

## Bi-weekly Residential Curbside Waste and Recycling Services Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2017

---

© 2017 Lethbridge College

**Faron Ellis, PhD**  
**Research Chair**

[faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ca)  
[www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl](http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl)

Lethbridge College  
3000 College Drive South  
Lethbridge AB T1K 1L6



## Methodology

**Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 96,828 residents (2016 census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (77,500). A total of 47,457 Lethbridge residents are male (49%) while 49,371 are female (51%). South Lethbridge is home to 31,720 residents (32.8%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 37,929 residents (39.2%). There are 27,179 north Lethbridge residents (28.1%).

**Sample Data** Collected by Lethbridge College students in 11 courses enrolled in a variety of Lethbridge College programs in the winter of 2017. Students interviewed 1,501 randomly selected adult Lethbridge residents by telephone on February 11-16, 2017 under the supervision of CSRL Research Chair, Faron Ellis. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes and results from previous Lethbridge and Alberta Public Opinion Studies can be accessed by visiting the CSRL web pages at: [www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/go/csrl](http://www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/go/csrl).

**Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted to even better reflect that of the population (sex, age, and area of the city of Lethbridge).

**Confidence** The sample yields a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing subsamples of the data.

**IB Commons Call Centre** The CSRL operates as a division of the Centre for Applied Arts and Sciences. Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre, drawing on support from the Lethbridge College Facility Management, Instructional Technology, Audio Visual, and the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation.

**Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the attitudes and opinions of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions was derived from student, faculty and community interest in the topic.

## Curbside Recycling in Lethbridge

Lethbridge City Council has repeatedly debated, and until recently rejected the idea of universal curbside blue-bin recycling services. During its 2014 operating budget deliberations, the current council deferred decision on curbside recycling until early 2015 when it debated and rejected four new curbside recycling and waste collection options. For a comprehensive report on public opinion at the time, see [CSRL – Curbside Recycling Options: Lethbridge Public Opinion Study, Winter 2015](#).

In November of 2016 council revisited the issue and decided by an eight-to-one vote to adopt the previously debated Option 3 that will reduce residential curbside waste collection to bi-weekly from the existing weekly collection service and introduce bi-weekly residential blue-bin curbside recycling services on alternate weeks at an additional cost of \$7 per month.

When asked to express their opinions about the City of Lethbridge's new plans for bi-weekly curbside waste and recycling collection, Lethbridge residents are divided: 50.6% are supportive while 49.4% are opposed. Lethbridge opinion is not only evenly divided, it is also very polarized, with the largest plurality of residents strongly opposed (34.9%), and the second largest group strongly supportive (28.1%). The remainder is somewhat supportive (22.5%) or somewhat opposed (14.5%).

### Bi-weekly Curbside Waste and Recycling Services (%)

Strongly support	28.1		
Somewhat support	22.5	Support	50.6
Somewhat oppose	14.5	Oppose	49.4
Strongly oppose	34.9		

- A majority of women are supportive (56.1%), while a majority of men are opposed (55.4%)
- A majority of westside residents are supportive (58.1%), while a majority of northside residents are opposed (60.1%), Southside residents are more evenly divided on the issue (51.6% supportive and 48.4% opposed)
- Majorities of upper-income (55.2%) and lower-income residents (61.6%) are supportive, but middle income residents are more evenly split (52.3% opposed and 47.7% supportive).
- A majority of university graduates is supportive (58.3%), as are those with some post-secondary education (56.3%), but a majority of those with a high school education or less is opposed (63.5%). College and technical school graduates are more evenly divided (53.0% opposed and 47.0% supportive).
- Age is the most significant predictor of opinion with sizable majorities of the youth aged 18 to 29 years old (66.0%) and gen-Xers aged 30 to 44 (69.8%) supportive. However, a majority of boomers (45 to 64 years of age) are opposed (53.4%). Seniors are most opposed (69.5%), with a clear majority of seniors strongly opposed (56.6%).

## Bi-weekly waste and recycling collection (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Support	44.6	56.1	50.6
Oppose	55.4	43.9	49.4

Area*	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Support	51.5	39.9	58.1
Oppose	48.5	60.1	41.9

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Support	61.6	47.7	55.2
Oppose	38.4	52.3	44.8

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	36.5	56.3	47.0	58.3
Oppose	63.5	43.7	53.0	41.7

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	66.0	69.8	46.6	30.5
Oppose	34.0	30.2	53.4	69.5

Provincial Vote*	NDP	Wildrose	PC	Liberal	Undecided
Support	62.5	36.1	49.1	61.7	52.7
Oppose	37.5	63.9	50.9	38.3	47.3

Federal Vote*	Liberal	Conservative	NDP	Green	Undecided
Support	58.0	46.6	63.5	46.5	52.4
Oppose	42.0	53.4	36.5	53.5	47.6

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

## Bi-weekly waste and recycling collection (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Strongly support	23.4	32.5	28.1
Somewhat support	21.2	23.6	22.5
Somewhat oppose	15.7	13.5	14.5
Strongly oppose	39.7	30.4	34.9

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Strongly support	29.9	20.6	32.3
Somewhat support	21.7	19.2	25.7
Somewhat oppose	14.9	14.9	13.9
Strongly oppose	33.5	45.3	28.1

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Strongly support	29.5	26.9	32.8
Somewhat support	32.0	20.8	22.4
Somewhat oppose	12.3	15.9	16.2
Strongly oppose	26.2	36.3	28.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Strongly support	16.9	30.3	23.9	37.3
Somewhat support	19.5	26.0	23.1	21.0
Somewhat oppose	15.4	15.4	15.4	12.5
Strongly oppose	48.1	28.3	37.6	29.2

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Strongly support	33.7	44.9	23.3	18.7
Somewhat support	32.3	24.9	23.3	11.8
Somewhat oppose	18.3	12.7	14.6	12.9
Strongly oppose	15.7	17.6	38.8	56.6

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; \* sig < 0.05

## Demographics

Gender (%)	
Male	48.9
Female	51.1

Area of City (%)	
South	33.7
North	28.7
West	37.6

Income (%)	
Under \$40,000	30.0
\$40-100,000	44.7
Over \$100,000	25.3

Education (%)	
H-School/less	18.7
Some P-Sec.	27.5
Col-Tech-Grad	25.2
University Grad	28.6

Age (%)	
18-29	25.3
30-44	17.4
45-64	31.5
65 or older	25.8

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

## Question

- Thinking for a moment about local issues, Lethbridge City Council recently decided to implement a new residential curbside recycling program that will also make changes to the frequency of residential garbage pick-up. The new plan will include blue-bin recycling pick-up once every two weeks and change black-bin garbage pick-up to once every two weeks from the existing weekly pick up. The new curbside program is projected to add \$7 to residents' monthly utility bills. Please tell me how much you support or oppose the city's new residential curbside recycling and garbage pick-up program.

*Supplemental Information about capital costs if requested:*

Capital costs include \$15 to \$17 million to build a Materials Recovery Facility to sort and process recyclable materials.