



Crime Prevention and Policing Study  
Strategic Update  
and  
Policing Services Model Review

Part 1: Research and Statistical Analysis

Part 2: Community Perception and Strategy  
Development

Part 3: Policing Service Model Review

SUBMITTED TO THE  
Mayor and Council  
JUNE 30<sup>th</sup> 2011

perivale + taylor

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## **Part 2 Community Perception and Strategy Development**

### **Executive Summary**

The multifaceted community consultative process undertaken in support of the *Review* included Council workshops; stakeholder interviews; community and business focus groups; and three forms of survey: web, print, and telephone. A community forum was held to obtain feedback on Part 2 and Part 3 findings and associated recommendations.

Additionally, a literature review of existing domestic and international crime prevention programs was undertaken and reported in Part 1 of the *Review*. As mentioned in the Part 1 Report, the purpose of the literature review was to examine the extent to which any of the 'leading practice' programs or initiatives may be applied in the Red Deer context. In looking towards a comprehensive crime prevention strategy for the City of Red Deer, the literature asserts that it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive community-based model with intervention strategies aimed at each level of prevention: primary (reducing opportunities for crime or social disorder), secondary (focus on at-risk individuals, groups, or communities), and tertiary (prevent offenders from re-offending).

The Part 2 report details community perceptions on a range of issues:

- a. Perceptions of crime and safety
- b. Personal experience with crime
- c. Awareness of crime prevention initiatives
- d. Policing in Red Deer.

A significant finding with respect to community safety is that Red Deerians hold the opinion that the City is safe, one's neighbourhood is safe; however, there is some anxiety about the downtown area.

When information obtained in the telephone survey is combined with, and compared to, focus group and stakeholder input, a picture emerges of a community (Red Deerians) engaged in, and supportive of, crime prevention initiatives. In looking towards a comprehensive crime prevention strategy for the City of Red Deer, the literature asserts that it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive community-based model with intervention strategies aimed at each level: primary (reducing opportunities for crime or social disorder), secondary (focus on at-risk individuals, groups, or communities), and tertiary (prevent offenders from re-offending). Red Deer has already undertaken a number of initiatives to work toward an integrated model.

As evidenced in the data obtained, in particular from the telephone survey, crime concerns and the 'root cause of crime' focus primarily on criminogenic factors which manifest themselves in crime and social

## *Part 2: Community Perception and Strategy Development*

disorder issues such as illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, as well as issues such as, homelessness, mental health, residential structure and schools, family structure, employment, education, marital status, and age proportions and median age.

There is also an apparent willingness by Red Deerians to further engage in crime prevention initiatives. To date, ownership of many community crime prevention initiatives has devolved to the Community Services Division of the City. Partnerships with the public police are seen as important opportunities to create a system where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It is seen as a proactive approach to long-term problems focusing more on the psycho-social and economic aspects of the genesis of crime.

As reported earlier in the report of the *Review*, the need for protocols and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between community organizations and the public police were one of the most salient issues brought forward during the *Review's* focus group meetings. A key issue is to ensure an ongoing and functional relationship between community/social agencies and the civic division responsible for policing services.

## 1 Summary: Community Consultative Process

The multifaceted community consultative process undertaken in support of the *Review* included Council workshops; stakeholder interviews; community and business focus groups; and three forms of survey: web, print, and telephone. A Community Forum was held to obtain feedback on Part 2 and Part 3 findings and associated recommendations.

Additionally, a literature review of existing domestic and international crime prevention programs was undertaken and reported in Part 1 of the *Review*. As mentioned in the Part 1 Report, the purpose of the literature review was to examine the extent to which any of the 'leading practice' programs or initiatives might be applied in the Red Deer context. In looking towards a comprehensive crime prevention strategy for the City of Red Deer, the literature asserts that it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive community-based model with intervention strategies aimed at each level of prevention: primary (reducing opportunities for crime or social disorder), secondary (focus on at-risk individuals, groups, or communities), and tertiary (preventing offenders from re-offending). Red Deer has already undertaken a number of initiatives to work toward an integrated model.

## 2 Inputs: Community Consultative Process

### 2.1 Council workshop

At the outset of the *Review* process, the Consultant facilitated a Council workshop which was designed to conduct an analysis of strengths; weaknesses; opportunities, and threats (SWOT) with respect to crime and social disorder issues. The workshop was held at the outset of the *Review* and, through a participative process, the members of Council provided input to the vision for crime prevention and policing strategies.<sup>1</sup> A key deliverable from the workshop was a listing of mechanisms to collect performance data from which to assess the success of crime prevention and policing initiatives, specifically:

#### **(Performance data)**

- Reporting
- Statistics
- Vital signs
- Accurate surveys

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<sup>1</sup> Following the October 2010 Civic election, the three new council members were also individually interviewed and their input sought with respect to the general questions posed to [then] sitting Council in August, 2010.

- Community feedback
- Sensitive, contextual information to media

Following the presentation of the Part 1 Draft findings, an additional workshop was held with Council and senior civic administration to specifically address the development of a strategic framework for crime prevention and law enforcement. Members of Council provided input to the framework for crime prevention and policing strategies.<sup>2</sup> This process, along with additional information received from interviewees, focus groups and survey inputs conducted during the *Review* process resulted in the production of the Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework is synthesised from the diverse perspectives from the *Review*. Equally importantly, the Framework is constructed against a backdrop in Red Deer which exhibits important elements that influence the nature and feasibility of such a framework. The conditions in Red Deer, noted below, create an environment which is conducive to the adoption of an inclusive crime prevention and law enforcement strategy:

- Council in Red Deer is progressive and practices a comprehensive perspective on oversight and the operation of City functions;
- Members of the senior administration mirror this perspective in thinking strategically;
- A strong foundation has been established in Council and City administration, which values the inclusion of all stakeholders in identifying issues which are problematic, in developing prospective resolutions to such problems and in following through on actions designed to improve the quality of life in the City;
- The police, the social support agencies, local businesses and members of the community are informed and active supporters of the principles of crime prevention and willing to participate in processes which enhance the quality of life in Red Deer; and
- The Government of Alberta is progressive and supportive of local initiatives which encourage crime prevention and improved policing.

## **2.2 Stakeholder interviews**

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with police practitioners, civic administration, social agencies, and representatives from Solicitor General and Public Security. The interviews were based upon a structured/open ended interview schedule. Where required, interviews focused upon specific areas of interest and expertise of the interviewee. Much valuable information was gained and interviewees were interested and constructive in their comments. Additional interviews were conducted during the course of the *Review* for the purpose of clarification or if, as further analysis was undertaken, an issue area required clarification. Representatives of Solicitor General and Public Security were consulted to discuss tentative options for structuring policing models given the specific Alberta context.

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<sup>2</sup> Following the October 2010 Civic election, the three new council members were also individually interviewed and their input sought with respect to the general questions posed to [then] sitting Council in August, 2011. They were in attendance at the second workshop.

### 2.3 Agency Focus groups and Community Focus Groups

During Part 1 of the *Review*, focus groups were conducted with 20 community agencies. Additionally, a focus group was held for Red Deer Community Associations to which 23 associations were invited and 8 community associations attended. Inclement weather may have influenced attendance. A focus group with youth, facilitated by the coordinator of Street Ties, was also held. A summary of focus group input is contained in Appendix 2-2. Primary concerns expressed regarding community safety and security issues were:

- Bullying
- Gangs
- Drug houses
- Lack of police response for problems at the hospital, e.g. found drugs patients/visitors
- Mental health
- Substance abuse – drugs/liquor
  - theft
  - violence
  - drunkenness
  - domestic violence
- Personal safety
  - bullied
  - feeling safe, not abused
- Elder abuse
- Vandalism
- House Break and Enter
- Late night bar closing
- Downtown reality vs. Perception – unfounded fear
- Violence against women
  - Stranger
  - Domestic
- Lack of police foot patrol downtown

As noted in the following discussion regarding input to the telephone survey, the issues addressed during the focus groups are consistent with the four broad areas examined in the telephone survey:

- Perceptions of crime and safety;
- Personal experience with crime;
- Awareness of crime prevention initiatives; and
- Policing in Red Deer.

### 3 Surveys

#### 3.1 Web and Print Survey

The *Review* provided a public input process through the Internet and an identical written response option which enabled any resident or business to add their views and opinions relating to public safety in Red Deer.<sup>3</sup> The questions were open ended and designed to encourage thoughtful, constructive advice. A total of 115 web responses were received and 17 written responses. The responses in the analysis, below, were grouped by neighbourhood. Respondents identified a total of 31 neighbourhoods.

It should be noted that the process is not a survey but an opportunity for persons to provide input. The *Review* contacted many of the community and social agencies<sup>4</sup> in Red Deer with the intention to especially gain input from persons who may not normally be inclined or asked to provide input on public safety issues. The list of agencies was considered comprehensive and gleaned from library sources, City administrative contacts, police agency liaisons, and input from the project manager and coordinator.

In the portion of the report which addresses downtown issues, responses from other areas of the city which mention downtown issues are repeated under the downtown section.

#### Summary

The responses show different perceptions from various neighbourhoods. For example, the downtown responses focus largely on police presence, while other neighbourhoods focus on crime or traffic issues. A constant theme is the need for effective two-way communication between the police and members of the community.

However, the volume of responses was different between neighbourhoods as some neighbourhoods had one or two responses, and none had more than six.

Appendix 2-8 provides a summary of public input to the survey.

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<sup>3</sup> See [http://www.perivaleandtaylor.com/reddeer\\_publicinput/reddeer.html](http://www.perivaleandtaylor.com/reddeer_publicinput/reddeer.html) Appendix 2-4 illustrates the public input webpage

<sup>4</sup> List of agencies provided by the City

## 3.2 Telephone Survey

The purpose of the telephone survey was to hear from Red Deerians regarding their perceptions of crime, safety, and policing at both the city and neighbourhood level. To this end, the Consultant contracted the Population Research Laboratory (PRL)<sup>5</sup> to conduct a telephone survey of 400 Red Deer residents aged 18 years and over using a Random-Digit Dialing (RDD) approach<sup>6</sup> and the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (Ci3 WinCati)<sup>7</sup> facilities at the PRL centre at the University of Alberta. The Arts Science and Law Research Ethics Board (ASLREB) at the University of Alberta approved the PRL undertaking the survey.

The survey was supported and promoted by The City of Red Deer. Just prior to the main data collection process, a news release,<sup>8</sup> intended to encourage citizens to participate, was issued by the City. PRL administration noted that there was an excellent response from the citizens participating in the survey. It is believed that the media release regarding the survey contributed significantly to the positive response.

### 3.2.1 Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire used in the process was developed by the Consultant, with input from the Review Steering Committee. It was subsequently refined by the PRL working collaboratively with the Consultant. Assurance was provided to the participants that the information was voluntary, confidential and anonymous, and protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP).

### 3.2.2 Data Collection Process

Data collection commenced April 4, 2011 and was completed April 11, 2011. The total sample size was 402 participants. The average length of a completed interview was 14.0 minutes. The data collection procedures included refusal interviewing<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> PRL is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations (AASRO) and seeks to advance the research, educational and service goals of the University of Alberta by helping academic researchers and policy makers design and implement applied social science research projects.

<sup>6</sup> The RDD method ensured that respondents had an equal chance to be contacted whether or not their household was listed in the local telephone directory.

<sup>7</sup> The Ci3 WinCati System is a product of Sawtooth Technologies, Inc., Northbrook, Illinois.

<sup>8</sup> Please see Appendix 2-1

<sup>9</sup> Interviewers call respondents back in an attempt to convert an initial refusal to participate into a completed interview.

### **3.2.2.1 Cell Phones**

The Red Deer RDD telephone survey was based on land-line households using working banks that had potential access to listed and unlisted cell phone numbers that were listed in a directory.<sup>10</sup> However, there are no exhaustive lists of cell phone - only working banks from which a sampling frame could be derived. Cell Phone Only (CPO) households could not be sampled because there are no databases at this point in time from which to draw a random sample. That being said, individuals were encountered on their cell phone and it could be that some of them participated in the study. However, of the 3,000 contact numbers used for the study, 65 or 2.2% were individuals who were called on their cell phone but did not wish to participate because it was too expensive for them to take the call. This is a typical finding in the literature.

As of 2010, according to Statistics Canada, 13% of households were CPO. Although 2010 provincial data was not available, it is known that in 2008, 11.5% of households in Alberta were CPO. CPO households tend to consist of young, single, never married males. As of 2010, 50% of CPO households in Canada were in the 18 to 34 years of age bracket.

In order to compensate for the lack of cell phone only coverage in the sample and the typical lack of coverage of individuals in the younger age categories, adjustments (weights) were applied to the sample based on the age and gender distributions of the 2010 Red Deer Municipal census. The application of these weights results in a representative sample of Red Deerians, regardless of whether they live in a CPO household, according to the latest census data. In other words, the weights adjust for younger individuals who are more likely than older people to be in a cell phone-only household.

### **3.2.3 Demographic Characteristics**

A review of demographic data garnered from the 402 respondents<sup>11</sup> indicates that the average years lived in Red Deer is 18.5, with half the population living in Red Deer for fewer than 14.5 years. The age range of participants was 18-93 years, with the average and median ages 47 years of age. As noted in the 2004 Crime Prevention and Policing Study, the median age recorded in the 2001 Census was 33.1 years.

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<sup>10</sup> Information in this section was provided by PRL staff: Andrea Werner-Leonard, PhD, Research Consultant, Dave Odynak, MA, Research Analyst, Tracy Kennedy, MA, Research Coordinator, Donna Fong, BA, Research Administrator.

<sup>11</sup> Note that totals do not always equal 402 due to some missing information regarding certain questions.

**Table 2-1: Residence and Age**

	Range	Average	Median
Years lived in Red Deer	0-73	18.5	14.5
Age (years)	18-93	47.75	47

The survey process did not have established gender quotas; for example, 50 percent women and 50 percent men. However, the process succeeded in bringing the gender distribution closer to 50-50 by the end of the data collection (46% males, n=186; 54% females, n=216). A weight (gender by age) variable was applied to the sample to make the sample demographics representative of the current population.<sup>12</sup>

Nearly 68% of the sample is married or common-law. Approximately 72% of the respondents own their homes, while another 27% rent their homes.

**Table 2-2: Marital Status**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	239	60.7	60.7
Common-law	28	7.1	67.8
Separated	15	3.8	71.6
Divorced	34	8.6	80.2
Widowed	21	5.3	85.5
Single, never married	57	14.5	100.0
Total	394	100.0	

The respondents came from across the city and were residents of 38 neighborhoods. The table below indicates the eleven communities from which the majority of participants were drawn (nearly 57% came from these communities). It is important to note that there was no effort to proportionately sample by neighbourhood, but larger neighborhoods are more likely to have participants drawn from them.

<sup>12</sup> Red Deer 2010 Census, Acknowledgements Christina Lust, Divisional Strategist, Community Services, City of Red Deer.

**Table 2-3: Community**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Anders	24	6.0	10.5
Bower	15	3.7	17.1
Deer Park	36	9.0	32.9
Highland Green	16	4.0	39.9
Kentwood	15	3.7	46.5
Lancaster	20	5.0	55.3
Morrisroe	15	3.7	61.8
Normandeau	23	5.7	71.9
Oriole Park	28	7.0	84.2
Rosedale	18	4.5	92.1
Westpark	18	4.5	100.0
Total	228	56.7	
Other Communities	174	43.3	
	402	100.0	

### 3.2.3 Survey Findings

The telephone survey provided findings with respect to four broad issues:

- Perceptions of crime and safety
- Personal experience with crime
- Awareness of crime prevention initiatives
- Policing in Red Deer.

Each issue contained a number of specifically focused responses. As indicated above, demographic data was also obtained from the respondents.

## 4 Findings: Perceptions of crime and safety

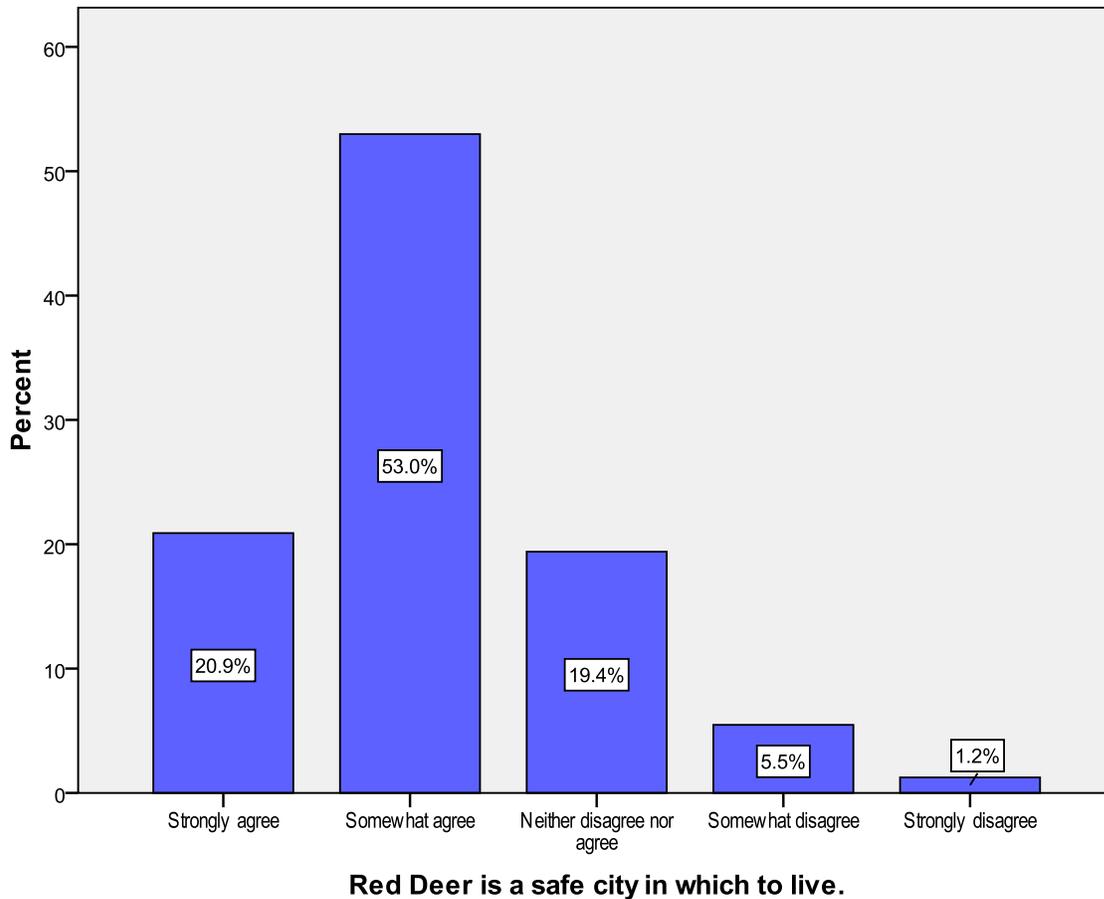
There are many factors influencing both the experience of crime and perceptions of crime. Those who have been victims of crime, for example, may perceive the nature of crime differently from those who haven't been victims. Similarly, those who have never been victims of crime may perceive that crime occurs less frequently than it does occur. In this snapshot analysis of a sample of Red Deer residents, the focus is on the impact that experience of crime has on perceptions of crime, as well as to highlight

how it is that these factors may be impacted by particular demographic characteristics (age and sex) along with residence in specific neighborhoods.

#### 4.1 City and Neighbourhoods

The majority perception (73.9%) of the respondents<sup>13</sup>, was that they somewhat agreed (53%) or strongly agreed (20.9%) that Red Deer is a safe city in which to live. This is in contrast to the October 2010, Maclean's magazine article "*Canada's Most Dangerous Cities*"<sup>14</sup> which ranked Red Deer, using a population of 97,038, as 36<sup>th</sup> most dangerous city in Canada with an overall crime score as a percentage difference (-11.31) from the national crime rate.

Chart 2-1: Red Deer is a safe city in which to live.

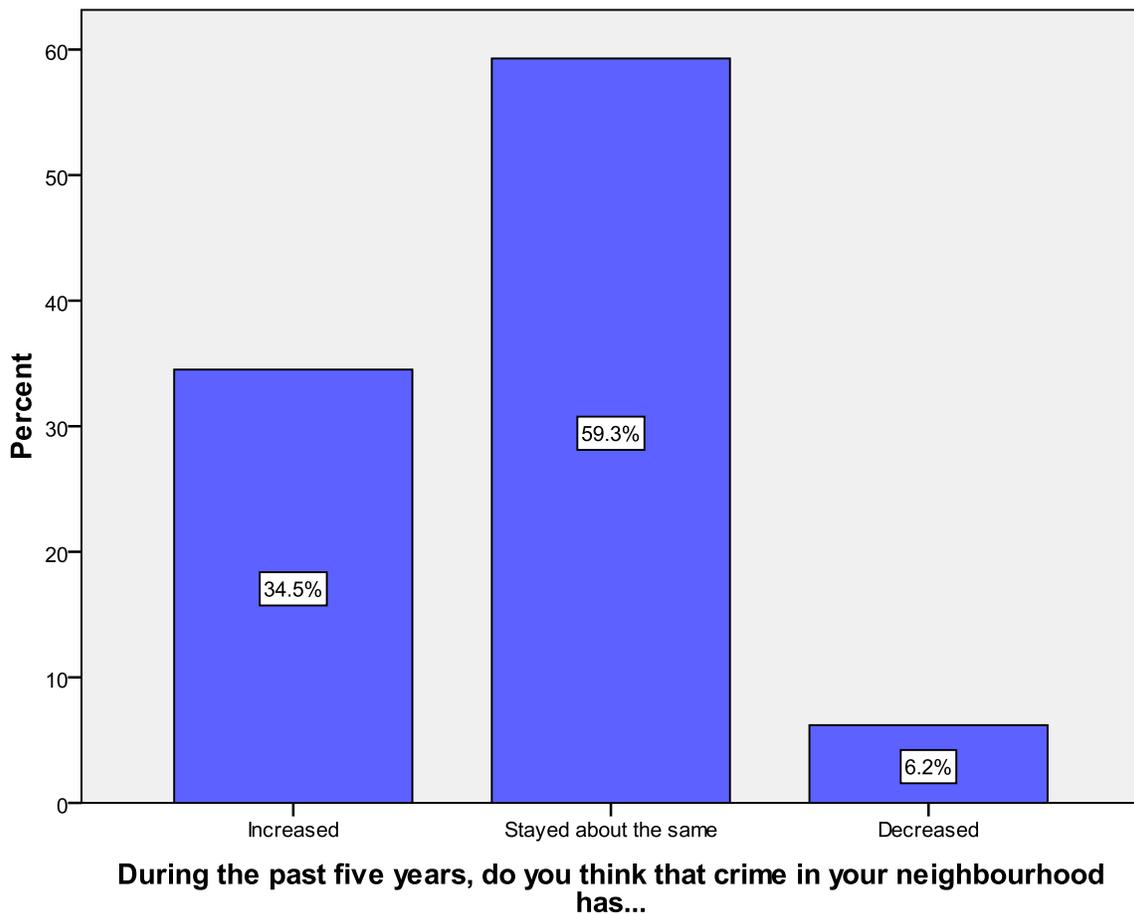


<sup>13</sup> Please see Appendix 2-4 for the Survey questions and frequency distribution.

<sup>14</sup> MacLean's Magazine. In, <http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/10/14/national-crime-rankings-2010/>

Notwithstanding the respondent's perception of safety, a majority of them were also of the opinion that during the past five years crime in the city of Red Deer had increased (67.9%) or had stayed about the same (27.1%). Data from the *Part 1 Research and Statistical Analysis* report indicates that the total reported violation trend has remained relatively constant when compared with the years from 2004 and 2009. However, there have been fluctuations within this time; for example, an 8% rise in 2005, followed by an almost 19% drop in 2006 (from the previous year) and then a gradual increase during 2007 and 2008 to a level in 2009 just under 1% higher than that of 2004.<sup>15</sup>

**Chart 2-2: Has crime increased/decreased/stayed the same in the city of Red Deer?**



The perception of crime increasing is contrary to statistical data regarding total reported violations (crime categories). This may be a function of how individuals receive information regarding crime in Red Deer.

Survey respondents were asked how they receive the majority of information about crime in Red Deer. While multiple responses were allowed, it became evident that "Media" (newspapers (65.4%), radio

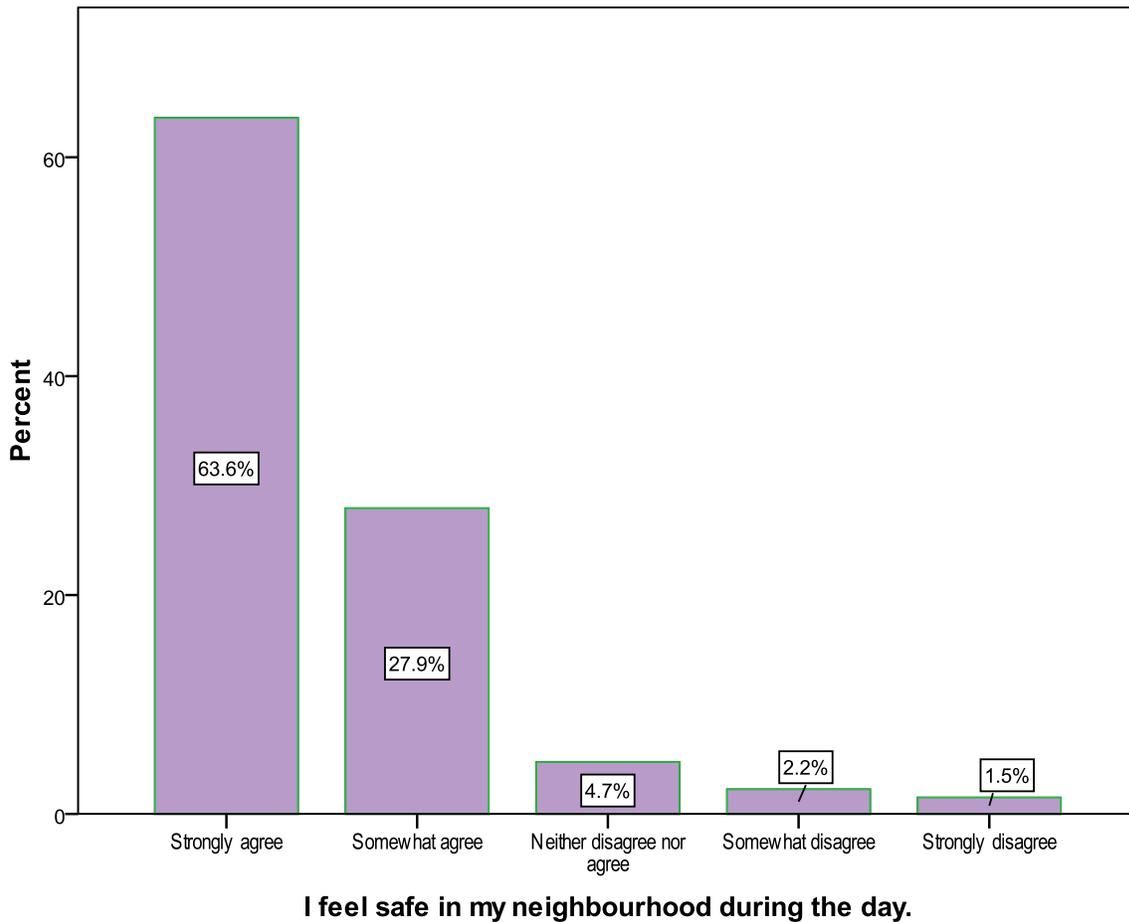
<sup>15</sup> Red Deer Crime Prevention and Policing Review – Part 1 Highlights. February 23, 2011, p.5.

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(39.6%), television newscasts (30.3%) were the most significant contributors to respondent information regarding crime. In contrast, public service announcements (0.5%), community meetings/town halls (0.7%), and community newsletters (1.2%) were the least informative. Social media (Internet/webpages) accounted for 9.7% of information, which was lower than personal experience (11.7%) and information garnered from family and friends (27.4%).

An overwhelming majority of respondents (91.3%) strongly agreed (63.4%) or somewhat agreed (27.9%) that they felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day.<sup>16</sup>

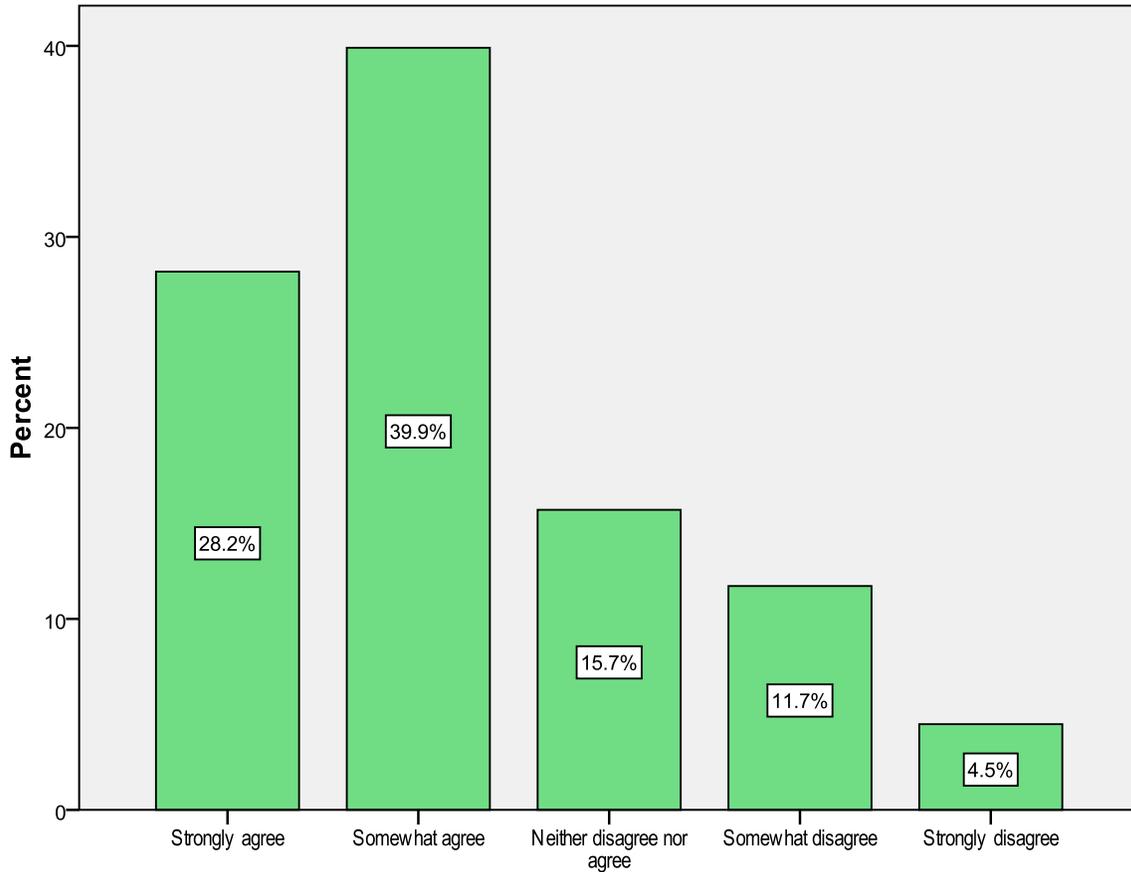
Chart 2-3: I feel safe in my neighborhood during the day



<sup>16</sup> A listing of respondent neighbourhoods is found in Appendix 2-5. In addition to established neighbourhoods, 3 areas: Aspen Ridge, Davenport and North Hill were provided by respondents as being their neighbourhood. Six respondents did not provide information concerning neighbourhood of residence.

The perception of safety during the night reduced somewhat with 68.1% of respondents strongly agreeing (28.2%) or somewhat agreeing (39.9%) to feeling safe in their neighbourhood. Approximately half of the respondents were of the opinion that crime had remained about the same in their neighbourhood over the past five years, although a third of the respondents felt that crime had increased.

**Chart 2-4: I feel safe in my neighbourhood during the night.**



**I feel safe in my neighbourhood during the night.**

Again, from a neighbourhood perspective, respondents were asked “When you think of violent crime, such as physical assault, how safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?”

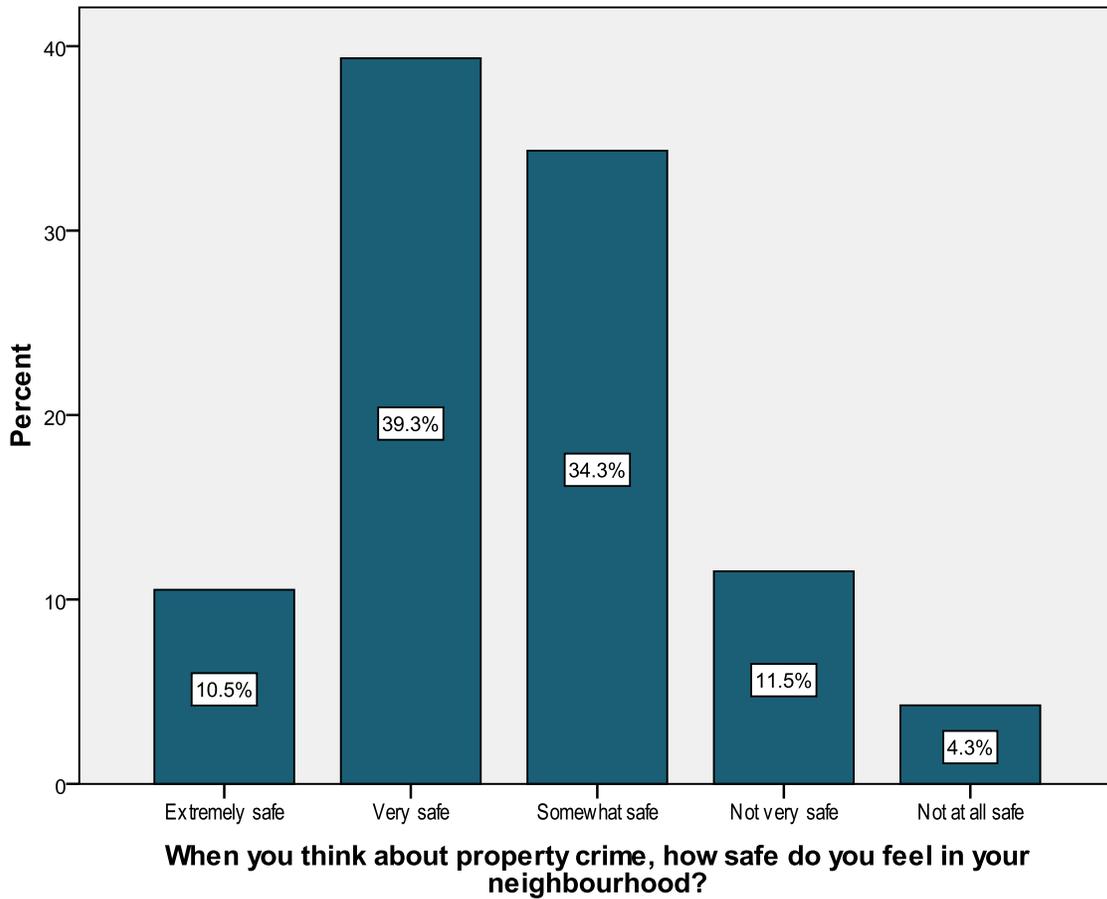
As indicated in the frequency table below, a majority of respondents (79%) felt very safe (48%) or extremely safe (31%) in their neighbourhood. When combined with the response of those who felt somewhat safe (17%), a significant proportion of residents expressed feeling safe. Just less than 4% of respondents stated they felt not very safe (2.8%) or not at all safe (1%).

**Table 2-4: When you think of violent crime, such as physical assault, how safe do you feel in your neighborhood?**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all safe	4	1.0	1.0
Not very safe	11	2.8	3.8
Somewhat safe	69	17.3	21.0
Extremely safe	125	31.3	52.3
Very safe	191	47.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	

The perception of safety in the respondents neighbourhood with respect to property crime, (essentially any crime other than a crime against one's own person) decreased to 50% of respondents who felt either very safe (39%) or extremely safe (10.5%). When the responses of individuals who felt somewhat safe (34.3%) are added, the overall sense of safety remains relatively high. It is also noted later in this report that respondents viewed property crimes such as house break and enter (40.8%), theft vehicle (17.4%) and other property (21.1%), and property damage (19.4%), as the main crimes of concern.

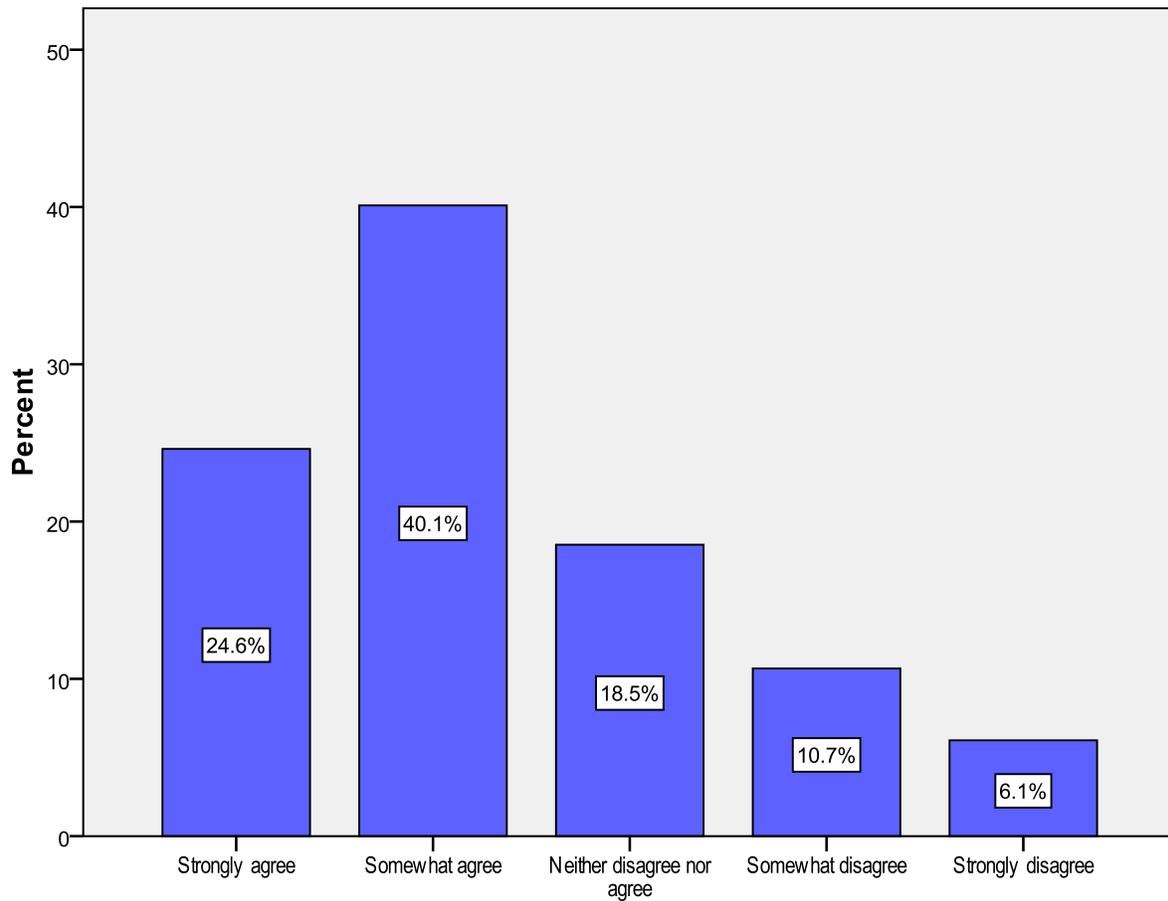
Chart 2-5: How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?



As previously reported in Part 1 of the *Review*, participants in interviews and focus groups frequently mentioned an ‘increase in crime’ and ‘the unsafe nature of the downtown area’ as concerns. When clarification was sought regarding the nature of “unsafe”, only isolated examples or hearsay anecdotes were provided. Those references alluded to panhandling and the presence of homeless people in the downtown core. Others mentioned an “increase in crime” given that Red Deer has become a city; however, specific details were lacking. Also mentioned in interviews was the feeling of apprehension that was engendered by the implementation of Neighborhood Watch, in that if such a crime prevention program is warranted, then crime must be rife. The preventive aspects of Neighbourhood Watch did not appear to be fully appreciated or understood.

Telephone survey respondents were asked about the perception of safety in the downtown area during the day and night. A majority of respondents (64.7%) somewhat agreed (40.1%) or strongly agreed (24.6%) that they feel safe in the downtown area during the day.

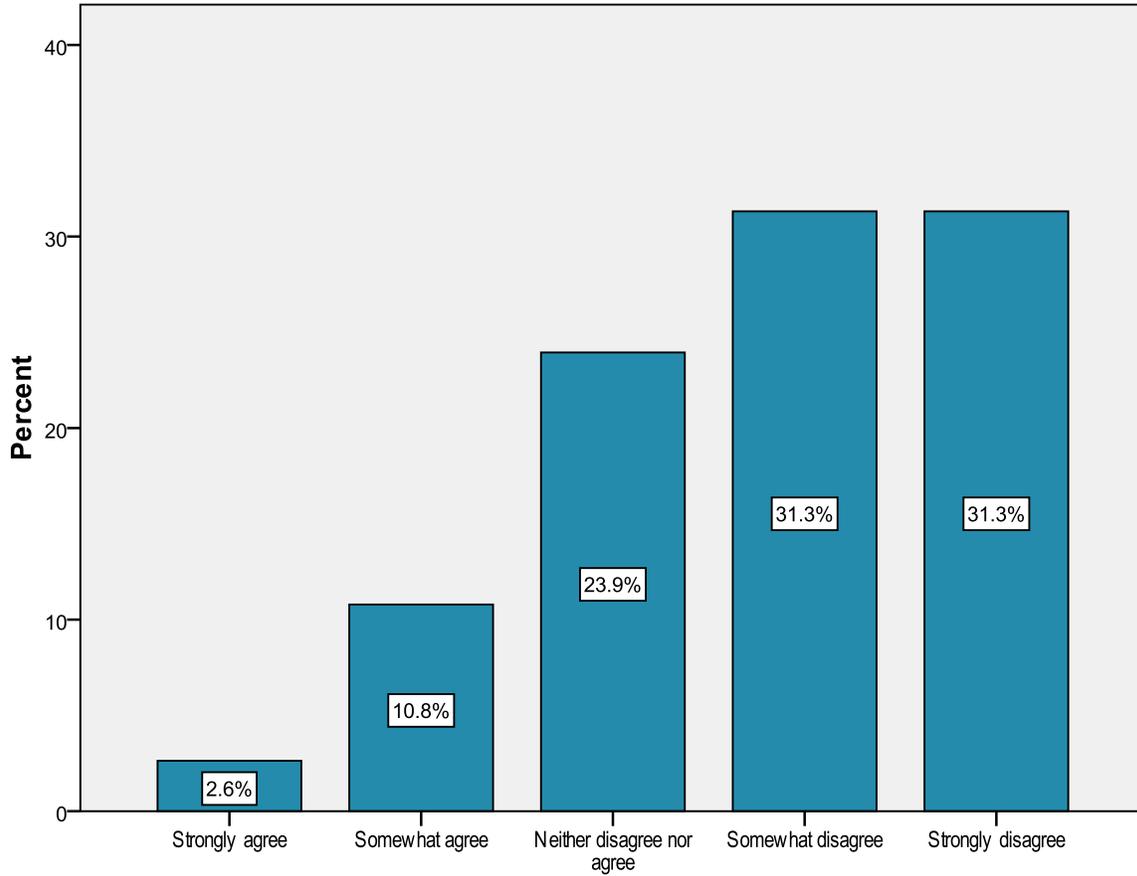
Chart 2-6: I feel safe when I am in the downtown area during the day



**I feel safe when I am in the downtown area during the day.**

However, as illustrated in the chart below, the perception of safety decreased dramatically when only 13.4% of respondents somewhat agreed (10.8%) or strongly agreed (2.65%) to feeling safe in the downtown area during the night. Stated conversely, 62.6% of the respondents either strongly disagreed (31.3%) or somewhat disagreed (31.3%) with feeling safe in the downtown area during the night.

Chart 2-7: I feel safe when I am in the downtown area during the night.



I feel safe when I am in the downtown area during the night.

## 4.2 Crime Concerns

### 4.2.1 Red Deer

Respondents were asked, “What is the most important crime concern for you in Red Deer?” In this instance only one selection was allowed. The results are ordered in Table 2-5 below by most frequently cited concern to least frequently cited concern.

**Table 2-5: Most Important Crime Concern by Frequency**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
House break-ins/break and enters	73	18.8	18.8
Drug-increase in dealing of illegal	65	16.7	35.5
Drug-increase in use of illegal	53	13.6	49.1
Assault causing injury	29	7.5	56.6
Other specify	25	6.4	63.0
Property damage	24	6.2	69.2
Theft-other property	23	5.9	75.1
Undesirable people	14	3.6	78.7
Gang-illegal activities	12	3.1	81.7
Theft-vehicles	12	3.1	84.8
Drug-increase in drug houses	11	2.8	87.7
None/no issue	10	2.6	90.2
Alcohol-drinking and driving	6	1.5	91.8
Panhandling/begging	6	1.5	93.3
Youth committing crimes	6	1.5	94.9
Alcohol-other related crimes	5	1.3	96.1
Drug-law enforcement	4	1.0	97.2
Traffic violations(speed, unsafe)	3	.8	97.9
Youth hanging around	3	.8	98.7
Sexual assault	2	.5	99.2
Computer-internet/cyber crime	1	.3	99.5
Domestic/family violence	1	.3	99.7
Prostitution	1	.3	100.0
Total	389	100.0	

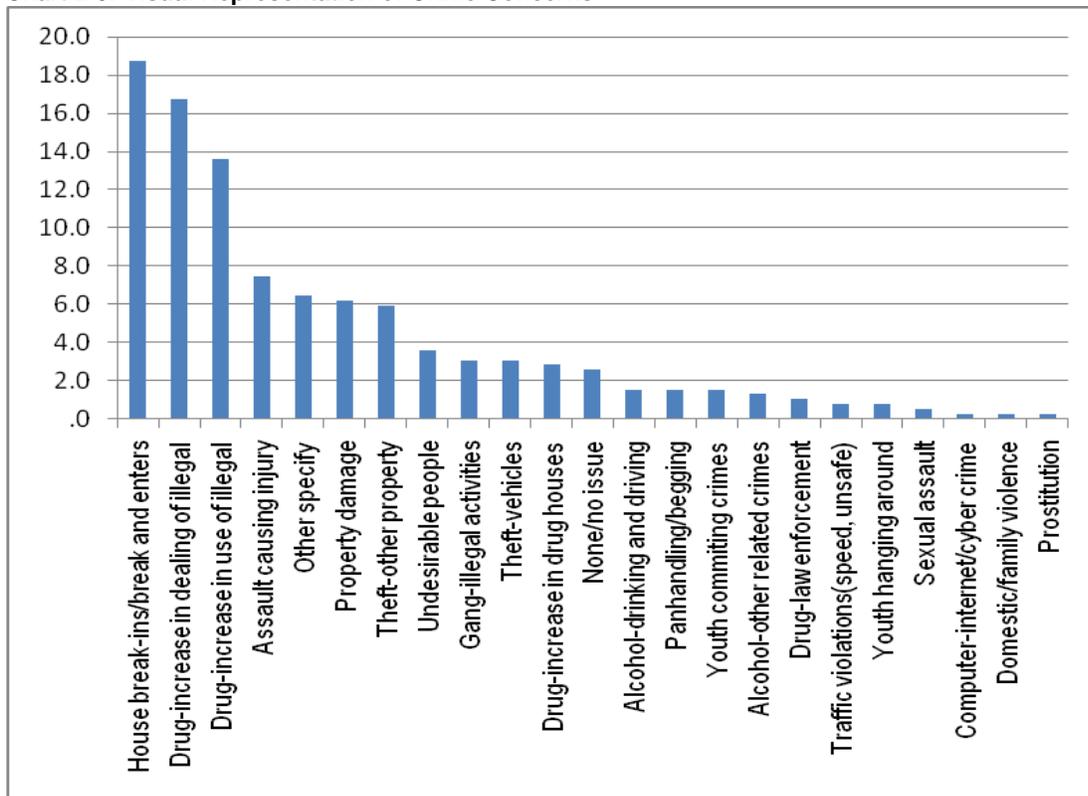
While House Break and Enter (18.8%) was the single most concern, a combination of drug related crime concerns was also significantly high (32.1%). This combination included: increase in drug houses (2.87%), increase in dealing of illegal drugs (16.7%), and increase in use of illegal drugs (13.6%). Personal safety issues – assault causing injury is also identified by 7.5% of respondents as a crime concern.

It was also noted that child abduction and child safety was a concern for some respondents (2.2%). As reported in Part 1 of the *Review*, incidents of crime involving youth and children as victims – child pornography, sexual exploitation, has become part of the criminal landscape in Red Deer, albeit infrequently. Publication of these incidents in the mass media may be a factor for increased community awareness and concern for children.

It is of interest to note that similar issues were also raised in a survey of the community in support of the 2004 *Crime Prevention and Policing Review*. At that time the issues that arose as the most urgent or significant were:

- Alcohol Abuse
- Drug Abuse
- Break and Enter
- Theft
- Vehicle Theft
- Drug/Substance Related Crimes

**Chart 2-8: Visual Representation of Crime Concerns**



In addition to identifying the most important crime concern, respondents also identified a range of other crime concerns. Respondents were asked to indicate: “What other crimes are of concern to you?” Table 2-6 indicates the number of respondents who chose that particular type of crime concern. Importantly,

respondents could choose more than one option. The frequencies for Table 2-6 therefore add up to more than 402 because multiple types of concerns may have been expressed by respondents.

**Table 2-6: Other Concerns by Frequency**

	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol-drinking and driving	20	5.0
Alcohol-other related crimes	22	5.5
Assault causing injury	76	18.9
Cell phone use or texting while driving	3	0.7
Child abuse	4	1.0
Computer-internet/cyber crime	1	0.2
Domestic/family violence	12	3.0
Drug-increase in drug houses	32	8.0
Drug-increase in dealing of illegal	70	17.4
Drug-increase in use of illegal	71	17.7
Drug-law enforcement	17	4.2
Gang-illegal activities	12	3.0
Graffiti	11	2.7
House break-ins/break and enters	113	28.1
Neighbourhood noise / disturbing the peace	4	1.0
Organized crime	8	2.0
Panhandling / begging	6	1.5
Prostitution	8	2.0
Scams/frauds against seniors	1	0.2
Scams/frauds against others	2	0.5
Sexual assault	15	3.7
Theft identity	10	2.5
Theft-other property	81	20.1
Theft-vehicles	59	14.7
Traffic violations(speed, unsafe)	21	5.2
Undesirable people	14	3.5
Youth hanging around	14	3.5
Youth committing crimes	22	5.5
None/no issue	34	8.5

In rank order the 10 most prevalent concerns were:

1. House Break and Enter (28.1%)
2. Theft property other than vehicle (20.1%)
3. Assault causing injury (18.9%)
4. Increase in use of illegal drugs (17.7%)
5. Increase in dealing of illegal drugs (17.4%)
6. Theft of vehicles (14.7%)
7. Property damage (13%)
8. Alcohol (10.5%) [drinking and driving (5%) and other related alcohol crime (5.5%)]
9. Youth (9%) [Youth crime (5.5%) and Youth hanging around (3.5%)]
10. Increase in drug houses (8%)

#### 4.2.2 Downtown

Respondents were asked to think specifically about the downtown area: “Thinking now of the downtown area of Red Deer, what crimes in this area are of the most concern to you?” Table 2-7 reflects the ten responses most frequently cited (alphabetically ordered). Again, note that respondents could select more than one response.

**Table 2-7: Downtown Concerns by Frequency**

	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol-other related crimes	42	10.4
Assault causing injury	116	28.9
Drug-increase in dealing of illegal	130	32.3
Drug-increase in use of illegal	116	28.9
House break-ins/break and enters	22	5.5
Panhandling / begging	37	9.2
Prostitution	25	6.2
Theft-other property	49	12.2
Theft-vehicles	28	7.0
Undesirable people	49	12.2

The majority of respondents were most concerned about personal safety - assault causing injury (28.9%) and a combination of drug related issues (69.6%) comprised of increase in drug houses (5.2%), increase in dealing of illegal drugs (32.3%), increase in use of illegal drugs (28.9%), and drug law enforcement (3.2%). Panhandling/begging (9.2%), undesirable persons (12.2%) and youth hanging around (3.7%)

were other respondent concerns. Homelessness was also identified as an issue in the downtown area (2.4%).

#### 4.2.3 Neighbourhoods

Along with concerns specific to all of Red Deer and the downtown area, respondents were asked about their concerns with crime in their own neighbourhoods: “When it comes to the neighbourhood in which you live, what crimes are of concern to you?” Respondents could choose more than one concern. The most frequently cited concerns are listed below in Table 2-8.

**Table 2-8: Most Important Crime Concern by Frequency**

	Frequency	Percent
Drug-increase in drug houses	23	5.7
Drug-increase in dealing of illegal	32	8.0
Drug-increase in use of illegal	26	6.5
House break-ins/break and enters	164	40.8
Property damage	78	19.4
Theft-other property	85	21.1
Theft-vehicles	70	17.4
None/no issue	56	13.9

In comparison to the downtown area, respondents had other crime concerns in their neighbourhoods. The majority of respondents identified house break and enter (40.8%), theft vehicle (17.4%) and other property (21.1%), and property damage (19.4%) as the main crimes of concern. Concern for the combination of drug related issues in the downtown area, was not as prevalent with respondents from a neighbourhood focus. It is also of note that 13.9% of respondents had no crime concerns in their neighbourhood.

Consistent with the findings in the 2004 *Crime and Policing Report*, residents of Red Deer felt fairly safe in their neighbourhoods, although they feel safer from violent crime than they do from property crimes and vandalism.

### 4.3 Causes of Crime

'Risk factors' can be defined as life events or experiences that are associated with an increase in problem behaviour such as drug use or gang activities. Risk factors can be divided into five categories:

- Individual characteristics
- Peer group
- School
- Family
- Community<sup>17</sup>

Respondents were asked what they perceived to be the causes of crime and were asked: "What are the root causes of crime in Red Deer?" (OPTIONAL READ: "What factors contribute to crime?"). The table below indicates the most frequently cited perceptions of the causes of crime.

**Table 2-9: Perceived Causes of Crime**

	Frequency	Percent
Abuse-alcohol	67	16.7
Education (e.g. drop out, discipline)	16	4.0
Homelessness	39	9.7
Illegal drugs-using/selling	189	47.0
Justice System-too lenient on criminals	17	4.2
Low moral standards	27	6.7
Policing issues	25	6.2
Poor parenting	38	9.5
Poverty	56	13.9
Social/recreational opportunities	26	6.5
Transient population	29	7.2
Unemployment/underemployment	45	11.2
Youth hanging around	42	10.4

In rank order, the 10 most noted causes/factors mentioned by respondents to the survey were:

<sup>17</sup> National Crime Prevention Centre, "Youth Gang Involvement: What are the risk factors." In, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/bldngevd/2007-yg-2-eng.aspx#s1>

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1. Illegal drugs (47%)
2. Alcohol abuse (16.7%)
3. Poverty (13.9%)
4. Unemployment/underemployment (11.2%)
5. Youth hanging around (10.4%)
6. Homelessness (9.7%)
7. Poor Parenting (9.5%)
8. Transient population (7.2%)
9. Low moral standards (6.7%)
10. Social/recreational opportunities (6.5%)

It is of interest to note that substance abuse/dependency issues lead respondent's perception of root causes of crime and following this are a range of issues identified as, or associated with, criminogenic factors, such as housing and schools, family structure, employment, education, marital status, and age proportions and median age, previously discussed in Part 1 of the *Review*.<sup>18</sup>

### 4.4 Personal Experience of Crime

The perceptions of crime are not necessarily matched with experiences of crime. When respondents were asked if they had been the victim of a crime in the past year, 23.4% (94) indicated that they had been: 7 were victims of violent crimes and 80 were victims of property crimes (the other 7 did not specify). Of the 7 who had been the victim of a violent crime, such as an assault, 5 of these victims reported the incidents to police. Of the 80 who had experienced a property crime, 70% (56) had reported the experience to police. The remaining 24 (30%) did not report the property crime incidents to police.

Those 56 who had reported their property crime to police indicated the following levels of satisfaction with the police response:

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<sup>18</sup> Part 1 *Crime Prevention and Policing Review* "Demographic Analysis". pp. 15-17.

**Table 2-10: Levels of satisfaction with police response to reported property crime.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very dissatisfied	7	12.5	12.5
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	17.9	30.4
Neither dissatisfied or satisfied	13	23.2	53.6
Somewhat satisfied	12	21.4	75.0
Very satisfied	14	25.0	100.0
Total	56	100.0	

One third (30.4%) were dissatisfied with the police response, while almost half (46.4%) were either somewhat satisfied (21.4%) or very satisfied (25%). Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) were neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied. The reasons for those who responded that they were satisfied centred on: fast response time and careful investigation.

For those who were very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, respondents were asked the following question: “What problems were there with how the police responded?” Of these 30 respondents, 11 (37%) indicated that police did not attend, 10 (33%) indicated that police attended but did not seem to care, and 9 (30%) indicated that there was no follow-up regarding the status of the incident.

The 24 respondents who experienced a property crime but chose not to report it to police indicated that the main reasons were: they did not want to bother police (50%); they felt that the police could not/would not do anything anyway (50%).

The 2004 *Crime and Police Study* commented that approximately 60% of respondents who were a victim of crime were moderately or completely satisfied with how the police dealt with their particular incident, leaving 40% who were not at all satisfied with the police performance when dealing with their incidents. When respondents identified which crime they were a victim of, most indicated break and enters or property crimes. The 2004 *Crime and Police Study* further commented that the success rate of catching criminals who commit these crimes is low and the victims of the crime report not being notified of the outcome of their investigation, so the frustration and subsequent low rating given in the survey is understandable.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Crime and Policing in Red Deer, Converge Group, 2004. p.16.

**5 Alternate Methods and Awareness of Crime Prevention Initiatives**

**5.1 Alternative Methods of Reporting Non-Emergency**

In focus groups and interviews conducted in the course of the *Review*, police practitioners supported more creative and effective protocols for call processing through the Operational Communication Centre (OCC) and Detachment. While it is important to ensure that all incidents of crime which occur are reported to allow an accurate assessment of community safety, it is also important that expensive police resources are used in an optimum fashion. Across Canada, there are examples of web reporting, telephone reporting, telephone triage and initial investigation, and follow-up investigation appointments and other initiatives which have been implemented in an attempt to achieve this dual objective. These are described in Chapter 7.1 of Part 1 of the Report.<sup>20</sup>

Residents were asked if they would be interested or supportive of or would use other means of reporting non-emergency incidents. A list of items was read to participants with responses summarized in Table 2-11 below.

**Table 2-11: Alternate secure methods of reporting non-emergency incidents**

	Frequency	Percent
telephone police and make the report by phone	309	76.9
make the report to police by Email	96	23.9
use police website to make a report	90	22.4
go to the police station	109	27.9
make an appointment with police for later follow up	64	15.9
a non-police officer authorized by City and/or police to attend your home	105	26.1

**5.2 Crime Prevention Initiatives**

The City of Red Deer has a ‘Crime Prevention Report Card’. Nearly 24% (95) of respondents were aware of this initiative. Beyond this initiative, nearly 39% (156) indicated that they were aware of other crime prevention initiatives. The 2004 *Crime and Policing Study* also noted awareness of policing and crime prevention programs was strong in general, but when respondents were asked if the program was operating in Red Deer, responses were not as strong. Further, that study commented that Red Deer

<sup>20</sup> Alternative Call Methods, are further discussed in Part 3 ‘Policing Service Model Review.’ Chapter 11 Calls for Service (Complaint Handling) System. pp. 98-100.

citizens are “knowledgeable of the big crime prevention or policing initiatives”, but are not as knowledgeable about the initiatives running in the city.

The range of initiatives, mentioned by respondents cited specific programs or in some instances amounted to a ‘best guess’. In sum, 25 initiatives or programs were mentioned, although not all are currently functioning, such as DARE. These included:

- Alberta Diversification Association / CARE
- Anti-graffiti program
- Bike Patrols on the paths
- Block Watch
- Boys and Girls Club
- Check Stop
- Citizen Watch
- Citizens assist the police. They are volunteer citizens that ride around with the police during the weekends
- Community Greeters
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- Crime Stoppers
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program.
- The "Party Program" - it's a drinking and driving prevention program for grade nines
- Downtown Ambassadors
- Downtown business crime prevention program
- Guardian Angels
- High Risk Youth Coalition
- Homelessness initiative
- Methadone Clinic
- Mothers Against Drunk Drivers
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Parkland youth homes
- Peace Officers
- Red Berets
- School programs (police)
- Street Ties youth drop-in centre

The program most mentioned was Neighbourhood Watch.

### 5.3 Responsibility for Crime Prevention

Respondents were asked a number of questions with regard to their own responsibility for crime prevention and what programs or initiatives they would like to see used in Red Deer.

With respect to personal responsibility for crime, over 75% of respondents agree that they must take responsibility for crime.

**Table 2-12: Responsibility for crime**

	Strongly Disagree %	Somewhat Disagree %	Neither %	Somewhat Agree %	Strongly Agree %
I feel it is my personal responsibility to help address crime. (N=395)	1.8	5.8	15.4	34.2	42.8

In comparison, the 2004 *Crime and Policing study* found that generally, most respondents felt a personal responsibility to do their part to prevent crime, they realize that the community has as much of a part in reducing crime as the police do, and they do their part by locking their doors in their cars and homes. Although most respondents indicated they needed to do their part, a considerably lower amount of residents surveyed felt they could be doing more to prevent crime. Thus, respondents likely believed they were already doing their part or simply did not have the time to do any more about crime.<sup>21</sup>

Respondents were also asked if there were any programs or initiatives that they would like to see used in Red Deer. While some persons responded by naming existing programs, such as Neighbourhood Watch, there were 139 diverse responses which galvanized around sectors such as Police/Law Enforcement, Youth/Schools, Community Health/Social Services, Business, and Housing/Homelessness. Responses from the public are listed in Appendix 2-10, Community input for programs/initiatives.

### 5.4 Policing

The majority of responses suggest support for the police on a number of dimensions: over 66% agree that the police provide adequate levels of support (only 11.4% disagree); nearly 70% agree that the police use appropriate levels of authority and force (10.3% disagree); nearly 70% also agree that the police respond fairly when dealing with all segments of society (nearly 9% disagree); nearly 64% agree that the police maintain appropriate visibility when dealing with the community (16.4% disagree). There is

<sup>21</sup> See 'Strategic Framework' for the proposed role of citizens in crime prevention.

somewhat less agreement that the police adequately communicate crime issues and trends, with 56% agreeing (nearly 17% disagree).

**Table 2-13: Responsibility for crime**

	Strongly Disagree %	Somewhat Disagree %	Neither %	Somewhat Agree %	Strongly Agree %
The police in Red Deer provide an adequate level of service to the public. (N=397)	3.3	8.1	22.2	41.6	24.9
The police in Red Deer use authority and force appropriately. (N=378)	3.7	6.6	19.8	36.5	33.3
The police in Red Deer respond fairly when dealing with all segments of the Red Deer community. (N= 370)	3.2	5.7	21.9	42.2	27.0
The police in Red Deer maintain appropriately visibility in the community. (N=396)	3.8	12.6	19.7	34.3	29.5
The police in Red Deer adequately communicate crime issues and trends to the community. (N=381)	3.7	12.9	27.3	41.2	15.0

## 6 Lessons Learned

The telephone survey provided current and very valuable information concerning Red Deerian’s perspectives on crime and social disorder issues in the community.

When information obtained in the telephone survey is combined with, and compared to, focus group and stakeholder input a picture emerges of a community engaged in, and supportive of, crime prevention initiatives. As previously mentioned, in looking towards a comprehensive crime prevention strategy for the City of Red Deer, the literature asserts that it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive community-based model with intervention strategies aimed at each level: primary (reducing opportunities for crime or social disorder), secondary (focus on at-risk individuals, groups, or communities), and tertiary (prevent offenders from re-offending).

As evidenced in the data obtained, in particular from the telephone survey, crime concerns and the ‘root cause of crime’ focus primarily on criminogenic factors which manifest themselves in crime and social disorder issues such as illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, as well as issues, such as, homelessness, mental health, residential structure and schools, family structure, employment, education, marital status, and age proportions and median age.

## *Part 2: Community Perception and Strategy Development*

There is also an apparent willingness by Red Deerians to further engage in crime prevention initiatives, as evidenced by the multiple suggestions put forward in the telephone survey. In order to reduce or eliminate barriers to collaboration and problem solving<sup>22</sup> stakeholders must consciously undertake a number of positive steps to advance crime prevention initiatives; namely:

- Planning
- Conducting thorough analysis
- Dedicating resources
- Following up on assessment
- Taking ownership/initiating process
- Translating plans into operation
- Developing collaborative approaches
- Communicating results
- Mutually defining problems
- Establishing consensus
- Recognizing technology cannot identify all problems.

To date, ownership of many community crime prevention initiatives has devolved to the Community Services Division of the City, albeit with, reported, support from the policing detachment. The alignment of policing services with community organizations which have the opportunity to intervene to address social or, more specifically, criminogenic issues is essential. Partnerships with the public police are seen as important opportunities to create a system where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It is seen as a proactive approach to long-term problems focusing more on the psycho-social and economic aspects of the genesis of crime.

As reported earlier in the report of the *Review*, the need for protocols and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between community organizations and the public police were one of the most salient issues brought forward during the *Review's* focus group meetings. A key issue is to ensure an ongoing and functional relationship between community/social agencies and the civic division responsible for policing services.

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<sup>22</sup> Brian Whitelaw and Richard Parent. *Community-Based Strategic Policing in Canada*. Nelson 2006.