



www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/departments/research/csrl



Dr. Faron Ellis

faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca

**Centre for Applied Arts and Sciences
Flora Matteotti Centre for Teaching and Learning**

3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 1L6






Telephone: (403) 317-3562
Fax: (403) 317-3540

Winter 2006 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study

Police Services Report
for
Lethbridge Regional Police Services

April 15, 2006

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 winter of 2006, students interviewed 512 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge (February 11th and 12th 2006) 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. We also sincerely appreciate and thank all the Lethbridge residents who took time out of their day to respond to our survey.
-  **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 $\pm 4.3\%$, 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. Lethbridge Regional Police Services commissioned this particular set of questions. We thank LRPS for their support of our research endeavors.

Perceptions of Lethbridge Regional Police Services

Performance

A majority of Lethbridge residents (63.7%) believe Lethbridge Regional Police Services is doing a good job policing the community. Only a small minority (8.6%) believes the police are doing a poor job, while slightly over one-quarter (27.7%) say the police are performing adequately.

Majorities in all demographic groups provide Lethbridge Regional Police Services with positive evaluations. West Lethbridge residents (70.1%), upper income earners (69.7%), university grads (69.6%) and seniors (68.9%) are most positive. Middle income earners (58.6%), residents with some post secondary schooling (56.2%) and the youth (57.7%) are less positive, although still much more positive than negative.

	Winter 2006
Good	63.7
Adequate	27.7
Poor	8.6

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Very good	19.9
Good	43.8
Adequate	27.7
Poor	6.1
Very Poor	2.5

Expectations

Lethbridge residents are similarly positive when asked to rate how Lethbridge police are meeting residents' expectations of what a police service should be doing to make the community a safe and secure place to live. A clear majority of residents (64.3%) believe the police are doing a good job while a further 30.2% believe the police are adequately meeting expectations. Only 5.6% think the police doing a poor job meeting residents' expectations.

West Lethbridge residents are again most positive (71.0%), with south side residents least positive (57.4%). University grads (68.7%), the youth (70.1%), seniors (66.0%), and those who frequent downtown daily (76.6%) or weekly (67.5%), are also among the most positive. South Lethbridge residents (9.3%), lower income earners (9.6%) and generation-x residents (9.7%) are the most likely to report dissatisfaction.

	Winter 2006
Good	64.3
Adequate	30.2
Poor	5.6

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Very good	15.9
Good	48.4
Adequate	30.2
Poor	3.6
Very Poor	2.0

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

Improvement

Overall, Lethbridge residents are much more likely to think that Lethbridge Regional Police Services has improved in meeting residents' expectations (24.3%) than to view it as having gotten worse (3.7%). The vast majority of residents (71.9%) believe that the police have neither improved nor gotten worse over the past year.

North Lethbridge residents (32.2%), seniors (31.6%), the youth (28.1%), and those making daily (40.0%) or weekly (36.7%) trips downtown are most likely to see improvement. Only generation-x residents demonstrate any substantial levels of discontent with 9.9% believing the police have gotten worse at meeting residents' expectations.

	Winter 2006
Improved	24.3
Stayed the same	71.9
Gotten worse	3.7

Increased Police Presence in the Downtown Core

Some of the improvement in meeting residents' expectations undoubtedly comes from the increased police presence in the downtown core. Although 12.2% of all residents stated that they do not go downtown often enough to comment on the new downtown patrol initiative, of those who felt qualified to comment, the majority saw at least some increased police presence in the downtown core during the past year. Only 36.9% stated they had not noticed any increased police presence in the downtown core over the past year.

Almost one in five residents (18.2%) stated that they had noticed some, but not much more of a police presence in the downtown core. Over one-third (34.3%) stated they noticed some more police presence, while 10.5% noticed a great deal more police presence.

Most importantly, those who visit downtown most frequently are the most likely to state that they have noticed an increased police presence in the downtown core. A clear majority of those who visit downtown on a daily basis noticed a great deal more (12.0%) or some more (50.4%) police patrolling the downtown core. Those who visit downtown on a weekly basis demonstrate similar, although somewhat weaker patterns with 12.7% noticing a great deal more police and 31.0% noticing some more police presence.

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Great deal more	10.5
Some more	34.3
Not much more	18.2
Not any more	36.9

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

Neighborhood Safety

Overall, Lethbridge residents tend to feel safe in their own neighborhoods. A substantial majority of all residents (60.7%) feel very safe while a further one-third (32.2%) feel somewhat safe in their own neighborhoods. Only 4.9% currently feel somewhat unsafe while an even smaller group (2.1%) feels very unsafe. Women are only slightly less likely to feel safe than are men. Seniors are just as likely to feel safe in their neighborhoods as are other age groups. Poorer residents are less likely to feel very safe in their neighborhoods than are middle and upper income resident.

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Very safe	60.7
Somewhat safe	32.2
Somewhat unsafe	4.9
Very unsafe	2.1

Downtown Safety

Overall Lethbridge residents also feel safe in downtown Lethbridge although less safe than in their own neighborhoods. A clear majority feels somewhat safe (54.9%) while another quarter of all residents (24.1%) feel very safe downtown. About one in five residents don't feel safe downtown, with most of those (16.9%) saying they feel somewhat unsafe. Only 4% stated they feel very unsafe when they visit downtown. Interestingly, seniors are more likely than any other age group to feel safe downtown.

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Very safe	24.1
Somewhat safe	54.9
Somewhat unsafe	16.9
Very unsafe	4.0

Downtown Safety

Most Lethbridge residents frequent downtown on a regular basis. Men and the youth visit most frequently?

	Winter 2006
Daily	23.6
Weekly	47.8
Monthly	17.4
Infrequently	11.3

	Winter 2006 Full range of responses
Daily	23.6
Weekly	47.8
Monthly	17.4
Few times per year	4.8
Rarely or never	6.4

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

Evaluations of Lethbridge Regional Police Services performance (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Good	61.6	65.8	63.7
Adequate	27.8	27.7	27.7
Poor	10.6	6.5	8.6

	South	North	West
Good	60.6	59.7	70.1
Adequate	27.8	32.2	24.3
Poor	11.7	8.1	5.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Good	64.7	58.6	69.7
Adequate	23.5	32.0	26.6
Poor	11.8	9.4	3.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Good	63.4	56.2	65.8	69.6
Adequate	30.9	32.1	24.3	23.7
Poor	5.7	11.7	9.9	6.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Good	57.7	60.2	66.9	68.9
Adequate	30.0	28.2	24.4	30.2
Poor	12.3	11.7	8.8	0.9

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Good	62.5	63.1	66.7	63.6
Adequate	25.0	29.9	23.0	29.1
Poor	12.5	7.0	10.3	7.3

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

Evaluations of how Lethbridge Police Services is meeting expectations (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Good	62.5	66.0	64.3
Adequate	30.6	29.8	30.2
Poor	6.9	4.2	5.6

	South	North	West
Good	57.4	64.9	71.0
Adequate	33.3	29.1	27.8
Poor	9.3	6.0	1.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Good	63.0	61.7	64.2
Adequate	27.4	34.0	31.2
Poor	9.6	4.4	4.6

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Good	64.8	62.3	60.9	68.7
Adequate	31.1	30.4	33.0	27.6
Poor	4.1	7.2	6.1	3.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Good	70.1	60.2	60.0	66.0
Adequate	27.6	30.1	32.5	31.1
Poor	2.2	9.7	7.5	2.8

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Good	76.6	67.5	63.4	57.3
Adequate	21.3	27.3	35.4	32.3
Poor	2.1	5.2	1.2	10.4

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

Changes in how Lethbridge Regional Police Services is meeting expectations (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Improved	23.0	25.6	24.3
Stayed the same	73.2	70.7	71.9
Worsened	3.8	3.7	3.7

	South	North	West
Improved	20.8	32.2	21.2
Stayed the same	75.1	63.7	76.4
Worsened	4.0	4.1	2.4

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Improved	28.6	28.1	10.6
Stayed the same	65.9	68.3	88.5
Worsened	5.6	3.5	1.0

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Improved	28.4	28.0	29.2	12.2
Stayed the same	67.2	68.2	67.3	84.6
Worsened	4.3	3.8	3.5	3.3

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Improved	28.1	14.9	23.5	31.6
Stayed the same	70.3	75.2	73.2	67.3
Worsened	1.6	9.9	3.3	1.0

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Improved	40.0	36.7	17.3	14.2
Stayed the same	55.6	61.3	82.7	78.7
Worsened	4.4	2.0	0.0	7.1

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

Visibility of increased police patrols in downtown core (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Great deal more	11.4	9.5	10.5
Some more	31.0	37.7	34.3
Not much more	20.1	16.4	18.2
Not any more	37.6	36.4	36.9

	South	North	West
Great deal more	5.7	12.8	12.7
Some more	32.7	39.1	32.5
Not much more	19.5	16.5	18.5
Not any more	42.1	31.6	36.3

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Great deal more	12.9	9.1	10.2
Some more	39.7	33.7	31.6
Not much more	12.9	24.6	14.3
Not any more	34.5	32.6	43.9

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Great deal more	11.9	9.4	10.3	9.9
Some more	29.7	40.2	37.1	30.6
Not much more	15.8	21.3	17.5	17.4
Not any more	42.6	29.1	35.1	42.1

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Great deal more	10.2	8.4	12.9	9.8
Some more	38.6	31.6	37.4	24.4
Not much more	22.0	16.8	16.5	17.1
Not any more	29.1	43.2	33.1	48.8

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Great deal more	12.0	12.7	2.6	7.7
Some more	50.4	31.0	25.0	19.2
Not much more	12.0	22.3	15.8	15.4
Not any more	25.6	34.1	56.6	57.7

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

Evaluations of neighborhood safety (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Very safe	66.5	55.0	60.7
Somewhat safe	27.8	36.3	32.2
Somewhat unsafe	4.0	6.1	4.9
Very unsafe	1.6	2.7	2.1

	South	North	West
Very safe	59.6	45.7	74.2
Somewhat safe	33.9	41.1	23.0
Somewhat unsafe	3.3	11.3	1.7
Very unsafe	3.3	2.0	1.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Very safe	52.2	60.7	70.9
Somewhat safe	36.8	34.0	26.4
Somewhat unsafe	6.6	3.9	2.7
Very unsafe	4.4	1.5	0.0

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Very safe	61.8	50.7	61.7	68.1
Somewhat safe	34.1	40.4	29.6	25.2
Somewhat unsafe	1.6	5.1	7.0	5.9
Very unsafe	2.4	3.7	1.7	0.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Very safe	64.9	59.6	57.8	61.3
Somewhat safe	27.6	30.8	35.4	34.9
Somewhat unsafe	6.0	6.7	4.3	1.9
Very unsafe	1.5	2.9	2.5	1.9

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Very safe	64.5	61.1	58.6	52.6
Somewhat safe	28.9	31.6	35.6	36.8
Somewhat unsafe	5.0	5.7	3.4	5.3
Very unsafe	1.7	1.6	2.3	5.3

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

Evaluations of downtown safety (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Very safe	26.5	21.8	24.1
Somewhat safe	57.1	52.8	54.9
Somewhat unsafe	13.5	20.2	16.9
Very unsafe	2.9	5.2	4.0

	South	North	West
Very safe	23.3	21.3	27.2
Somewhat safe	53.3	53.9	57.2
Somewhat unsafe	18.3	22.7	11.0
Very unsafe	5.0	2.1	4.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Very safe	22.0	24.1	24.3
Somewhat safe	53.0	53.3	62.6
Somewhat unsafe	22.0	16.1	12.1
Very unsafe	3.0	6.5	0.9

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Very safe	23.2	21.6	25.2	26.3
Somewhat safe	53.6	55.2	54.1	57.9
Somewhat unsafe	19.6	17.2	16.2	13.5
Very unsafe	3.6	6.0	4.5	2.3

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Very safe	26.3	17.2	24.1	28.9
Somewhat safe	55.6	58.6	51.3	57.7
Somewhat unsafe	13.5	19.2	20.3	12.4
Very unsafe	4.5	5.1	4.4	1.0

(Frequency of downtown visits)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently
Very safe	28.6	26.0	16.1	18.2
Somewhat safe	45.4	57.9	56.3	61.4
Somewhat unsafe	21.0	12.8	24.1	13.6
Very unsafe	5.0	3.3	3.4	6.8

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

Frequency of visits to downtown core (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Daily	25.0	22.3	23.6
Weekly	52.8	43.0	47.8
Monthly	15.3	19.2	17.4
Infrequently	6.9	15.5	11.3

	South	North	West
Daily	22.7	20.4	27.1
Weekly	47.0	48.0	48.6
Monthly	19.3	17.8	15.3
Infrequently	11.0	13.8	9.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Daily	22.8	24.9	25.7
Weekly	45.6	47.8	48.6
Monthly	16.9	18.0	15.6
Infrequently	14.7	9.3	10.1

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Daily	23.0	21.9	28.7	21.6
Weekly	39.3	52.6	46.1	53.0
Monthly	21.3	16.8	12.2	17.2
Infrequently	16.4	8.8	13.0	8.2

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Daily	32.8	19.2	25.5	14.2
Weekly	53.7	43.3	47.2	46.2
Monthly	11.2	24.0	16.1	20.8
Infrequently	2.2	13.5	11.2	18.9

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

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.4	South	35.8	Under \$30,000	30.1	H-School/less	24.0	18-29	26.5
Female	51.6	North	29.7	\$30-\$70,000	45.7	Some P-Sec.	27.0	30-44	20.5
		West	34.6	Over \$70,000	24.2	Col-Tech-Grad	22.6	45-64	31.8
						University Grad	26.4	65 or older	21.2

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

Questions

How would you rate the job the Lethbridge police are doing in policing our community?

We would like to know how the Lethbridge Regional Police Service is meeting your expectations about what the police should be doing to keep Lethbridge a safe and secure place to live and work.

In the past year, would you say that Lethbridge Police Services has improved in meeting your expectations of what a police service should be doing, has neither improved nor worsened, or that Lethbridge Police Services has gotten worse in meeting your expectations of what a police service should be doing?

Over the past year, Lethbridge Regional Police Services has increased the number of police it has patrolling in Downtown Lethbridge. Have you noticed the increased police presence in the downtown core over the past year?

Overall, how safe do you feel in your neighborhood?

Overall, how safe do you feel when visiting, working or shopping in the Downtown core of Lethbridge?

How often do you visit downtown for work, shopping, entertainment or other business?