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## Fall 2005 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study

for City of Lethbridge  
Transportation Services

Downtown Parking Study

October 15, 2005

## Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 77,202 residents (2005 municipal census) approximately 79% of which are 18 years of age or older (61,250 est.). A total of 37,546 residents are male (48.6%) while 39,656 are female (51.4%). South Lethbridge is home to 27,894 residents (36.1%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 26,407 residents (34.2%). There are 22,911 north Lethbridge residents (29.7%).
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge Community College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College in the fall of 2005. Students interviewed 584 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge on October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005 by telephone using the Western Wats Lethbridge call center facility. Telephone numbers were selected using random predictive dialing from a sample drawn from the Telus Superpages. We sincerely thank Western Wats for their hospitality.
-  **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 where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender and area of the city).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of  $\pm 4\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.
-  **Sponsorship** 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 City of Lethbridge Transportation Services sponsored this particular set of questions. We thank Lethbridge Transportation Services for their support of our research endeavors.

## Profile of Visits, Employment and Residency in Downtown Lethbridge

- The vast majority of Lethbridge residents (93.8%) visited a downtown Lethbridge business, entertainment or retail destination in the past year. North Lethbridge residents (90.2%) are slightly less likely to visit downtown than are south (95.3%) and west (95.0%) Lethbridge residents.
- Upper income residents (98.2%) are slightly more likely to visit downtown than are other income groups while the youth (95.5%) are slightly more likely to visit downtown than are other age groups, especially seniors (89.8%).
- Slightly more than one-in-seven Lethbridge residents (14.9%) reported working downtown with men (16.6%) slightly more likely than women (13.3%). Residents with the least amount of formal education (9.4%), north Lethbridge residents (12.7%), and seniors (9.1%) are the least likely to work downtown.
- Only 7.4% of Lethbridge residents report that they currently live downtown and they tend to be poorer (12.5% of low income residents live downtown) and older (10.1% of seniors) than the average Lethbridge resident.

### Visits, Work and Live Downtown






	Visited downtown in past year	Currently work in downtown	Currently live in downtown
Yes	93.8	14.9	7.4
No	6.2	85.1	92.6

### Profile of Downtown Lethbridge Residents

Male	46.5	Under \$30,000	59.0	18-29	34.1
Female	53.5	\$30-\$70,000	28.2	30-44	11.4
		Over \$70,000	12.8	45-64	34.1
				65 and older	20.5

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

## Downtown Parking Preferences

-  There is little doubt that Lethbridge residents prefer parking close to their downtown destinations. Over half of all residents want to park no more than one block away from their destination. Almost one-quarter (24.5%) stated that they want to park a half block or closer to their destination, while 4.7% demand parking right in front or they will likely take their business elsewhere.
-  A further quarter of all residents (27.4%) are willing to park one block away while 21.4% said they would be willing to park two blocks away. Another quarter of all residents (26.6%) are willing to park more than two blocks away.
-  Women, north Lethbridge residents, upper income earners and middle aged residents are more likely to want closer parking than are other demographic groups.
-  Over half of all residents frequently or occasionally make trips downtown when meters are free. Over one-third (37.7%) say they occasionally make such trips while a further 23.4% frequently visit downtown when meters are free.
-  Only one-in-ten residents never visit downtown when meters are free (10.0%), while 28.9% rarely make trips downtown when meters are free.

Distance willing to park away from destination		Visit downtown when parking is free	
Less than a block	24.5 (4.7%)*	Frequently	23.4
One block	27.4	Occasionally	37.7
Two blocks	21.5	Rarely	28.9
More than two	26.6	Never	10.0

- 4.7% stated that if they couldn't park right in front of their destination they would go somewhere else and are included with the 19.8% who stated they prefer to park no more than one-half block away.

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

## Preferences for Resolving Downtown Parking Meter Issue

- A slight majority of Lethbridge residents (55.3%) do not think tax dollars should be used to support the removal of downtown parking meters. A significant plurality (44.7%) believes tax dollars should be used to remove meters.
- Women (46.6%) are slightly more likely than are men (42.6%) to want tax dollars used to remove meters. North Lethbridge residents (51.2%) are more likely to support tax dollar being used to remove meters than are south Lethbridge (43.5%) and west Lethbridge residents (40.0%).
- Support for using tax dollars is strongest among lower income residents (53.4%) and decreases as income rises with support among middle income (40.5%) and upper income (38.0%) residents considerably lower.
- Interestingly, tax dollar supported removal of meters is strongest amongst the small group of Lethbridge residents who state they never go downtown (53.7%) when meters are free, and drops as frequency of visits increases, to only 35.6% support among those who most frequently visit downtown when meters are free.
- Those who work downtown (47.1%) are slightly more supportive than are those who do not work downtown (44.1%). Support is considerably higher among those who live downtown (57.1%) than among other residents (43.6%).
- Lethbridge residents exhibited no clear consensus about how to best recover the lost parking revenue should meters be removed.
- Increasing all city property taxes is the least preferred option with only 22.7% support. Increasing property taxes downtown (27.7%) or reducing services downtown (28.3%) do not receive much more support.

### Options for removing downtown parking meters

	Use tax dollars to remove parking meters downtown	Reduce downtown services to recover lost parking revenue	Increase downtown taxes to recover lost parking revenue	Increase all city taxes to recover lost parking revenue
Agree	44.7	28.3	27.7	22.7
Disagree	55.3	71.7	72.3	77.3

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

## Visited downtown in past year by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Yes	93.6	93.7	93.8
No	6.4	6.3	6.2

	South	North	West
Yes	95.3	90.2	95.0
No	4.7	9.8	5.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Yes	93.5	91.9	98.2
No	6.5	8.1	1.8

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Yes	93.5	91.4	95.0	96.1
No	6.5	8.6	5.0	3.9

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Yes	95.5	93.4	93.8	89.8
No	4.5	6.6	6.2	10.2

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

## Currently work downtown by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Yes	16.6	13.3	14.9
No	83.4	86.7	85.1

	South	North	West
Yes	16.2	12.7	15.4
No	83.8	87.3	84.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Yes	16.3	15.3	17.1
No	83.7	84.7	82.9

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Yes	9.4	11.5	18.5	20.9
No	90.6	88.5	81.5	79.1

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Yes	17.6	15.6	14.5	9.1
No	82.4	84.4	85.5	90.9

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

## Currently live downtown by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Yes	7.1	7.6	7.4
No	92.9	92.4	92.6

	South	North	West
Yes	19.9	0.0	0.0
No	80.1	100	100.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Yes	12.5	4.7	4.5
No	87.5	95.3	95.5

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Yes	7.9	5.7	10.9	6.6
No	92.1	94.3	89.1	93.4

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Yes	8.5	4.1	7.7	10.1
No	91.5	95.9	92.3	89.9

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



## Distance Lethbridge residents will park away from a downtown business, shopping or entertainment establishment by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Less than a block	22.1	26.7	24.5
One block	28.3	26.3	27.4
Two blocks	19.6	23.5	21.5
More than two blocks	30.1	23.5	26.6

	South	North	West
Less than a block	23.7	31.5	19.3
One block	25.3	23.6	32.5
Two blocks	21.2	19.4	23.9
More than two blocks	29.8	25.5	24.4

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Less than a block	28.8	21.8	25.5
One block	21.8	28.8	31.8
Two blocks	20.6	24.0	18.2
More than two blocks	28.8	25.3	24.5

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Less than a block	36.0	27.5	19.0	16.1
One block	23.2	25.7	30.2	30.9
Two blocks	22.4	17.5	23.3	23.5
More than two blocks	18.4	29.2	27.6	29.5

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Less than a block	28.5	22.2	22.5	22.7
One block	21.5	35.9	29.8	21.3
Two blocks	20.3	21.4	19.9	29.3
More than two blocks	29.7	20.5	27.7	26.7

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

## Frequency of visits to downtown Lethbridge when parking is free by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Frequently	22.1	24.7	23.4
Occasionally	40.6	35.0	37.7
Rarely	28.8	29.0	28.9
Never	8.5	11.3	10.0

	South	North	West
Frequently	25.8	18.3	25.5
Occasionally	36.4	34.9	41.5
Rarely	26.8	33.1	27.5
Never	11.0	13.7	5.5

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Frequently	25.1	21.6	23.4
Occasionally	35.5	39.8	37.8
Rarely	27.9	31.2	29.7
Never	11.5	7.4	9.0

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Frequently	24.6	21.1	26.3	22.1
Occasionally	29.0	38.9	39.0	43.6
Rarely	31.9	29.1	27.1	27.5
Never	14.5	10.9	7.6	6.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Frequently	31.1	23.1	19.6	16.1
Occasionally	37.9	47.9	37.1	26.4
Rarely	26.0	23.1	32.5	34.5
Never	5.1	5.8	10.8	23.0

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

## Should tax dollars be used to provide free parking downtown at all times?

	Male	Female	All Residents
Yes	42.6	46.6	44.7
No	57.4	53.4	55.3

	South	North	West
Yes	43.5	51.2	40.0
No	56.5	48.8	60.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Yes	53.4	40.5	38.0
No	46.6	59.5	62.0

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Yes	52.8	42.9	44.7	40.1
No	47.2	57.1	55.3	59.9

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Yes	45.1	38.0	48.4	46.8
No	54.9	62.0	51.6	53.2

Frequency of visits downtown when meters are free				
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Yes	35.6	46.9	47.2	53.7
No	64.4	53.1	52.8	46.3

		Work Downtown		Live Downtown	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes		47.1	44.1	57.1	43.6
No		52.9	55.9	42.9	56.4

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

## Reduce funding for downtown to recover lost parking meter revenue.

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	28.3	28.2	28.3
Disagree	71.7	71.8	71.7

	South	North	West
Agree	26.4	32.7	26.4
Disagree	73.6	67.3	73.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	30.2	26.8	28.3
Disagree	69.8	73.2	71.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	33.6	28.5	30.3	21.2
Disagree	66.4	71.5	69.7	78.8

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	23.7	21.8	34.6	34.6
Disagree	76.3	78.2	65.4	65.4

Frequency of visits downtown when meters are fee				
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Agree	20.9	24.5	33.8	44.2
Disagree	79.1	75.5	66.2	55.8

	Work Downtown		Live Downtown	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agree	20.9	29.7	20.5	28.8
Disagree	79.1	70.3	79.5	71.2

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

## Increase downtown property taxes to recover lost parking meter revenue.

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	31.4	24.0	27.7
Disagree	68.6	76.0	72.3

	South	North	West
Agree	26.1	31.0	26.5
Disagree	73.9	69.0	73.5

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	31.8	24.2	30.3
Disagree	68.2	75.8	69.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	34.1	27.2	29.1	21.5
Disagree	65.9	72.8	70.9	78.5

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	32.2	26.3	27.3	20.7
Disagree	67.8	73.7	72.7	79.3

Frequency of visits downtown				
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Agree	27.6	29.7	28.2	20.0
Disagree	72.4	70.3	71.8	80.0

	Work Downtown		Live Downtown	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agree	17.6	29.3	23.7	27.8
Disagree	82.4	70.7	76.3	72.2

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

## Increase all city of Lethbridge property taxes to recover lost parking meter revenue.

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	23.6	21.9	22.7
Disagree	76.4	78.1	77.3

	South	North	West
Agree	25.1	23.2	19.4
Disagree	74.9	76.8	80.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	25.0	23.6	16.8
Disagree	75.0	76.4	83.2

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	27.1	23.1	17.8	22.0
Disagree	72.9	76.9	82.2	78.0

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	22.0	16.7	22.7	32.6
Disagree	78.0	83.3	77.3	67.4

Frequency of visits downtown				
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Agree	23.5	24.1	21.7	21.1
Disagree	76.5	75.9	78.3	78.9

	Work Downtown		Live Downtown	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agree	19.8	23.3	29.3	22.2
Disagree	80.2	76.7	70.7	77.8

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

## Reduce funding for downtown to recover lost parking meter revenue (full).

	Male	Female	All Residents
Strongly agree	2.5	1.8	2.1
Agree	25.8	26.4	26.1
Disagree	54.8	55.4	55.1
Strongly disagree	16.8	16.4	16.6

	South	North	West
Strongly agree	2.5	2.4	1.6
Agree	23.9	30.1	25.0
Disagree	52.7	54.2	58.3
Strongly disagree	20.9	13.3	15.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Strongly agree	1.7	2.6	0.9
Agree	28.5	24.1	27.4
Disagree	54.2	57.0	53.8
Strongly disagree	15.6	16.2	17.9

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Strongly agree	0.8	3.0	1.7	2.7
Agree	33.1	25.5	28.8	18.5
Disagree	54.3	57.0	50.8	58.2
Strongly disagree	11.8	14.5	18.6	20.5

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Strongly agree	1.7	1.7	2.8	1.3
Agree	21.6	19.3	31.5	33.3
Disagree	58.0	62.2	52.5	44.9
Strongly disagree	18.8	16.8	13.3	20.5

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

## Increase downtown property taxes to recover lost parking meter revenue (full).

	Male	Female	All Residents
Strongly agree	1.4	0.3	0.9
Agree	30.0	23.7	26.8
Disagree	50.4	61.0	55.8
Strongly disagree	18.2	15.0	16.5

	South	North	West
Strongly agree	0.0	1.8	1.5
Agree	26.0	29.6	25.0
Disagree	53.4	58.0	56.1
Strongly disagree	20.6	10.7	17.3

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Strongly agree	1.7	1.3	0.0
Agree	30.1	22.9	30.3
Disagree	54.0	57.1	53.2
Strongly disagree	14.2	18.6	16.5

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Strongly agree	0.8	1.8	0.0	0.7
Agree	33.3	25.4	29.1	20.8
Disagree	50.8	58.6	51.3	61.1
Strongly disagree	15.2	14.2	19.7	17.4

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Strongly agree	2.3	1.7	0.0	0.0
Agree	29.9	24.6	27.3	20.7
Disagree	52.5	59.3	56.1	56.1
Strongly disagree	15.3	14.4	16.6	23.2

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



## Increase all city of Lethbridge property taxes to recover lost parking meter revenue (full).

	Male	Female	All Residents
Strongly agree	2.5	0.3	1.4
Agree	21.1	21.6	21.3
Disagree	46.4	52.4	49.6
Strongly disagree	30.0	25.7	27.7

	South	North	West
Strongly agree	1.9	1.8	0.5
Agree	23.1	21.9	18.9
Disagree	49.0	51.5	48.5
Strongly disagree	26.0	24.9	32.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Strongly agree	0.6	1.7	2.8
Agree	24.4	21.9	14.0
Disagree	52.8	46.8	50.5
Strongly disagree	22.2	29.6	32.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Strongly agree	3.0	0.0	2.5	0.7
Agree	24.8	23.1	15.3	21.3
Disagree	48.9	50.9	44.1	53.3
Strongly disagree	23.3	26.0	38.1	24.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Strongly agree	1.1	1.7	2.2	0.0
Agree	20.8	15.0	20.5	32.9
Disagree	55.6	49.2	47.6	43.5
Strongly disagree	22.5	34.2	29.7	23.5

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

# Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.3	South	36.0	Under \$30,000	34.8	H-School/less	23.8	18-29	30.5
Female	51.7	North	29.7	\$30-\$70,000	44.3	Some P-Sec.	29.9	30-44	20.9
		West	34.3	Over \$70,000	21.0	Col-Tech-Grad	20.3	45-64	33.2
						University Grad	26.1	65 or older	15.3

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

## Questions

Please tell me which of the following applies to you.

Have you visited Downtown Lethbridge for shopping, entertainment or other business services in the past year?

Do you currently work in Downtown Lethbridge?

Do you currently live in Downtown Lethbridge (in south Lethbridge, north of sixth avenue and west of Stafford Drive)?

When driving to a downtown destination, please tell me how far you will walk from a parking stall to a shopping, entertainment or other business establishment?

Parking meters are free on Saturdays and weekday evenings in Downtown Lethbridge. How often do you visit downtown Lethbridge on Saturdays or weekday evenings for shopping, entertainment or other business? (parking is also free on Sundays)

Do you think tax dollars should be used to remove parking meters and provide free parking in the Downtown at all times?

If the City of Lethbridge was to provide free parking at all times in Downtown Lethbridge it would lose approximately \$1 million in revenue. Please tell me how much you support or oppose each of the following options the City might choose to recover that revenue.

Reduce funding for Downtown projects and services to recover the \$1 million in lost downtown parking revenue.

Increase property taxes in the downtown core only to recover the \$1 million in lost downtown parking revenue.

Increase All city of Lethbridge property taxes to recover the \$1 million in lost downtown parking revenue.