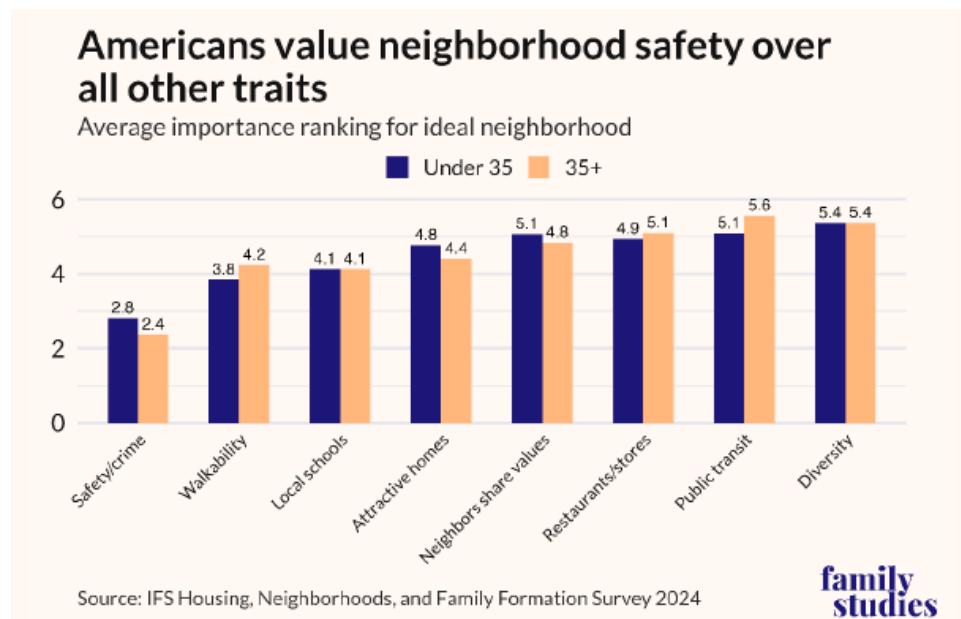


Homes for Young Families: Fact Sheet on Safety, Crime, and Housing

For decades, one of the dominant trends in American housing geography has been suburbanization, which has always been associated with public narratives around crime. In [*Homes for Young Families: A Pro-family Housing Agenda*](#), our survey of almost 9,000 Americans finds that safety is the single most important factor shaping the housing decisions of young families. No amount of affordability or amenities will ever be enough to convince a family that a neighborhood where they feel unsafe is a great place to raise kids.

Americans Value Safety and Low Crime Far Above Other Factors.

- When asked to rank neighborhood traits in order of priority, survey respondents placed safety and low crime far ahead of any trait, and this was true for every demographic subgroup.



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- Likewise, in a forced choice experiment, Americans value the difference between a low- vs. high-crime neighborhood about three times as much as the difference between a single-family home and an apartment.
- In fact, survey respondents are more willing to crowd into a 1- or 2-bedroom unit than accept higher crime: they rated crime gaps 2-3 times as important as monthly housing costs.

Crimes of Public Disorder Matter for Housing

- For most people, their experiences of crime in their neighborhood come from things like car break-ins, vandalism, public drug use, police visits to neighbors' homes due to domestic violence, or even reckless driving.
- To a considerable extent, then, making neighborhoods safe for families is about crimes that can be categorized as crimes of *public disorder* or even a lack of *neighborliness*, rather than homicide statistics.

Safe Schools, Attractive Homes, and Neighborhood Walkability

- After safety, school quality is one of the highest-valued neighborhood traits, alongside attractive homes and walkability. But even these factors may be related: children facing crime or violence at home likely underperform at school.
- Walkability obviously relates to crime as unsafe neighborhoods are not safe for kids to walk to a friend's house, and attractively kept homes clearly relate to crimes of public disorder, since high crime rates can lead to worsening care of local properties, and vice versa.
- Overall, our report suggests that a central part of any successful pro-family housing policy is to improve conditions for crime and public order. The plateau or even increase in various crime rates and kinds of public disorder (including public drug use) must be addressed. The trend of declining crime in the 1990s and early 2000s must be resumed, such that crime rates are *materially lower* than the recent past.

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