between the others, with a relatively low 7.5 percent “very worried” but 65 percent feeling “very” or “somewhat” secure. Residents of relatively urban areas probably have somewhat different expectations than those in less dense neighborhoods. For example, they may assume that they need to be very alert when walking at night. Consequently, “very” secure may have a somewhat different meaning in different parts of Silver Spring/Takoma Park.

- Overall, a slight majority have not changed their activities in their neighborhoods because of security concerns, but almost half report making changes. Fifty-two percent reported no changes while 47 percent said that they had limited their activities. East Silver Spring and Takoma Park residents were most likely to have limited their neighborhood activities, as 51 percent said they had. West Silver Spring residents were the least likely to have made changes, only 34 percent said they had.

Figure 3-1 Sense of Security



- *Almost 39 percent suggested more police as the way to address public safety in their neighborhoods.* Twenty-nine percent had no suggestions, and 16 percent wanted better outdoor lighting. The responses were fairly similar among the four planning areas, except that both East Silver Spring and Takoma Park and West Silver Spring expressed a slightly stronger desire for better lighting than the other areas. Over 5 percent of respondents in both North Silver Spring and the CBD said they believe that “development or revitalization” would increase public safety in their neighborhoods.

Sense of Security by Age

- *As might be anticipated, respondents aged 65 and over felt less secure when walking in their neighborhoods after dark than younger respondents.* In every planning area, a smaller percentage of people 65 and over report that they feel “very” or “somewhat” secure walking in their neighborhoods than younger respondents. Less than half of older persons report feeling relatively secure compared to between 52 and 70 percent of younger people, depending on the planning area. Older residents of North Silver Spring were least comfortable walking after dark, only 33 percent said that they felt “very” or “somewhat” secure. Older residents of East Silver Spring and Takoma Park also had low levels of comfort and were the group with the highest percentage stating that they are “very worried,” 25 percent.
- *While older respondents feel least secure, they also have the fewest suggestions for improving the situation.* Generally, they answered “no suggestions” or “don’t know” more often than other age groups when asked for ideas for improvement. In addition, a smaller percentage of older people had limited their activities for security reasons than the planning area average in three of the four planning areas. Silver Spring CBD was the one exception.

Table 3-1 How do you feel about your personal safety when walking in your neighborhood after dark?

Question 4	Assigned Master Plan Area								Total	
	North Silver Sp		SS CBD		East SS & TP		West Silver Sp		Count	Col %
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
Very secure	932	26.8%	1145	23.1%	3503	17.7%	974	22.2%	6553	20.1%
Somewhat secure	1519	43.7%	2076	41.9%	7323	37.0%	2094	47.7%	13012	39.9%
Somewhat worried	630	18.1%	1293	26.1%	6406	32.3%	956	21.8%	9285	28.5%
Very worried	273	7.9%	372	7.5%	2390	12.1%	188	4.3%	3224	9.9%
Don't know	125	3.6%	66	1.3%	190	1.0%	178	4.0%	558	1.7%
Total	3479	100.0%	4951	100.0%	19812	100.0%	4390	100.0%	32632	100.0%

Table 3-2 Personal safety when walking in your neighborhood after dark by age groups

Master Plan Area	Personal Safety	Age Groups						Total	
		< 45		45-64		65+		Count	% within Age Groups
		Count	% within Age Groups	Count	% within Age Groups	Count	% within Age Groups		
North Silver Spring	Very secure	389	27.4%	451	33.8%	92	12.7%	932	26.8%
	Somewhat secure	736	51.9%	562	42.1%	222	30.6%	1520	43.7%
	Somewhat worried	244	17.2%	221	16.5%	166	22.9%	631	18.1%
	Very worried	42	3.0%	78	5.8%	153	21.1%	273	7.8%
	Don't know	8	.6%	24	1.8%	93	12.8%	125	3.6%
Total		1419	100.0%	1336	100.0%	726	100.0%	3481	100.0%
SS CBD	Very secure	652	23.1%	362	27.1%	131	16.6%	1145	23.1%
	Somewhat secure	1287	45.5%	542	40.5%	246	31.2%	2075	41.9%
	Somewhat worried	789	27.9%	274	20.5%	230	29.2%	1293	26.1%
	Very worried	99	3.5%	159	11.9%	115	14.6%	373	7.5%
	Don't know					66	8.4%	66	1.3%
Total		2827	100.0%	1337	100.0%	788	100.0%	4952	100.0%
East SS & Takoma Park	Very secure	1603	15.1%	1260	20.3%	640	21.6%	3503	17.7%
	Somewhat secure	4925	46.3%	1964	31.7%	434	14.6%	7323	37.0%
	Somewhat worried	3059	28.7%	2367	38.2%	980	33.0%	6406	32.3%
	Very worried	1033	9.7%	606	9.8%	751	25.3%	2390	12.1%
	Don't know	26	.2%			164	5.5%	190	1.0%
Total		10646	100.0%	6197	100.0%	2969	100.0%	19812	100.0%
West Silver Spring	Very secure	651	24.4%	203	18.8%	120	18.6%	974	22.2%
	Somewhat secure	1415	53.1%	499	46.3%	180	27.9%	2094	47.7%
	Somewhat worried	594	22.3%	226	21.0%	136	21.1%	956	21.8%
	Very worried			113	10.5%	75	11.6%	188	4.3%
	Don't know	6	.2%	37	3.4%	135	20.9%	178	4.1%
Total		2666	100.0%	1078	100.0%	646	100.0%	4390	100.0%

Table 3-3 Have you limited your activities in your neighborhood because you feel less secure?

Question 4.3	Assigned Master Plan Area								Total	
	North Silver Sp		SS CBD		East SS & TP		West Silver Sp		Count	Col %
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
No	2011	57.6%	2651	52.8%	9532	47.9%	2820	64.0%	17014	51.9%
Yes	1413	40.5%	2355	46.9%	10092	50.7%	1479	33.6%	15339	46.8%
Don't know	67	1.9%	11	.2%	266	1.3%	105	2.4%	450	1.4%
Total	3491	100.0%	5017	100.0%	19890	100.0%	4404	100.0%	32803	100.0%

Table 3-4 Limited your activities in your neighborhood because you feel less secure by age groups

Assigned Master Plan Area	Limited Activities?	Age Groups						Total	
		< 45		45-64		65+		Count	% within Age Groups
		Count	% within Age Groups	Count	% within Age Groups	Count	% within Age Groups		
North Silver Spring	No	861	60.7%	820	61.1%	329	45.1%	2010	57.6%
	Yes	541	38.2%	491	36.6%	381	52.2%	1413	40.5%
	Don't know	16	1.1%	32	2.4%	20	2.7%	68	1.9%
	Total	1418	100.0%	1343	100.0%	730	100.0%	3491	100.0%
SS CBD	No	1501	52.5%	707	51.6%	444	56.3%	2652	52.8%
	Yes	1347	47.1%	663	48.4%	345	43.7%	2355	46.9%
	Don't know	11	.4%					11	.2%
	Total	2859	100.0%	1370	100.0%	789	100.0%	5018	100.0%
East SS & Takoma Park	No	5056	47.5%	3144	50.7%	1332	43.7%	9532	47.9%
	Yes	5377	50.5%	3001	48.4%	1715	56.3%	10093	50.7%
	Don't know	214	2.0%	52	.8%			266	1.3%
	Total	10647	100.0%	6197	100.0%	3047	100.0%	19891	100.0%
West Silver Spring	No	1842	69.4%	583	52.8%	396	61.3%	2821	64.1%
	Yes	733	27.6%	495	44.8%	250	38.7%	1478	33.6%
	Don't know	79	3.0%	26	2.4%			105	2.4%
	Total	2654	100.0%	1104	100.0%	646	100.0%	4404	100.0%

Greater Washington Consumer Research, "Survey of Silver Spring/Takoma Park Residents" (1/98): Research & Technology Center, Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning.

Table 3-5 Do you have any suggestions for improving public safety in your neighborhood?

Question 4.4	Assigned Master Plan Area								Total Respondents	
	North Silver Sp		SS CBD		East SS & TP		West Silver Sp		Cases	% of Respondent
	# of Respondent	%	# of Respondent	%	# of Respondent	%	# of Respondent	%		
More police	1237	35.4%	2246	44.5%	7691	38.7%	1474	33.6%	2648	38.5%
No suggestions	1116	32.0%	1605	31.8%	5298	26.6%	1475	33.7%	9495	28.9%
Better lighting	559	16.0%	734	14.5%	3914	19.7%	860	19.6%	6067	18.5%
Other	145	4.2%	279	5.5%	1833	9.2%	319	7.3%	2577	7.9%
Community Watch/Safety program	208	6.0%	329	6.5%	1449	7.3%	190	4.3%	2176	6.6%
Don't know	172	4.9%	246	4.9%	889	4.5%	305	7.0%	1613	4.9%
Development/Revitalization	219	6.3%	312	6.2%	376	1.9%	189	4.3%	1096	3.3%
More community activities	72	2.1%	82	1.6%	618	3.1%	89	2.0%	862	2.6%
Control traffic	179	5.1%	66	1.3%	476	2.4%	86	2.0%	807	2.5%
More sidewalks	142	4.1%	33	.7%	188	.9%	107	2.4%	470	1.4%
Total Respondents	3491	116.0%	5050	117.5%	9890	114.3%	4383	116.2%	2815	115.2%

Greater Washington Consumer Research, "Survey of Silver/Takoma Park Residents" (1/98); Research & Technology Center, Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning.