Crime & Tech –
San Diego Police Department

January - February 2023

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The structure of the report

01. Methodology — The sample, distribution method, and the research tools

02. Current Situation — How many respondents have been a victim of crime, and how familiar they are with license plate readers and cameras in public spaces

03. License Plate Readers — How respondents feel about the introduction of license plate readers and what concerns they have

04. Cameras in Public Spaces — How respondents feel about the introduction of cameras in public spaces and what concerns they have

Summary

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01

Methodology

Methodology

914 sample survey of San Diego adults, 18+

Respondents recruited online

Fielded January 31st – February 19th, 2023

Survey was conducted in English and Spanish.

Data was weighted to represent the population in San Diego

Methodology – how we ensure the sample is statistically valid

o   914 respondents were recruited online between January 31st and February 19th, 2023, using targeted ads on various platforms (e.g., social media, apps for Android and IOS) as well as online survey panels.

o   Using data from the Census Bureau, this survey employed quotas to match the distribution of race, age, and gender in San Diego, ensuring that the sample represents the entire city.

o   To make sure our sample is representative, a technique called rake-weighting was used to balance out any remaining differences between the makeup of the survey respondents and the community. This process serves as a statistical safeguard against any demographic group being overrepresented or underrepresented in the final score calculations by giving overrepresented groups a lower weight and underrepresented groups a higher weight in the analysis.
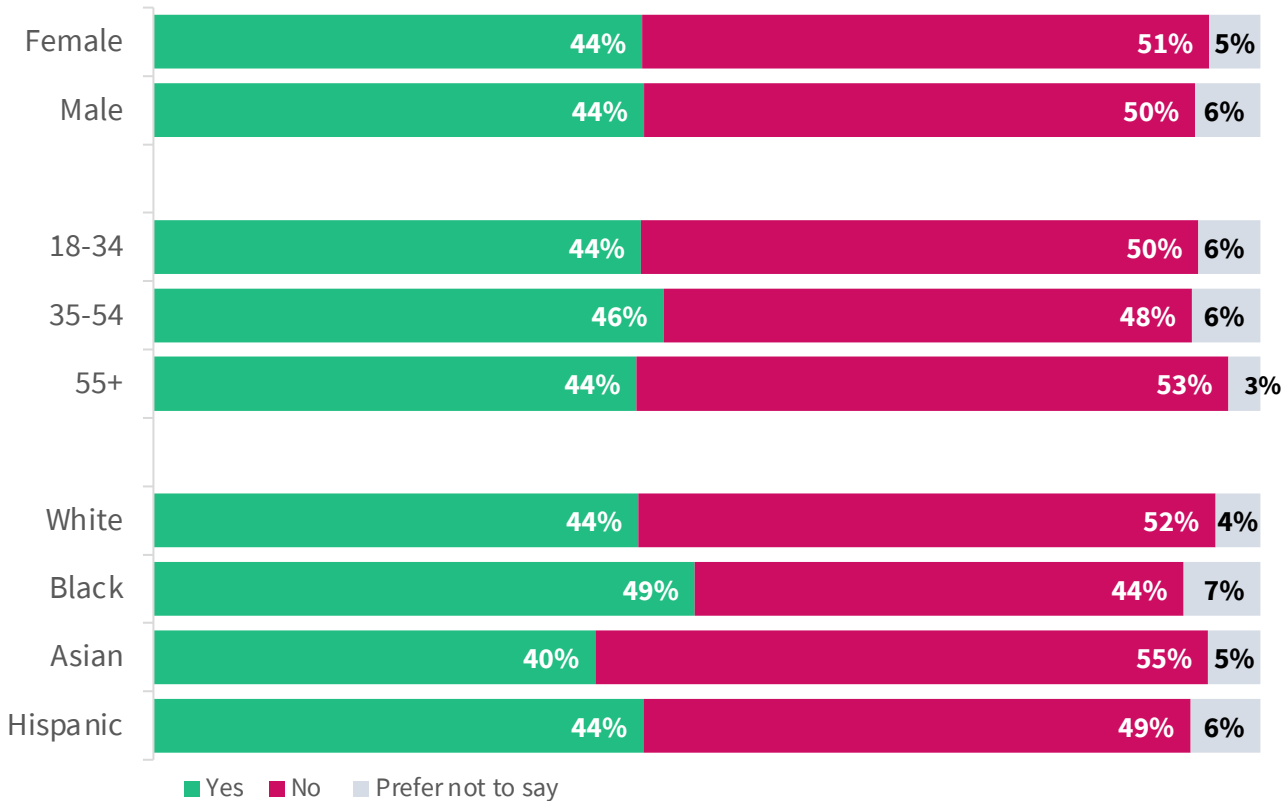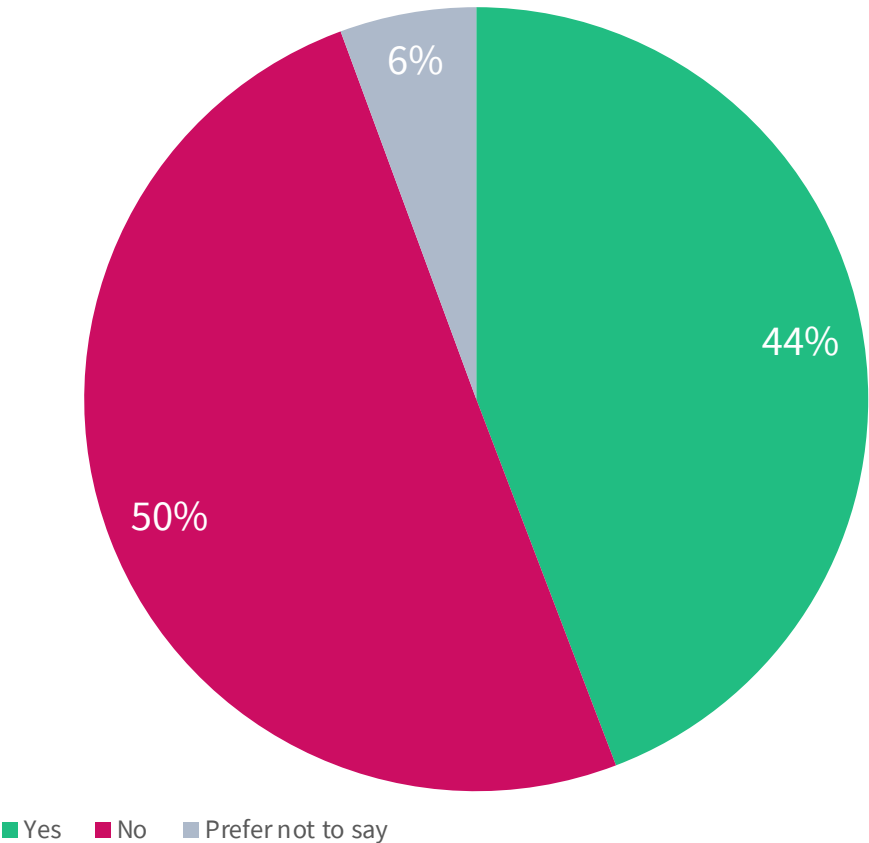
02

Current Situation

Victim of crime: Though half of the respondents reported that they had not been a victim of a crime and did not know someone who had been, 44% reported that they had been or did know someone. Black respondents most commonly reported being a victim of a crime or knowing someone who had been (49%), especially compared to Asian respondents that reported this least often (40%).

Q2: Have you, or someone you know, been the victim of a crime?

Pie chart:
- 44% Yes
- 50% No
- 6% Prefer not to say

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to say

Bar chart (Yes / No / Prefer not to say):

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Female	44%	51%	5%
Male	44%	50%	6%
18-34	44%	50%	6%
35-54	46%	48%	6%
55+	44%	53%	3%
White	44%	52%	4%
Black	49%	44%	7%
Asian	40%	55%	5%
Hispanic	44%	49%	6%

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to say

Victim of crime: Over half of the respondents in district 2 and district 9 reported having been or knowing someone who had been a victim of crime (54%, and 52%, respectively). In comparison, under 40% reported this in districts 6, 7, and 8 (39%, 38%, and 39%, respectively).

% that reported being, or knowing someone who had been, a victim of crime

Q2: Have you, or someone you know, been the victim of a crime?

Council District	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
1	40%	57%	4%
2	54%	43%	4%
3	49%	45%	6%
4	44%	49%	7%
5	47%	50%	3%
6	39%	54%	8%
7	38%	59%	4%
8	39%	57%	5%
9	52%	47%	1%

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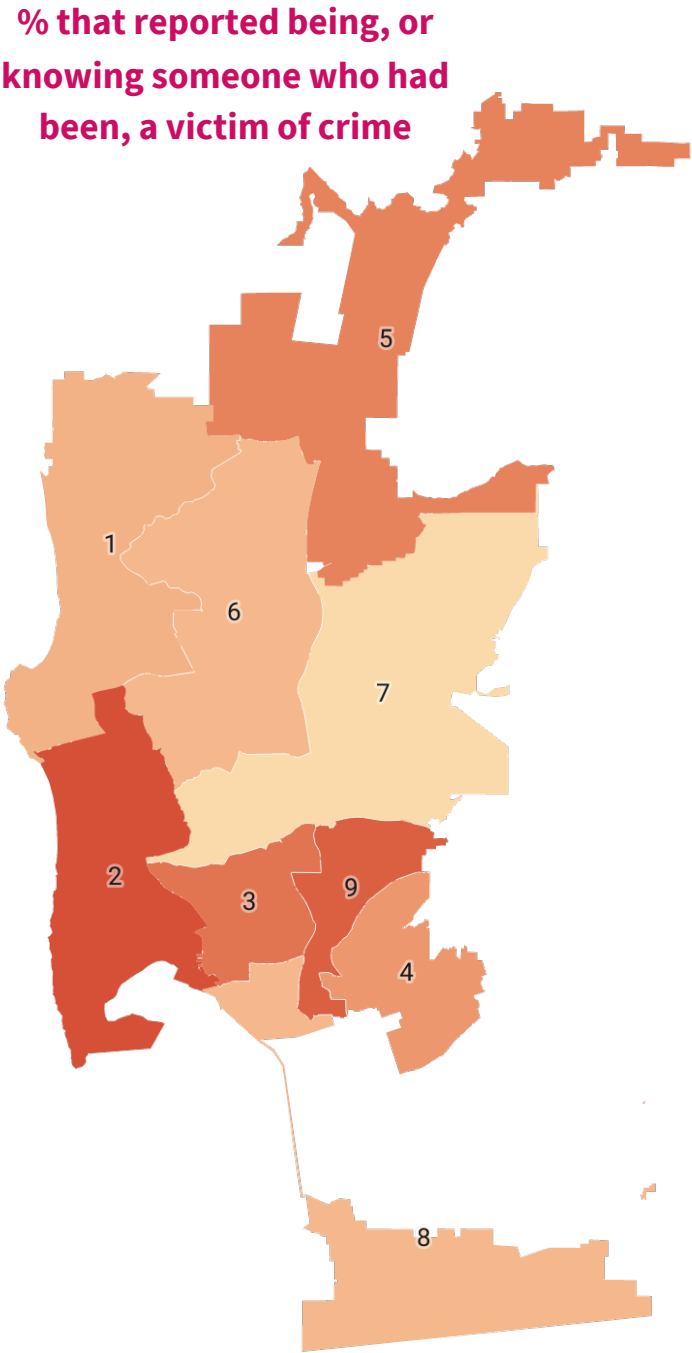
Awareness: 45% of respondents reported that they were completely or mostly familiar with license plate readers. Respondents aged 18-34, male respondents, and Black respondents all reported being familiar with license plate readers more often than other analyzed demographic groups (50%, 50%, and 53% , respectively).

Q3: How familiar are you with license plate readers?

16%	**29%**	**31%**	**25%**

■ Completely familiar　　　■ Mostly familiar　　　■ Mostly unfamiliar　　　■ Completely unfamiliar

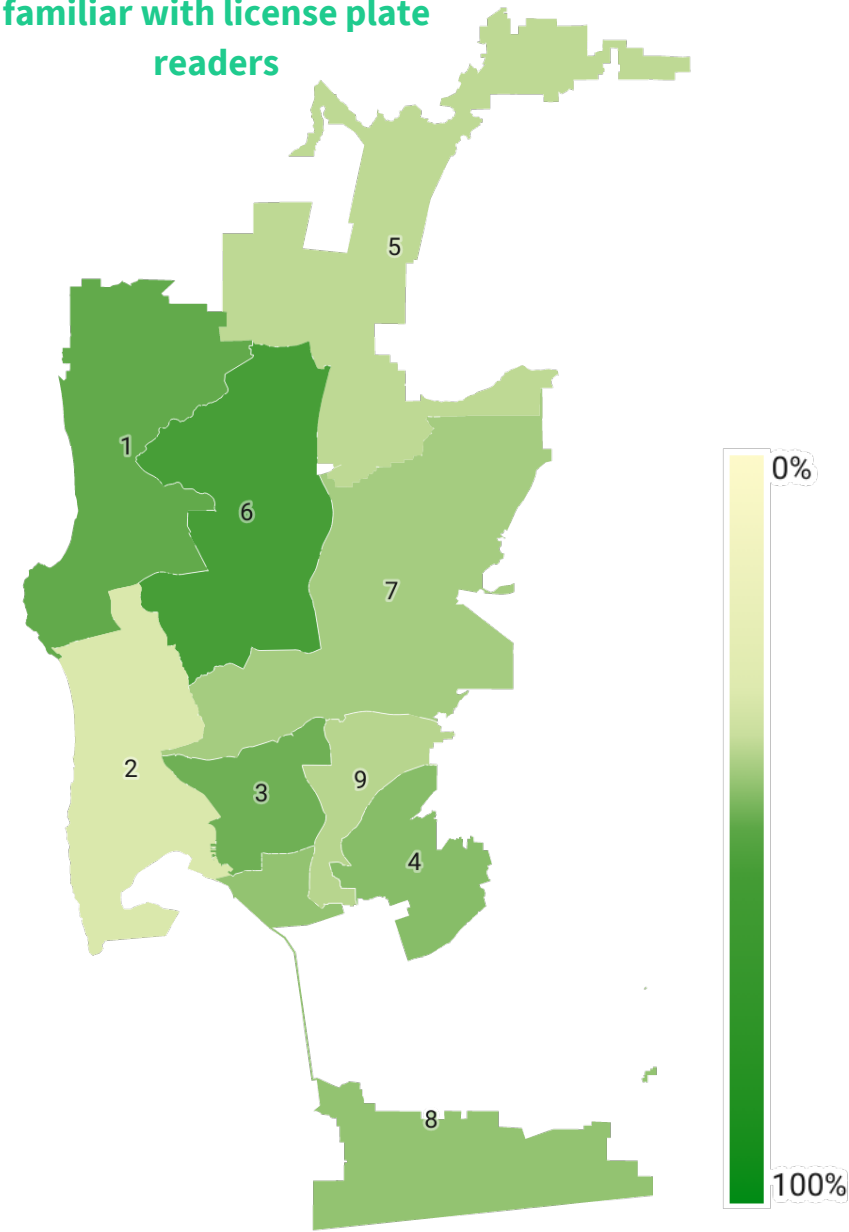|	Completely familiar	Mostly familiar	Mostly unfamiliar	Completely unfamiliar
Female	10%	29%	34%	27%
Male	21%	29%	27%	23%
18-34	19%	31%	33%	17%
35-54	15%	24%	32%	28%
55+	10%	31%	29%	29%
White	12%	34%	29%	25%
Black	24%	29%	23%	24%
Asian	16%	19%	39%	25%
Hispanic	18%	28%	32%	21%
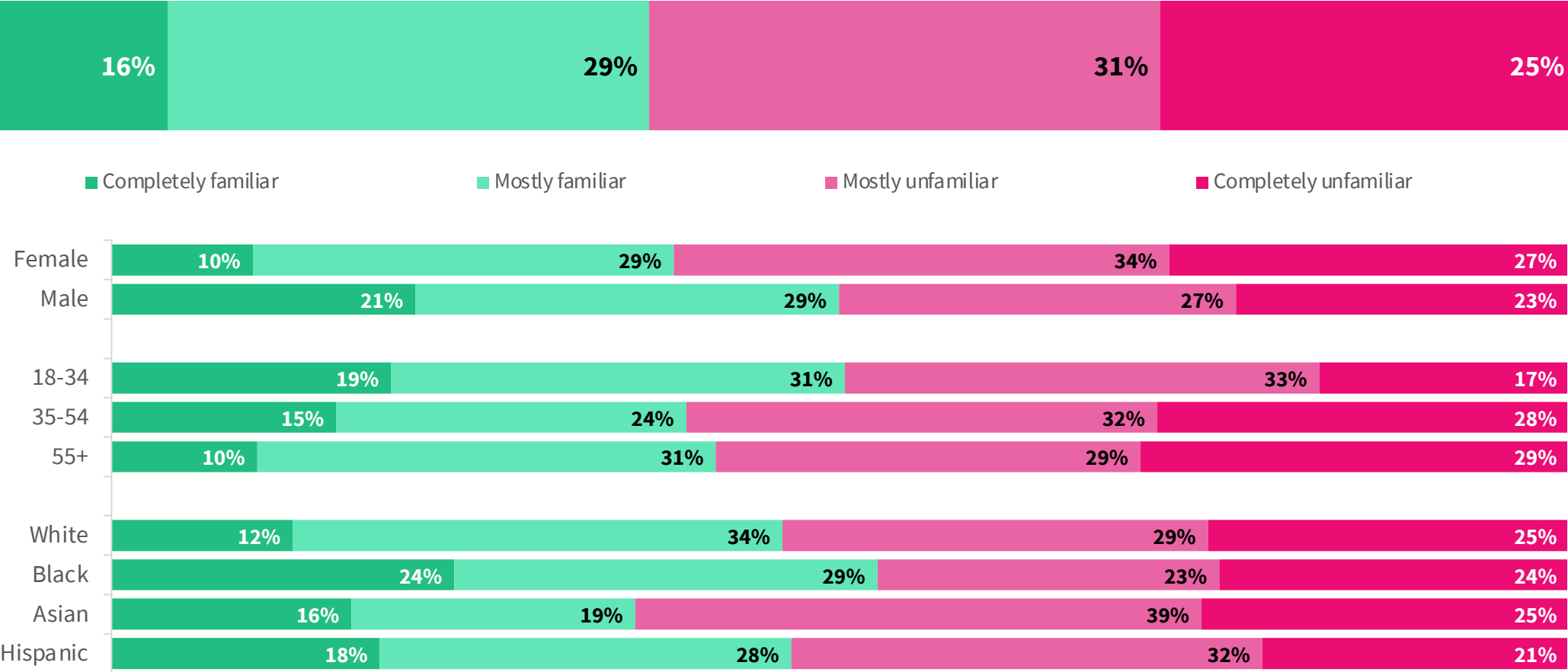
Awareness: Over half of the respondents in district 6 reported being completely or mostly familiar with license plate readers (53%). In comparison, only 35% of respondents in district 2 reported being completely or mostly familiar with them.

% of completely or mostly familiar with license plate readers

Q3: How familiar are you with license plate readers?

Council District	Completely familiar	Mostly familiar	Mostly unfamiliar	Completely unfamiliar
1	10%	39%	36%	15%
2	9%	26%	37%	29%
3	16%	31%	18%	35%
4	20%	25%	34%	21%
5	11%	28%	33%	28%
6	21%	32%	25%	22%
7	14%	28%	39%	19%
8	14%	30%	26%	30%
9	13%	27%	35%	25%

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Awareness: Over 3/4 of respondents (77%) reported that they were completely or mostly familiar with cameras in public spaces. 84% of respondents aged 18-34 reported being familiar with cameras in public spaces, as compared to 74% of respondents aged 35-54 and respondents over the age of 55.

Q8: How familiar are you with the use of cameras in public spaces?

31%	46%	16%	7%

■ Completely familiar   ■ Mostly familiar   ■ Mostly unfamiliar   ■ Completely unfamiliar

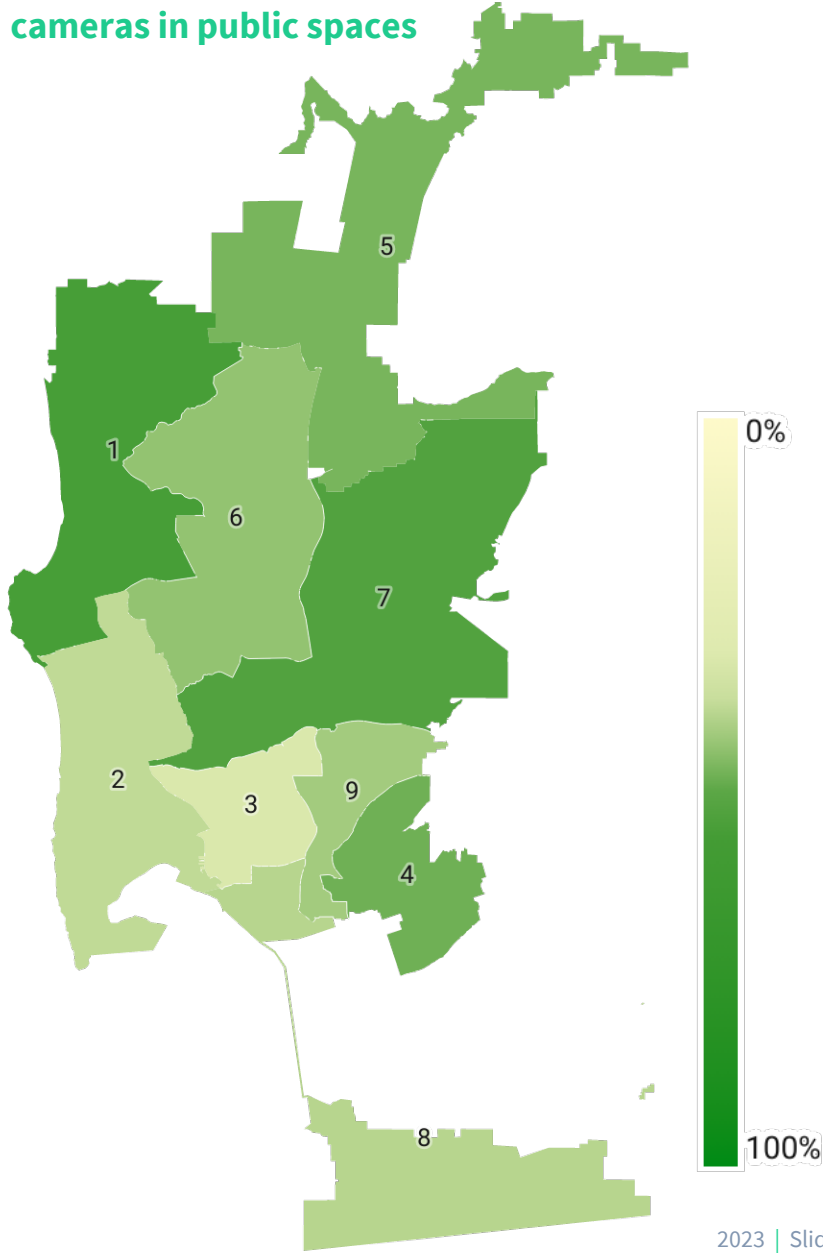|	Completely familiar	Mostly familiar	Mostly unfamiliar	Completely unfamiliar
Female	29%	46%	18%	7%
Male	33%	46%	14%	7%
18-34	37%	47%	12%	4%
35-54	29%	45%	16%	9%
55+	26%	48%	20%	7%
White	33%	46%	17%	5%
Black	26%	53%	12%	9%
Asian	28%	48%	15%	9%
Hispanic	34%	41%	18%	6%
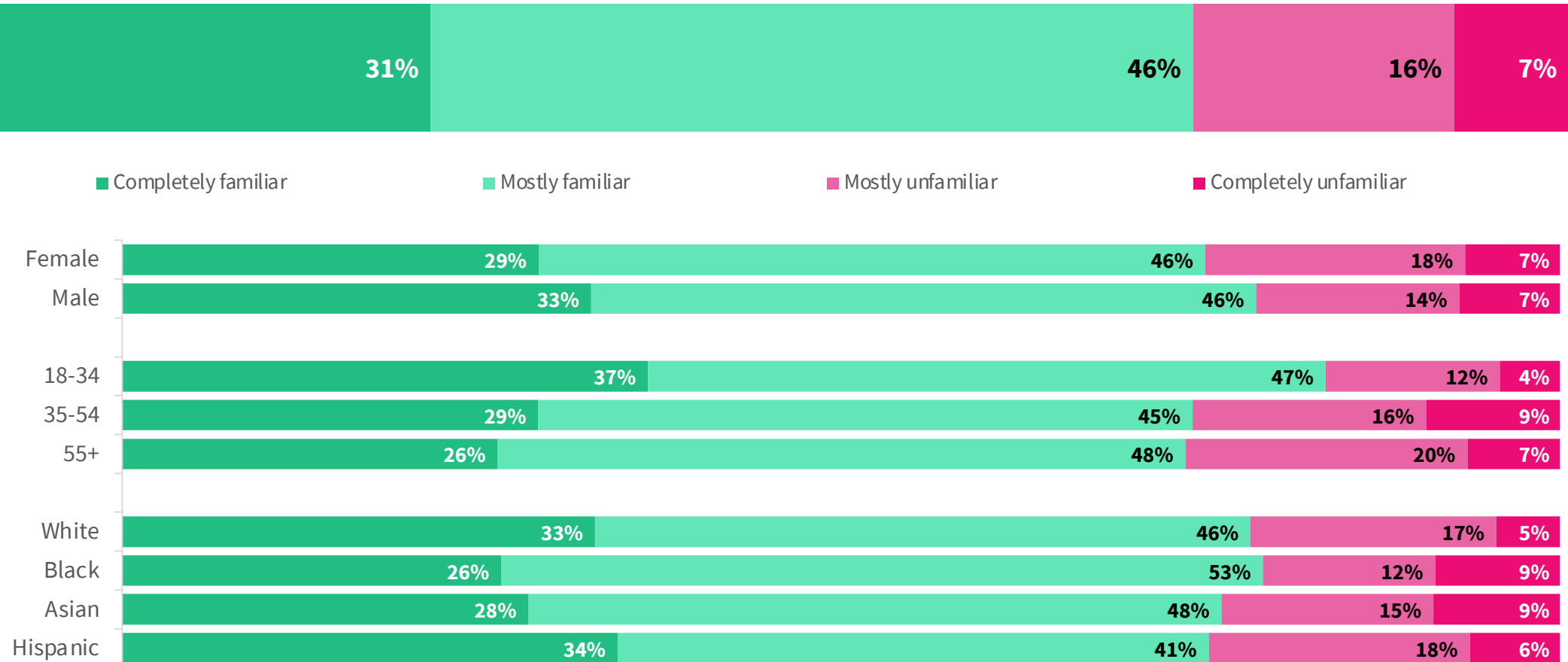
Awareness: Respondents in district 1 and district 7 were most familiar with the use of cameras in public spaces (87%, and 86%, respectively). In comparison, only a third (66%) of respondents in district 3 were familiar with their use in public spaces.

% of completely or mostly familiar with the use of cameras in public spaces

Q8: How familiar are you with the use of cameras in public spaces?

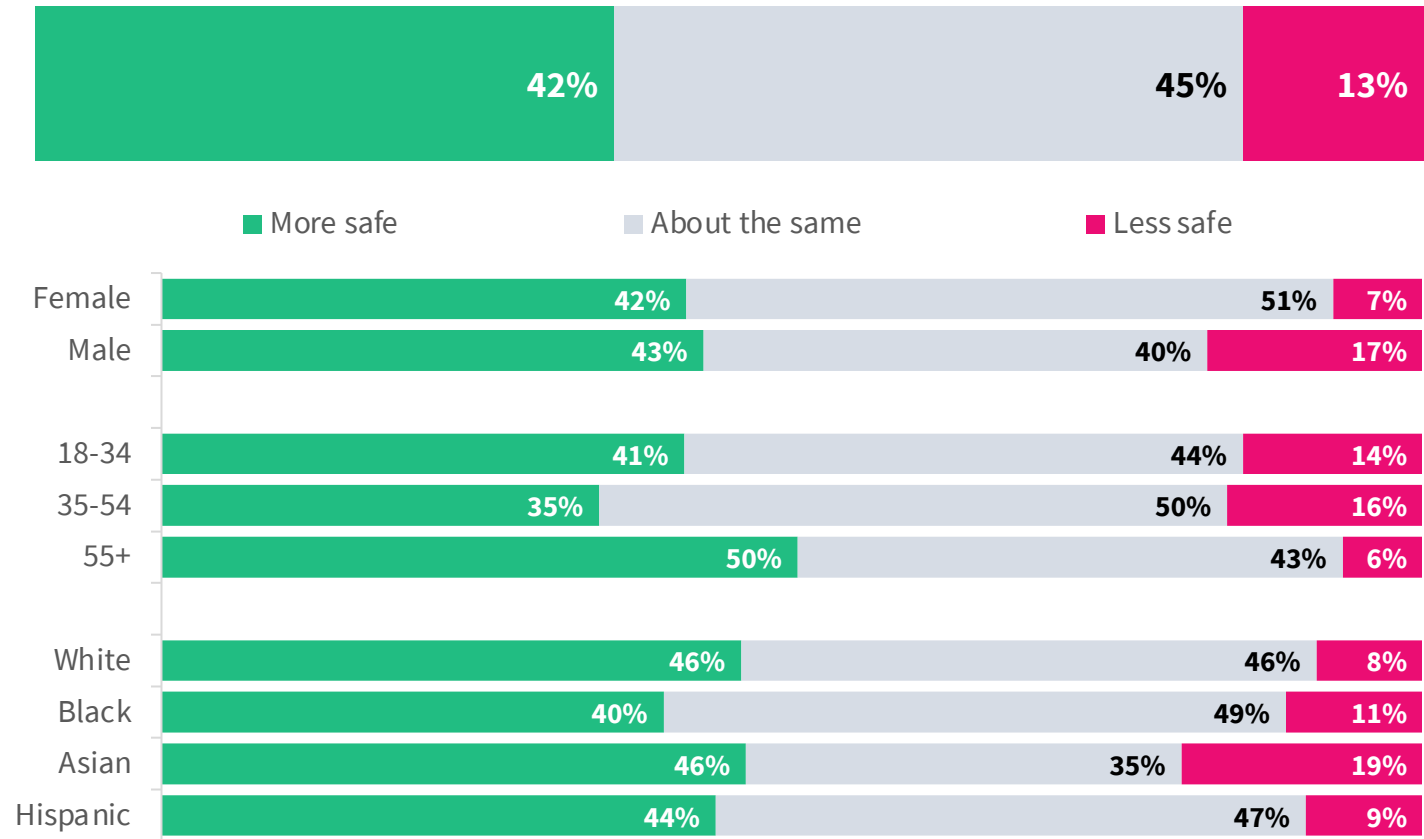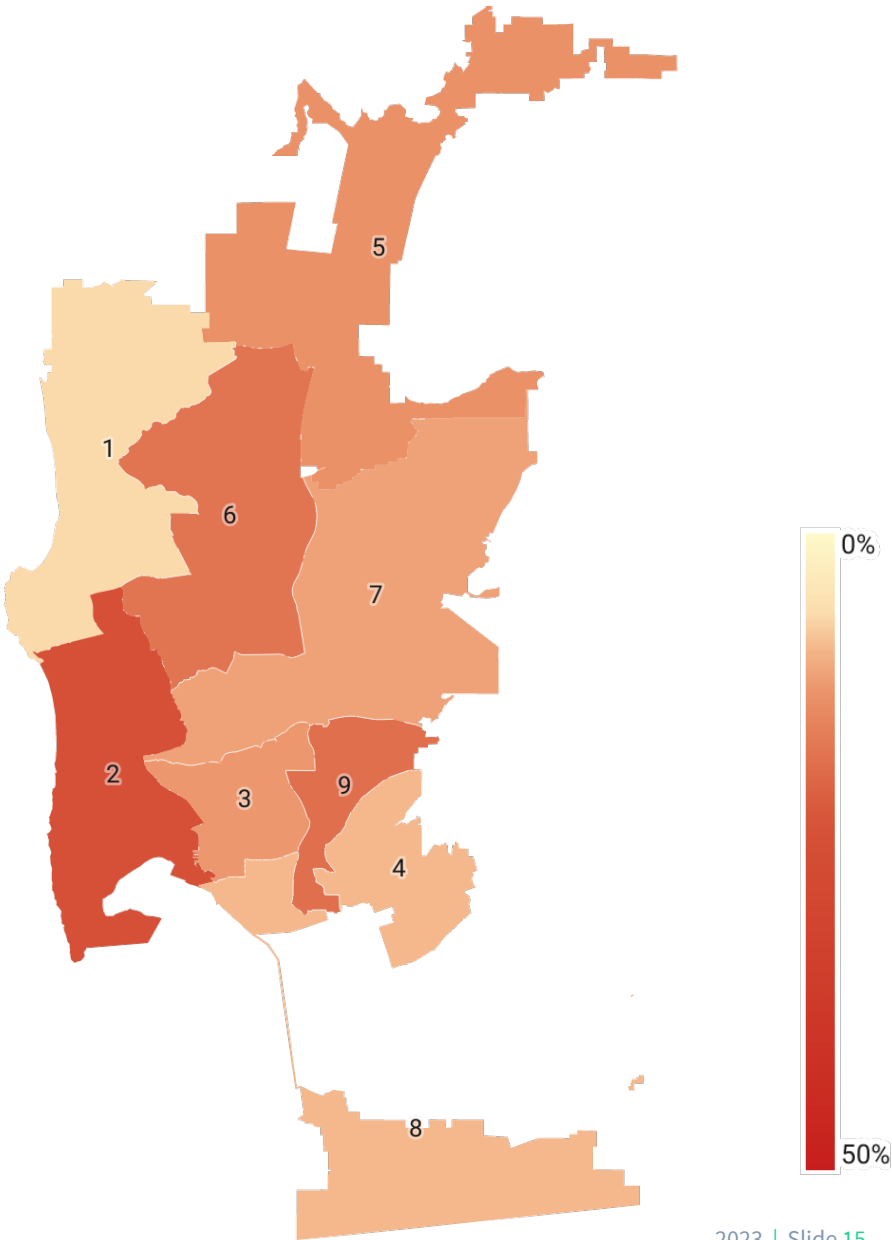| Council District	Completely familiar	Mostly familiar	Mostly unfamiliar	Completely unfamiliar
1	25%	62%	12%	2%
2	23%	46%	25%	6%
3	23%	43%	24%	10%
4	38%	45%	11%	6%
5	29%	53%	11%	7%
6	30%	49%	13%	8%
7	35%	51%	11%	3%
8	28%	42%	17%	13%
9	38%	38%	17%	7%

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03

License Plate Reader

Safety : 42% of respondents reported that they would feel more safe if license plate readers were used. Respondents over the age of 55, White respondents and Asian respondents more commonly reported that they would feel more safe (50%, 46% and 46%, respectively). 23% of respondents in district 2 reported that they would feel less safe if license plate readers were to be used, as compared to only 7% of those in district 1.

% of feeling less safe if license plate readers were to be used

Q4: If the San Diego Police Department were using license plate readers, do you think that would make you feel..

	More safe	About the same	Less safe
	42%	45%	13%

■ More safe   ■ About the same   ■ Less safe

	More safe	About the same	Less safe
Female	42%	51%	7%
Male	43%	40%	17%
18-34	41%	44%	14%
35-54	35%	50%	16%
55+	50%	43%	6%
White	46%	46%	8%
Black	40%	49%	11%
Asian	46%	35%	19%
Hispanic	44%	47%	9%

0%

50%
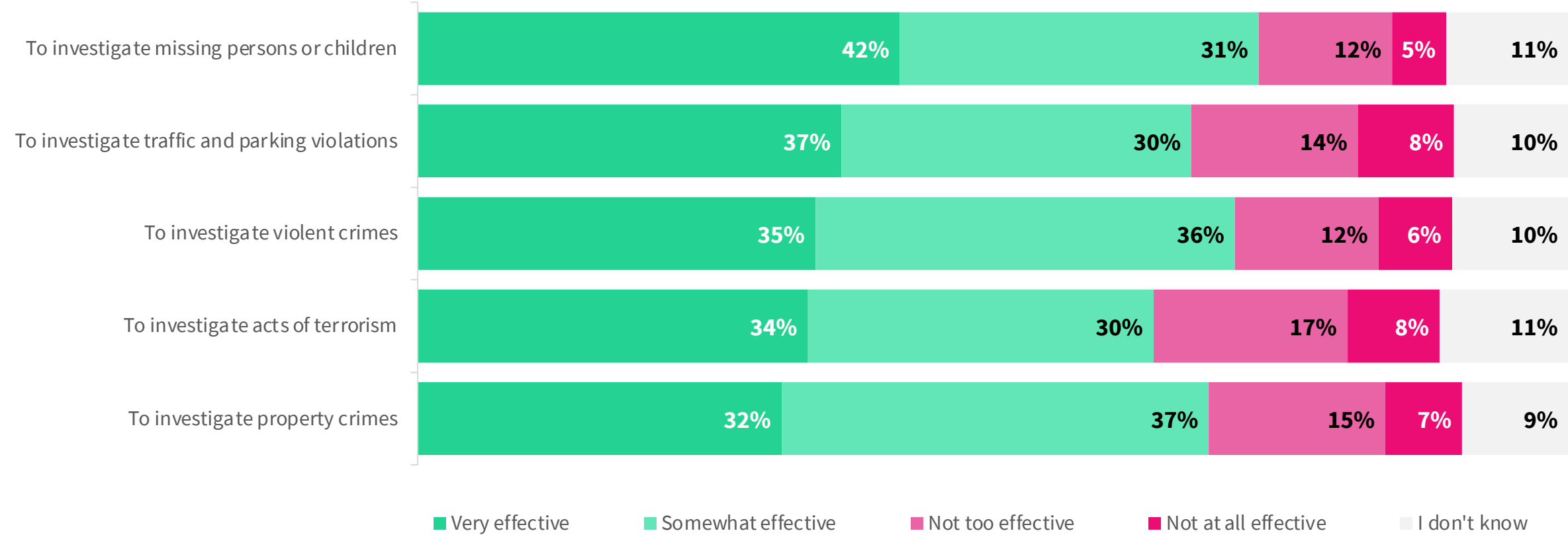
Comfortable: Over half of respondents reported that they would be very comfortable if license plate readers were used to investigate missing persons or children, acts of terrorism, and violent crimes (64%, 56%, 52%). However, only a third of respondents reported that they were very comfortable with their use for traffic and parking violations and 14% reported that they would be not at all comfortable with that.

Q5: How comfortable would you be if license plate readers were used by the San Diego PD to do each of the following?

	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Not too comfortable	Not at all comfortable	I don't know
To investigate missing persons or children	64%	19%	7%	5%	5%
To investigate acts of terrorism	56%	24%	9%	6%	5%
To investigate violent crimes	52%	28%	10%	5%	5%
To investigate property crimes	48%	28%	13%	5%	5%
To investigate traffic and parking violations	33%	29%	19%	14%	5%
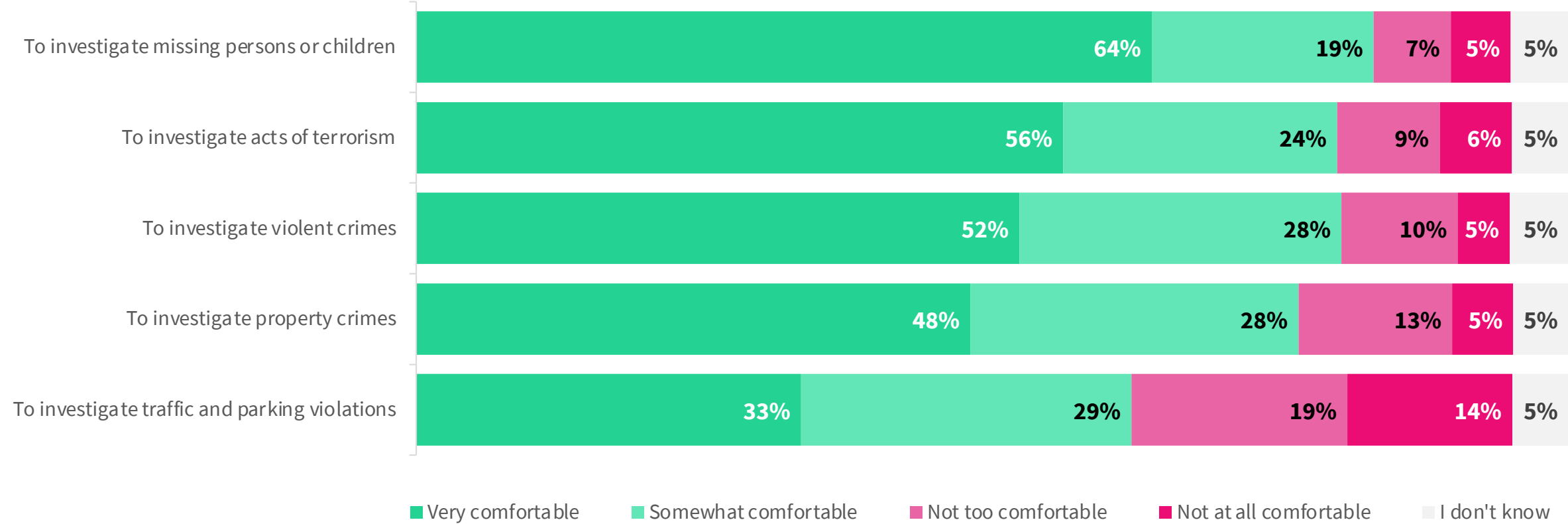
Effectiveness: The large majority of respondents reported that they thought license plate readers would be very or somewhat effective for all the uses listed. Respondents most commonly thought that license plate readers would be very effective for investigating missing persons or children and investigating traffic and parking violations (42%, and 37%, respectively).

Q6: How effective do you think license plate readers are for each of the following?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not too effective	Not at all effective	I don't know
To investigate missing persons or children	42%	31%	12%	5%	11%
To investigate traffic and parking violations	37%	30%	14%	8%	10%
To investigate violent crimes	35%	36%	12%	6%	10%
To investigate acts of terrorism	34%	30%	17%	8%	11%
To investigate property crimes	32%	37%	15%	7%	9%

■ Very effective ■ Somewhat effective ■ Not too effective ■ Not at all effective ■ I don't know

Demographic & geographic breakdowns: The majority of demographic and geographic groups were most comfortable with license plate readers being used to investigate missing persons or children. However, 94% of respondents over 55 and 95% of respondents in district 1 were comfortable with them being used to investigate violent crimes. Interestingly, differences were found in most demographic groups between what crime they believed license plate readers would be most effective for and with which they were most comfortable.

	Most comfortable for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very comfortable)*	**Most effective** for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very effective)*
Female	Missing persons or children *(90%)*	Missing persons or children *(76%)*
Male	Missing persons or children *(78%)* Acts of terrorism *(78%)*	Violent crimes *(73%)*
18-34	Missing persons or children *(75%)*	Violent crimes *(71%)*
35-54	Missing persons or children *(87%)*	Missing persons or children *(75%)*
55+	Missing persons or children *(94%)* Violent crimes *(94%)*	Violent crimes *(80%)*
White	Missing persons or children *(91%)*	Missing persons or children *(76%)*
Black	Violent crimes *(80%)*	Missing persons or children *(71%)*
Asian	Missing persons or children *(79%)* Acts of terrorism *(79%)*	Property crimes *(80%)*
Hispanic	Missing persons or children *(79%)* Violent crimes *(79%)*	Violent crimes *(73%)*

	Most comfortable for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very comfortable)*	**Most effective** for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very effective)*
District 1	Violent crimes *(95%)*	Missing persons or children *(79%)*
District 2	Acts of terrorism *(80%)*	Violent crimes *(66%)*
District 3	Missing persons or children *(87%)*	Missing persons or children *(75%)*
District 4	Violent crimes *(88%)*	Traffic and parking violations *(77%)*
District 5	Missing persons or children *(92%)*	Missing persons or children *(82%)*
District 6	Missing persons or children *(88%)*	Property crimes *(81%)*
District 7	Missing persons or children *(92%)*	Missing persons or children *(82%)*
District 8	Missing persons or children *(82%)*	Violent crimes *(78%)*
District 9	Violent crimes *(77%)*	Missing persons or children *(68%)*

Demographic breakdowns: The sample of respondents who reported being not comfortable with license plate readers being used for at least one of the five uses listed included more 18-34-year-olds, White, Black, Hispanic and female respondents than the general population of San Diego. Asian respondents and respondents over 55 were underrepresented, suggesting that those demographic groups were most comfortable with the use of license plate readers. Similar results were seen when analyzing the sample of respondents who reported they believed license plate readers were not at all or not too effective.

Q5: How comfortable would you be if license plate readers were used by the San Diego PD to do each of the following?

As compared to the general population, the sample of respondents who reported being **not too comfortable** or **not at all comfortable** for at least one of the five uses of license plate readers, included;

More 18-34-year-olds *(+10 percentage points)*
More White respondents *(+6 percentage points)*
More Black respondents *(+4 percentage points)*
More females *(+3 percentage points)*
More Hispanic respondents *(+3 percentage points)*

Less Asian respondents *(-13 percentage points)*
Less over 55s *(-12 percentage points)*

* +/- percentage point refers to the difference between the percentage of that group in the full sample (i.e., the general population) and in the subsample (i.e., the respondents who reported being not comfortable/not effective).

Q6: How effective do you think license plate readers are for each of the following?

As compared to the general population, the sample of respondents who reported believing license plate readers to be **not too effective** or **not at all effective** for at least one of the five uses of license plate readers, included;
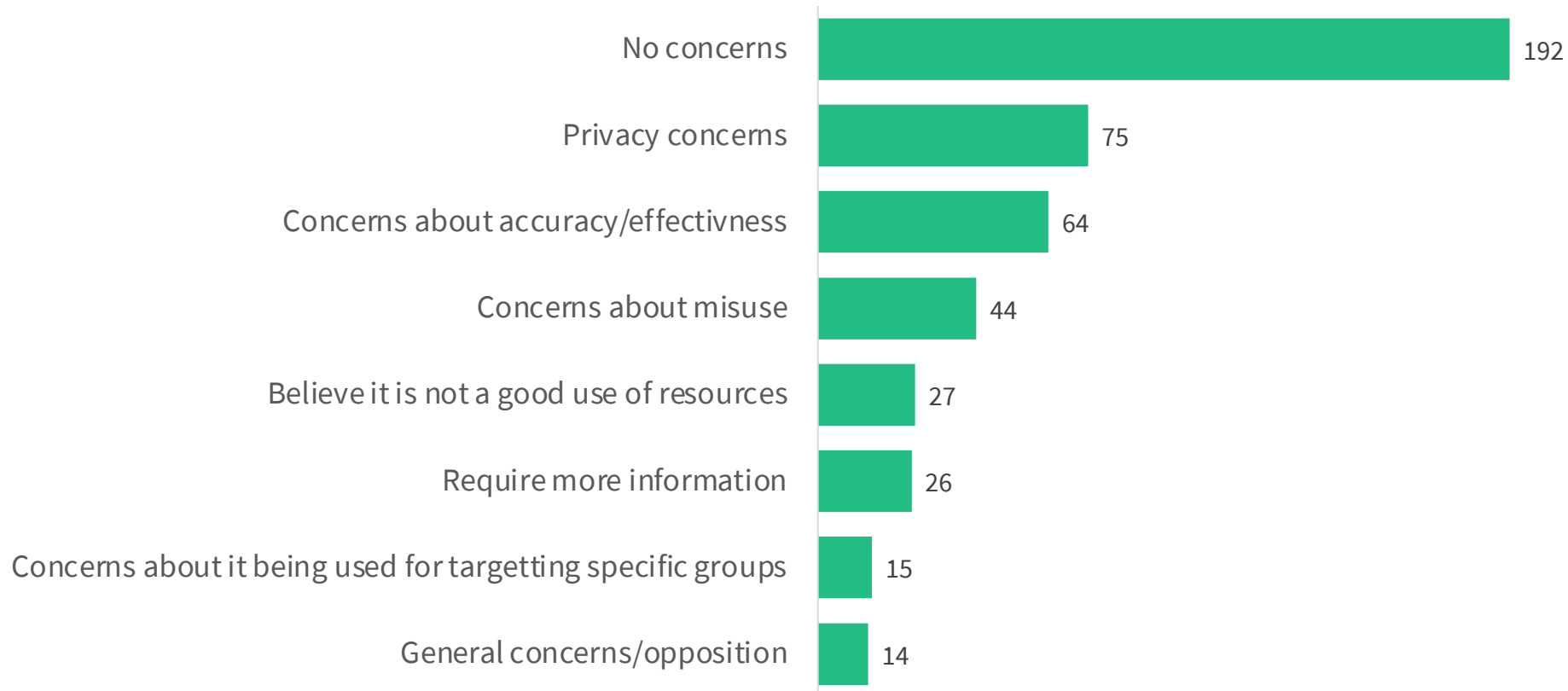
More 18-34-year-olds *(+8 percentage points)*
More Black respondents *(+6 percentage points)*
More Hispanic respondents *(+5 percentage points)*
More females *(+5 percentage points)*
More White respondents *(+3 percentage points)*

Less Asian respondents *(-11 percentage points)*
Less males *(-8 percentage points)*
Less over 55s *(-5 percentage points)*
Less 35-54-year-olds *(-3 percentage points)*

Concerns (open text): Respondents most commonly reported not having any concerns about the use of license plate readers. However, those who did, reported that they were concerned about privacy and the accuracy/effectiveness of the license plate readers. In terms of privacy, respondents were concerned about the lack of privacy due to their use and the security of the data once it is collected. When mentioning accuracy/effectiveness, respondents were most concerned about what happens if a car is being driven by someone other than the owner (for example, if it was stolen) and if the car license plates are changed.

Q7: Please indicate what concerns, if any, you have about license plate readers.
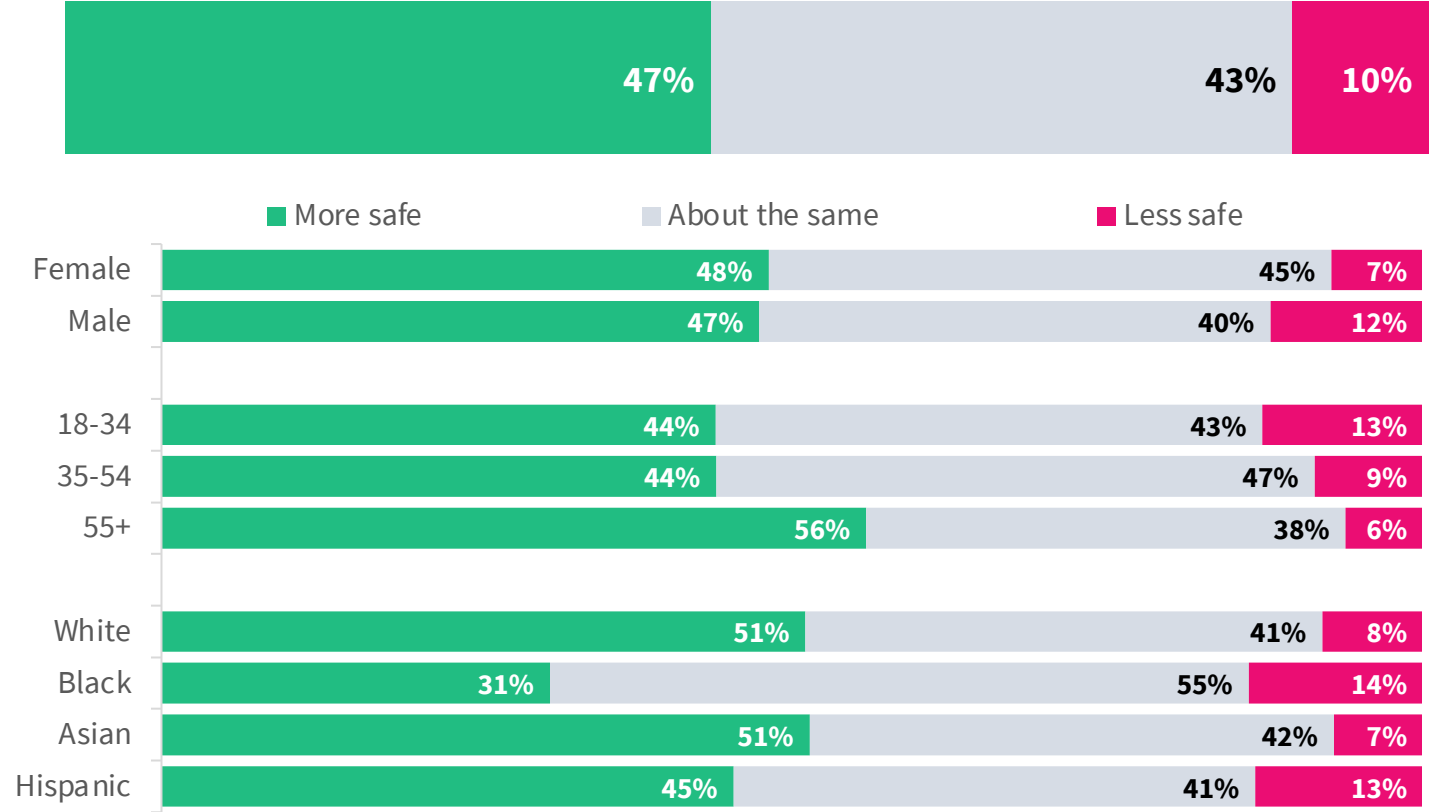*(n = 482)*

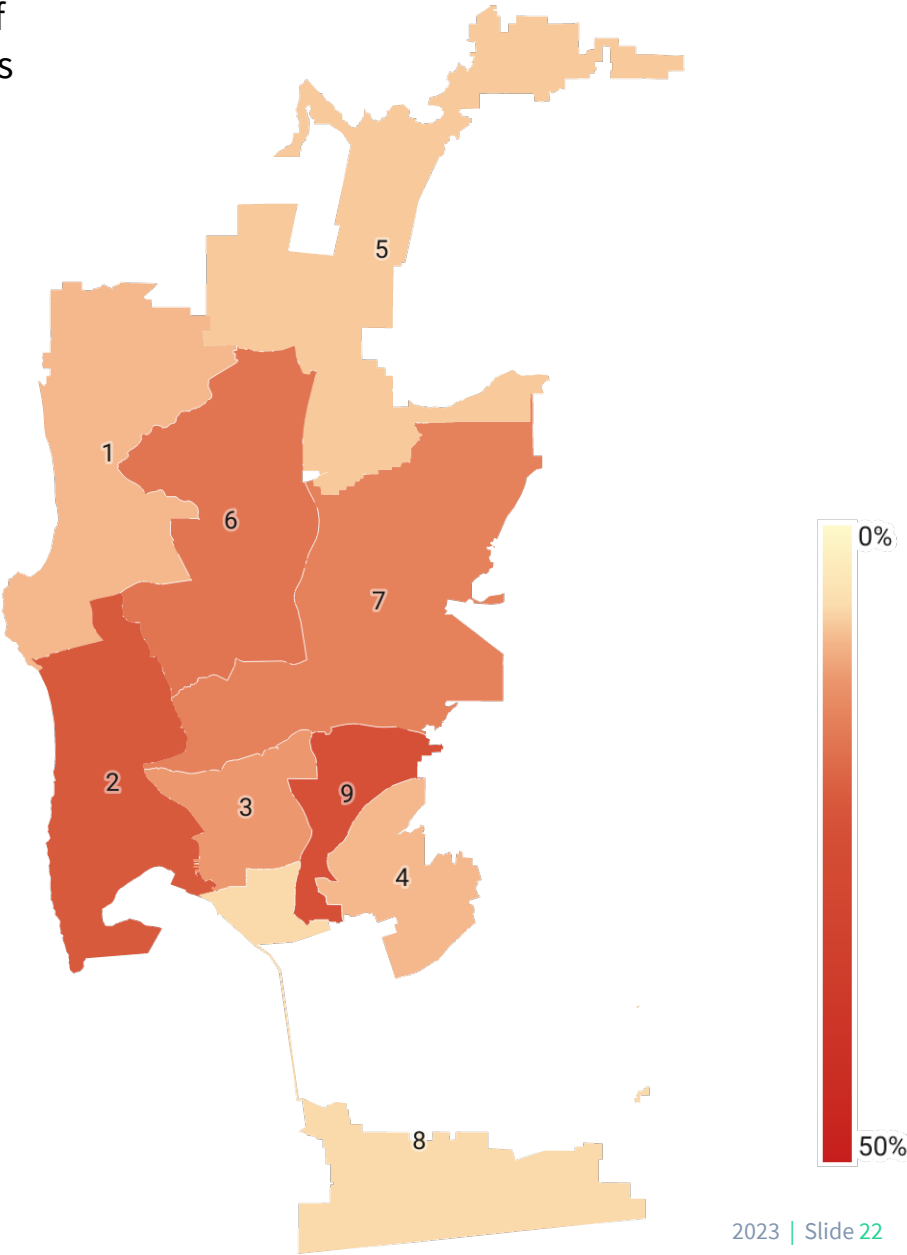| Category	Value
No concerns	192
Privacy concerns	75
Concerns about accuracy/effectivness	64
Concerns about misuse	44
Believe it is not a good use of resources	27
Require more information	26
Concerns about it being used for targetting specific groups	15
General concerns/opposition	14

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04

Cameras in Public Spaces

Safety: 47% of respondents reported that they would feel safer if cameras were used in public spaces. Respondents over the age of 55, White respondents, and Asian respondents more commonly reported that they would feel safer (56%, 51%, and 51%, respectively). 16% of respondents in district 9 and 15% of respondents in district 2 reported that they would feel less safe if cameras were used in public spaces, as compared to only 4% of those in district 1.

% of feeling less safe if cameras were to be used in public spaces

Q9: If the San Diego Police Department were using these cameras, do you think that would make you feel..

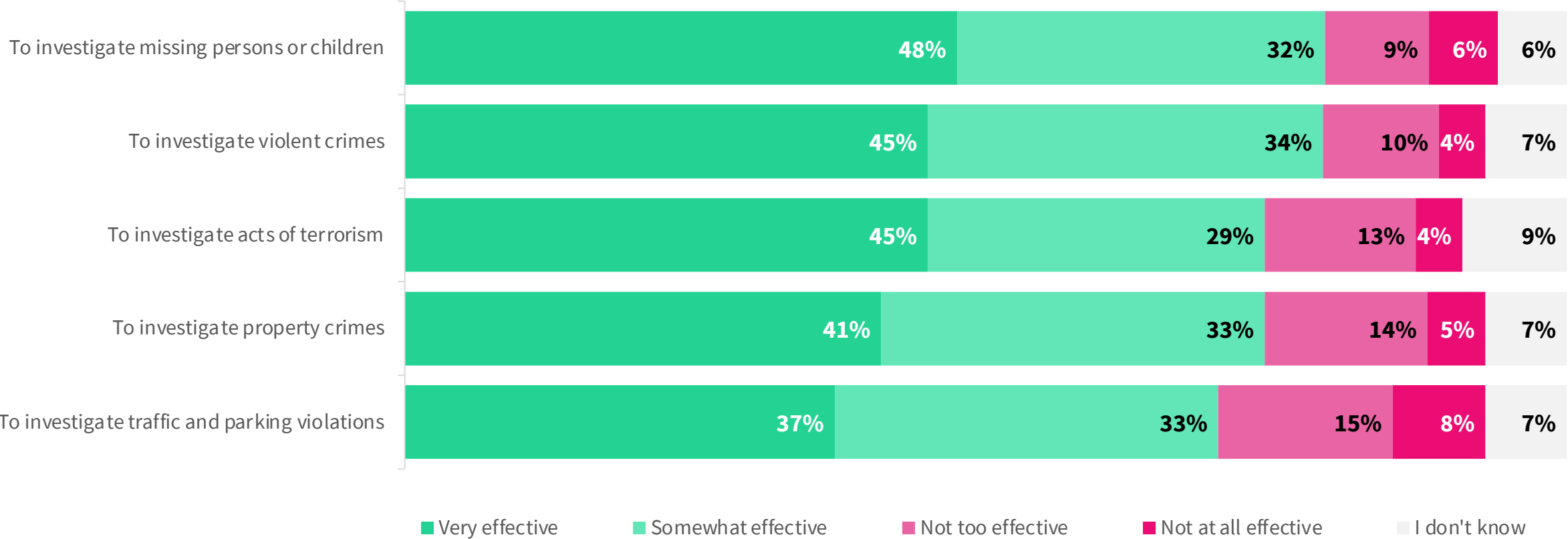|	More safe	About the same	Less safe
Total	47%	43%	10%
Female	48%	45%	7%
Male	47%	40%	12%
18-34	44%	43%	13%
35-54	44%	47%	9%
55+	56%	38%	6%
White	51%	41%	8%
Black	31%	55%	14%
Asian	51%	42%	7%
Hispanic	45%	41%	13%

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Comfortable: Over half respondents reported that they were very or somewhat comfortable with San Diego PD using cameras to investigate missing persons or children, violent crimes, acts of terrorism, and property crimes (65%, 56%, 59%, and 52%, respectively). However, under 40% reported that they would be very comfortable with the PD using them to investigate traffic and parking violations.

Q10: How comfortable would you be if these cameras could be used by the San Diego PD to do each of the following?

	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Not too comfortable	Not at all comfortable	I don't know
To investigate missing persons or children	65%	21%	7%	3%	4%
To investigate acts of terrorism	59%	22%	9%	5%	5%
To investigate violent crimes	56%	27%	9%	4%	4%
To investigate property crimes	52%	28%	10%	5%	5%
To investigate traffic and parking violations	39%	30%	15%	12%	5%

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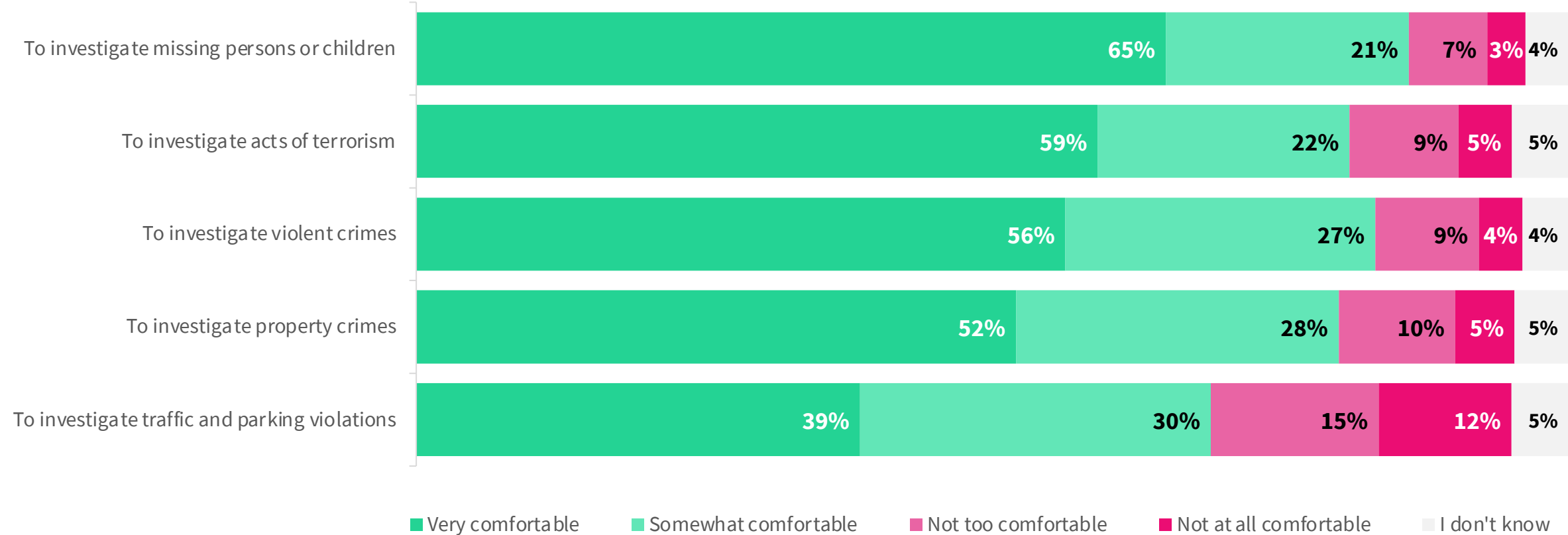
Effectiveness: Just under half of respondents reported that they believed cameras in public spaces were very effective for investigating missing persons or children, violent crimes, and acts of terrorism (48%, 45%, and 45%, respectively). 23% of respondents reported that they believed cameras in public spaces would be not too or not at all effective as a tool to investigate traffic and parking violations.

Q11: How effective do you think the use of cameras in public spaces is for each of the following?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not too effective	Not at all effective	I don't know
To investigate missing persons or children	48%	32%	9%	6%	6%
To investigate violent crimes	45%	34%	10%	4%	7%
To investigate acts of terrorism	45%	29%	13%	4%	9%
To investigate property crimes	41%	33%	14%	5%	7%
To investigate traffic and parking violations	37%	33%	15%	8%	7%

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Demographic & geographic breakdowns: Respondents across most demographic and geographic groups reported that they felt most comfortable with cameras being used to investigate missing persons or children. However, respondents over 55 and respondents in districts 1, 2, 3, and 5 reported that they would feel most comfortable with cameras being used to investigate violent crimes. Investigating violent crimes and missing persons or children were also the districts for which respondents across all analyzed demographic and geographic groups thought cameras would be most effective.

	Most comfortable for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very comfortable)*	**Most effective** for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very effective)*
Female	Missing persons or children *(89%)*	Missing persons or children *(81%)*
Male	Missing persons or children *(85%)*	Violent crimes *(81%)*
18-34	Missing persons or children *(80%)*	Violent crimes *(76%)*
35-54	Missing persons or children *(89%)*	Missing persons or children *(82%)* Violent crimes *(82%)*
55+	Violent crimes *(94%)*	Missing persons or children *(84%)*
White	Missing persons or children *(92%)*	Missing persons or children *(84%)*
Black	Missing persons or children *(83%)*	Violent crimes *(72%)* Acts of terrorism *(72%)*
Asian	Missing persons or children *(84%)*	Violent crimes *(83%)*
Hispanic	Missing persons or children *(82%)*	Missing persons or children *(78%)*

	Most comfortable for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very comfortable)*	**Most effective** for it to be used to investigate… *(% somewhat or very effective)*
District 1	Violent crimes *(97%)*	Missing persons or children *(85%)*
District 2	Missing persons or children *(82%)* Violent crimes *(82%)*	Missing persons or children *(76%)*
District 3	Violent crimes *(90%)*	Missing persons or children *(77%)* Property crimes *(77%)*
District 4	Missing persons or children *(92%)*	Violent crimes *(85%)*
District 5	Violent crimes *(92%)* Acts of terrorism *(92%)*	Violent crimes *(90%)*
District 6	Missing persons or children *(89%)*	Violent crimes *(86%)*
District 7	Missing persons or children *(87%)*	Missing persons or children *(86%)*
District 8	Missing persons or children *(90%)*	Missing persons or children *(92%)*
District 9	Missing persons or children *(71%)*	Missing persons or children *(63%)*

Demographic breakdowns: The sample of respondents who reported being not comfortable with cameras in public spaces being used for at least one of the five uses listed included more female, White, Black, Hispanic, and over 55 respondents than the general population of San Diego. Asian respondents, male respondents, and respondents aged 18-34 were underrepresented. No differences in age were found when looking at effectiveness, but differences between genders and some race groups were noted.

Q10: How comfortable would you be if these cameras could be used by the San Diego PD to do each of the following?

As compared to the general population, the sample of respondents who reported being **not too comfortable** or **not at all comfortable** for at least one of the five uses of cameras in public spaces, included;

More females (+8 percentage points)

More White respondents (+7 percentage points)

More Black respondents (+5 percentage points)

More Hispanic respondents (+3 percentage points)

More over 55s (+3 percentage points)

Less Asian respondents (-13 percentage points)

Less males (-10 percentage points)

Less 18-34-year-olds (-4 percentage points)

Q11: How effective do you think the use of cameras in public spaces is for each of the following?

As compared to the general population, the sample of respondents who reported believing cameras in public spaces to be **not too effective** or **not at all effective** for at least one of the five uses of cameras in public spaces, included;

More females (+11 percentage points)

More Black respondents (+7 percentage points)

More White respondents (+6 percentage points)

Less males (-12 percentage points)

Less Asian respondents (-9 percentage points)

* +/- percentage point refers to the difference between the percentage of that group in the full sample (i.e., the general population) and in the subsample (i.e., the respondents who reported being not comfortable/not effective).

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Concerns (open text): Respondents most commonly reported not having any concerns about the use of cameras, with some stating that they believe they are already being used. Those who reported having concerns mentioned privacy, accuracy, and misuse of cameras most commonly. As with license plate readers, privacy concerns related to both the lack of privacy due to the cameras themselves and also the privacy of the data once it had been collected. Accuracy/effectiveness concerns centered around the quality of images and the number of blind spots that will still exist.

Q12: Please indicate what concerns, if any, you have about these cameras.

(n = 595)

Concern	Count
No concerns	240
Privacy concerns	144
Concerns about misuse	50
Concerns about accuracy/effectivness	49
Believe it is not a good use of resources	20
Require more information	20
General concerns/opposition	20

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05

Summary

Summary

Current Situation

44% reported they have been or know someone who has been a **victim of crime**

45% are completely or mostly **familiar with license plate readers**

77% are completely or mostly **familiar with the use of cameras in public spaces**

License Plate Readers

42% reported they would feel **more safe** if license plate readers were introduced.

13% reported they would feel **less safe**.

64% felt **very comfortable** with the use of license plate readers to **investigate missing persons or children.**

42% believed that they would be **very effective** in **investigating missing persons or children.**

Privacy and **accuracy/ effectiveness** were the **top concerns** about license plate readers.

Cameras in Public Spaces

47% reported they would feel **more safe** if cameras were introduced.

10% reported they would feel **less safe**.

65% felt **very comfortable** with the use of cameras to **investigate missing persons or children.**
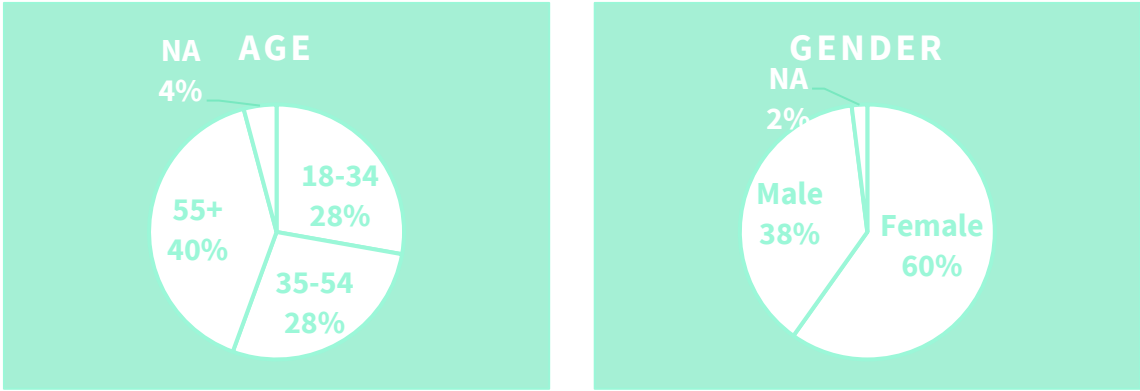
48% believed that they would be **very effective** in **investigating missing persons or children.**

Privacy and **misuse** were the **top concerns** about cameras in public spaces.

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Thank You!
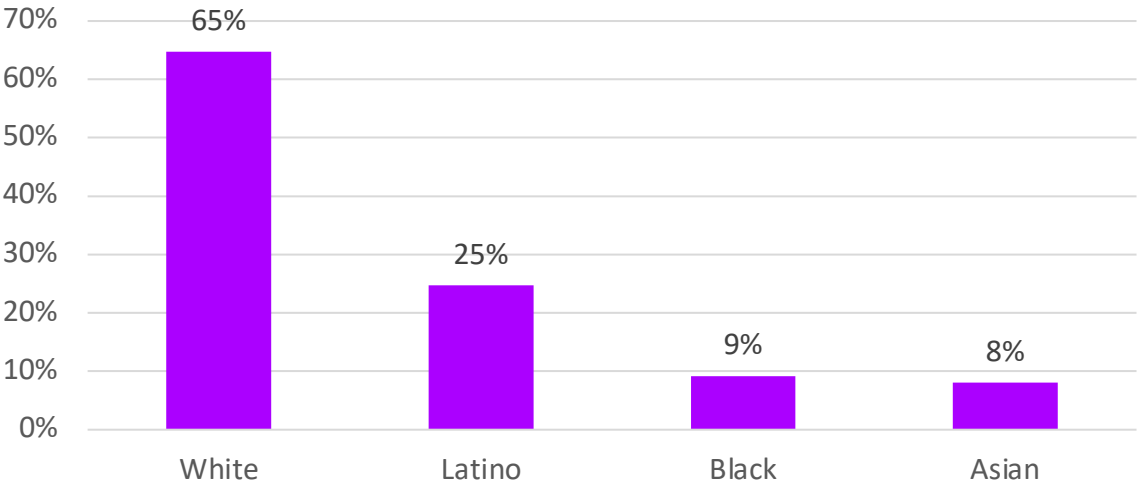
Survey respondents demographics – age, gender, ethnicity
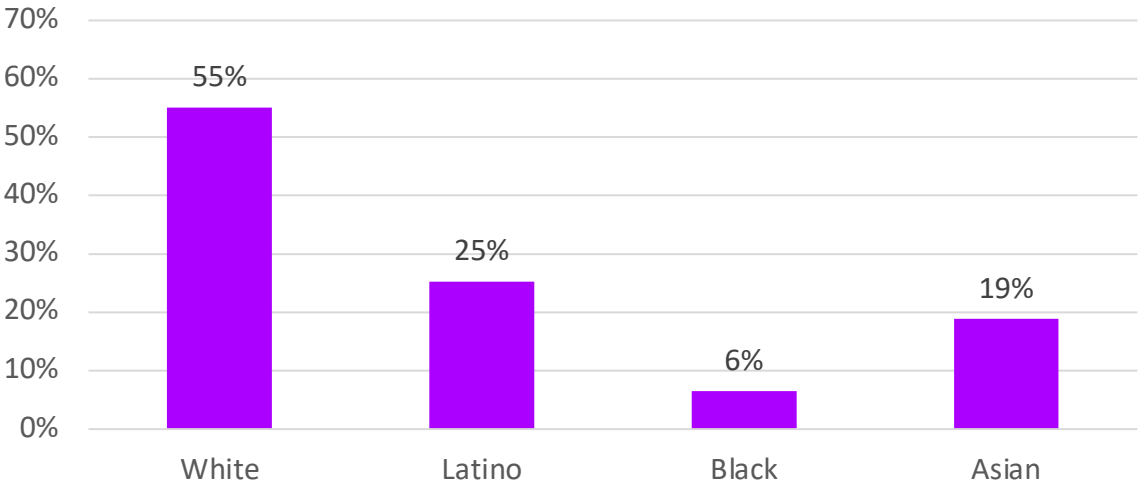
Unweighted demographics – the original sample

AGE
- NA 4%
- 18-34 28%
- 35-54 28%
- 55+ 40%

GENDER
- NA 2%
- Male 38%
- Female 60%

Ethnicity

- White: 65%
- Latino: 25%
- Black: 9%
- Asian: 8%

Weighted demographics – representative of the population

AGE
- NA 4%
- 18-34 36%
- 35-54 31%
- 55+ 29%

GENDER
- NA 2%
- Male 49%
- Female 49%

Ethnicity

- White: 55%
- Latino: 25%
- Black: 6%
- Asian: 19%

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[Link to Survey Questions](#)