

January 10, 2019

Dearborn Brand Development  
Individual Survey Findings 1.0

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## 1. Background and Methodology

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To guide development of the Dearborn brand strategy and ensure that the voices of Dearborn residents and stakeholders are incorporated throughout the process, the Dearborn Community Survey was developed to gather opinions, understand concerns and test hypotheses regarding the most salient elements of the lifestyle, reputation, economic and social future of Dearborn. Four versions of the Community Survey were developed:

- Dearborn Individual Survey (English)
- Dearborn Individual Survey (Arabic)
- Dearborn Business Owner Survey (English)
- Dearborn Business Owner Survey (Arabic)

The surveys were available online via the [www.brandingdearborn.com](http://www.brandingdearborn.com) site, and were also available to be taken in a paper version at sites throughout Dearborn.

Survey collection took place from November 1, 2018 through December 15, 2018. Respondents were encouraged to complete the entire survey but it was possible in all versions of the survey for respondents to skip questions. Percentages shown throughout this report reflect the percentage of respondents answering the question, rather than the percentage of total respondents taking the survey.

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## 2. Individual Survey Respondent Profile

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In total, over 1900 Dearborn individuals took the Individual Survey, with 1,880 taking the English version and 29 taking the Arabic version. (Note: in addition to those participants, 204 Arab-American Dearborn individuals took the survey in English, allowing for a statistically reliable sample of Arab-American Dearborn individuals.) However, not every participant answered every question, so that the sample for each question ranged from about 1200-1500, which still represents a highly reliable sample from which to draw conclusions. The demographics of our final sample were as follows:

- **Zip code:** 45% are from 48124 zip code; 18% from 48126; 15% from 48128; 5% from 48120. 17% listed their zip code as “other,” with the most common responses being 48101, 48125, 48127.
- **Community role:** 74% of survey respondents are residents, 18% are students, 13% are parents of students, 12% are business employees, 11% are educators/school employees, 8% are visitors/consumers, and 4% listed their role as “other,” for which the most common response was former resident.
- **Dearborn residency:** Of survey respondents who call themselves Dearborn residents, 36% have lived in Dearborn all their lives, 63% have not.
- **Length of Dearborn residency:** 4% have lived in Dearborn less than 2 years, 2-5 years: 7%; 6-9 years: 7% 10-19 years: 19%; 20-29 years: 19%; 30-39 years: 15%; 40+ years: 27%.

- **Age/Generations:** 26% of respondents are Millennials / Gen Z, 35% are Gen X, and 39% are Baby Boomers.
- **Education:** 30% have a Bachelor's degree, 32% have a graduate degree, 31% have some form of education past high school, but have not achieved a 4-year college degree.
- **Household Income:** 15% under \$40K, 20% \$40-75K, 36% \$75-150K, 12% \$150K+
- **Household size:** 18% 1-person household, 34% 2-person household, 43% 3/4/5-person households, 6% 6+person household
  - 20% have at least 1 child in the household ages 0-5; 22% have at least one child ages 6-10, 33% have at least one child ages 11-18.
  - 22% have someone 65+ living in the household; 78% do not.
- **Employment:** 61% are employed for wages, 18% retired, 9% students.
  - 22% work in education, 20% in business/managerial, 9% in STEM, 8% in Human Services, and 11% listed "other," many of which gave a more specific description of one of the listed categories.
- **Cultural background/race:** 69% are white/Caucasian, 14% Arab. All other races represented 3% or fewer of all respondents.
- **Home ownership:** 84% of those stating they are residents of Dearborn own their residence, 10% rent, and 6% live with someone who owns the residence but do not pay rent.

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### 3. Key Findings: Dearborn Perceptions

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**Dearborn is generally believed to be a good place to live. The community's "right size", cultural diversity, spiritual offerings and proximity to Detroit are all positives closely associated with Dearborn's identity.**

- The top 5 most agreed-with attributes of Dearborn were that it is "about the right size," (94% of those with an opinion agreed), "a good place to live," (93%), "a good place to find spiritual community," (91%) "being close to all of the resources and amenities of Downtown Detroit is a benefit of living in Dearborn." (91%), and "diverse" (90%).
- Following closely in agreement were the statements "Dearborn has a positive future" (88%), "Dearborn is a good place to raise children" (88%), "Dearborn is a good place for senior citizens to live" (87%).

**Respondents have strong positive associations with the people of Dearborn.**

- A large majority of individuals agreed that "residents have pride in Dearborn" (89%), that "Dearborn is welcoming to visitors and newcomers" (88%), that "people in Dearborn generally get along with each other" (86%) and "residents have a positive attitude towards attracting new business and industry" (85%).

**Community services also are highly regarded.**

- Individuals agreed that "Dearborn provides quality services for senior citizens" (87%), "Dearborn is a good place to do business" (84%), "Local businesses serve the needs of community residents" (82%), "Dearborn supports

healthy neighborhoods” (82%), and “Local government actively promotes industrial and commercial development” (81%).

- Further, 78% of individuals feel Dearborn “provides quality youth programs,” 77% agree that “Dearborn has good resources and programs to support people in need,” and 76% of individuals feel “Dearborn has good community leaders.”
- Still highly positive yet garnering a lower level of agreement, 67% of individuals said “the quality of education in our community is excellent.”

#### **Individuals agree that there are a variety of opportunities for activities and community in Dearborn.**

- 86% agree that “Dearborn has good cultural and arts offerings,” 84% feel that “Dearborn has good sports and recreational offerings,” and 81% say that “there are many opportunities to belong to groups sharing similar interests in our community.”

#### **Dearborn is widely believed to be a good tourist destination.**

- Individuals agree that “Dearborn has attractions you won’t find in other cities nearby” (87%), “Dearborn has plenty of good hotel and lodging options” (86%), and “Dearborn is an interesting and worthwhile tourism destination” (83%).

#### **Despite mostly positive impressions, individuals feel that others don’t see Dearborn positively.**

- Only 50% of individuals felt that “Dearborn has a positive reputation among people living in southeast Michigan,” and only 38% felt that “Dearborn has a positive image in the news media,” or that “Dearborn is an important shopping and entertainment destination for residents from surrounding towns and cities,” notably the two least agreed-with statements in the entire survey.

#### **Further, only a little more than half of individuals agree that Dearborn is a vibrant dining, shopping and entertainment scene**

- Only 55% of individuals agree that “Dearborn has vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment offerings.”
- This is reinforced by the fact that only 40% of individuals say Dearborn is their “primary destination for entertainment, dining and attractions.”

#### **And there is a sense that Dearborn isn’t a place that young people necessarily want to stay.**

- Despite 71% of individuals agreeing that younger residents are able to stay in Dearborn after completing their education, only 41% say younger people “would like to stay in our community after completing their education.”

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## 4. Key Findings: Dearborn Attractions and Activities

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**Dearborn individuals are evenly split between those who go out in Dearborn frequently and those who do not.**

- 51% say they go out in Dearborn “all the time” or “fairly often,” while 49% say they only go out “from time to time,” “rarely” or “never.”
- Further, 55% of Dearborn individuals say they “seek to stay current about new developments, and experience them regularly and often,” while 38% say “I’m not necessarily aware of what’s new but I visit my favorite destinations in Dearborn regularly”

**While the majority of Dearborn individuals say that Dearborn is not their primary destination for dining, entertainment and activities, some restaurants and attractions do appear to have a loyal following.**

- 61% of Dearborn individuals say Dearborn is not their primary destination for dining and entertainment. Among residents specifically, 56% say Dearborn is not their primary destination for dining and entertainment.
  - Those saying Dearborn is not their primary destination frequently cited other cities’ (Detroit, Ann Arbor, Novi, Royal Oak, Plymouth, Northville, etc.) offerings as being superior, while a few felt Dearborn wasn’t a safe nighttime destination. Others cited the lack of good restaurants outside of Middle Eastern offerings. A few felt there were no “respectable” or “safe” movie theaters in town.
  - Those who say Dearborn is their primary dining and entertainment destination commented on ease and proximity, and felt the variety of offerings in Dearborn was sufficient to meet their needs.
- Favorite restaurants in Dearborn included the Ford Garage, La Pita, Buddy’s, Mint, Andiamo, Brome, Roman Village, Al Ameer and LA Bistro.
- Favorite shopping destinations included Westborn Market, Fairlane Mall, Kroger, Target and Dearborn Music.
- Favorite arts/cultural experiences were the The Henry Ford, Greenfield Village, Ford Museum [all essentially the same destination], Arab American Museum and Dearborn Performing Arts Center.
- Only a few individuals cited favorite sporting/recreation destinations in Dearborn. Parks, pools, recreation centers, trails and walking were mentioned most frequently.
- Few individuals cited favorite nightlife destinations, but those who did most frequently mentioned Bar Louie and Bailey’s.
- Individuals listed a wide variety of places that “only locals know about,” but few destinations had a large share of mentions. Miller Bar, Biergarten and Dearborn’s trails received the most mentions.
- The Henry Ford and Greenfield Village were mentioned as “places to take visitors” with the highest frequency.
- Leon, Holiday Grill and Red Olive were most desirable breakfast spots in Dearborn individuals’ “perfect day” itineraries. Ford Garage, Brome and La Pita were top lunch destinations. Mint, Ford Garage, Andiamo and La Pita

were top dinner spots. The Henry Ford, Greenfield Village, and a walk or visit to a local park were top morning and afternoon activities. A movie or a visit to Bar Louie were top post-dinner activities.

### **The Homecoming Festival, Farmers Market and events in Greenfield Village are the most widely attended activities in Dearborn.**

- 58% of individuals say they have visited the Dearborn Homecoming Festival (which was also the most mentioned festival in open-ended responses), and the same percentage say they have visited the Dearborn Farmers and Artisan Market. 51% have visited Henry Ford's Holiday Nights in Greenfield Village and 45% have visited Henry Ford's Hallowe'en in Greenfield Village. Following at a distance were the Memorial Day Parade (38%), Dearborn Restaurant Week (28%) and Taste of Dearborn (26%).
- Least visited activities were the Eastern Cleanup (2%), Tunes@Noon (2%) and the EDDDA Holiday Open House (2%).

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## **5. Key Findings: Civic Pride, Advocacy and Attachment**

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### **Most Dearborn individuals are proud of Dearborn and would recommend it to others thinking of moving here or visiting.**

- 34% of Dearborn individuals rate their pride in Dearborn a 9- or 10-out-of-10, and 54% of Dearborn individuals chose an 8, 9 or 10 to describe their pride in Dearborn. Only 5% said they are not at all proud to live in Dearborn (1 or 2 rating).
- Likewise, 34% of Dearborn individuals rate their willingness to recommend Dearborn as a 9- or 10-out-of-10, and 53% chose an 8, 9 or 10 for this measure.

### **Perhaps driving this pride are a sense that Dearborn is a little bit different than other neighboring cities.**

- Dearborn's diversity was the top-stated aspect that "makes Dearborn different from the cities surrounding it." The community's history and city services were also cited.
- The Henry Ford, good city services and great Middle Eastern Food were mentioned most often as things that Dearborn offers that are "better than any other nearby city." Diversity was also mentioned.

### **However, more practical reasons drive the choice to move to Dearborn.**

- Among those who chose to move to Dearborn (vs having been born here), 56% chose it for its safety, 54% chose it for its proximity to their work, 50% chose it for its appealing neighborhoods, and 45% chose it for its reasonable cost of living.

### **The bulk of Dearborn residents plan to stay in Dearborn.**

- 68% of Dearborn residents say they "plan to stay in Dearborn for the foreseeable future", while only 8% say they do not. 23% say they are "not sure."

- That said, if an opportunity to move came up, more than 40% of Dearborn individuals wouldn't "mind" moving, indicating that while Dearborn may be different and desirable, other cities may match or exceed it in appeal.
  - 57% of Dearborn individuals said they would mind moving (21% "a lot" and 36% "a little"), while 43% of Dearborn individuals said they wouldn't mind (19% "wouldn't mind much" and 25% "wouldn't mind at all").
  - Ann Arbor, Detroit and Plymouth were the most desirable places to live "besides Dearborn."

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## 6. Key Findings: Generational Differences

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**Younger Dearborn individuals (Millennials and Gen Zs) are generally less attached to Dearborn than their older peers, particularly those in the Baby Boomer generation.**

- While 39% of Boomers rated their pride in Dearborn a 9- or 10-out-of-10, only 29% of Millennials did so.
- While 37% of Boomers rated their willingness to recommend Dearborn a 9- or 10-out-of-10, only 29% of Millennials did so.
- While 95% of Boomers agree with the statement that "Dearborn is a good place to live" 89% of Millennials/Gen Zs agree with that statement. Notably, however, the two generations rate younger residents' desire to stay in Dearborn similarly (41% and 40%).
- 53% of Millennials plan to stay in Dearborn for the foreseeable future while 74% of Boomers plan to stay.
- 52% of Millennials would mind moving away from Dearborn, while 59% of Boomers would mind moving away from Dearborn.

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## 7. Key Findings: Cultural/racial Differences

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**While civic pride and willingness to recommend Dearborn are similar across cultural/racial groups, Arab American individuals tend to have a more positive view of Dearborn than their non-Arab American peers on a number of other measures.**

- 67% of Dearborn individuals identifying as Arab agree that "Dearborn has vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment offerings," while 53% of Dearborn individuals identifying as Non-Arab did so.
- 51% of Arab individuals agree that "younger residents would like to stay in Dearborn after completing their education, while 38% of Non-Arab individuals agree with that statement.
- 78% of Arab individuals agree that "younger residents are able to stay in Dearborn after completing their education," while 70% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 80% of Arab individuals agree that "Dearborn has all the amenities of a big city while still feeling like a tight knit community" while 71% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 42% of Arab individuals agree that "Dearborn has a positive image in the news media," while 34% of Non-Arab individuals agree. Similarly, 65% of Arab individuals agree that "Dearborn has a positive reputation among people living in Southeast Michigan," while 46% of Non-Arab individuals agree.

- 62% of Arab individuals agree that “Dearborn is an important shopping and entertainment destination for residents from surrounding towns and cities, while 33% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 67% of Arab individuals agree that the people in Dearborn “are generally satisfied with the way things are,” while 57% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 87% of Arab individuals agree that “Dearborn has good resources to support people in need,” while only 77% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 50% of Arab individuals agree Dearborn is their “primary destination for entertainment, dining and attractions,” while 39% of Non-Arab individuals agree.

**There are a few areas where Arab individuals are less positive about Dearborn than their Non-Arab peers.**

- 70% of Arab individuals agree that “Our community has quality youth programs,” while 83% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 74% of Arab individuals agree that “Dearborn is an interesting and worthwhile tourist destination,” while 87% of Non-Arab individuals agree.
- 70% of Arab individuals agree that “Dearborn has attractions you won’t find in other cities nearby,” while 93% of Non-Arab agree.

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## 8. Selected Quotes

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**Aside from great people, what makes Dearborn different from the cities surrounding it?**

- **Diversity and cultural richness:** “Dearborn is actually a completely unique city. It is incredibly diverse in nationality, ethnicity, and religion. It's one of the few places in Michigan where there is an unspoken second language. It's a central place in the world to learn about Islam, to understand immigration from several Middle Eastern countries to the US, to really know what Arab American means. It is so rich in authentic food through small businesses. It's also a place full of city and community leaders who are brown, who are Muslim, who are immigrants. It's a powerful place.”
- **A diverse community and big-city features:** “The diversity is wonderful, and one of the things that I'd miss about leaving. Also, seriously, we have a university, a museum and a world headquarters in our city!”
- **Unpretentious and affordable:** “Dearborn has the potential to be the affordable Birmingham, and the unpretentious Royal Oak in Wayne County. Perhaps if more persuasion in branding our openness to diversity and inclusion were to occur, we could be Wayne County's Birmingham, Royal Oak, and Ferndale combined, but it takes time to heal old lapses of discrimination (ie. the Orville Hubbard statue). If mass transit to Detroit/Ann Arbor/DTW happens, there is no city most uniquely positioned to have an advantage. Dearborn Heights has nothing on Dearborn, and their lack of a downtown is what most prevents the success of their community. Dearborn offers those surrounding residents lacking a main street presence, the local connection to a established city with 3 different downtowns.”

- **Strong sense of community:** "A sense of community that I think is stronger than a lot of other places. Many of my friends find it so surprising that we still have block parties. They've moved a bit west to more impressive sounding cities but know none of their neighbors."
- **Small-town feeling and meaningful history:** "It's a big city that feels like a small town. Also the history. Not the racist Hubbard parts, but the legit focus on the city's history."
- **Kind people, a diverse perspective:** "It is the people. Dearborn is different and interesting because we have a diverse, kind community "

### **What does Dearborn offer that's better than any other city in metro Detroit?**

- **The best combination of features in the area:** "Diversity plus a downtown. Southfield is diverse but it has that post WW2 sprawl thing going. Royal Oak has a great downtown, but the city isn't diverse. Birmingham is lovely, but who can afford to live there?"
- **A wide array of meaningful amenities:** "Endless sidewalks - two colleges - one of Michigan's most popular tourist attractions - Ford World Headquarters - a train station - one of the largest civic centers - a defunct but enormous mall - a once amazing Hyatt Hotel (which should now be rented as micro apartments and/or dorms) - proximity to Detroit - once beautiful Fairlane Club - poorly managed Dearborn Country Club - Dearborn Hills - Ford Field Park - Rouge River for canoe and kayak - unkept but could be amazing Hines Park - but somehow we can't seem to manage to connect them all for one amazing destination. First - link them all with sidewalks and bike paths - and not just the Rouge Gateway Trail but also along Evergreen which is more well lit and high profile. Clean up Hines - from Plymouth north it is a different more improved park - Dearborn's end - not pristine - shady characters - poorly maintained - uncalled for."
- **City services and upkeep:** "City services - Hands down nobody beats Dearborn here. Police, fire, medical - top notch. The city also keeps our roads clean and grass cut which you don't see many cities doing."
- **Parks and recreational opportunities:** "Recreational services like pools and swimming lessons, senior activities, and youth sports organizations"
- **Arab American culture that infuses the city:** "Strong Arab American population with their cultural foods, markets, and presence."
- **World class Homecoming festival:** "Homecoming! The three days of Homecoming are better than any other city's festival in America."