



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 22, 2020

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact: Linda Russell  
901.385.4230  
lrsell8@memphis.edu

**MURDERS AND AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS GO UP;  
ENCOURAGING DECLINES IN ROBBERIES AND BURGLARIES CONTINUE**

**MEMPHIS** - The University of Memphis (UofM) Public Safety Institute and the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission have released preliminary crime figures from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) for the first three quarters of 2020 (January-September) compared to certain previous years. In some cases, the figures reflect significant changes during the COVID-19 pandemic period of April-September compared to figures released earlier for just the first quarter of the year (January-March).

A disturbing change is in the major violent crime rate (based on reported murders, robberies, rapes and aggravated assaults). At the end of the first quarter, the major violent crime rate actually dropped 4.3% in the City of Memphis and 5.2% countywide compared to the first quarter of 2019. The decline was driven by significant declines in reported robberies and aggravated assaults. However, taking the COVID-19 months of April-September into account, the major violent crime rate is up 17.6% in Memphis and 17.1% countywide for the first three quarters of the year compared to 2019.

The increase in the major violent crime rate is attributable to significant increases in murders (up an alarming 62.7% in Memphis and 55.1% countywide) and aggravated assaults (up 27.2% in Memphis and 26.6% throughout the county), reversing the decline during the first quarter of the year. Both murders and aggravated assaults often involve perpetrators and victims who know each other.

On the other hand, during the COVID-19 months of April-September, the rate of reported robberies – where the victims are usually random and unknown to the perpetrators – continued a three-year decline. Through September, reported robberies were down 14.7% in Memphis and 15.5% countywide compared to the first three quarters of 2019. This continues a longer-term downward trend. Since 2016, in Memphis, the rate of reported robberies has plummeted 34.1% and an even more significant 59.8% compared to 2006.

There was encouraging news on the major property crime rate as well (which includes reported burglaries, motor vehicle thefts and other felony thefts). Overall, the major property crime rate was down 12.2% in Memphis and 11.7% throughout the county, driven by a very significant decrease in the burglary rate – minus 27.5% in Memphis and minus 26.3% countywide compared to the first three quarters of last year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, more people have been at home, especially during the day, likely serving as a deterrent to would-be burglars.

The reduction in reported burglaries is a continuation of an ongoing downward trend. In Memphis, there were 6,832 reported burglaries during the first three quarters of 2016 and an alarming 12,478 in 2006. The number stands at 4,055 so far this year. Since 2016, Memphis has benefitted from a 40.5% drop in the rate of reported burglaries and a dramatic decline of 66.8% since 2006.

The overall crime rate is measured by 54 separate types of “Group A crimes” tracked by the TBI. While not as dramatic as the reduction in robberies and burglaries, the overall crime rate has also shown a relatively consistent downward trend. In Memphis, the overall crime rate dropped 4.1% compared to the first three quarters of 2019 and 5.3% countywide. Compared to 2006, the decline is 25.0% in Memphis and 27.9% countywide.

“The increases in murders and aggravated assaults are occurring in cities across the country during the pandemic. We are not alone. Many of these crimes involve perpetrators and victims who know each other, which probably reflects the increased stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, we can be encouraged by continuing and consistent declines in robberies and burglaries. While still a problem, the chances of being a random victim of a robbery or burglary are down considerably,” said Bill Gibbons, president of the Crime Commission and executive director of the UofM Public Safety Institute.

**About the Crime Statistics:** In measuring overall crime rates and trends, the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and the Public Safety Institute use data reported by local enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS), which was developed and is maintained by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. An incident is defined in TIBRS as “one or more offenses committed by the same offender or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place.” Certain types of violent crimes and domestic violence offenses, however, uniquely refer to a victim count versus an incident count. All rates are calculated based on per 100,000 population.

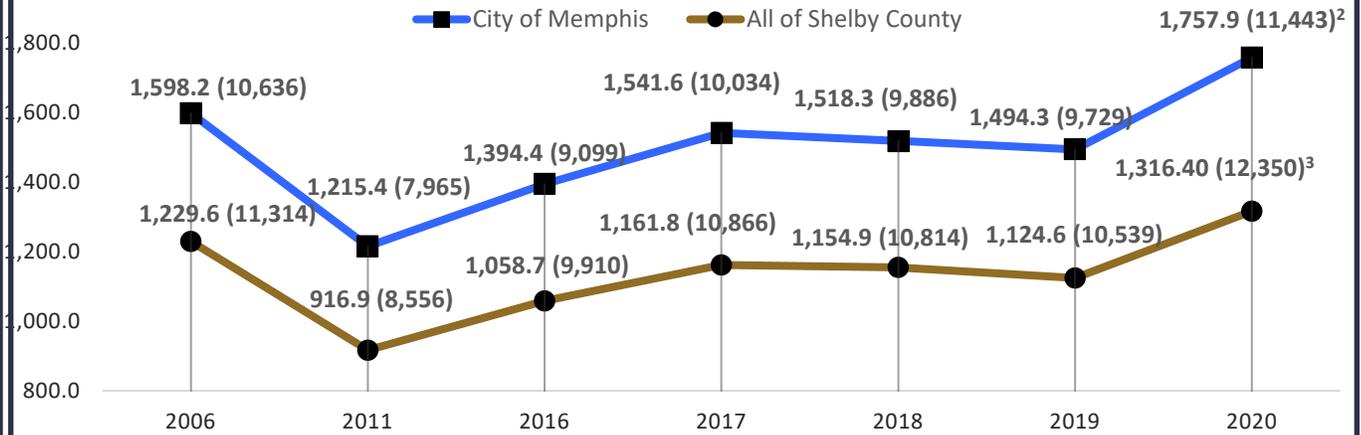
###

**About the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission ([www.memphiscrime.org](http://www.memphiscrime.org)):** Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is an independent, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that “quarterbacks” the work of the Safe Community Plan and its partners. It is funded through the generous contributions of many private sector donors. Ben Adams, chairman emeritus of Baker Donelson law firm, serves as chair of the board, and Bill Gibbons serves as president of the Commission.

**About the Safe Community Plan ([www.memphiscrime.org](http://www.memphiscrime.org)):** Launched in 2007, the Safe Community Plan, an action plan spearheaded by the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, is a community-based crime reduction initiative. Implementation of the Safe Community Plan is chaired by Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weirich.

**About the Public Safety Institute ([www.memphis.edu/psi/](http://www.memphis.edu/psi/)):** The Public Safety Institute of the University of Memphis is an interdisciplinary part of the University community committed to identifying and advancing best practices in the field of public safety. It is housed in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. Bill Gibbons serves as executive director.

**MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME**  
**JANUARY – SEPTEMBER**  
*(Incidents Per 100,000 Population and Numbers)<sup>1</sup>*



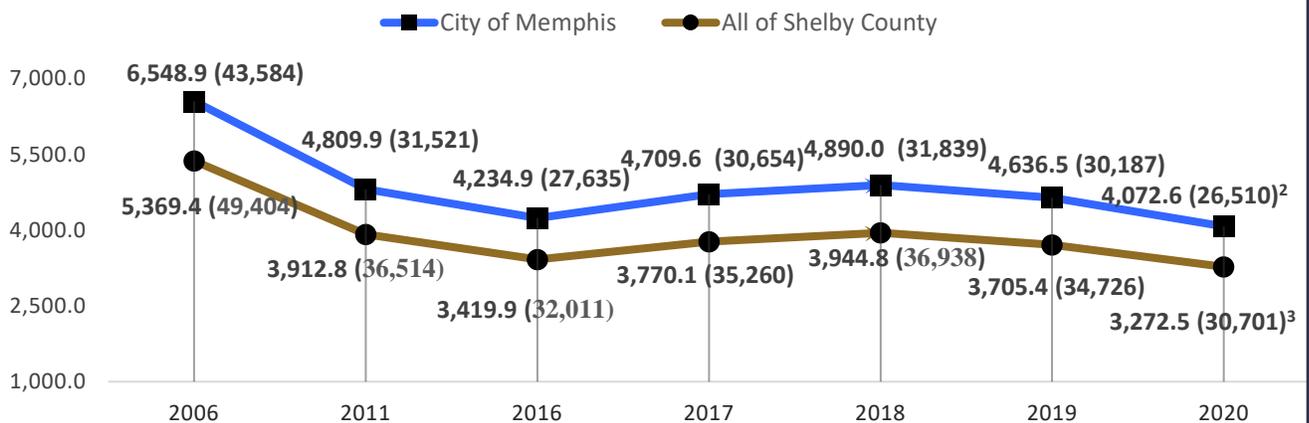
<sup>1</sup> Includes murders, forcible rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2020 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is an increase of 10.0 percent from 2006 and an increase of 17.6 percent from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is an increase of 7.1 percent from 2006 and an increase of 17.1 percent from 2019 in all of Shelby County.

**MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME**  
**JANUARY - SEPTEMBER**  
*(Incidents Per 100,000 Population and Numbers)<sup>1</sup>*



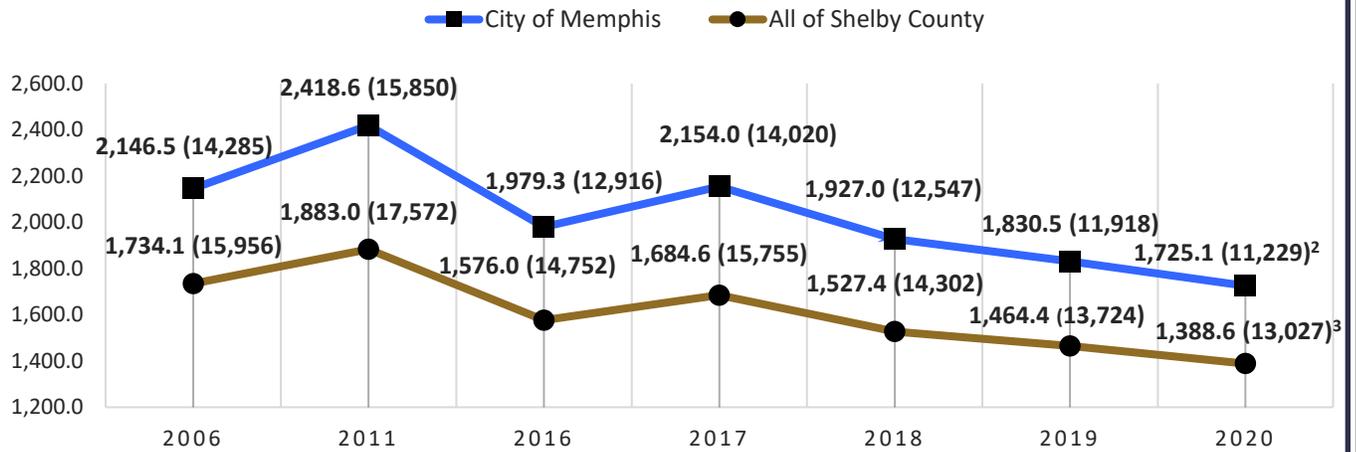
<sup>1</sup> Includes burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and other felony thefts.

Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2019 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 37.8 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 12.2 percent from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 39.1 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 11.7 percent from 2019 in all of Shelby County.

**REPORTED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENSES**  
**JANUARY - SEPTEMBER**  
**(RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION AND NUMBERS)<sup>1</sup>**

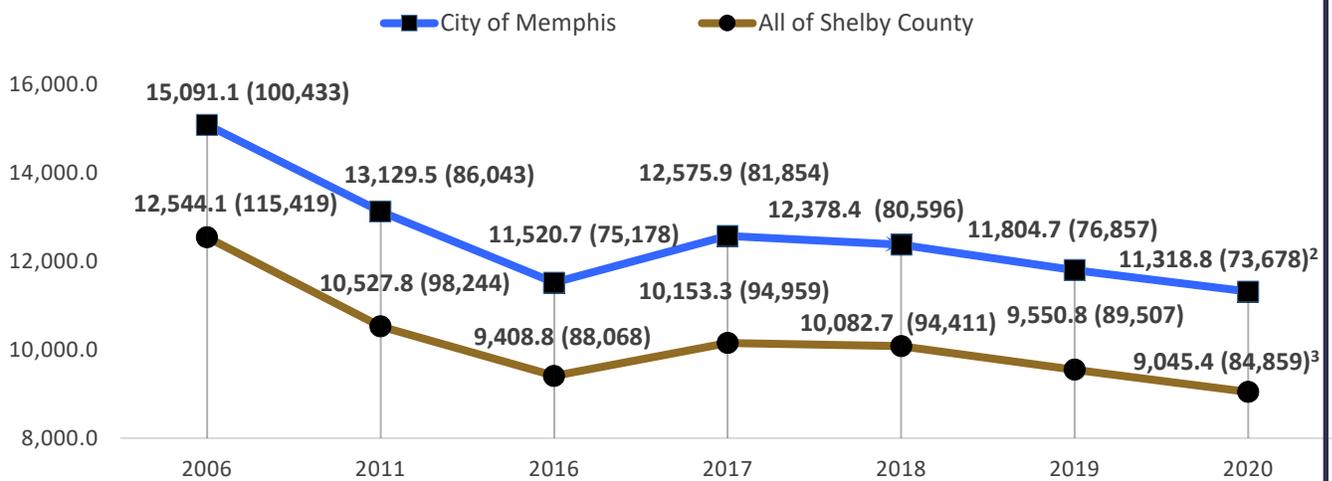


<sup>1</sup> Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2020 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 19.6 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 5.8 percent from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 19.9 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 5.2 percent from 2019 in all of Shelby County.

**OVERALL CRIME**  
**JANUARY - SEPTEMBER**  
**(Incidents Per 100,000 Population and Numbers)<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The overall crime rate is measured by 54 separate types of "Group A crimes" tracked by the T.B.I. Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2020 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a 25.0 percent decrease from 2006 and a 4.1 percent decrease from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a 27.9 percent decrease from 2006 and a 5.3 percent decrease from 2019 for all of Shelby County.

**Table 2.2 Memphis, TN: Crime Rates: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Memphis, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES											
CRIME RATES (Offenses per 100,000 Population*)											
January 1 - September 30, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder <sup>2</sup>	18.2	13.4	22.1	21.2	20.3	20.6	33.5	84.2%	149.4%	51.8%	62.7%
Rape <sup>2,3</sup>	61.0	62.0	66.5	73.3	64.8	58.4	45.0	-26.2%	-27.3%	-32.3%	-22.9%
Aggravated Assault <sup>2,4</sup>	909.4	798.5	933.7	1051.7	1083.9	1128.0	1434.2	57.7%	79.6%	53.6%	27.2%
Robbery	609.6	341.5	372.1	395.5	349.4	287.4	245.2	-59.8%	-28.2%	-34.1%	-14.7%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>2,4</sup></b>	<b>1598.2</b>	<b>1215.4</b>	<b>1394.4</b>	<b>1541.6</b>	<b>1518.3</b>	<b>1494.3</b>	<b>1757.9</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
Burglary	1874.9	1432.7	1047.0	1066.6	972.3	859.8	622.9	-66.8%	-56.5%	-40.5%	-27.5%
Theft Offenses	3914.1	2985.6	2827.4	3186.8	3400.8	3301.9	2955.9	-24.5%	-1.0%	4.5%	-10.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	759.9	391.6	360.6	456.3	516.8	474.8	493.7	-35.0%	26.1%	36.9%	4.0%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>6548.9</b>	<b>4809.9</b>	<b>4234.9</b>	<b>4709.6</b>	<b>4890.0</b>	<b>4636.5</b>	<b>4072.6</b>	<b>-37.8%</b>	<b>-15.3%</b>	<b>-3.8%</b>	<b>-12.2%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>5</sup>	2514.2	2754.1	2075.7	2148.2	2002.3	1835.3	1580.2	-37.1%	-42.6%	-23.9%	-13.9%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>6</sup>	563.9	604.0	417.1	397.8	397.8	340.4	377.8	-33.0%	-37.5%	-9.4%	11.0%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>6</sup>	167.8	159.9	125.8	147.0	152.2	139.0	283.4	68.9%	77.2%	125.3%	103.9%
Domestic Violence	2146.5	2418.6	1979.3	2154.0	1927.0	1830.5	1725.1	-19.6%	-28.7%	-12.8%	-5.8%
Total Group A Offenses <sup>7</sup>	15091.1	13129.5	11520.7	12575.9	12378.4	11804.7	11318.8	-25.0%	-13.8%	-1.8%	-4.1%
Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm <sup>7</sup>			1002.1	1136.8	1131.8	1118.3	1544.1			54.1%	38.1%

\* Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.

\* Rates and population figures are based on 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. The latest estimates available, 2019 Estimates, are used to calculate the 2020 population estimates based on the UCR methodology which are then used for calculating the rates for 2020.

POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	665,512	655,341	652,548	650,878	651,104	651,073	650,937

**Table 2.1 Memphis, TN: Number of Offenses: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Memphis, TN - TIBRS <sup>1</sup> GROUP A OFFENSES											
January 1 - September 30, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder <sup>2</sup>	121	88	144	138	132	134	218	80.2%	147.7%	51.4%	62.7%
Rape <sup>2,3</sup>	406	406	434	477	422	380	293	-27.8%	-27.8%	-32.5%	-22.9%
Aggravated Assault <sup>2,4</sup>	6,052	5,233	6,093	6,845	7,057	7,344	9,336	54.3%	78.4%	53.2%	27.1%
Robbery	4,057	2,238	2,428	2,574	2,275	1,871	1,596	-60.7%	-28.7%	-34.3%	-14.7%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>2,4</sup></b>	<b>10,636</b>	<b>7,965</b>	<b>9,099</b>	<b>10,034</b>	<b>9,886</b>	<b>9,729</b>	<b>11,443</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>43.7%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
Burglary	12,478	9,389	6,832	6,942	6,331	5,598	4,055	-67.5%	-56.8%	-40.6%	-27.6%
Theft Offenses	26,049	19,566	18,450	20,742	22,143	21,498	19,241	-26.1%	-1.7%	4.3%	-10.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5,057	2,566	2,353	2,970	3,365	3,091	3,214	-36.4%	25.3%	36.6%	4.0%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>43,584</b>	<b>31,521</b>	<b>27,635</b>	<b>30,654</b>	<b>31,839</b>	<b>30,187</b>	<b>26,510</b>	<b>-39.2%</b>	<b>-15.9%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>	<b>-12.2%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>5</sup>	16,732	18,049	13,545	13,982	13,037	11,949	10,286	-38.5%	-43.0%	-24.1%	-13.9%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>6</sup>	3,753	3,958	2,722	2,589	2,590	2,216	2,459	-34.5%	-37.9%	-9.7%	11.0%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>6</sup>	1,117	1,048	821	957	991	905	1,845	65.2%	76.0%	124.7%	103.9%
Domestic Violence	14,285	15,850	12,916	14,020	12,547	11,918	11,229	-21.4%	-29.2%	-13.1%	-5.8%
<b>Total Group A Offenses<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>100,433</b>	<b>86,043</b>	<b>75,178</b>	<b>81,854</b>	<b>80,596</b>	<b>76,857</b>	<b>73,678</b>	<b>-26.6%</b>	<b>-14.4%</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>
<b>Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm<sup>8</sup></b>			<b>6,539</b>	<b>7,399</b>	<b>7,369</b>	<b>7,281</b>	<b>10,051</b>			<b>53.7%</b>	<b>38.0%</b>

<sup>8</sup> Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2019.

**Table 1.2 Shelby County, TN: Crime Rates: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Shelby County, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES											
CRIME RATES (Offenses per 100,000 Population*)											
January 1 - September 30, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder	13.3	10.1	17.0	15.0	14.6	15.3	23.7	78.5%	134.9%	39.3%	55.1%
Rape <sup>2</sup>	49.5	49.8	52.7	57.8	51.7	46.8	36.1	-26.9%	-27.5%	-31.4%	-22.9%
Aggravated Assault <sup>3</sup>	711.4	610.0	717.7	803.7	833.3	852.0	1078.8	51.6%	76.9%	50.3%	26.6%
Robbery	455.5	247.0	271.4	285.3	255.2	210.4	177.8	-61.0%	-28.0%	-34.5%	-15.5%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>1229.6</b>	<b>916.9</b>	<b>1058.7</b>	<b>1181.8</b>	<b>1154.9</b>	<b>1124.6</b>	<b>1316.4</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
Burglary	1518.2	1129.2	815.8	819.9	763.8	664.3	489.5	-67.8%	-56.7%	-40.0%	-26.3%
Theft Offenses	3254.2	2480.2	2318.4	2598.9	2770.4	2652.3	2396.8	-26.3%	-3.4%	3.4%	-9.6%
Motor Vehicle Theft	597.0	303.4	285.7	351.3	410.6	388.8	386.3	-35.3%	27.3%	35.2%	-0.7%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>5369.4</b>	<b>3912.8</b>	<b>3419.9</b>	<b>3770.1</b>	<b>3944.8</b>	<b>3705.4</b>	<b>3272.5</b>	<b>-39.1%</b>	<b>-16.4%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>-11.7%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>4</sup>	2070.7	2155.2	1696.3	1737.5	1642.7	1518.9	1290.7	-37.7%	-40.1%	-23.9%	-15.0%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>5</sup>	568.8	533.4	411.7	395.0	418.1	358.4	361.9	-36.4%	-32.2%	-12.1%	1.0%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>5</sup>	144.1	129.7	115.0	131.3	135.5	120.8	217.3	50.8%	67.6%	89.1%	79.9%
Domestic Violence	1734.1	1883.0	1576.0	1684.6	1527.4	1464.4	1388.6	-19.9%	-26.3%	-11.9%	-5.2%
Total Group A Offenses <sup>6</sup>	12544.1	10527.8	9408.8	10153.3	10082.7	9550.8	9045.4	-27.9%	-14.1%	-3.9%	-5.3%
Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm <sup>6</sup>			754.9	852.3	855.6	837.2	1145.6			51.8%	36.8%

\* Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.

\* Rates and population figures are based on 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. The latest estimates available, 2019 Estimates, are used to calculate the 2020 population estimates based on the UCR methodology which are then used for calculating the rates for 2020.

POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	920,106	933,186	936,021	935,251	936,365	937,166	938,143

**Table 1.1 Shelby County, TN: Number of Offenses: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Shelby County, TN - TIBRS <sup>1</sup> GROUP A OFFENSES											
January 1 - September 30, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder	122	94	159	140	137	143	222	82.0%	136.2%	39.6%	55.2%
Rape <sup>2</sup>	455	465	493	541	484	439	339	-25.5%	-27.1%	-31.2%	-22.8%
Aggravated Assault <sup>3</sup>	6,546	5,692	6,718	7,517	7,803	7,985	10,121	54.6%	77.8%	50.7%	26.8%
Robbery	4,191	2,305	2,540	2,668	2,390	1,972	1,668	-60.2%	-27.6%	-34.3%	-15.4%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>11,314</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>9,910</b>	<b>10,866</b>	<b>10,814</b>	<b>10,539</b>	<b>12,350</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>
Burglary	13,969	10,538	7,636	7,668	7,152	6,226	4,592	-67.1%	-56.4%	-39.9%	-26.2%
Theft Offenses	29,942	23,145	21,701	24,306	25,941	24,856	22,485	-24.9%	-2.9%	3.6%	-9.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5,493	2,831	2,674	3,286	3,845	3,644	3,624	-34.0%	28.0%	35.5%	-0.5%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>49,404</b>	<b>36,514</b>	<b>32,011</b>	<b>35,260</b>	<b>36,938</b>	<b>34,726</b>	<b>30,701</b>	<b>-37.9%</b>	<b>-15.9%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>	<b>-11.6%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>4</sup>	19,053	20,112	15,878	16,250	15,382	14,235	12,109	-36.4%	-39.8%	-23.7%	-14.9%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>5</sup>	5,234	4,978	3,854	3,694	3,915	3,359	3,395	-35.1%	-31.8%	-11.9%	1.1%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>5</sup>	1,326	1,210	1,076	1,228	1,269	1,132	2,039	53.8%	68.5%	89.5%	80.1%
Domestic Violence	15,956	17,572	14,752	15,755	14,302	13,724	13,027	-18.4%	-25.9%	-11.7%	-5.1%
<b>Total Group A Offenses<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>115,419</b>	<b>98,244</b>	<b>88,068</b>	<b>94,959</b>	<b>94,411</b>	<b>89,507</b>	<b>84,859</b>	<b>-26.5%</b>	<b>-13.6%</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>
<b>Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm<sup>6</sup></b>			<b>7,066</b>	<b>7,971</b>	<b>8,012</b>	<b>7,846</b>	<b>10,747</b>			<b>52.1%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.