



# **New poll details Chicagoans’ opinions about policing, race and Mayor Lightfoot’s performance**

**A Wirepoints | RealClear Opinion Research Poll**

**October 2020**

While Chicagoans share many concerns over the city's policing practices, 79% want the police to spend the same amount of time or more in their neighborhoods. That's one of the key findings of a new Wirepoints/Real Clear Opinion Research poll that looked at a range of attitudes in Chicago on policing, race and Mayor Lori Lightfoot's performance.

The desire for more police holds true across the city's North (76%), South (80%) and West Sides (85%), as well as across whites (79%), blacks (77%) and Hispanics (87%).

Only 15% of blacks and 10% of Hispanics citywide said they want the police to spend less time in their neighborhoods.

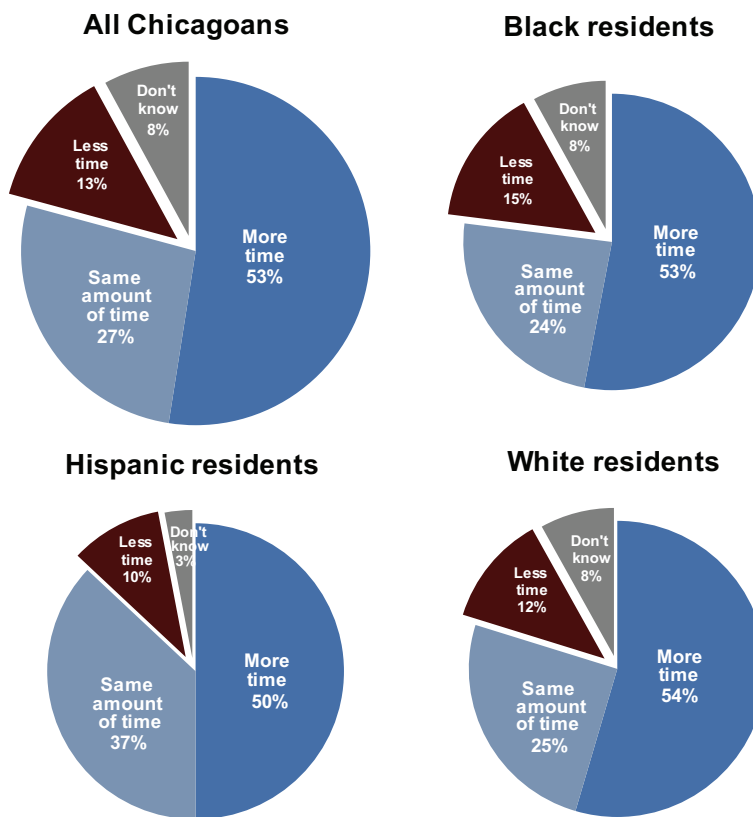
The Wirepoints/RCOR poll surveyed 895 registered voters in Chicago from September 26th through October 4th using a mixed phone and online methodology.

Although Chicagoans overwhelmingly indicated they want more police, they were also very clear in their desire for better-quality policing. Half (51%) of all Chicagoans polled said they believe the Chicago Police Department is currently handling its job badly. More than six out of ten black residents (63%) held that view.

More than a third (35%) of all respondents felt they would not be treated respectfully in an encounter with police, a percentage that jumps to 54% among black residents.

**79% of Chicagoans polled say they want police to spend the same amount of time or more in their neighborhood**

*Q. Would you rather police in Chicago spend more time, the same amount of time, or less time as they currently spend in your neighborhood?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020  
 Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

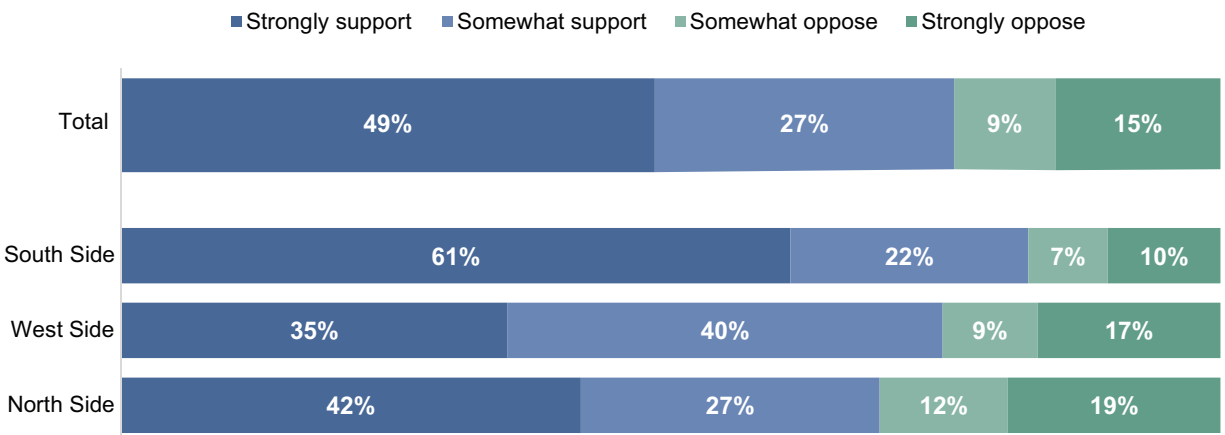
The polling also finds that while 61% of residents approve of the job that Mayor Lightfoot is doing, some of her lowest issue performance ratings come in how she is dealing with police reform, gun violence and violent crime.

**Chicagoans support both BLM and more policing**

George Floyd's death and the subsequent protests expanded the influence of Black Lives Matter across the country, including in Chicago. Unsurprisingly, more than three-quarters (76%) of surveyed Chicagoans reported they strongly support or somewhat support BLM. Black Chicagoans maintained the highest support for BLM (86%), followed by whites (74%) and then Hispanics (61%). Geographically, South Side support of BLM is the highest (83%).

**Nearly 80 percent of Chicagoans polled support Black Lives Matter**

*Q. From what you have read or heard, do you support or oppose Black Lives Matter?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020

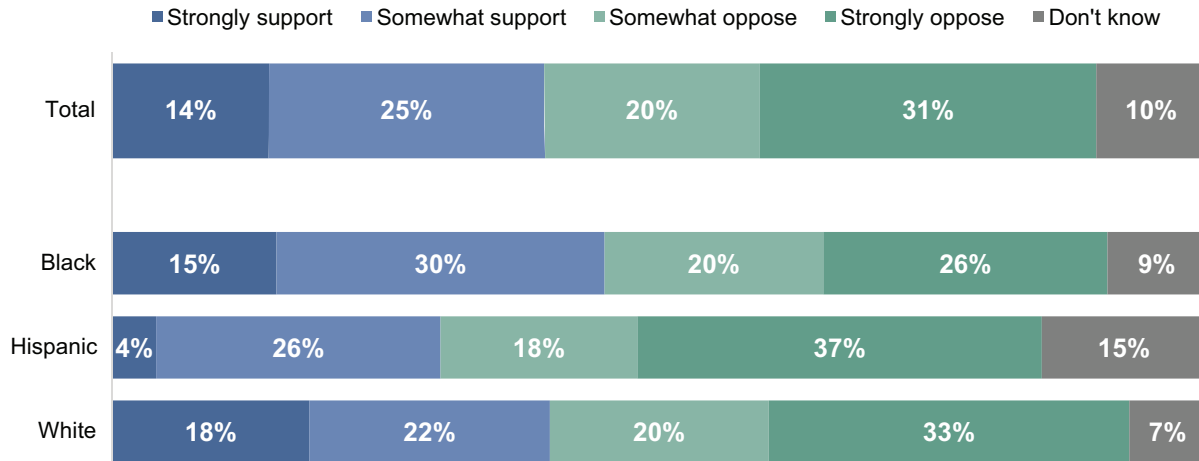


But when Chicagoans were asked directly if they support defunding the police, only 39% said they were in favor, while 51% were opposed. Opposition to defunding exceeded support in every region, with North Side residents expressing the most opposition (57% oppose / 36% support).

Along racial/ethnic lines, opposition exceeded support slightly among blacks (46% oppose / 45% support) and most strongly among Hispanics (55% oppose / 30% support).

**Over half of Chicagoans polled oppose defunding the police**

*Q. Do you support or oppose defunding the police?*



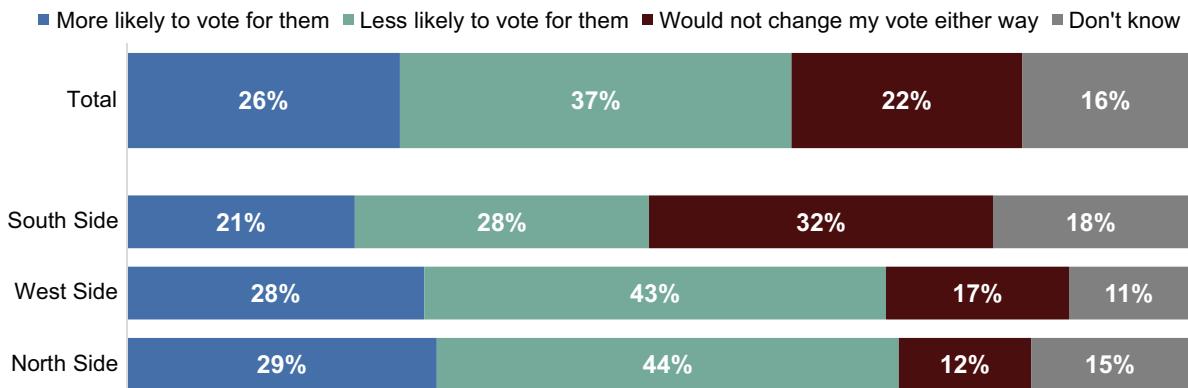
Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



The support for BLM has also failed to translate into political support for wholly disbanding the CPD. Only 26% of Chicagoans polled would be more likely to vote for city council members that support disbanding the police, while 37% would be less likely to vote for them. Even fewer South Siders (21%) would be more likely to vote for members supporting disbanding.

**Only a quarter of Chicagoans polled say they would be more likely to vote for a city council member that supports disbanding the police**

*Q. Recently, most of the Minneapolis City Council members have said they support disbanding the police department and creating a new system of public safety. If a candidate for the Chicago City Council embraced disbanding the Chicago Police Department, would it make you more likely to vote for them, less likely to vote for them, or would it not change your vote either way?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



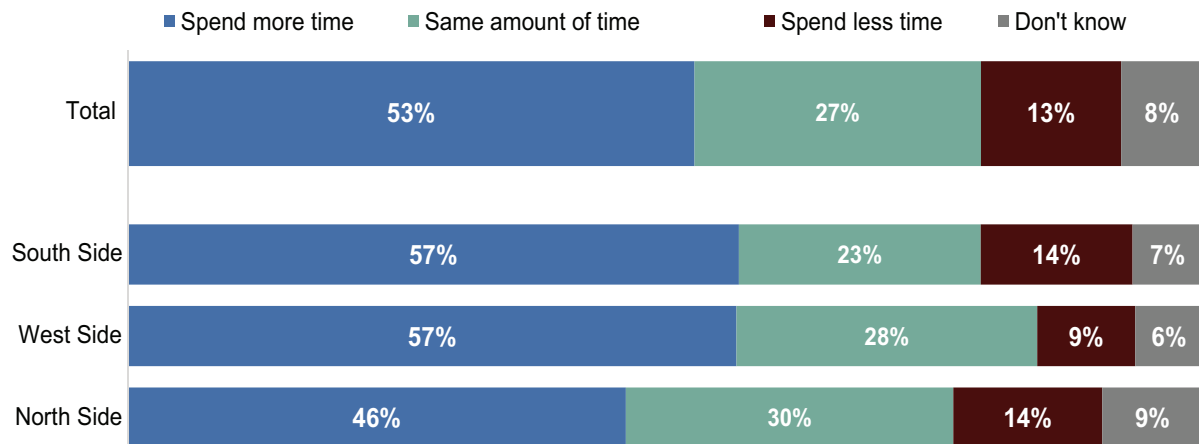
By race, whites and Hispanics were most opposed to politicians supporting disbanding the CPD, with 43% and 41% saying they would be less likely to vote for a council member that pushed disbanding, respectively. Black residents were at 27%.

Instead of less police presence, most Chicagoans polled want more officers on the street. A vast majority (79%) of voters indicated they wanted police to spend more or the same amount time in their neighborhood.

The desire for additional policing was strongest on the South and West Sides, with more than half (57%) of residents in both areas wanting more police presence in their neighborhoods despite their concerns about current CPD practices. The number of Chicagoans polled who want police to spend less time amounted to less than 15% of those surveyed. On the West Side, only 9% of those polled wanted less police.

**Fewer than 15% of Chicagoans want police to spend less time in their neighborhood**

*Q. Would you rather police in Chicago spend more time, the same amount of time, or less time as they currently spend in your neighborhood?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



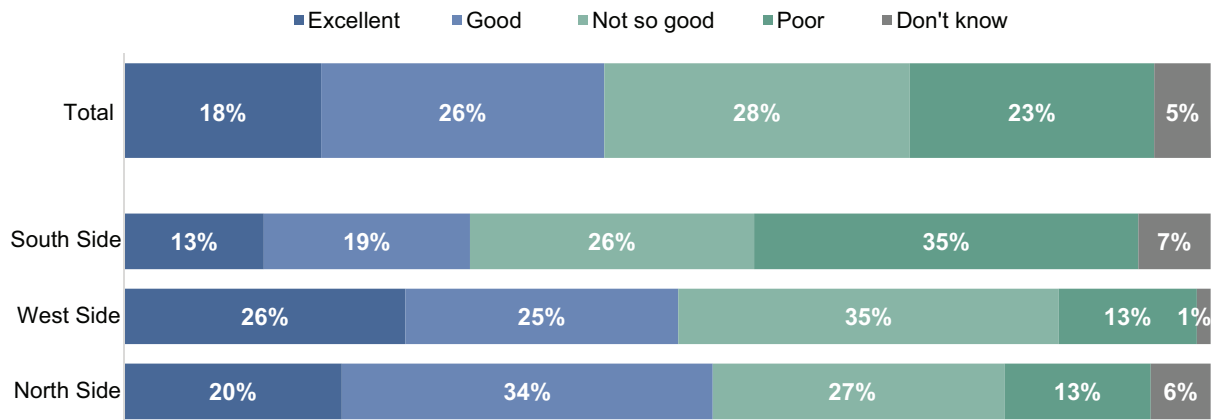
**Chicagoans want better-quality policing**

When questioned on a variety of topics, including job performance, systemic racism, police behavior, general safety and more, a majority or sizable minority of Chicagoans showed they have negative opinions of and/or have suffered negative encounters with Chicago officers.

Chicagoans' overall negative rating of the CPD (51%) varied widely by geography. More than half of citizens from the North Side (54%) and the West Side (51%) said the CPD was doing a good or excellent job, while only 32% of voters from the South Side said the same.

**Over half of Chicagoans polled have a negative opinion of the Chicago Police Department**

*Q. Overall, how would you rate the Chicago Police Department for how they are handling their job?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



When asked what needs to be reformed in the department, systemic racism or a few bad apples, nearly half of all those polled (45%) chose systemic racism. Hispanic residents were least likely to say systemic racism (33%) while black residents were the most likely (57%).

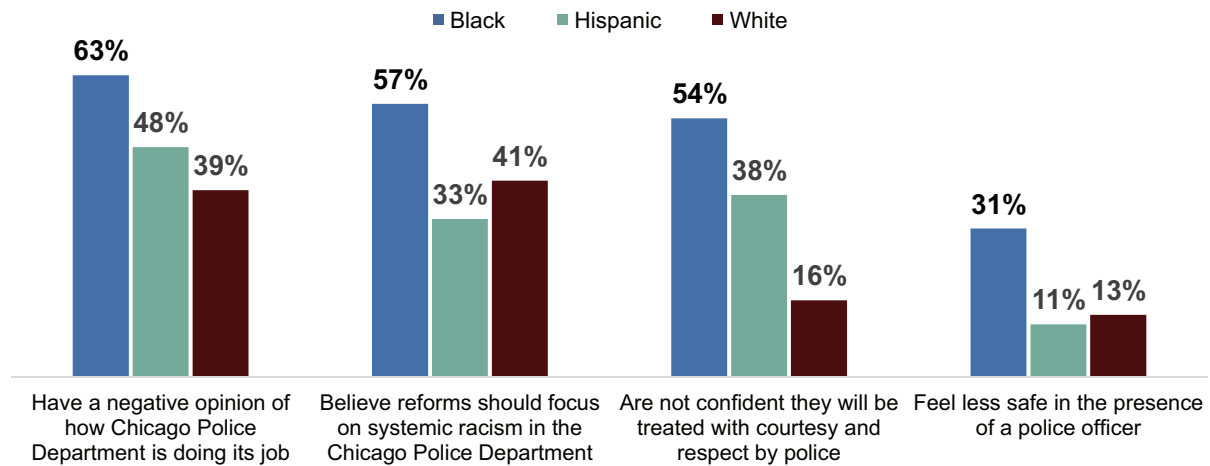
When asked how they thought they would be treated by officers, more than a third of Chicagoans (35%) said they were not very or not at all confident they would be treated with courtesy and respect. And in a similar vein, one in five of those surveyed (19%) said that seeing a police officer made them feel less safe.

In summary, while white and Hispanics ultimately have a mixed view of the city's police force, black residents report more negative opinions/experiences.

- 63% of black residents think the Chicago Police Department is handling its job badly, while only 48% of Hispanics and 39% of whites feel the same way.
- More than half (57%) believe reforms should focus on systemic racism in the Chicago Police Department, while only 33% of Hispanics and 41% of whites believe the same.
- More than half (54%) aren't confident they'll be treated with courtesy and respect by officers, while only 38% of Hispanics and 16% of whites aren't confident.
- Nearly a third (31%) of blacks feel less safe in the presence of an officer, while only 11% of Hispanics and 13% of whites feel less safe.

### Black Chicagoans have the most unfavorable opinions of the Chicago Police Department

Poll answers by respondents by race/ethnicity

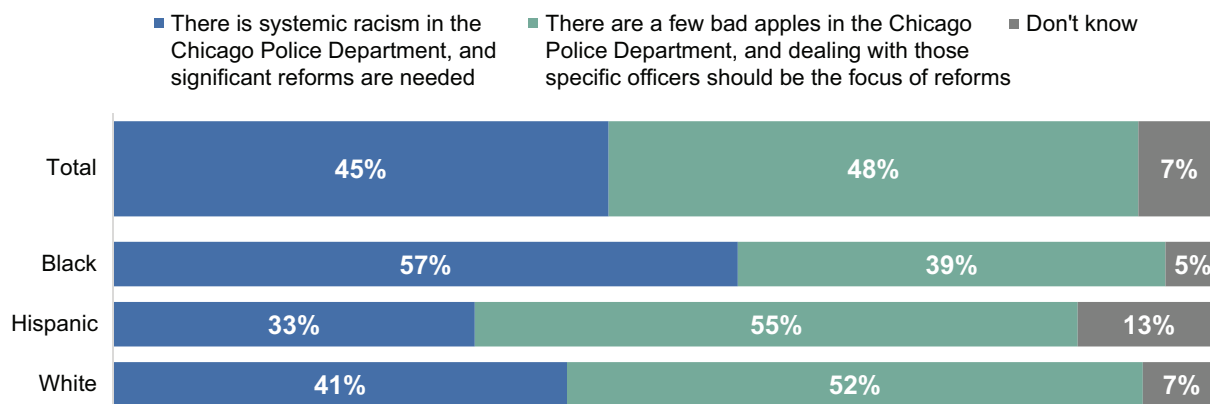


Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



### Nearly half of Chicagoans polled believe there is systemic racism in the Chicago Police Department

Q. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?

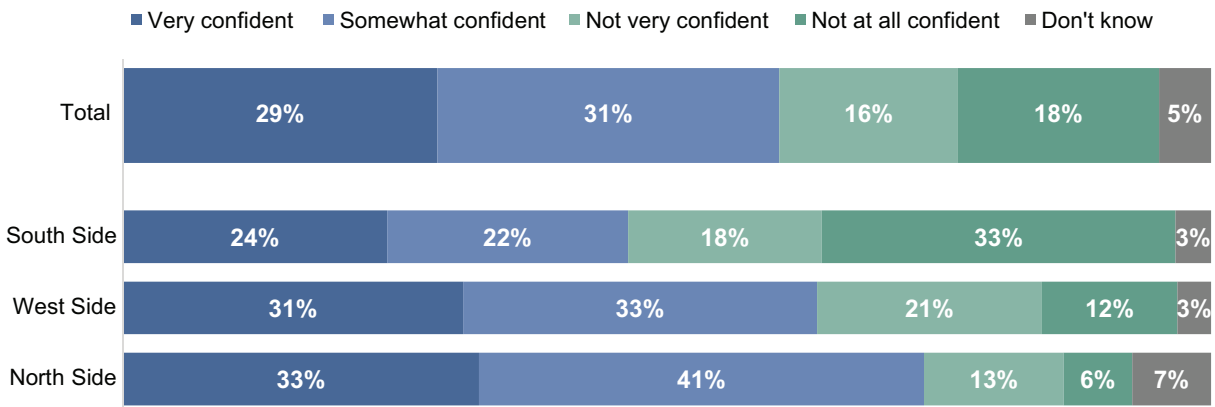


Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



### More than a third of Chicagoans polled believe they would not be treated respectfully by Chicago Police

*Q. If you had an interaction with Chicago police in your area, how confident are you that they would treat you with courtesy and respect?*

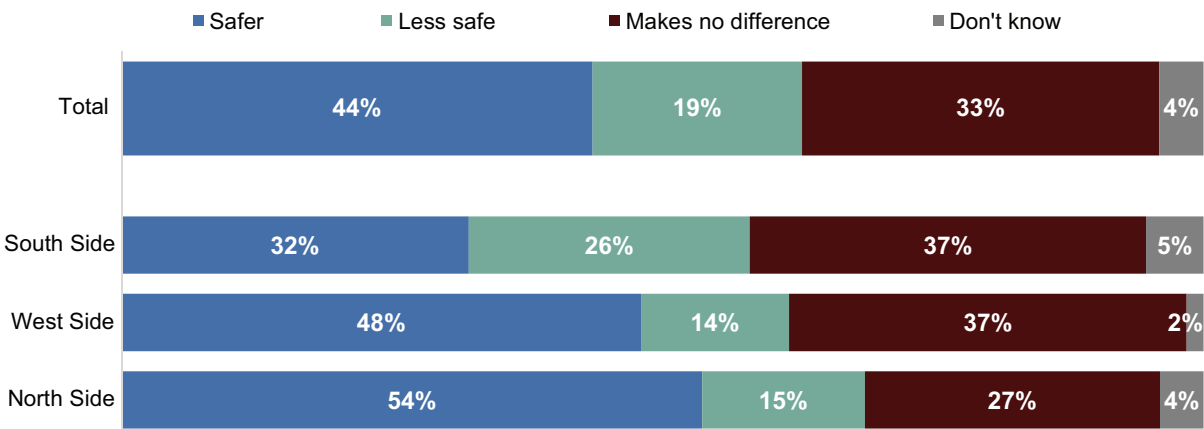


Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



### One in five Chicagoans polled feel less safe in the presence of a Chicago police officer

*Q. When you see a police officer in your neighborhood, does it make you feel safer, less safe, or does it make no difference?*



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



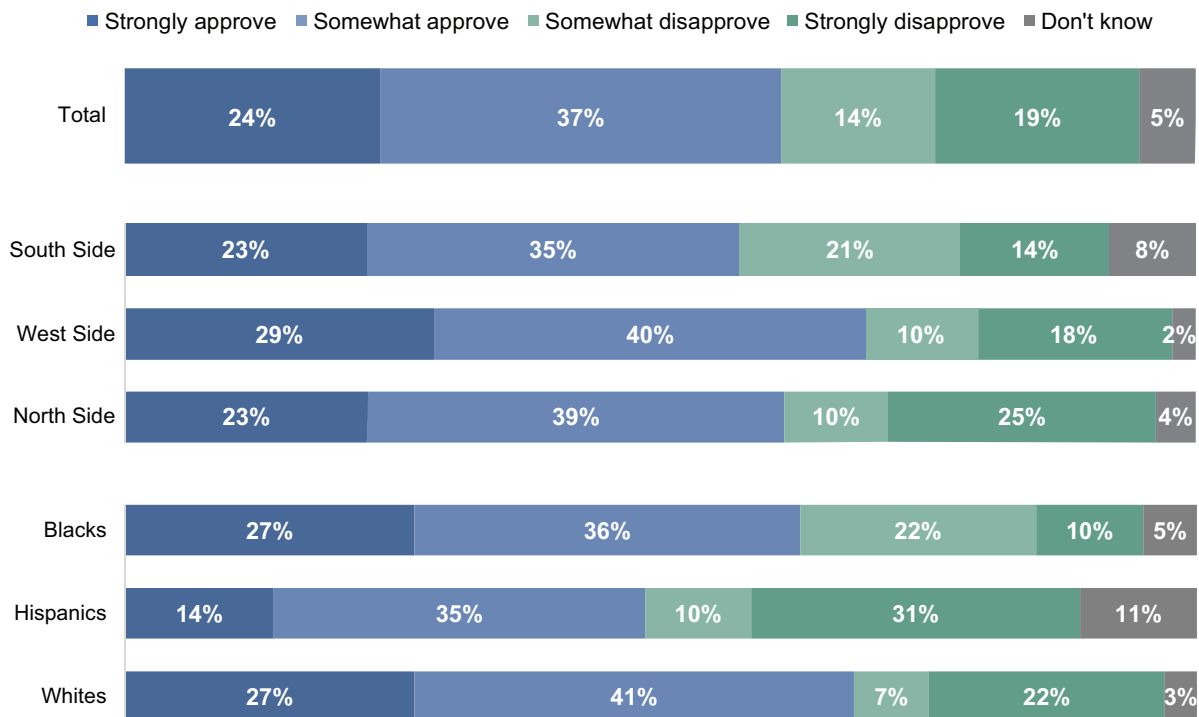
## Mayor Lightfoot has her work cut out for her on race and public safety

Of the 61% of respondents who approve of the job Mayor Lightfoot is doing, Chicago's white residents gave her the highest marks (68%), followed by blacks (63%) and then Hispanics (48%).

Her biggest support came from the West Side, where 69% of responders approved of her performance. South Side residents favored her performance the least, giving an approval rating of 57%.

### Over 60 percent of Chicagoans polled approve of Mayor Lori Lightfoot's job performance

*Q. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, or somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the job Lori Lightfoot is doing as Mayor of Chicago?*



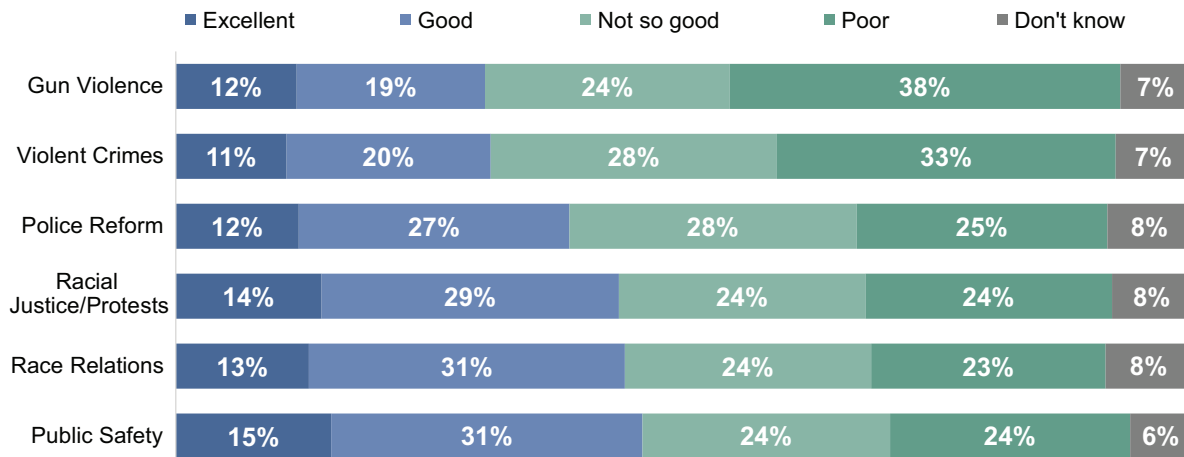
Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020

On individual issues, Mayor Lightfoot achieved her best ratings on her handling of the Coronavirus (58% excellent or good; 39% not so good or poor) and economic development (50% excellent or good; 37% not so good or poor). However, her ratings on those related to race relations and public safety are lower.

Lightfoot's handling of public safety has an approval rating of 46%. Her overall approval on racial justice is 44%. On police reform, 39%. And just 31% on gun violence.

**Only 30 to 46 percent of Chicagoans polled approve of Mayor Lori Lightfoot's handling of issues related to race and public safety**

*Q. How would you rate the job Mayor Lori Lightfoot is doing handling the following issues?*



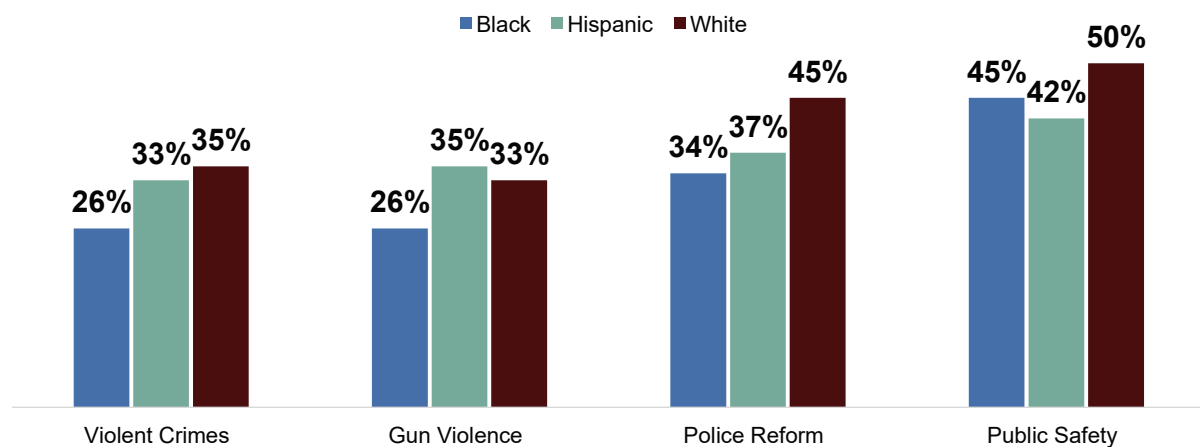
Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020



Her lowest approval ratings come from black Chicagoans. Just 26% approve of the way the mayor is handling both violent crime and gun violence.

**Chicagoans' approval of Mayor Lori Lightfoot's job performance varies widely by issue, race**

Percent of respondents who approve of Mayor Lightfoot's performance, by race/ethnicity



Source: Wirepoints/RCOR poll, October 2020

