

Lower Paxton Township Police Department

**2008 Citizen Survey
Report of Findings**

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The Lower Paxton Police Department is committed to providing our citizens with exemplary service. A community survey is an excellent tool to determine if the Department is meeting the community's needs and expectations. The survey poses key questions to assist the Department in determining citizen perceptions of safety, quality of life, and the quality of police services. The survey also allows residents to express their priorities for enforcement. Community feedback serves as a "report card" to determine how well the police department is responding to our "customers" needs, it provides insight for the process of establishing goals, and it also has value in shaping the future of the Police Department.

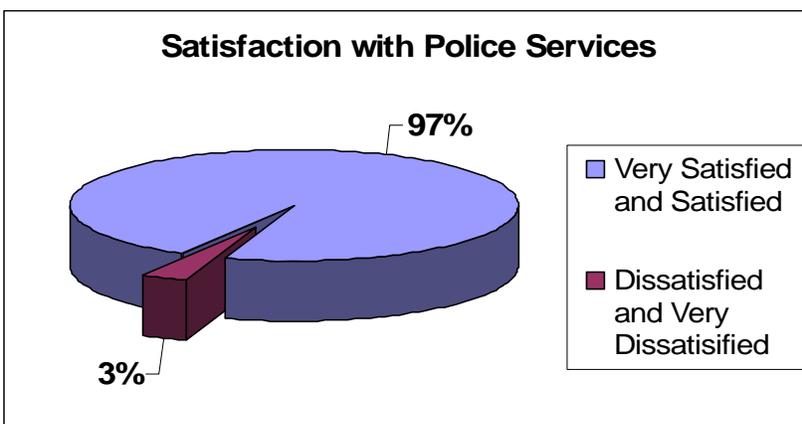
On July 1, 2008, the Lower Paxton Township Police Department initiated its second township wide citizen survey. A previous survey was completed in 2003. The 2008 survey was condensed to 17 questions from the 41 questions in the 2003 survey. It was anticipated that a streamlined survey would increase responses by at least 10%.

The Police Department took the survey in a new direction in 2008 by making the survey available online via the Township's website. The citizen survey form was also distributed to 17,000 households via the Township's sewer bill mailing. Hard copies of the survey form were delivered to sixteen apartment complex rental offices for distribution to tenants. Survey forms were also available at the township municipal building and the Friendship Center.

The condensed survey form and the change in distribution methods greatly exceeded our expectations and resulted in a 120% increase in the number of completed surveys. The Police Department received 3,363 survey responses in 2008 as compared to the 1,532 received in 2003. Survey questions 1 thru 7 identify respondent demographics and questions 8 thru 11 address citizen interaction with the police and their opinion of the quality of police services. Questions 12 thru 15 address the perception of crime and quality of life issues. Question 16 polled respondents on their use of the Township web site and question 17 requested suggestions or comments.

The results of the 2008 citizen survey are very positive. The response to survey question 11, "How satisfied are you with the services of the Lower Paxton Police Department", is representative of the survey's overall findings. Of the 2,579 respondents who expressed an opinion to the question, ninety-

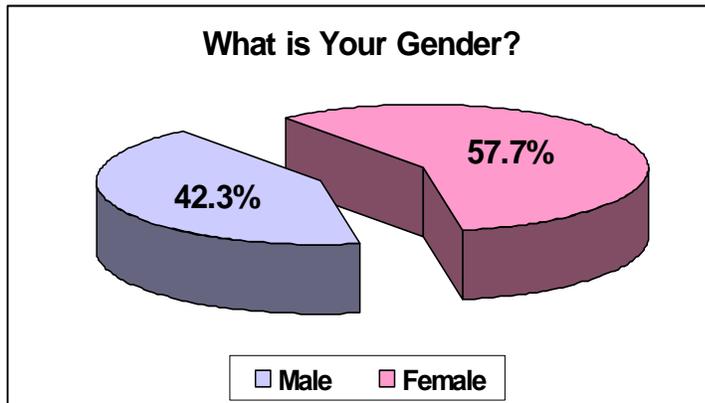
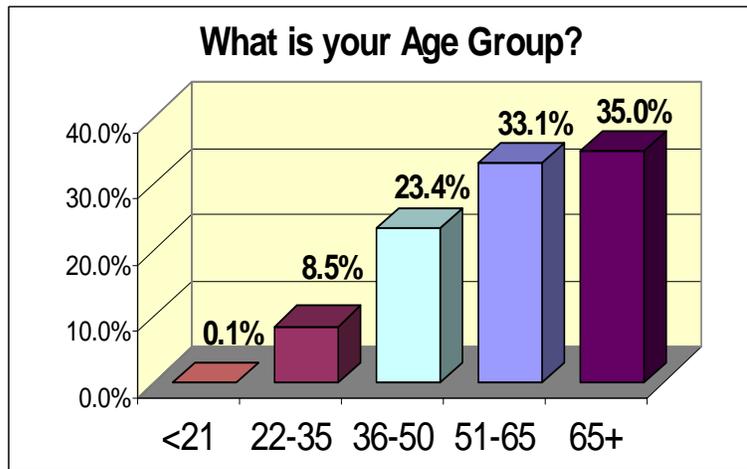
seven percent (97%) indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied and only three percent (3%) indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



II. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey questions 1 through 7 deal exclusively with the demographics of those respondents who completed the survey.

Age groups were broken down as follows: Under 21, 22 to 35, 36 to 50, 51 to 65, and 65 and over. The data reveals that less than 1% of the respondents were under age 21 and that 68.1% were age 51 and older.

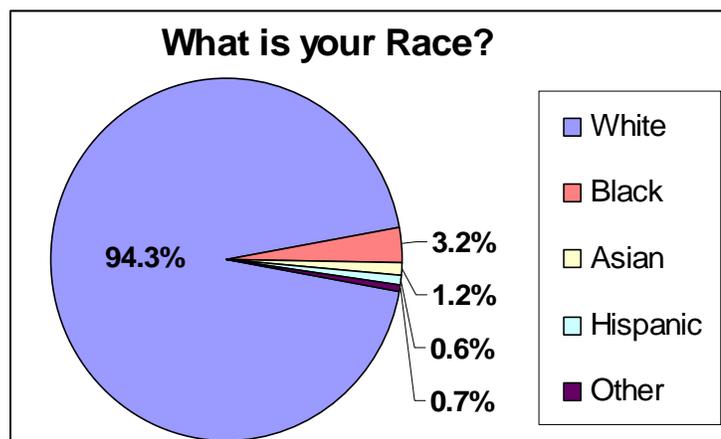


Fifty-seven (57%) of the persons who responded were female and forty-two percent (42%) were male.

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the respondents have lived in Lower Paxton Township for more than twenty (20) years while only 15% have lived in the township for five (5) or less years.

Ninety-eight (98%) percent of the 3,363 respondents own their homes while only 2% are renters.

Finally, 94% (1,434) of the persons who responded to the survey listed their race as white. Three percent (106) of the respondents listed their race as black, 1.2% as Asian, and 0.6% as Hispanic. The remaining 0.7% of the respondents listed their race as other.

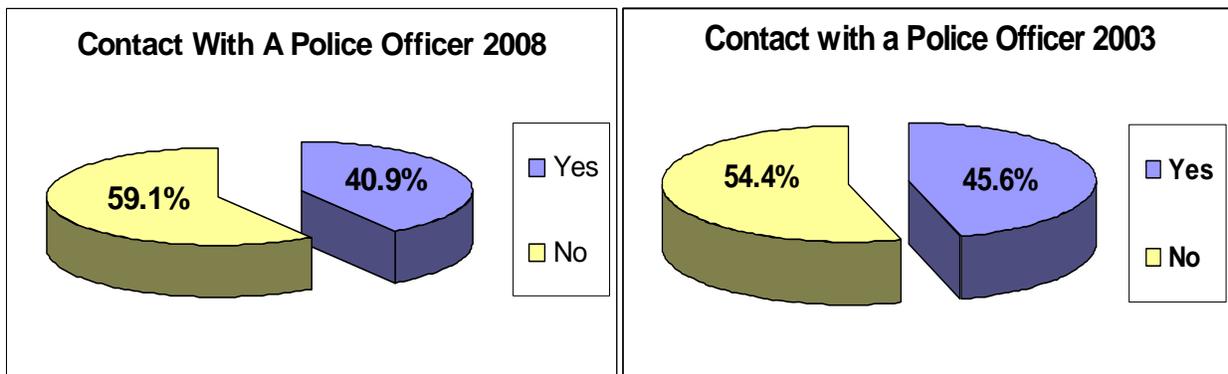


Statistically, the median respondent was a white female, over 50 years of age, who has lived in the township for 20 or more years, and owns their own home. These factors influence the survey results, particularly the perception of crime and quality of services.

III. ANALYSIS OF POLICE SERVICES

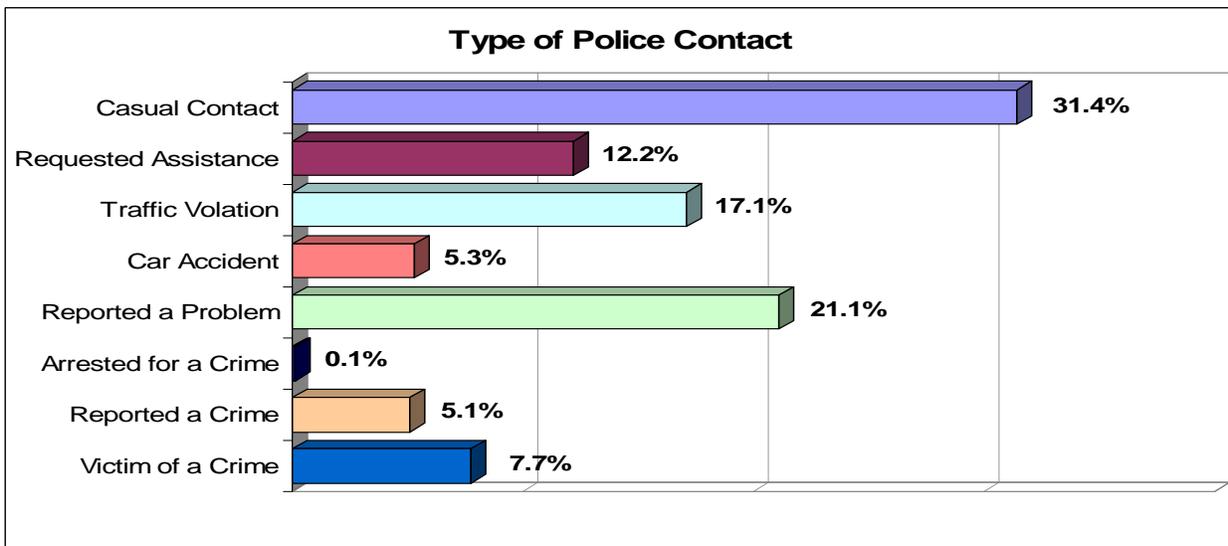
Survey questions 8 through 10 were designed to solicit information from respondents who had direct contact with a police officer during the past 12 months. We wanted to know, based on the respondents' actual experience; the nature of their contact, and how satisfied they were with the officer and the outcome of the contact. Question 11 was designed to determine overall satisfaction with police services in general by all survey respondents whether or not they had direct contact with a police officer.

The 2008 survey indicated that 1,366 respondents (41%) did have contact with a police officer during the past 12 months and that 1,974 respondents (59%) had no contact. This response rate is similar to the data obtained in the 2003 survey when 46% indicated they had contact with a police officer and 54% indicated they had not.

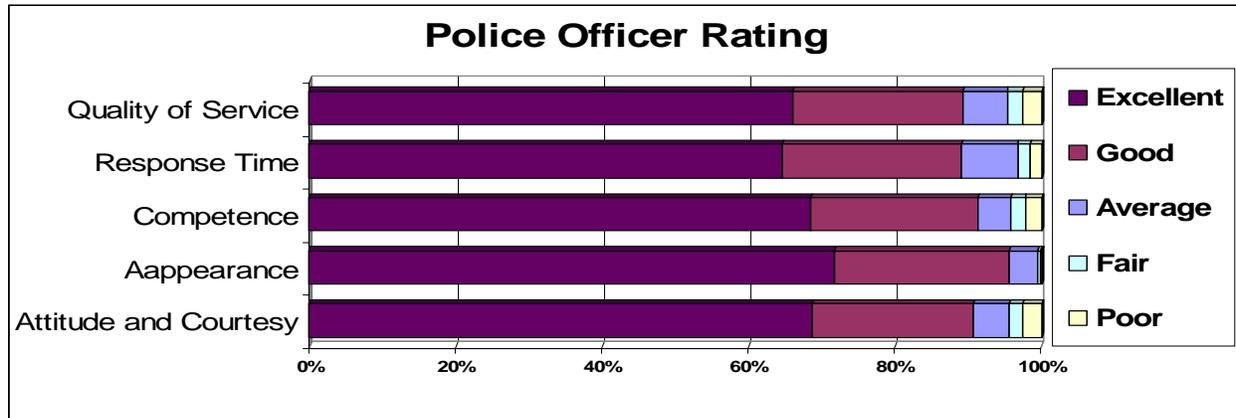


Question 9 asked the respondents to categorize the nature of their contact with police officers. The greatest number of respondents (31.4%) indicated they had casual contact with an officer. This high number of proactive and positive contacts with members of the community is a reflection on our commitment to the principles of community policing.

In regard to crime, 7.7% of the respondents reported being a victim of crime, 5.1% reported a crime, and 0.1% were arrested for a crime. Additionally, 21.1% of respondents reported a neighborhood problem, 5.3% were involved a motor vehicle crash, 17.1% were stopped for a traffic violation, and 12.2% requested other assistance.



In survey question 10, only those respondents that had contact with a police officer (1,478) rated their encounter with the police officer. The respondents were asked to rate the officer on the following five (5) categories: Overall Quality of Service, Response Time, Competence and Professionalism, Appearance, and Attitude and Courtesy.



An Overall Satisfaction Rating (OSR) was calculated for each of the five categories to measure citizen satisfaction. Normally, an OSR of less than 80% will identify an area where improvement in services may be made. Each of these five categories related to officer contacts with citizens had a satisfaction rating of 89.5% or greater. The five categories have been ranked according to their Overall Satisfaction Rating.

1. Appearance			
Rating	Response	Value	Score
Excellent	1,012	5	5,060
Good	337	4	1,348
Average	54	3	162
Fair	6	2	12
Poor	3	1	3
Total Rating Point:			6,585
Highest Possible Rating:			7,060
Overall Satisfaction Rating:			93.27%

2. Competence and Professionalism			
Rating	Response	Value	Score
Excellent	984	5	4,920
Good	328	4	1,312
Average	65	3	195
Fair	28	2	56
Poor	33	1	33
Total Rating Point:			6,516
Highest Possible Rating:			7,190
Overall Satisfaction Rating:			90.63%

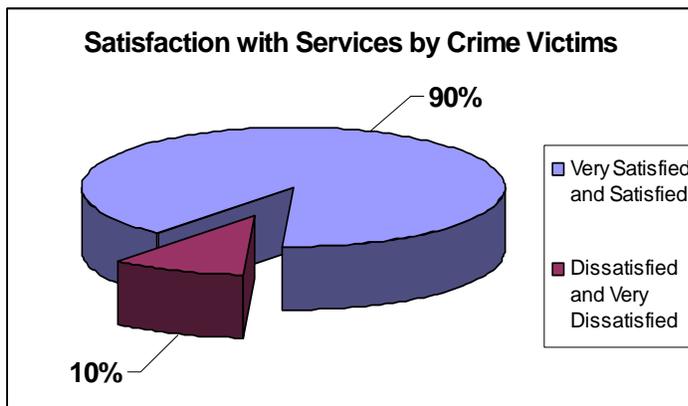
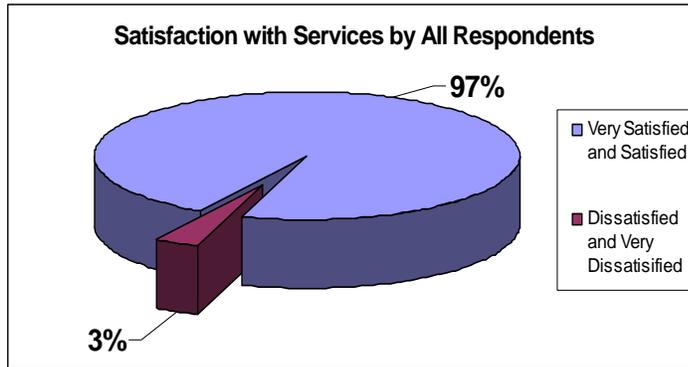
3. Attitude and Courtesy			
Rating	Response	Value	Score
Excellent	1,008	5	5040
Good	325	4	1300
Average	72	3	216
Fair	28	2	56
Poor	37	1	37
Total Rating Point:			6,649
Highest Possible Rating:			7,350
Overall Satisfaction Rating:			90.46%

4. Response Time			
Rating	Response	Value	Score
Excellent	722	5	3,610
Good	272	4	1,088
Average	86	3	258
Fair	20	2	40
Poor	17	1	17
Total Rating Point:			5,013
Highest Possible Rating:			5,585
Overall Satisfaction Rating:			89.76%

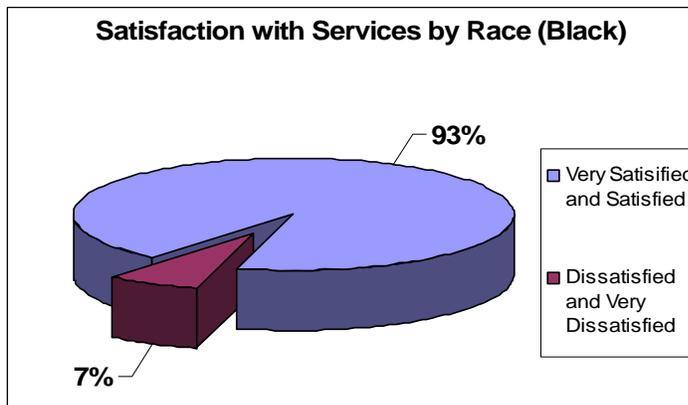
5. Quality of Service			
Rating	Response	Value	Score
Excellent	893	5	4,465
Good	316	4	1,264
Average	81	3	243
Fair	28	2	56
Poor	36	1	36
Total Rating Point:			6,064
Highest Possible Rating:			6,770
Overall Satisfaction Rating:			89.57%

Another important function of the survey is to determine how well the department responds to the needs of crime victims and minorities. Survey question 11 was used to

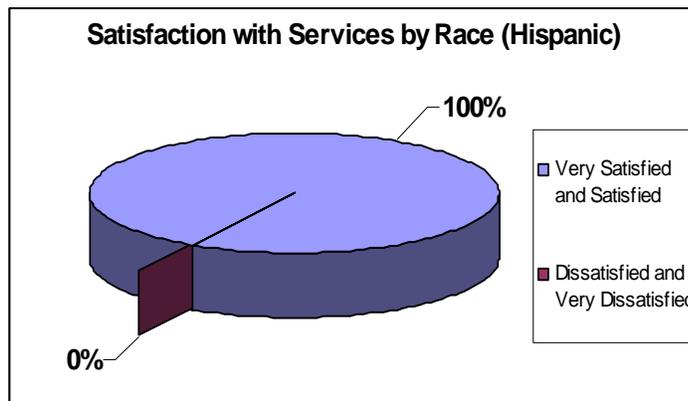
individually compare the responses of crime victims, Blacks, and Hispanics with those of the entire response group. The question; "How satisfied are you with the services of the Lower Paxton Police Department" received a 97% satisfaction rating. This figure will be compared with the ratings given by the identified sub-groups.



Satisfaction with police services by victims of crime received a 90% satisfaction rating. While this is a very good rating, it is 7 percentage points below the control group's rating and the lowest rating from the three sub-groups. We will review our procedures on how we respond to and assist crime victims to identify areas where we may improve the quality of our service.



Satisfaction with police services by persons of color received a 93% satisfaction rating. This good rating is a reflection of the professionalism of our personnel. The Department has and will continue to strive to ensure that persons of all races, colors, and economic standing receive equal protection under the law and the highest quality of service from our officers.



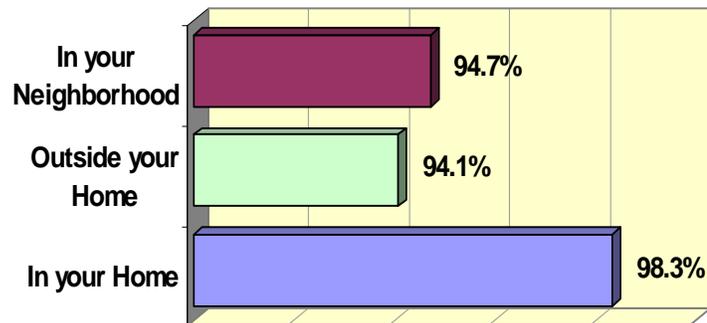
A satisfaction rating of 100% is a truly outstanding accomplishment. We do recognize that the response to the survey by Hispanics was very limited. A small survey sample will skew its results. However, we also recognize that our Hispanic population is increasing annually. As stated previously, we will ensure that all persons receive equal protection and high quality services.

IV. PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

A person’s perception of safety or fear of crime has a dramatic impact on their quality of life. Survey question 12 asked residents how safe they feel, both during the day and at night, in their homes, in their neighborhoods, and in the township in general. It came as no surprise that there was a greater perception of safety during the day than at night.

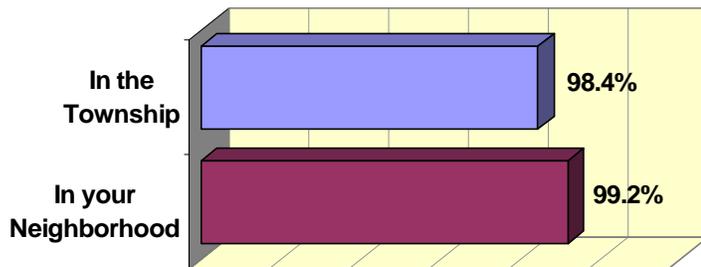
We were, however, encouraged to discover that the perception of safety was so very high in all circumstances, even at night. More than ninety-eight percent (98%) of the respondents indicated they felt very safe or safe at night in their homes, ninety-four percent (94%) felt very safe or safe at night in their immediate neighborhood, and ninety-four percent (94%) felt very safe or safe at night outside their homes.

How Safe do you Feel at Night:



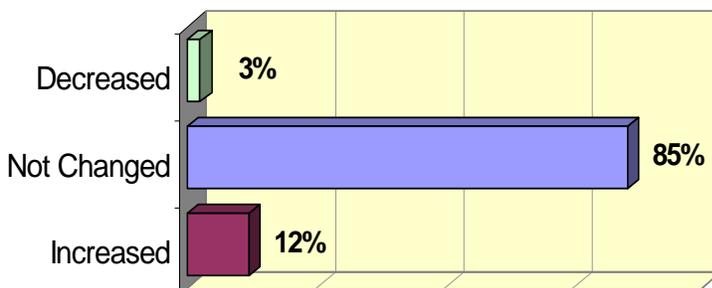
The citizens that responded to the survey rated their perception of safety very high during the day. Their perception of safety was virtually identical whether within their neighborhood or throughout the township. The difference was a mere eight tenths of one percent (0.8%).

How Safe do you Feel during the Day:



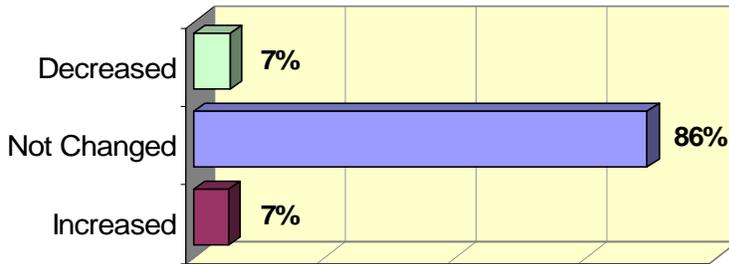
Question 13 asked respondents to indicate if, during the past twelve (12) months, there has been any change in their perception of their neighborhood concerning: crime, safety, traffic, police presence, and quality of life. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they perceived any change in those five categories.

Crime in my Neighborhood Has?



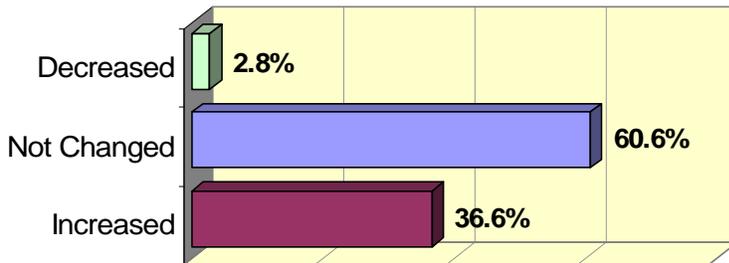
In regard to crime, the vast majority of respondents (85%) indicated that their perception of crime in their neighborhood had not changed. Twelve percent (12%) of respondents indicated that crime appeared to have increased, and three percent (3%) indicated that their perception of crime has actually decreased.

My Feelings of Safety Have?



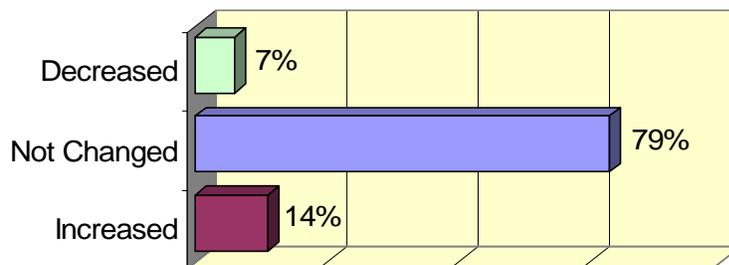
Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents indicated their feeling of safety had not changed over the past 12 months. Seven percent (7%) indicated their feelings of safety decreased while an equal amount (7%) indicated their feelings of safety had increased.

Neighborhood Traffic Problems Have?



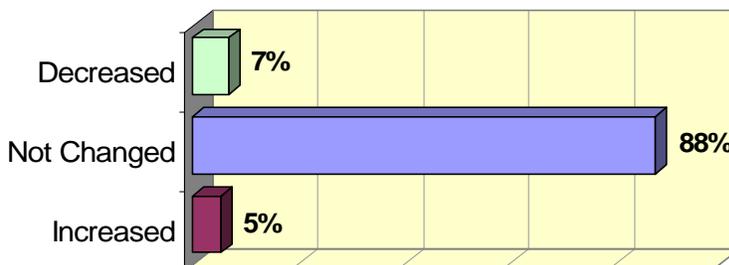
With respect to traffic problems in their neighborhoods, sixty-one percent (61%) indicated traffic problems have not changed in the past 12 months. Thirty-seven percent (37%) indicated that traffic problems have increased, while two percent (2%) felt traffic problems had decreased.

Police Presence in Neighborhood Has?



Question 13 also asked residents about police officer presence in their neighborhood. Seventy-nine percent (79%) indicated there was no change in officer presence. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents perceived an increase in police presence while seven percent (7%) indicated that police presence had decreased.

Quality of Life in Neighborhood Has?

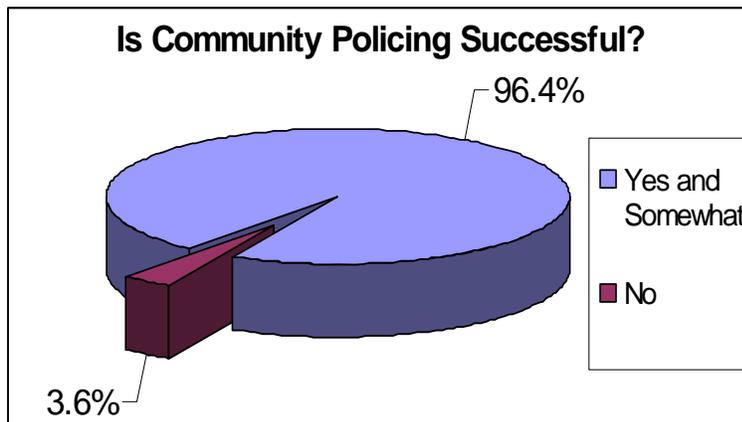


In regard to the respondents' perception of the quality of life in their neighborhood, eighty-eight percent (88%) reported no change in their quality of life during the last 12 months. Five percent (5%) reported an improvement in their quality of life, while seven percent (7%) perceived a decrease in their quality of life.

Eighty-five percent (85%) or more of the respondents reported that they perceived no change in their neighborhood concerning crime, feelings of safety, and quality of life. It is clearly evident that traffic is a major concern to be addressed as thirty-six percent (36%) perceived that traffic problems have increased in their neighborhoods.

V. DIRECTION OF POLICE ACTIVITIES

Survey questions 14 and 15 were intended to solicit information useful to the Department in determining the future direction of police services. Question 14 asked residents: “Community Policing involves police officers working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce crime problems and the fear of crime. Based on the definition, do you think Community Policing is successful in Lower Paxton Township?” The Department was seeking specific feedback on whether respondents were aware of our commitment to the concepts of community policing and, if so, are our efforts perceived as being successful.

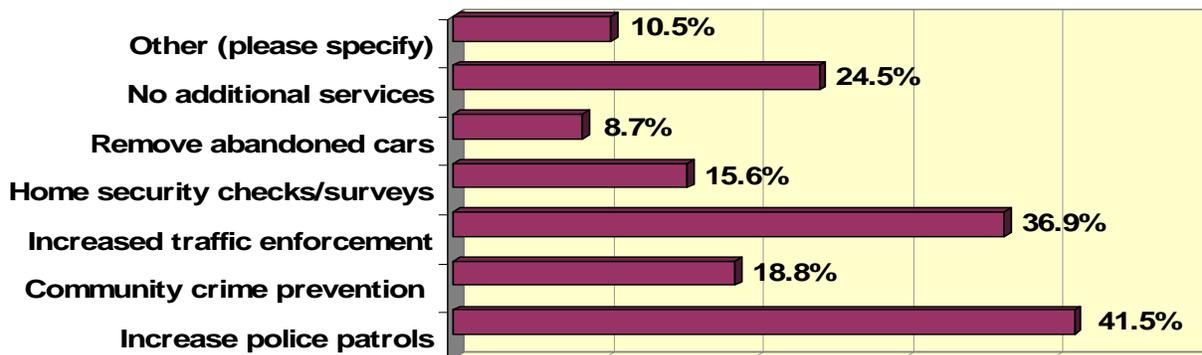


A total of 2,196 respondents provided an opinion to this question. Ninety-six percent (96.4%) of the respondents who had an opinion answered that community policing is successful or somewhat successful in Lower Paxton Township. Only three percent (3.6%) indicated that community policing is not successful. It is clearly evident that the survey respondents who

expressed an opinion to this question believe that our model of community policing is having positive results. The response to this question correlates favorably with the response to question 9 where the greatest number of respondents (31.4%) indicated their contact with a police officer was through casual contact. These proactive casual contacts between officers and the public is a core concept of community policing.

Survey question 15 asked residents what services they would like to see the police department increase. The options included; increase police patrols, increase traffic enforcement, work with the community to prevent crime, conduct home security checks, remove abandoned vehicles, no additional services needed, or other.

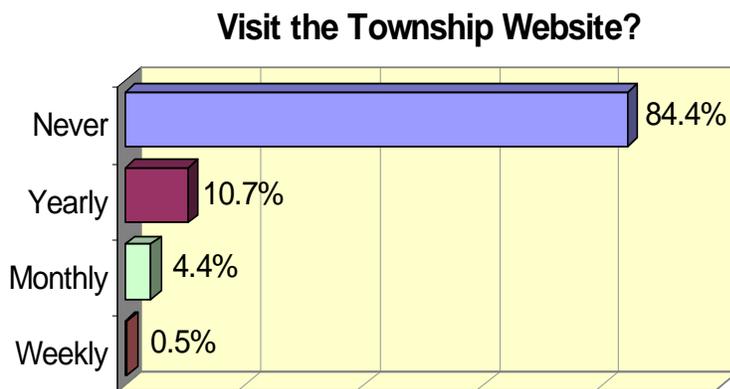
Need for Increased Police Services



Three thousand sixty-three respondents answered question 15. Three hundred twenty-three of those respondents (10.5%) selected “Other” and entered free text comments in the comment field. Those comments are contained in Appendix B of this report. The following is a prioritized listing based on number of responses actually selected in question 15:

1. 1,272 respondents want increased police patrols in their neighborhoods.
2. 1,129 respondents want increased traffic enforcement.
3. 750 respondents indicated no additional services are needed.
4. 577 respondents want police to work more closely with the community to prevent crime.
5. 479 respondents want police to conduct more home security checks.
6. 323 respondents selected other.
7. 265 respondents want police to remove abandoned vehicles.

Survey question 16 asked respondents if they visited the Township’s website and question 17 asked respondents if they have any suggestions or comments for improving the services the police department provides.



Survey question 16 was used to solicit input on whether the Township’s website could be an effective resource to pass police related information to the community. Ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents indicated they never visited the website or visited it only once a year. The Department believes that these numbers are representative of past practices.

The Police Department’s section of the Township’s website is in the process of a complete overhaul. When completed, the website will contain relevant and timely information to keep residents up to date with what is occurring in their neighborhoods. Also, numerous responses to question 17 suggested that the Township’s website should be used to keep residents advised of what crimes are being committed and in which neighborhoods.

Survey question 17 asked respondents to give suggestions or comments for improving the services provided by the Lower Paxton Police Department. One thousand and forty-five (1,045) comments and suggestions were received in response to this question. Each suggestion will be evaluated to identify the best possible police response to appropriately mitigate the problem. Those comments and suggestions are contained in Appendix C of this report.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND COMPARISONS

The Police Department met its goal of exceeding the number of responses that were received in the 2003 survey; 3,363 surveys were received in 2008 as compared to the 1,532 received in 2003. The information gleaned from the survey is of considerable value and appears to be a valid representation of our community's opinions.

Demographics

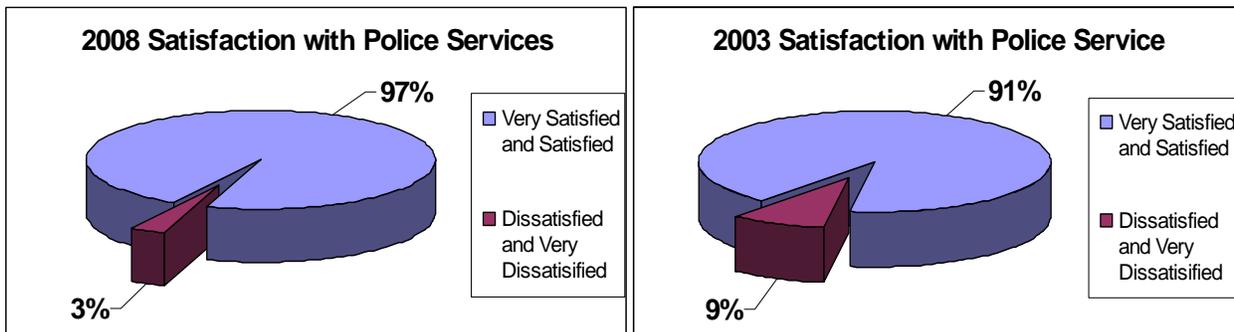
The median respondent in the 2008 survey was a white female, over 50 years of age, who has lived in the township for 20 or more years, and owns their own home. The median respondent in the 2003 survey was nearly identical; white female, over 46 years of age, had resided in the township for 20 or more years, and owned their own home. The 2003 survey revealed that 94% of respondents were white, 3% were black, and 3% were Hispanic, Asian, or other. In the 2008 survey the race breakdown was exactly the same, 94% white, 3% black, and 3% were Hispanic, Asian, or other. Since respondents in both surveys share the same demographic base, any comparisons of like questions should be fairly valid.

Perception of Safety and the Fear of Crime

The survey respondents overwhelmingly consider Lower Paxton Township to be a safe place to live. On average, ninety-seven percent (97%) of all respondents in the 2008 survey indicated they felt safe in their homes, neighborhoods, and in the township in general; both during the day and night time. Eighty-five percent (85%) or more of the survey respondents reported that they perceived no change in their neighborhood concerning crime, feelings of safety, or their quality of life.

Perception of Police Services

The 2008 survey results indicate that the Lower Paxton Police Department continues to provide quality service and our officers have earned the respect of our community. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of respondents who expressed an opinion were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with our police service. This is a six (6) percentage point increase over the 2003 survey results.

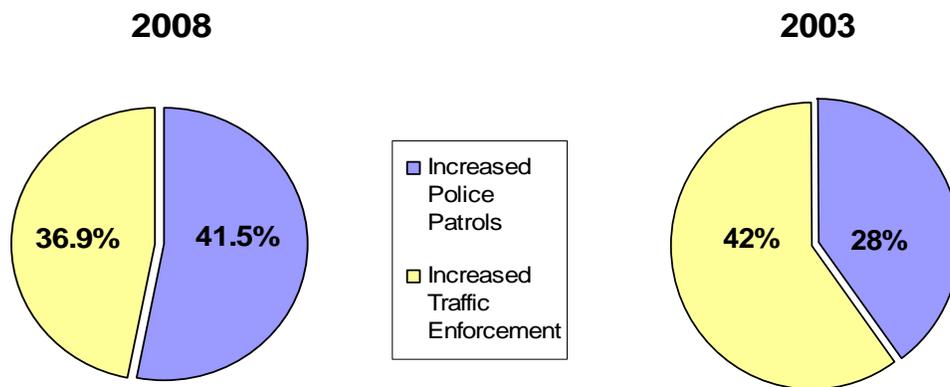


Fourteen hundred and seventy eight (1,478) of the total respondents had contact with a police officer within twelve months prior to completing the survey. Based on their perceptions of those contacts, 89.3% of the respondents rated the officers' *quality of service* as excellent or good, 90.7% rated the officers' *courtesy* as excellent or good, and 91.2% rated the officers' *professionalism* as excellent or good.

Requests for Increased Services

The 2008 survey provided citizens the opportunity to submit their comments or suggestions concerning police services. Question 15 of the survey asked respondents to choose what services they wish the police would increase in their neighborhood.

In the 2003 citizen survey, forty-two percent (42%) of respondents chose increased traffic enforcement in their neighborhood as their top priority. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents chose increased patrols in their neighborhoods as their second priority. In the 2008 survey the top two priorities were reversed. More than forty-one percent (41%) of respondents chose additional police patrols first while thirty-seven percent (37%) chose increased traffic enforcement second. It must also be noted that in the 2008 citizen survey, the third highest choice (25%) was *no additional services needed*.



Survey question 17 asked respondents if they have any suggestions or comments for improving the services the police department provides. There were no forced choices for this question. The survey respondents were provided a free text field to enter what comments or suggestions they believed appropriate. One thousand and forty-five (1,045) respondents submitted comments or suggestions.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF SURVEY FINDINGS

The Lower Paxton Township Police Department is committed to being a “Learning Organization.” Because of this commitment, we will analyze the survey’s findings and implement strategies to address citizens’ requests and mitigate identified problems. The information gathered from this survey will become the basis for the Police Department’s 2009 Annual Business Plan. Our residents’ opinions and needs, as identified in this survey, will be converted into the police department’s goals for 2009 and beyond. To illustrate the goal setting process, we will look at the findings from question 15 of the survey. The greatest number of respondents (41.5%) chose increased patrols in their neighborhoods as their top priority. The Patrol Services Division will set a goal for 2009 to increase the presence of patrol officers in neighborhoods. Objectives will then be established based on specific action plans (How will we achieve the objective?). Finally, performance indicators will be set to measure performance in regard to achieving the anticipated objectives.