

City Council Remuneration Report
for
Lethbridge Herald

Lethbridge Public Opinion Study
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City of Lethbridge

A garden city located in southwestern Alberta, the city of Lethbridge is home to 72,717 residents, 57,674 of which are 18 years of age or older.



The city is divided into six census areas, two each for its South, North and West geographic areas. It is divided north and south by Alberta highway 3, and east west by the Oldman River.

The south side's 27,941 residents represent 38.4% of the city's total population. West Lethbridge (22,429) and north Lethbridge (22,347) represent 30.8% and 30.7% respectively.

Respondents indicated considerable concern over the method of remuneration for City Councilors. Over seventy per cent indicated they were either somewhat or very uncomfortable with the method of remuneration.

Although a majority of respondents in all categories expressed their discomfort with the methods, women, younger voters and poorer voters were most critical.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by Interdisciplinary Studies students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College in the winter of 2003. Students conducted 469 telephone interviews over a three-week period from February 4 to 25, 2003 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the sample yields a margin of error of $\pm 4.7\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

The demographic data analysis indicated that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the voting age population within the city of Lethbridge.

These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC. The Lethbridge Herald sponsored this analysis and we wish to express our thanks for their continuing support of applied research at Lethbridge Community College.

The following represents a selection of our results.

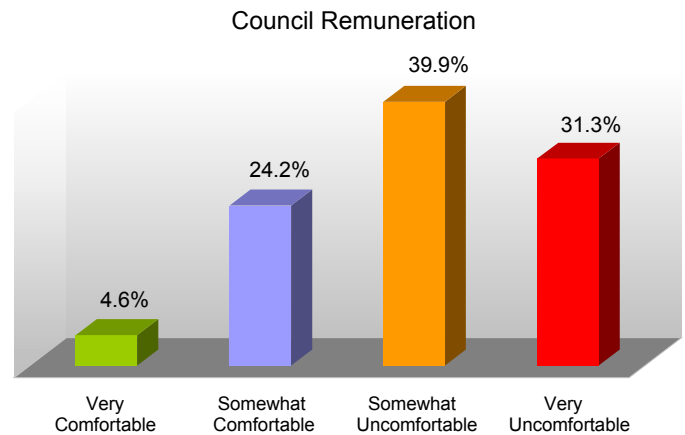
Council Remuneration

When asked to express their opinions on how comfortable or uncomfortable they are with the current Lethbridge city councilors' remuneration packages, a majority of respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable with the method of remuneration.

Fully 71.2% of all city voters indicated some level of discomfort with the method which pays councilors and the mayor a base salary and a top-up un-receipted expense allowance.

Almost two-in-five voters stated they are somewhat uncomfortable (39.9%) while another one-third (31.3%) stated they are very uncomfortable. One-quarter (24.2%) stated they are somewhat comfortable while only 4.6% said they are very comfortable with the remuneration methods

Women (76.2%) tend to be more critical than are men (64%), while younger voters are more critical than older voters. The wealthiest voters are the least concerned with the method.



Questionnaire

- Currently, Lethbridge city councilors are paid a base salary plus an unvouchered expense amount. Each alderman is allowed to claim \$6,500 in un-receipted expenses in addition to his or her salary while the mayor can claim \$22,500 in addition to his salary. They are also allowed to claim other expenses by submitting receipts. Please tell me how comfortable you are with this method of remunerating city councilors?

__Very comfortable

__Somewhat comfortable

__Somewhat uncomfortable

__Very uncomfortable

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Area of City

Tabular Data

Council Remuneration (%)

Council Remuneration by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Comfortable	7.4	2.6	4.6
Comfortable	28.6	21.1	24.2
Uncomfortable	33.3	44.5	39.9
Very Uncomfortable	30.7	31.7	31.3

Council Remuneration by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Comfortable	3.8	2.7	7.1
Comfortable	24.2	24.5	24.3
Uncomfortable	43.3	36.4	39.6
Very Uncomfortable	28.7	36.4	29.0

Council Remuneration by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Comfortable	3.3	2.6	10.3
Comfortable	20.3	23.2	32.5
Uncomfortable	43.9	41.9	32.5
Very Uncomfortable	32.5	32.3	24.6

Council Remuneration by Education (%)

	High School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Comfortable	2.6	6.1	1.8	8.0
Comfortable	21.1	19.1	24.3	33.0
Uncomfortable	42.1	40.9	39.6	35.7
Very Uncomfortable	34.2	33.9	34.2	23.2

Council Remuneration by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Comfortable	3.3	2.1	7.1	5.2
Comfortable	22.5	18.8	27.8	25.9
Uncomfortable	50.0	35.4	36.1	36.2
Very Uncomfortable	24.2	43.8	29.0	32.8