

Lethbridge Parks and Recreation Study

by

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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.



South Lethbridge is the city's most populous area. The southside'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.

Lethbridge is home to some 70 parks, playgrounds, sports fields and greenstrips, including an extensive urban park system with more than 60 kilometers of trails.

The city also boasts a full array of recreational facilities including five indoor pools, six ice arenas, an indoor soccer facility, extensive baseball facilities and two post-secondary institutions, each with an array of community accessible facilities.

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 fall of 2001. Students conducted 405 telephone interviews during October using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, a sample size of 405 yields a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

The demographic data presented on pages 12-13 demonstrate that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the population within the city of Lethbridge.

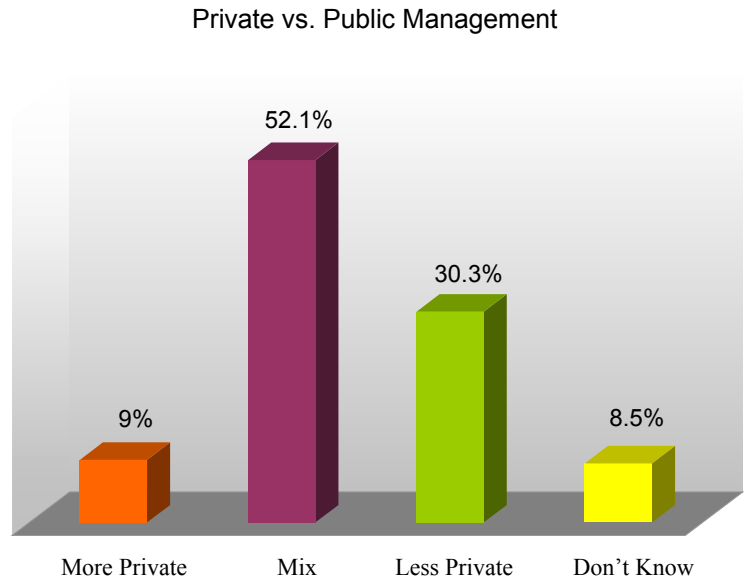
Private vs. Public Management of Recreation Facilities (%)

A majority of residents in the city of Lethbridge (52.1%) support the City's policies of having some public recreational facilities managed by private interests and some managed by the City itself.

However, the remaining residents favor less private management by a three-to-one margin. Only 8% stated they would prefer to see more private firms operating City facilities while 30.3% stated they would prefer less private management.

Men (15.6%) were almost three times as likely as women (4.3%) to state they wanted more private firms. Younger residents were also much more likely than older residents to desire more private management.

Interestingly, both male and female respondents with dependent children were less opposed to private management than were those without dependent children.

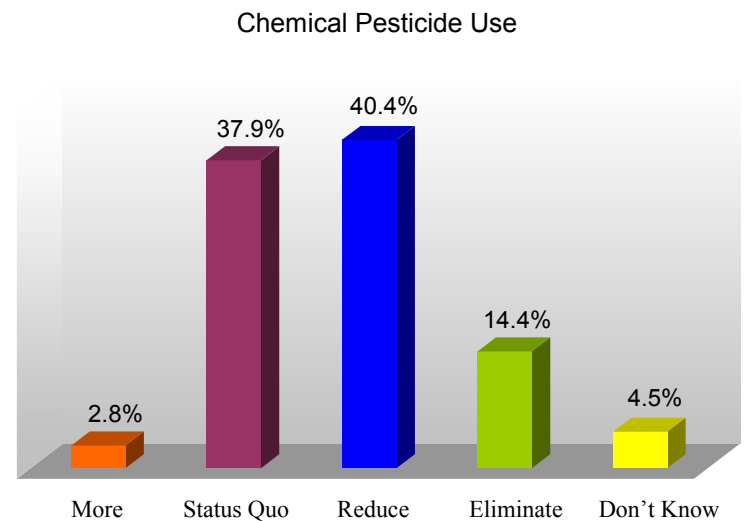


Chemical Pest Management in Parks and Open Spaces (%)

Lethbridge residents indicated strong support for the City's pest management policies. Slightly more than one-in-three respondents (37.9%) stated the City should continue its current use of chemical while another 40.4% want the City to continue to further reduce its use of chemical pesticides. Only 2.8% stated they wanted more chemicals used while 14.4% indicated they wanted the use of chemical pest controls eliminated altogether.

Men, northside residents, and people without children and/or dogs were slightly more predisposed to greater chemical use, but only marginally and in all cases the majority still preferred the status quo or reduced chemical use.

Westside women were most opposed to chemical use with one-in-five (20.7%) wanting to eliminate chemicals altogether.

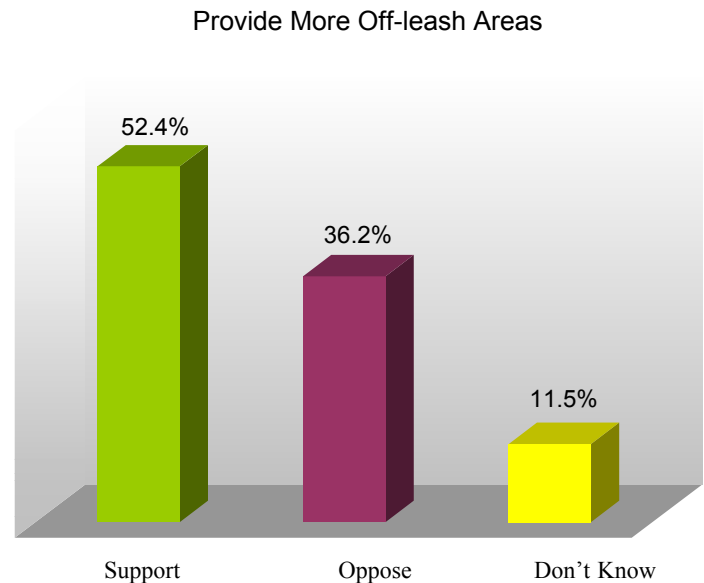


Provide More Off-leash Areas for Dog Owners (%)

Research indicates that providing off-leash areas for dog owners and their pets is relatively inexpensive. When asked if the City should provide more off-leash areas at a reasonable cost, 52.4% of respondents indicated they would support such a policy. Just over one-third (36.2%) are opposed.

Support is highest amongst dog owners (60.3%) and in North Lethbridge (60.9%). Slightly less than one-third of all households (32.7%) responded that they had a dog living with them.

Support increase to 68.6% amongst northside dog owners. West Lethbridge residents were least supportive with only 44.9% indicating support, dropping to 41.4% for non-dog owning westsiders.



Ban Dogs in Some Parks if More Off-leash Areas Provided (%)

Following from the previous question, we asked respondents to express their opinions on the idea of banning dogs from some city parks if more off-leash areas were provided. Opinion was almost evenly split with 46.7% favoring the idea and 48.5% opposed.

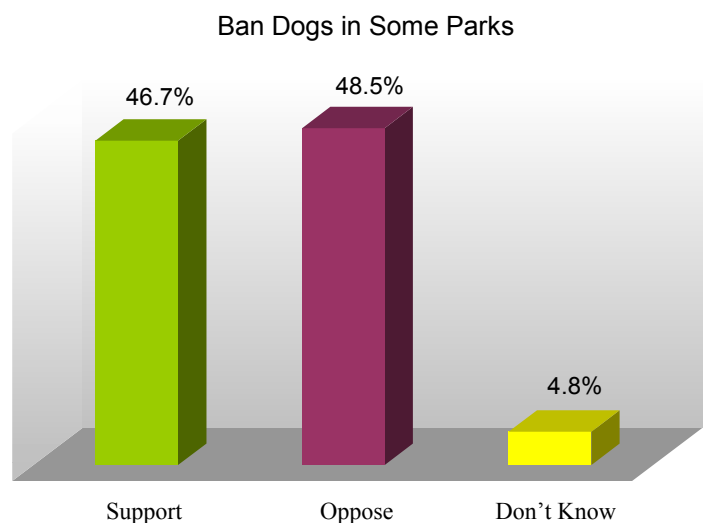
As expected, almost two-thirds of dog owners were opposed (64.6%) although 33.1% supported the idea. A majority of non-owners supported the proposal (53.2%) while 40.8% were opposed.

Again, northside residents were most supportive (51.9%) while westsiders were most opposed at 54.7% overall, increasing to 78.4% opposition amongst westside dog owners. Southside dog owners were also opposed by a margin of two-to-one with 65.2% opposed and only 34.8% supportive. Conversely, a majority of non-owners in all areas of the city were supportive.

Older residents were much more likely to support a ban than were younger residents. Only 26.9% of the youth were supportive.

Support climbs to 43% amongst gen-xers, 61.1% for boomers and 68.8% for seniors.

Female opinion was also very polarized on this issue with a majority of female non-owners (57.6%) were supportive while 68.2% of female owners were opposed.



Tabular Data

Public vs. Private Facility Management (%)

Facility Management	(%)
More Private Firms	9.0
Mix Public-Private	52.1
No Private Firms	30.3
Don't Know	8.5

Facility Management by Gender

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
More Private Firms	15.6	4.3	9.0
Mix Public-Private	50.3	53.5	52.1
No Private Firms	28.1	31.7	30.2
Don't know	6.0	10.4	8.6

Facility Management by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
More Private Firms	10.6	7.3	9.3
Mix Public-Private	49.4	51.8	54.2
No Private Firms	30.0	30.0	32.7
Don't know	10.0	10.9	3.7

Facility Management by Age

	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65 plus</u>
More Private Firms	10.4	12.4	7.4	6.0
Mix Public-Private	63.2	57.5	38.9	40.0
No Private Firms	20.8	22.1	45.4	40.0
Don't know	5.7	8.0	8.3	14.0

Facility Management by Income

	<u>Under \$30,000</u>	<u>\$30- \$60,000</u>	<u>Over \$60,000</u>
More Private Firms	10.1	6.9	13.5
Mix Public-Private	52.3	56.5	46.9
No Private Firms	29.4	31.3	34.4
Don't know	8.3	5.3	5.2

Facility Management by Education

	<u>HS or less</u>	<u>Some PS</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>University</u>
More Private Firms	12.9	7.4	10.8	6.3
Mix Public-Private	47.3	58.9	48.4	53.2
No Private Firms	32.3	25.3	30.1	33.3
Don't know	7.5	8.4	10.8	7.2

Facility Management by Dependent Children and Gender

	<u>Dependent Children</u>		<u>No Dependent Children</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
More Private Firms	16.0	5.9	15.8	3.4
Mix Public-Private	56.0	55.3	47.4	52.4
No Private Firms	20.0	24.7	31.6	35.9
Don't know	8.0	14.1	5.3	8.3

Chemical Pest Management in Parks and Open Spaces (%)

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces (%)

Use More Chemicals	2.8
Continue Current	37.9
Reduce Further	40.4
Eliminate Chemicals	14.4
Don't Know	4.5

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces by Gender

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Use more chemicals	4.8	1.3	2.8
Continue current use	40.4	36.0	37.9
Reduce chemical use	38.6	42.1	40.4
Eliminate chemicals	13.3	14.9	14.4
Don't know	3.0	5.7	4.5

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
Use more chemicals	2.5	4.6	1.9
Continue current use	37.5	39.8	37.7
Reduce use further	42.5	36.1	44.3
Eliminate chemical use	13.8	14.8	12.3
Don't know	3.8	4.6	3.8

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces by Age

	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65 plus</u>
Use more chemicals	2.9	3.5	3.7	0.0
Continue current use	34.3	36.5	39.3	37.5
Reduce use further	41.9	40.0	41.1	45.8
Eliminate chemical use	15.2	15.7	14.0	10.4
Don't know	5.7	4.3	1.9	6.3

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces by Income

	<u>Under \$30,000</u>	<u>\$30- \$60,000</u>	<u>Over \$60,000</u>
Use more chemicals	2.8	1.5	5.2
Continue current use	33.6	40.8	35.4
Reduce use further	43.0	39.2	41.7
Eliminate chemical use	15.0	14.6	14.6
Don't know	5.6	3.8	3.1

Chemical Pest Control in Public Parks and Open Spaces by Education

	<u>HS or less</u>	<u>Some PS</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>University</u>
Use more chemicals	1.1	3.2	4.3	2.7
Continue current use	42.9	36.2	41.5	31.8
Reduce use further	41.8	38.3	39.4	44.5
Eliminate chemical use	9.9	16.0	13.8	15.5
Don't know	4.4	6.4	1.1	5.5

Chemical Pest Control by Children in Household

	<u>Children</u>	<u>None</u>
Use more chemicals	1.5	3.5
Continue current use	36.1	38.0
Reduce chemical use	42.1	40.3
Eliminate chemicals	15.8	13.6
Don't know	4.5	4.7

Chemical Pest Control by Dogs in Household

	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>None</u>
Use more chemicals	1.5	3.4
Continue current use	36.2	38.9
Reduce chemical use	40.8	40.0
Eliminate chemicals	17.7	12.8
Don't know	3.8	4.9

More Off-leash Areas (%)

More Off-leash Areas	(%)
Support	52.4
Oppose	36.2
Don't Know	11.5

More Off-leash Areas by Gender

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Support	50.9	53.5	52.4
Oppose	37.3	35.2	36.2
Don't know	11.8	11.3	11.5

More Off-leash Areas by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
Support	51.9	60.9	44.9
Oppose	37.7	29.1	41.1
Don't know	10.5	10.0	14.0

More Off-leash Areas by Age

	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65 plus</u>
Support	59.8	56.1	53.2	32.7
Oppose	29.9	33.3	33.9	51.0
Don't know	10.3	10.5	12.8	16.3

More Off-leash Areas by Income

	<u>Under \$30,000</u>	<u>\$30- \$60,000</u>	<u>Over \$60,000</u>
Support	50.5	55.4	53.1
Oppose	38.5	33.8	31.6
Don't know	11.0	10.8	15.3

More Off-leash Areas by Education

	<u>HS or less</u>	<u>Some PS</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>University</u>
Support	57.9	52.1	48.4	53.6
Oppose	31.6	36.2	42.1	31.8
Don't know	10.5	11.7	9.5	14.5

More Off-leash Areas by Children in Household

	<u>Children</u>	<u>None</u>
Support	56.9	50.2
Oppose	30.7	38.6
Don't know	12.4	11.2

More Off-leash Areas by Dogs in Household

	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>None</u>
Support	60.3	48.7
Oppose	35.1	36.4
Don't know	4.6	14.9

More Off-leash Areas by Area of City and by Dogs in Household

	South		North		West	
	<u>Dogs</u>	No <u>Dogs</u>	<u>Dogs</u>	No <u>Dogs</u>	<u>Dogs</u>	No <u>Dogs</u>
Support	62.5	47.4	68.6	57.3	52.8	41.4
Oppose	35.4	38.6	31.4	28.0	38.9	41.4
Don't know	2.1	14.0	0.0	14.7	8.3	17.1

Ban Dogs in Some Parks if More Off-leash Areas Provided (%)

Ban Dogs in Some Parks	(%)
Support	46.7
Oppose	48.5
Don't Know	4.8

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Gender

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Support	45.7	47.8	46.7
Oppose	48.8	48.3	48.5
Don't know	5.5	3.9	4.8

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
Support	46.9	51.9	41.5
Oppose	48.1	43.5	54.7
Don't know	5.0	4.6	3.8

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Age

	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65 plus</u>
Support	26.9	43.0	61.1	68.8
Oppose	67.3	53.5	36.1	22.9
Don't know	5.8	3.5	2.8	8.3

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Income

	<u>Under \$30,000</u>	<u>\$30- \$60,000</u>	<u>Over \$60,000</u>
Support	43.0	45.4	51.5
Oppose	52.3	49.2	46.4
Don't know	4.7	5.4	2.1

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Education

	<u>HS or less</u>	<u>Some PS</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>University</u>
Support	55.4	36.2	45.3	50.9
Oppose	41.3	58.5	51.6	42.6
Don't know	3.3	5.3	3.2	6.5

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Children in House Hold

	<u>Children</u>	<u>None</u>
Support	44.9	47.8
Oppose	51.5	47.1
Don't know	3.7	5.1

Ban Dogs in Some Parks by Dogs in Household

	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>None</u>
Support	33.1	53.2
Oppose	64.6	40.8
Don't know	2.3	6.0

Demographics

Gender	(%)
Male	42.2
Female	57.8

Area of City	(%)
South	42.8
North	28.7
West	28.5

Age	(%)
18-29	27.9
30-44	30.3
45-64	28.7
65 or older	13.1

Income	(%)
\$30,000 or less	32.1
\$30,001-\$60,000	38.8
Over \$60,000	29.1

Education	(%)
High School or less	23.9
Some post secondary	23.9
College-tech grad	24.1
University grad	28.1

Dependent Children	(%)
Yes	34.5
No	65.5

Demographics (continued)

Number of Dependent Children (%)

One	33.3
Two	47.0
Three or more	19.7

Children in Household by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
Yes	31.3	41.3	30.6
No	68.7	58.7	69.4

Dog in Household (%)

Yes	32.7
No	67.3

Number of Dogs in Household (%)

One	72.1
Two or more	27.9

Dogs in Household by Area

	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
Yes	29.3	31.8	34.3
No	70.7	68.2	65.7

Questionnaire

- The City of Lethbridge currently contracts with private companies to manage a number of City owned recreational facilities. Do you think the City should have more of its recreational facilities managed by private firms, continue to use some private and some public management, have no private firms managing public recreational facilities.
- The City of Lethbridge parks department uses an integrated pest management system that has allowed them to gradually reduce the amount of chemical pesticides they use on public spaces (herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides). Please tell me if you think the Lethbridge parks department should use more chemical pesticides, use about the same as it now uses, further reduce the amount of chemical pesticides, or completely eliminate the use of chemical pesticides on Lethbridge public spaces.
- If the City of Lethbridge could provide more off-leash areas at a reasonable cost it should do so.
- If the City of Lethbridge could provide more off-leash areas at a reasonable cost, dogs should be banned from some city parks.
- Do you have any dependent children currently living with you?
- How many dependent children?
- Do you have a dog currently living in your household?
- How many dogs?
- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Area of city