

2003 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study (Fall)

Traffic Violation Fines & Auto Insurance

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City of Lethbridge

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'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.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by students enrolled in STS270–Social Science Research Methods and PSC150–Local Government at Lethbridge Community College in the fall of 2003. Students interviewed 769 adult residents by telephone over a two-week period from October 1 to 15, 2003 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the sample yields a margin of error of ± 3.5 , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

Analysis of the demographic data indicated that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult 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 questions were based on student interest in the issue and the release of these data is intended to contribute to the public debate on the issue.

This selection of our findings is based on the questions below.

Faron Ellis, Ph.D.
Citizen Society Research Lab

Questionnaire

Q. Alberta should move to a public auto insurance system.

Public Auto Insurance System

Strongly agree	12.1
Agree	41.3
Disagree	26.2
Strongly disagree	3.6
Don't know	16.8

Q. Recent increases in the fines for traffic violations in Alberta are fair and reasonable.

Traffic Violation Fine Increases Fair

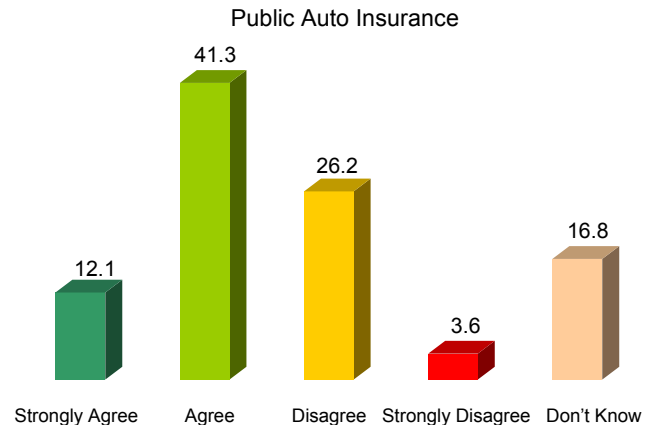
Strongly agree	7.3
Agree	43.3
Disagree	33.3
Strongly disagree	16.1

Public Auto Insurance System

A majority of Lethbridge residents support Alberta adopting a public automobile insurance program (53.4%) while less than one-third of all residents are opposed (29.8%). A further 16.8% are undecided.

Few demographic differences can be measured with men as likely to support public auto insurance are women and upper income earners just as supportive as lower income earners.

Seniors are slightly less supportive (49.5%) than are the youth (58%) but even these differences are accounted for by the fact that seniors are the most undecided (25.2% vs. only 14.2% for the youth).



Traffic Violation Fines Fair & Reasonable

Opinion is much more divided when Lethbridge residents consider whether or not the Alberta government's recent increases in fines for traffic violations are fair and reasonable.

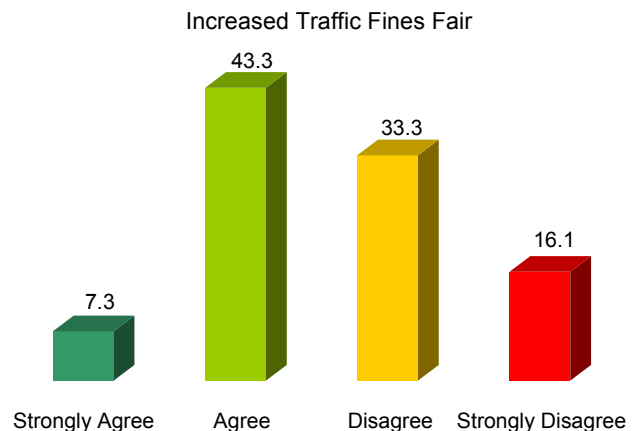
Approximately half of all Lethbridge residents (50.6%) agree that the fine increases are fair and reasonable, while the other half 49.4% disagree.

Opponents are more intense in their opposition (16.1% strongly disagree) than supporters are in their agreement (only 7.3% strongly agree).

Again, gender is not a significant predictor of opinion with men as divided as are women.

Household income does affect opinion, but not in the way we may expect. Lower-income Lethbridge residents are most likely to agree (59.3%) that the increases are fair and reasonable. Support drops to only 44.7% among middle-income earners, while upper-income Lethbridge residents are least supportive 42.5%.

Residents' age is also important in that the youth are the least supportive (46.6%), followed by 30 to 44 year olds (48.5%). A slight majority of middle-aged residents are supportive (50.6%) while seniors are most supportive (62.5%).



Public Auto Insurance System for Alberta

Q. Alberta should move to a public auto insurance system.

Public Auto Insurance by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	13.9	10.4	12.1
Agree	39.6	42.9	41.3
Disagree	29.2	23.4	26.2
Strongly disagree	4.1	3.0	3.6
Don't know	13.1	20.3	16.8

Public Auto Insurance by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly agree	11.5	10.9	14.5
Agree	40.8	45.3	38.5
Disagree	29.3	23.4	24.4
Strongly disagree	2.2	3.1	5.9
Don't know	16.2	17.2	16.7

Public Auto Insurance by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly agree	12.3	9.7	16.3
Agree	42.7	45.6	39.5
Disagree	21.8	27.4	28.5
Strongly disagree	1.8	1.9	5.8
Don't know	21.4	15.4	9.9

Public Auto Insurance by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly agree	9.8	11.9	11.2	15.8
Agree	45.1	42.3	35.7	43.7
Disagree	23.7	24.2	30.6	26.3
Strongly disagree	1.7	5.2	2.6	4.7
Don't know	19.7	16.5	19.9	9.5

Public Auto Insurance by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly agree	14.2	9.6	14.1	6.3
Agree	43.8	38.9	40.6	43.2
Disagree	24.9	29.9	26.9	22.5
Strongly disagree	3.0	6.0	3.0	2.7
Don't know	14.2	15.6	15.4	25.2

Traffic Violation Fines Fair & Reasonable

Q. Recent increases in the fines for traffic violations in Alberta are fair and reasonable.

Fines by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly agree	8.8	5.8	7.3
Agree	39.9	46.5	43.3
Disagree	34.4	32.3	33.3
Strongly disagree	16.8	15.5	16.1

Fines by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly agree	8.3	3.6	10.1
Agree	46.8	44.6	37.6
Disagree	32.9	32.6	33.0
Strongly disagree	12.0	19.2	19.3

Fines by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly agree	7.9	4.7	9.9
Agree	51.4	41.0	32.6
Disagree	27.6	37.9	37.8
Strongly disagree	13.1	16.4	19.8

Fines by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly agree	4.1	7.4	7.3	9.6
Agree	49.1	42.9	35.4	47.1
Disagree	34.3	36.5	34.9	27.3
Strongly disagree	12.4	13.2	22.4	16.0

Fines by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly agree	7.8	6.6	7.9	6.7
Agree	38.8	41.9	42.7	55.8
Disagree	33.6	33.5	34.8	27.9
Strongly disagree	19.8	18.0	14.5	9.6