

Public Safety in Thunder Bay

2024 Survey Results

December 2024



Goals for Surveying

The survey aimed to **understand community perceptions of safety and policing** in Thunder Bay, providing a foundation for informed decision-making by local authorities and stakeholders. By capturing residents' views, the survey sought to **identify key areas where safety efforts could be improved**. This data provides critical insights into how different demographic groups experience safety and interact with law enforcement.

Another goal was to **assess community priorities for policing and public safety initiatives**. These findings offer guidance for allocating resources and shaping strategies that align with community expectations and needs.

Finally, the survey aimed to **identify barriers to trust and engagement with law enforcement**. The results are intended to support Thunder Bay Police Service in developing data-driven, community-centred strategies to improve safety, foster trust, and enhance overall satisfaction with public safety efforts.

This is an annual recurring survey, which means efforts to address perceptions of public safety and resident concerns can be measured year-over-year.

Executive Summary

Disparities Across Demographics

- **There are substantial differences in how younger and lower-income respondents perceive and experience policing**, with concerns about fairness and equity contributing to feelings of mistrust and reduced safety. These groups largely feel less safe, believe the police do not treat everyone equally, and lack trust and confidence in law enforcement.

Perceptions of Crime and Safety

- **Most respondents say they feel safe in Thunder Bay, though nearly half believe crime has increased over the past year.** Findings also reveal considerable differences in perceptions of safety across demographic groups, with younger and economically disadvantaged respondents expressing greater concerns.

Priorities and Concerns

- **Community members identify violence, illegal firearms, and drug-related issues as their top concerns for policing efforts.** Almost half of respondents also say they want the police to prioritize patrolling neighbourhoods and interacting with residents.

Barriers to Engagement

- **Issues of trust and confidence in the police deter crime reporting and weaken relationships with law enforcement.** Less than half of respondents citywide feel police provide equitable services to all individuals, and even fewer consider TBPS officers to be “very approachable.” Furthermore, one in five respondents say they don’t feel they’re able to provide input to the Thunder Bay Police Service. Younger and lower-income individuals are more likely to express these negative views.

Connecting to the Community

- **Respondents identified a disconnect between the police and the communities they serve.** Less than half of respondents are satisfied with the Thunder Bay Police Service’s enforcement of the law, and only 9% of respondents believe TBPS collaborates effectively with the public.

Report structure

01 Methodology and Sample

02 Perception of Safety and Community Priorities

03 Engagement with the Police

04 Summary

| 01

Methodology & Sample

Methodology

Sample

442 respondents were recruited online between **October 28th and December 18th, 2024** using targeted ads on various platforms (e.g., social media, apps for Android and IOS) as well as online survey panels. Using data from **Statistics Canada**, this survey employed quotas to match the distribution of **race, ethnicity, age, and gender** in Thunder Bay, ensuring that the sample represents the entire population of the city.

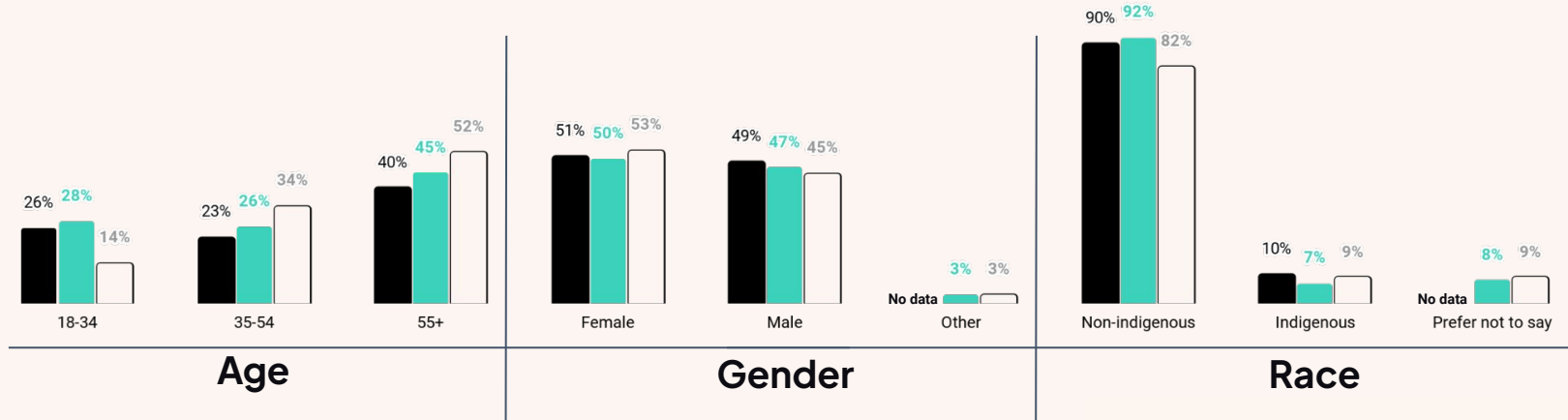
Weighting

To make sure our sample is representative, a technique called **rake-weighting** was used to balance out any remaining differences between the makeup of the 442 survey respondents and the community. This process serves as a **statistical safeguard** against any demographic group being overrepresented or underrepresented in the final score calculations by giving **overrepresented groups a lower weight** and **underrepresented groups a higher weight** in the analysis. Note that rake weighting was not conducted for the city-distributed responses.

Zencity Sampling

Our data

Zencity's sampling methods are designed to ensure data reliability and representativeness by using advanced weighting techniques that account for the demographic composition of Thunder Bay. While the data from the self-distributed survey data provides valuable input, it may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives across the population and is therefore largely excluded from our analysis. Our representative approach ensures a balanced and comprehensive view of resident sentiment, enabling more nuanced insights to support data-driven decisions.



■ Census ■ Zencity □ City distributed

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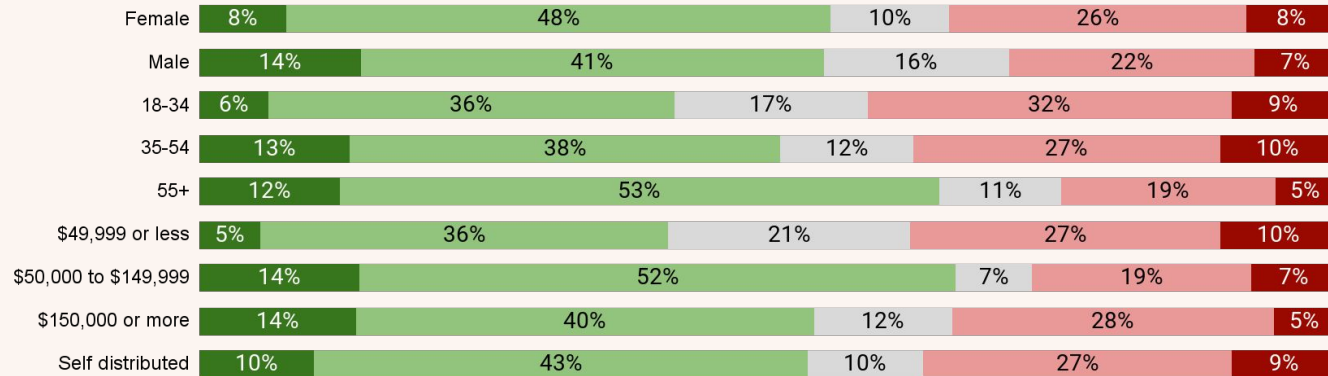
Perceptions of Safety and Community Priorities

Perceptions of Safety: Half of respondents (54%) feel at least somewhat safe in Thunder Bay, though perceptions vary across demographics. Older respondents report the highest sense of safety, while younger individuals say they feel less safe. Furthermore, lower-income respondents feel less safe compared to those who have an income of at least \$50K.

Q2: Overall, how safe do you feel in Thunder Bay?

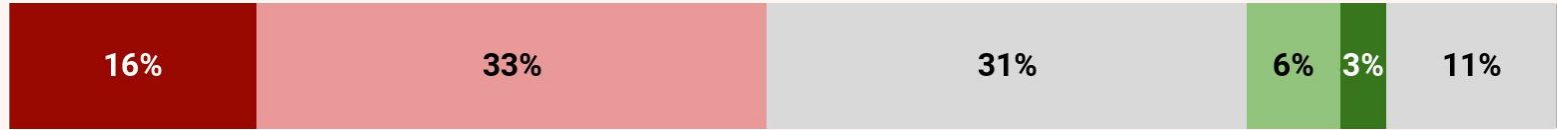


■ Very safe
 ■ Somewhat safe
 ■ Neither safe nor unsafe
 ■ Somewhat unsafe
 ■ Very unsafe

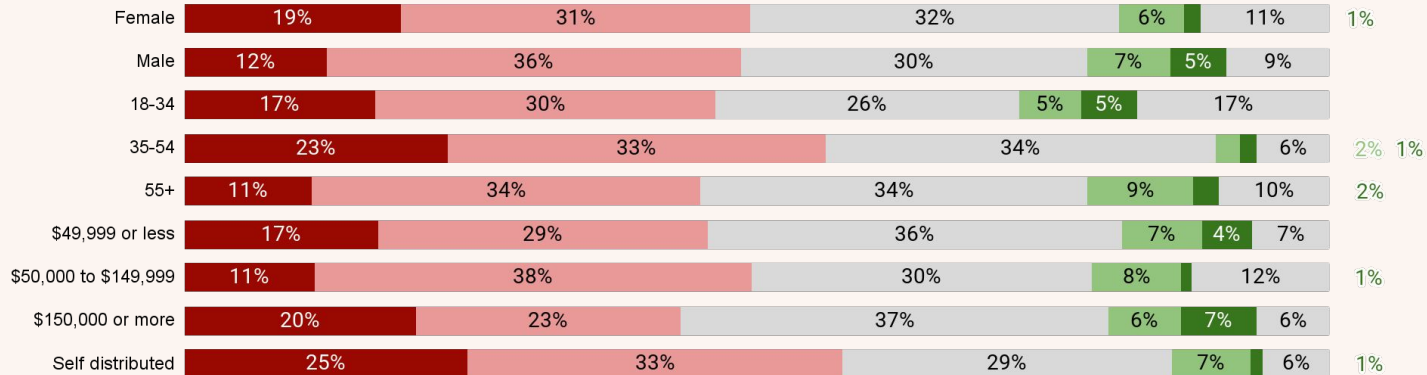


Perceived Crime Trends: Almost half of respondents (49%) believe crime has increased to some extent in Thunder Bay, particularly those in the 35–54 age group (56%). Only 9% of respondents citywide thought crime has decreased in the past 12 months. About one in three think crime has stayed about the same.

Q3: In your opinion, in the past 12 months, has crime in Thunder Bay decreased, stayed the same, or increased?

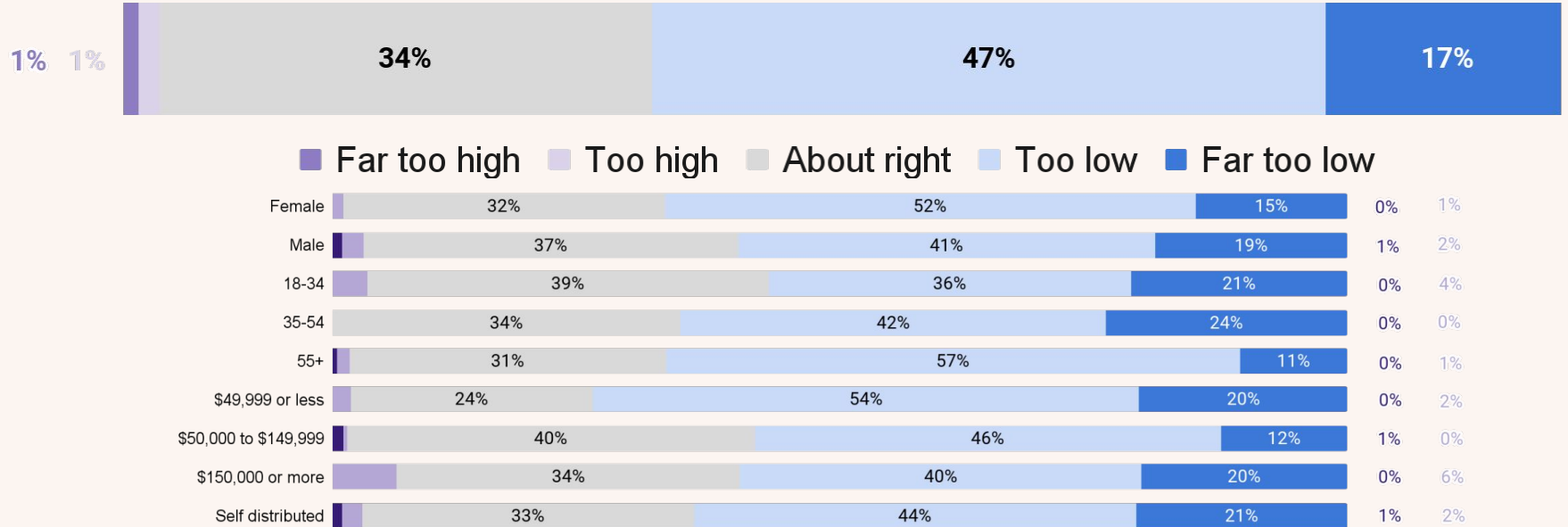


■ Significantly increased
 ■ Somewhat increased
 ■ Stayed the same
 ■ Somewhat decreased
 ■ Significantly decreased
 ■ Not sure



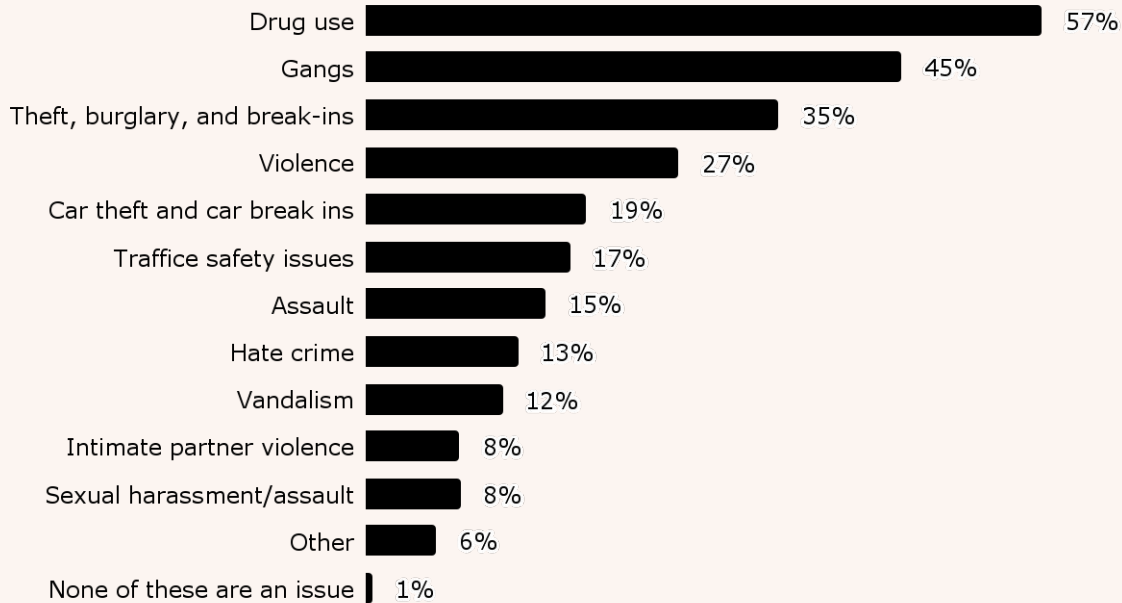
Police Presence: A majority (64%) of respondents citywide feel that police presence in their neighbourhood is too low. This is especially true for low-income respondents (74%) and women (67%). Furthermore, only one in fifty respondents citywide feel police presence is too high. Roughly a third of respondents citywide think police presence is about right.

Q10: Thinking about the police presence in your neighbourhood, do you feel that it is too high, too low, or about right?



Top Concerns: A majority of respondents (57%) identify drug use as a top issue, especially among those with an income under \$150K. Gangs (45%), theft, burglary, and break-ins (35%) rank are also highly reported issues. About one in five (19%) residents are concerned about car theft and break-ins. Violence and assault (15%) are also viewed as an area Thunder Bay PS should prioritize. Sexual harassment/assault is cited much more frequently among women (10%) than men (4%).

Q4: What are the top issues or problems that you would like the Thunder Bay Police Service to deal with?



Group	Drug use
Overall	57%
\$150K or more	45%
\$15K-\$149K	60%
Under \$50K	66%

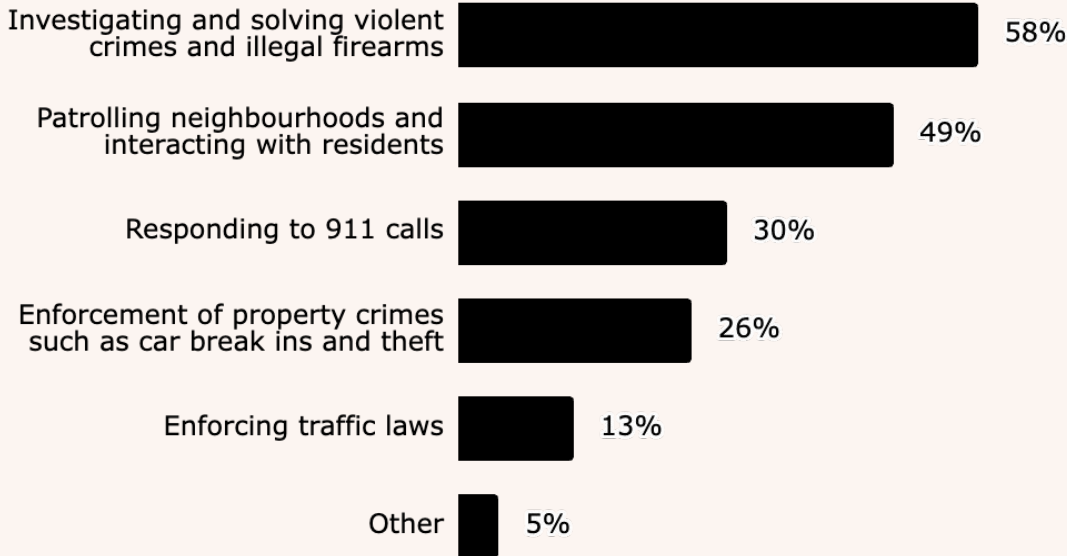
Group	Sexual harassment/assault
Female	10%
Male	4%



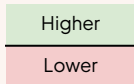
Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Top Priorities: A majority (58%) of respondents want police to prioritize investigating and solving violent crimes and illegal firearms, especially those with an income under \$150,000. Almost half (49%) of respondents prioritize neighbourhood patrolling and more interaction with residents. Responding to 911 calls (30% citywide) is emphasized less by those 55 or older. Roughly a quarter (26%) of residents citywide prioritize enforcement of property crimes such as car break-ins and theft.

Q7: In your opinion, which of the following would you like the police to prioritize?



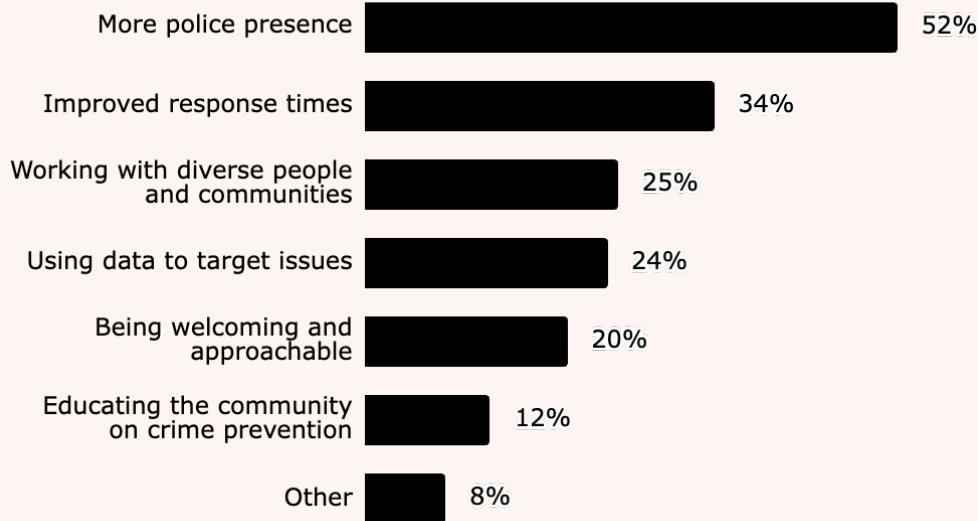
Group	Investigating and solving violent crimes and illegal firearms	Responding to 911 calls
Overall	58%	30%
18-34	55%	32%
35-54	56%	39%
55+	62%	24%
Under \$50K	62%	26%
\$50K-\$150K	60%	27%
\$150K or more	42%	44%



Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Keeping Communities Safe: Roughly half (52%) of respondents believe more police presence is important for keeping their community safe, but this is slightly less common among those under 35 (40%). Improved response times (34%) are also important. About a quarter of respondents place importance on working with diverse people and communities (25%) and using data to target issues (24%). Very few older respondents place importance on educating the community on crime prevention.

Q6: Which of the following police actions are most important for keeping your community safe?



Group	More police presence
Overall	52%
18-34	40%
35-54	56%
55+	59%

Group	Improved response times
Overall	34%
18-34	29%
35-54	45%
55+	32%

Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Improving Community Safety: Almost half (44%) of respondents said that the police play a critical role in improving community safety. Outside of the police, efforts to address addiction (52%), mental health issues (49%), and housing (36%) are popular. Women are more likely to favour addiction services and support than men, and respondents under 35 are less likely to support mental health and wellness services. By far, the largest discrepancy among demographic groups was affordable housing vs. income.

Q5: In your opinion, which of the following play the most critical role in improving community safety in Thunder Bay?

Group	Addiction services and support
Overall	52%

Female	60%
Male	42%

Group	Mental health and wellness services
Overall	49%

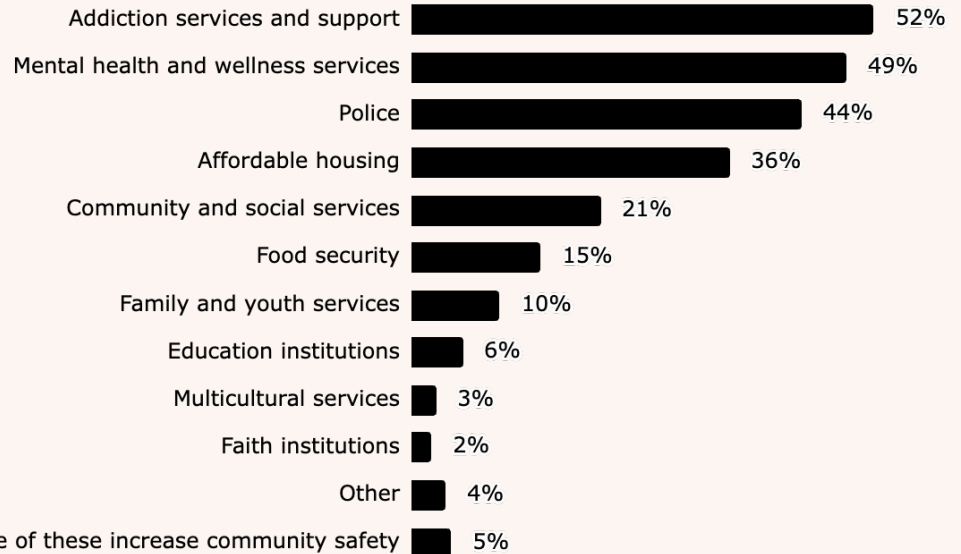
18-34	41%
35-54	54%
55+	52%

Group	Affordable Housing
Overall	36%

Under \$50k	47%
\$50K-\$150K	36%
\$150K or more	25%

Higher
Lower

Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis



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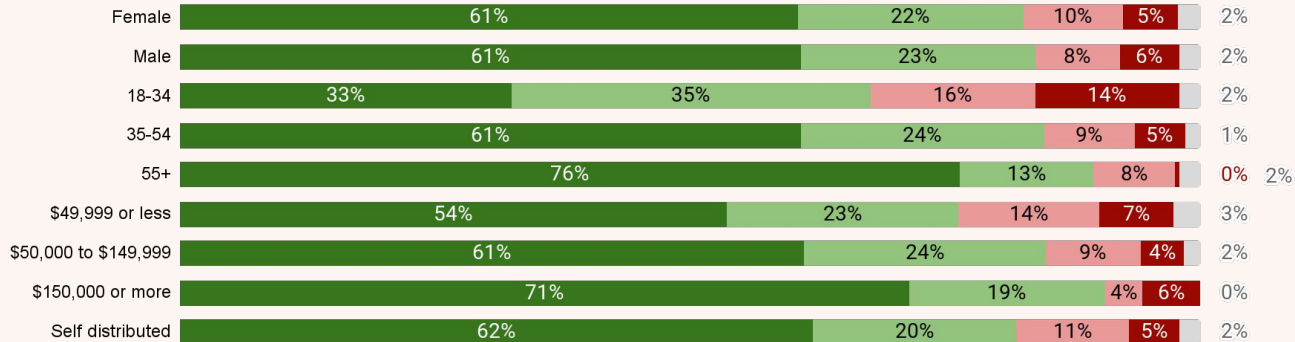
Engagement with the Police

Willingness to Contact Police: A large majority (82%) of respondents would be willing to contact the police if they were a victim of a crime or were worried about something. Notably, respondents under the age of 35 are considerably less likely to say they would be “very willing” to contact the police (33% vs 60% citywide). Only 6% of respondents citywide said that they would not be willing at all to contact the police, but this number is more than doubled for respondents under 35 (14%).

Q8: How willing would you be to contact the Thunder Bay Police Service if you were a victim of crime or were worried about something?



■ Very willing
 ■ Fairly willing
 ■ Not very willing
 ■ Not willing at all
 ■ Don't know

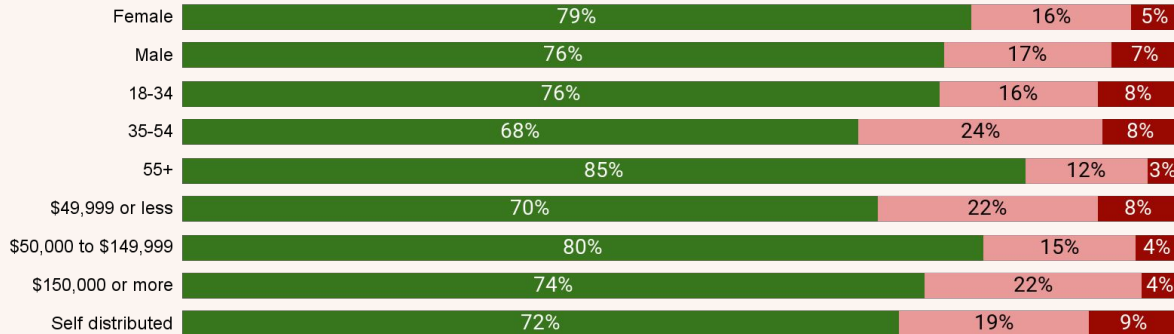


Reporting Something to the Police: 78% of respondents said that nothing happened to them which they considered a crime. Of the 22% who said something did happen to them, more than 60% reported it to the police. However, a little more than one in four respondents who said something happened to them did not go on to report it.

Q22: During the last six months, did you report to the Thunder Bay Police Service something that happened to you that you thought was a crime?

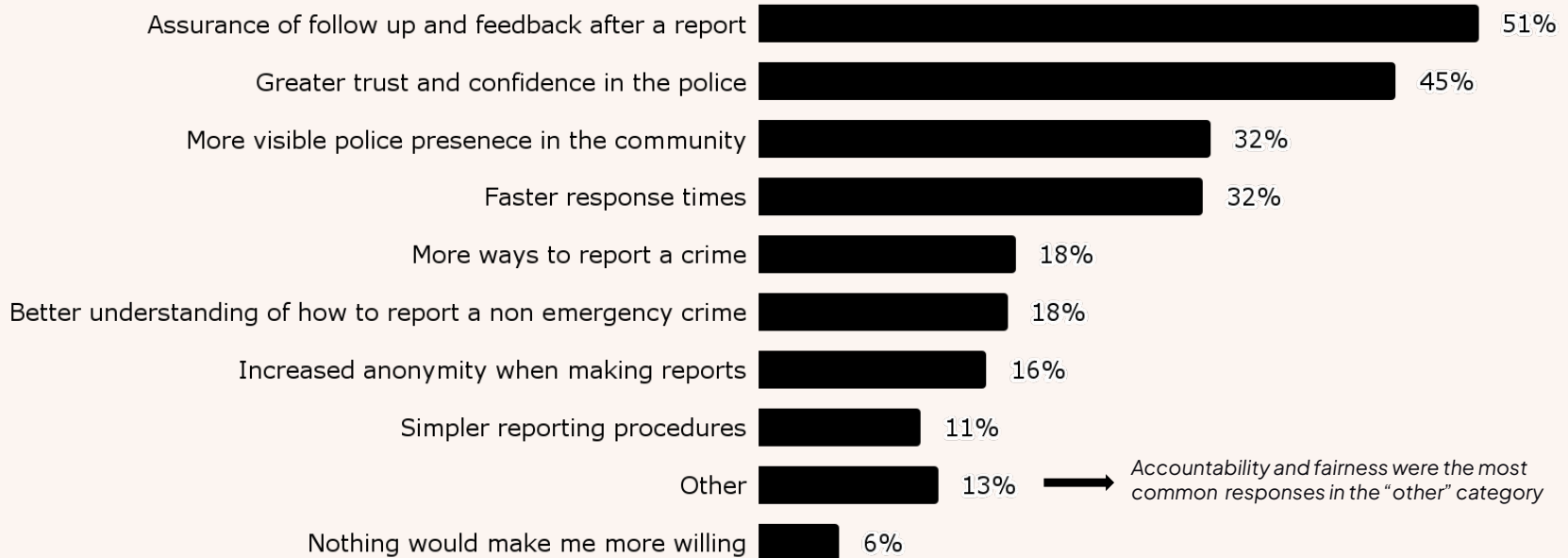


■ Nothing happened to me ■ Yes ■ Something happened to me, but I did not report it



Increasing Willingness to Report: More than half (51%) of respondents want greater assurance of follow-up and feedback after they report a crime. Almost half of respondents (45%) believe greater trust and confidence in the police would increase their willingness to report. More visible police presence in the community (32%) and faster response times (32%) were also common. Roughly one in twenty said that nothing would make them more willing to report a crime.

Q9: Which, if any, of the following would make you more willing to contact the Thunder Bay Police Service if you were a victim of crime or were worried about something?



Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Increasing Willingness to Report: Younger respondents (18–34) are more likely to say greater trust and confidence in the police would make them more willing to report a crime (51%), but this is less true for those above the age of 55 (32%). This suggests increasing trust and confidence in the police among young residents may improve relations. Additionally, those in the 35–54 age group are substantially less likely to say that more ways of reporting a crime would make them more willing to do so (5%).

Q9: Which, if any, of the following would make you more willing to contact the Thunder Bay Police Service if you were a victim of crime or were worried about something?

Group	Greater trust and confidence in the police	More ways to report a crime
Overall	45%	18%
18–34	51%	20%
35–54	46%	5%
55+	32%	27%

Higher

Lower

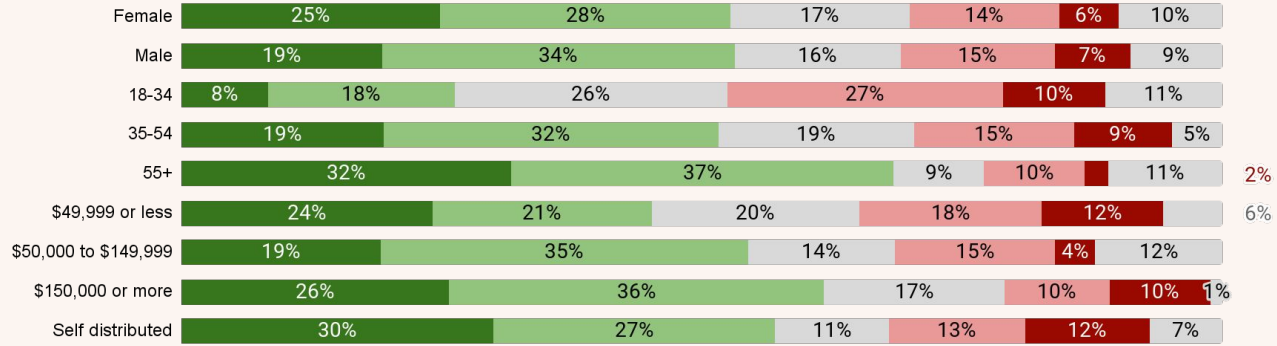
Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Approachability: A majority (52%) of respondents said that Thunder Bay Police Service officers are at least reasonably approachable. Only 7% of respondents citywide said that officers are not approachable at all. However, respondents under the age of 35 consider officers to be substantially less approachable compared to the city at large.

Q19: How approachable are the Thunder Bay Police Service officers?



■ Very approachable
 ■ Reasonably approachable
 ■ Moderately approachable
 ■ Somewhat approachable
 ■ Not approachable
 ■ I don't know

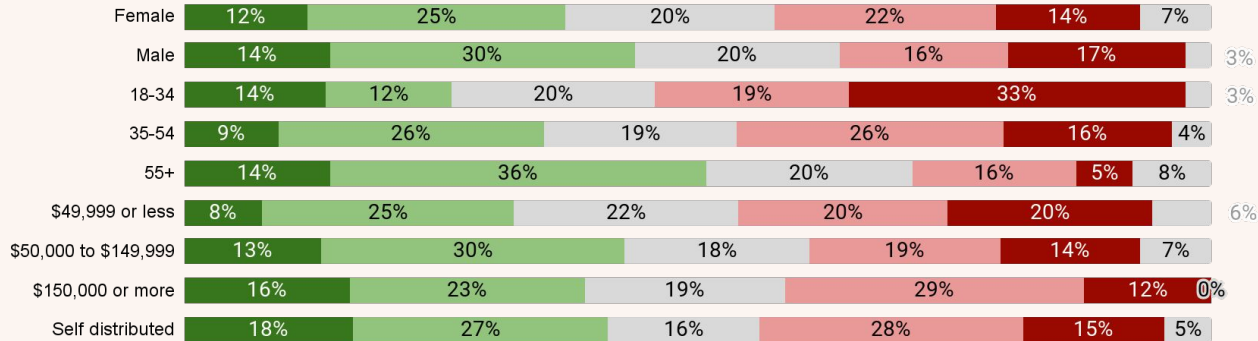


Quality of Service: Less than half (40%) of respondents said that Thunder Bay police provide the same quality of service to all individuals. 35% of respondents citywide disagree with this statement to some extent. Neutral and negative sentiment is particularly pronounced among those under 35 (72%) and low-income respondents (62%).

Q12: Thunder Bay police provide the same quality of service to all individuals.

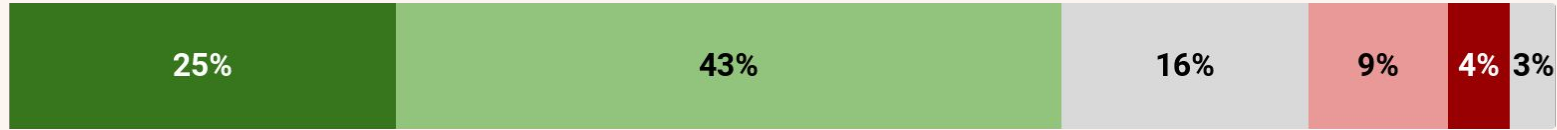


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ I don't know

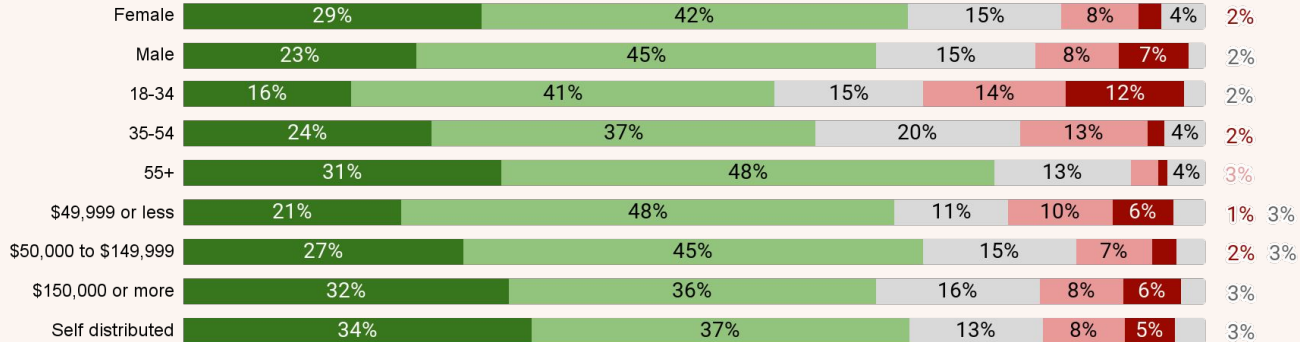


Respect: A large majority (68%) of respondents feel that the Thunder Bay police would treat them with respect if they had contact with them for any reason. Only 13% of respondents citywide disagreed with this statement, but those under the age of 35 were considerably more likely to disagree (26%).

Q13: Thunder Bay police would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason.

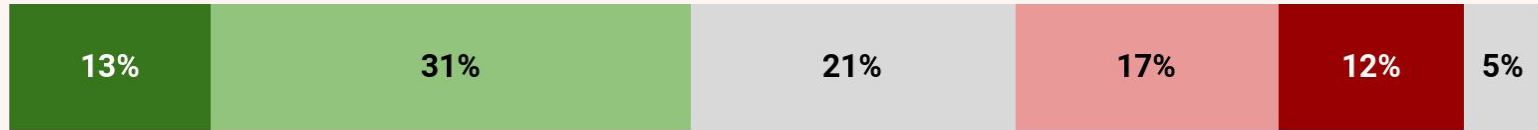


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ I don't know

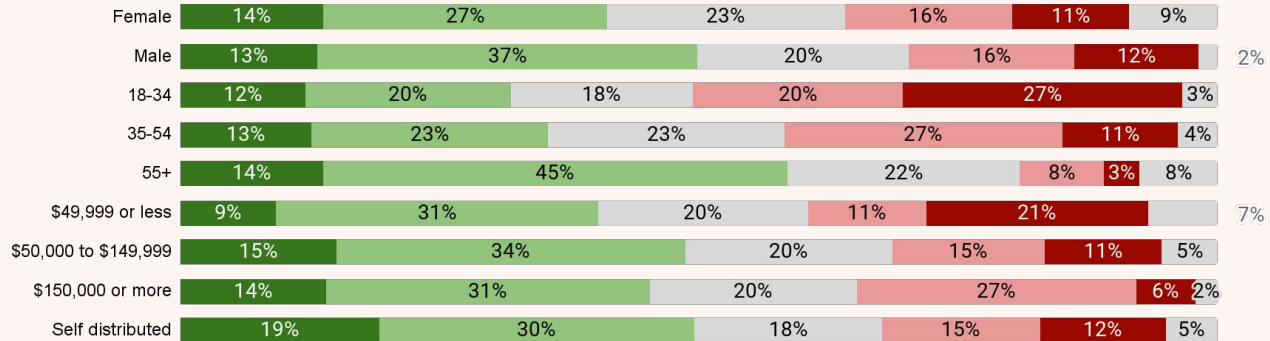


Respecting Others: Similar to the previous question, 44% of respondents agreed that the Thunder Bay police treat individuals with respect regardless of who they are. However, 29% of respondents citywide disagreed with this statement. This negative sentiment was felt by almost half (47%) of those under 35. One in five respondents citywide said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Q11: Thunder Bay police treat individuals with respect regardless of who they are.



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ I don't know

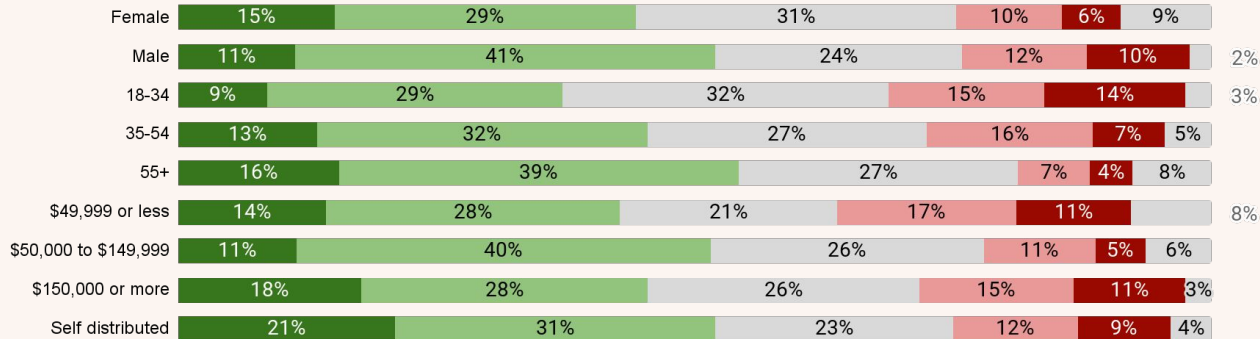


Providing Input: 47% of respondents feel that they are able to provide input to the Thunder Bay Police Service to some degree. More than one in four (28%) were neutral, and roughly one in five (20%) disagreed to some extent. Low-income respondents were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (28%) compared to the city at large.

Q14: I feel that I am able to provide input to the Thunder Bay Police Service.



■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ I don't know

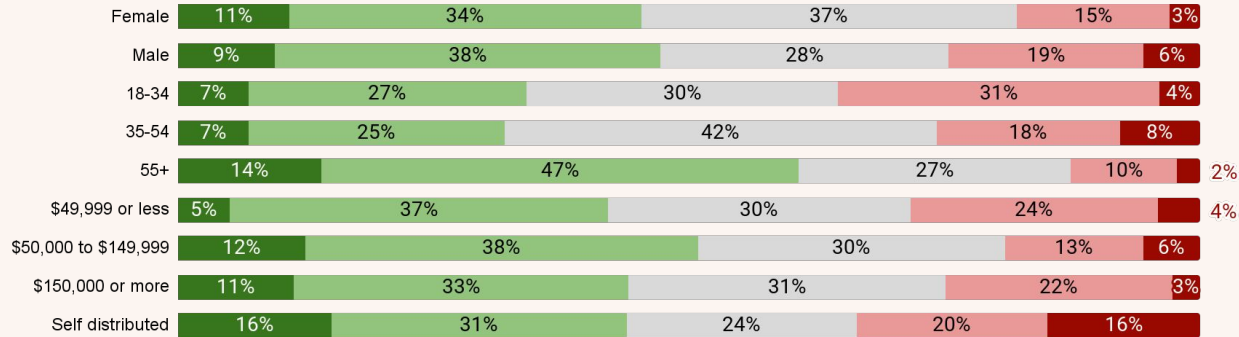


Satisfaction: Less than half (45%) of respondents citywide are satisfied with the Thunder Bay Police Service’s enforcement of the law, whereas a little more than one in five (22%) said they were dissatisfied. This negative sentiment was more common among respondents under 35 (26%) and low-income respondents (28%). Roughly one in three (32%) respondents citywide were neutral.

Q17: How satisfied are you with the Thunder Bay Police Service’s enforcement of the law?

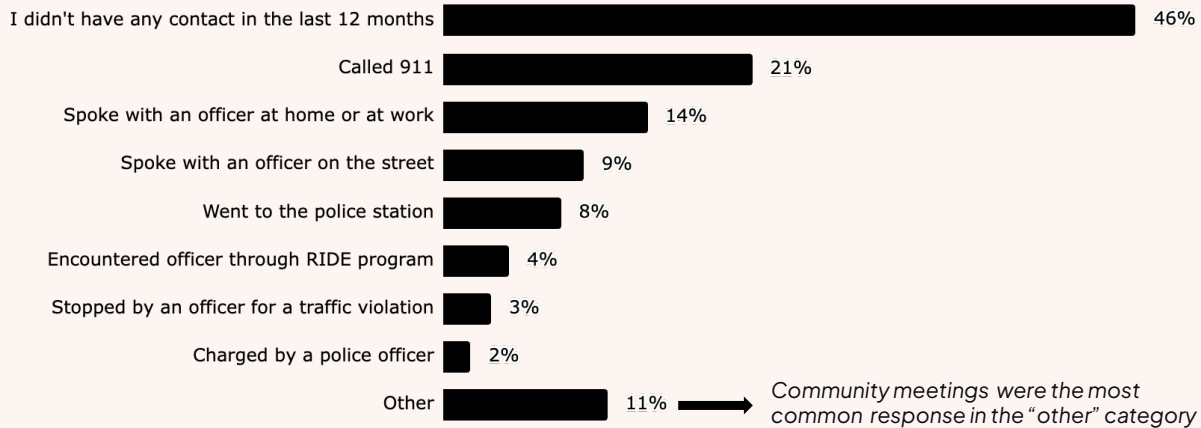


■ Very satisfied
 ■ Satisfied
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Dissatisfied
 ■ Very dissatisfied



Recent Contact Point: Almost half (46%) of respondents had no contact with police in the last 12 months. More than one in five (21%) reported their most recent contact with the police came from calling 911. Some spoke with an officer at home or at work (14%), but fewer reported actually going to the police station (8%). Very few respondents encountered an officer through the RIDE program (4%). Even fewer were stopped by an officer for a traffic violation (3%) or were charged by a police officer (2%).

Q15: What was the most recent contact you had with the Thunder Bay Police Service in the last 12 months?



Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Recent Contact: Older respondents (58%) and those with lower income (52%) are more likely to report having had no contact with the police in the past 12 months. In contrast, younger adults (40%) and those with higher income (31%) are more likely to report police contact.

Q15: What was the most recent contact you had with the Thunder Bay Police Service in the last 12 months?

Group	I didn't have any contact in the last 12 months
Overall	46%
18-34	40%
35-54	31%
55+	58%
\$150K or more	31%
\$50K-\$150K	47%
\$50K or less	52%

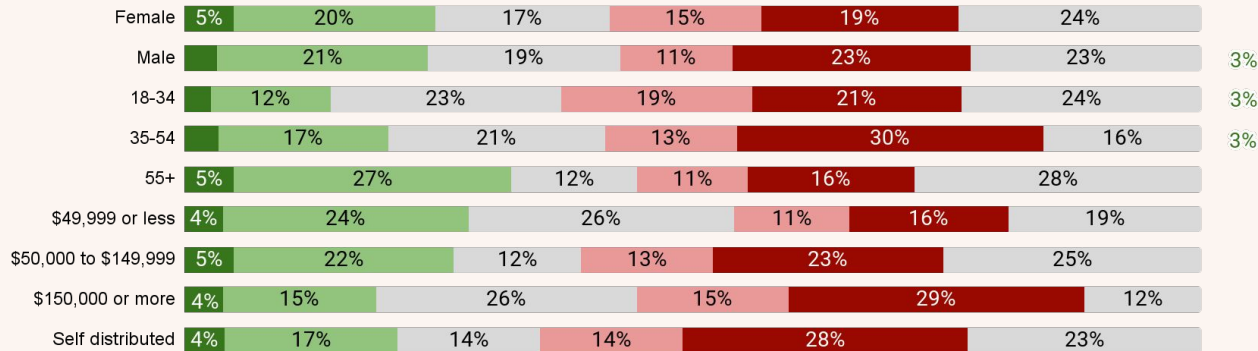
Note: Self-distributed data were excluded from this analysis

Promptness: A slight majority (54%) of respondents citywide said that the Thunder Bay Police Service is at least somewhat prompt when responding to 911 calls. Less than one in twenty (4%) said the police are very prompt. A considerable portion (22%) of respondents said that the police are *not* prompt, especially respondents aged 35–54 (30%) and higher-income respondents (29%). Roughly a quarter of respondents citywide didn't know.

Q18: How prompt is the Thunder Bay Police Service at responding to calls?



■ Very prompt
 ■ Reasonably prompt
 ■ Moderately prompt
 ■ Somewhat prompt
 ■ Not prompt
 ■ I don't know

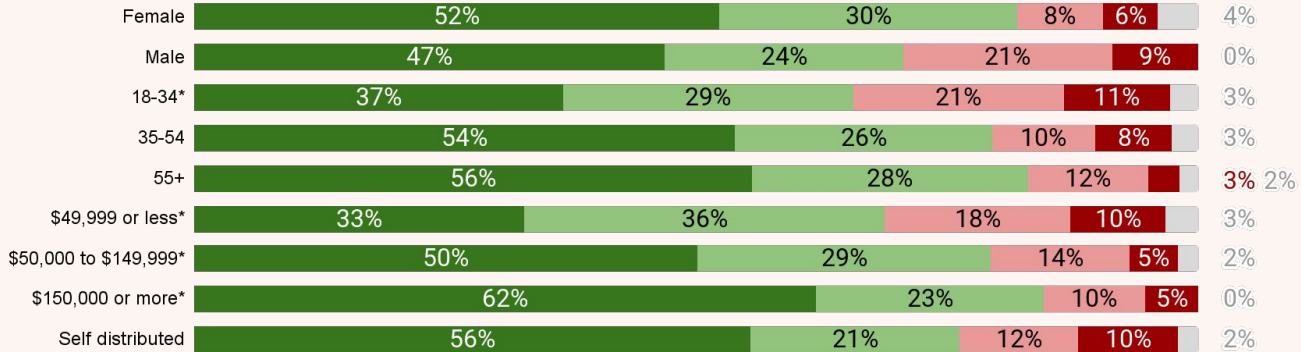


Respect: Of the respondents who had contact with the Thunder Bay Police Service in the past 12 months, almost half (49%) felt they were treated respectfully to a large extent by the officer or staff member. Low-income respondents (33%) and those under the age of 35 (37%) were less likely to say this. 7% of respondents citywide said they were not treated with respect at all, and 2% preferred not to say.

Q16: Thinking back to your most recent interaction with a Thunder Bay Police Service officer or staff member, to what extent were you treated respectfully?



■ To a large extent
 ■ To some extent
 ■ To a small extent
 ■ Not at all
 ■ Prefer not to say



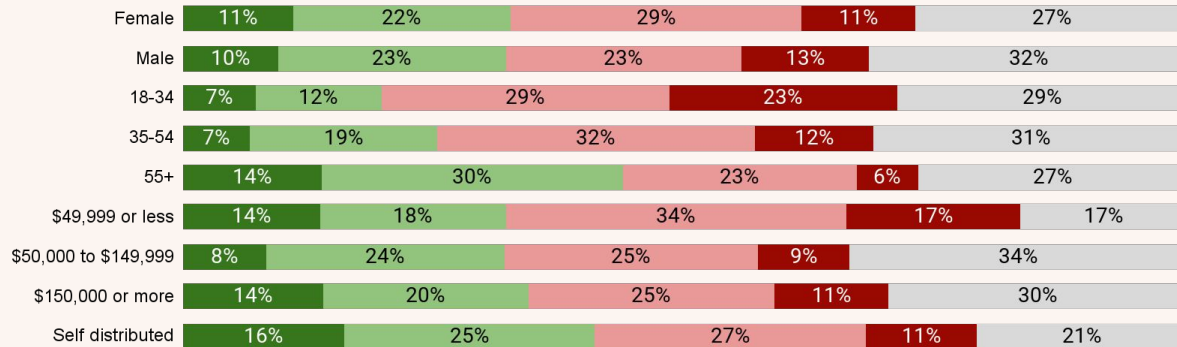
*limited sample size

Building Relationships: About one in three (32%) respondents said that the Thunder Bay PS builds relationships with community members. About one in eight (12%) said the Thunder Bay Police Service doesn't do this at all. Furthermore, respondents under the age of 35 (23%) and low-income respondents (17%) also said the police don't do this at all. 30% of respondents citywide said they didn't know.

Q20: To what extent does the Thunder Bay Police Service build relationships with community members and groups?



■ To a great extent
 ■ Mostly
 ■ A little
 ■ Not at all
 ■ I don't know

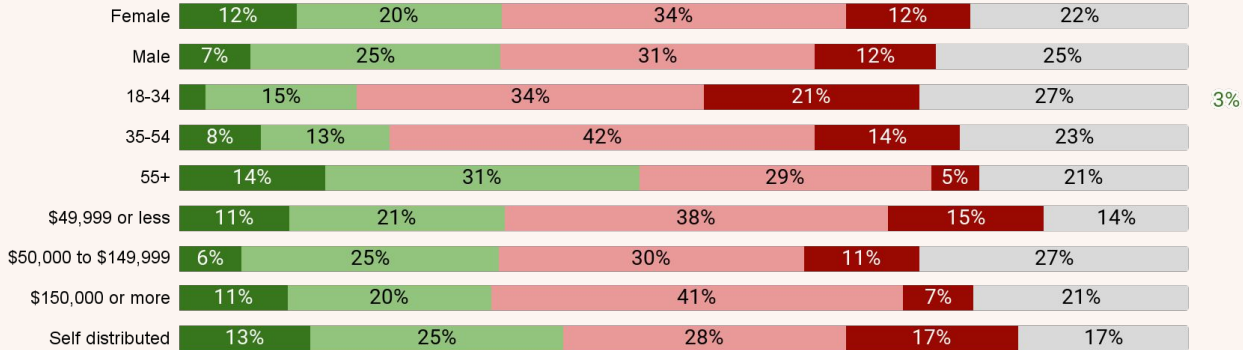


Working with the Public: Less than one in ten (9%) respondents said that the Thunder Bay Police Service work with the public to address their concerns, and even fewer (3%) of those under the age of 35 said this. In contrast, 12% of respondents citywide and more than one in five (21%) of respondents under the age of 35 said the Thunder Bay Police Service doesn't work with the public to address their concerns at all. 23% of respondents citywide said they didn't know.

Q21: To what extent does the Thunder Bay Police Service work with the public to address their concerns?

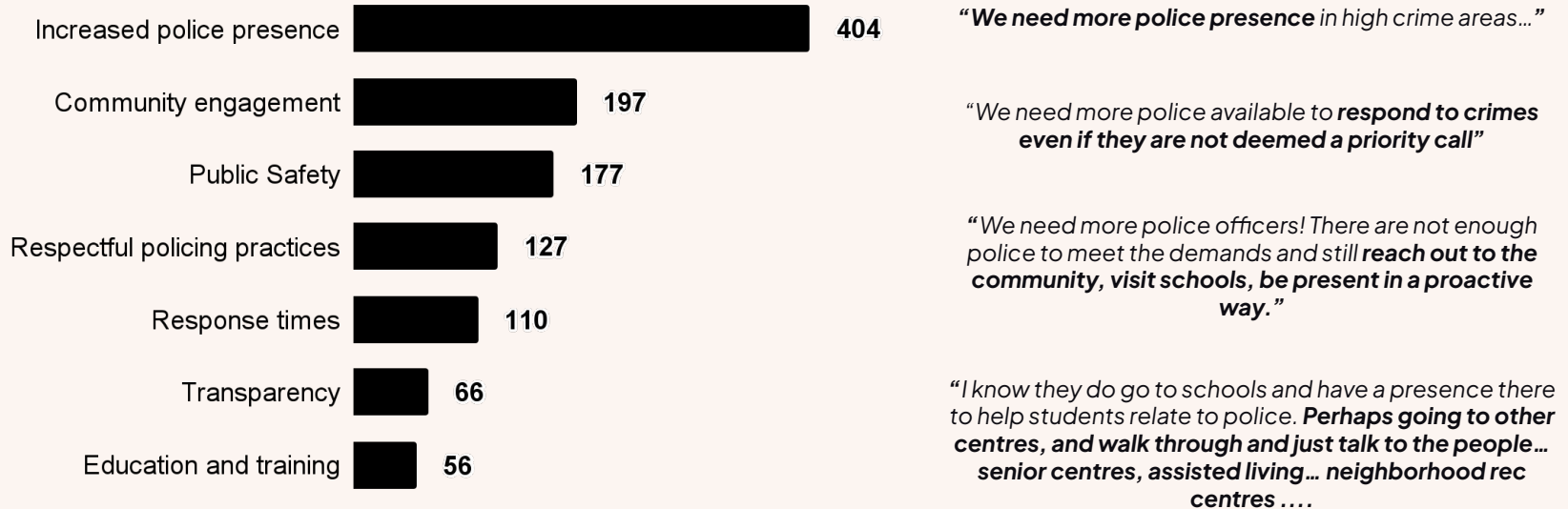


■ To a great extent
 ■ Mostly
 ■ A little
 ■ Not at all
 ■ I don't know



Additional Feedback: Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized a need for increased police presence (404 mentions), followed by greater community engagement (197 mentions).

Q24: What is the number one thing you think the Thunder Bay Police Service could do to improve?



[Link to open text responses](#)

| 04

Summary

| Summary

The report highlights significant disparities in perceptions of safety and trust in law enforcement across Thunder Bay, particularly among younger and lower-income residents.

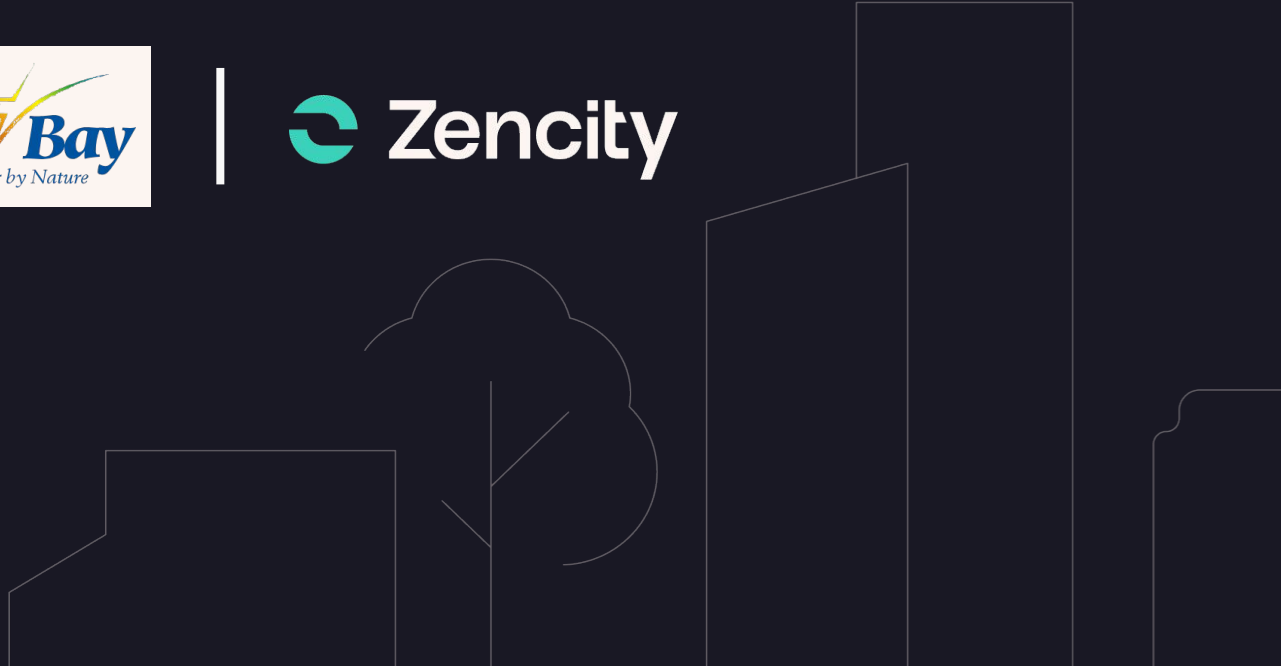
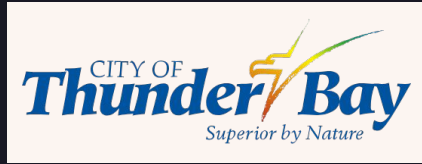
These groups are less likely to feel safe or believe the police treat all individuals equally, and they're more likely to express mistrust and a lack of confidence in law enforcement. Compounding issues like these contribute to underreporting of crimes and underscore broader, citywide challenges in fostering equitable and inclusive safety for all demographics.

While addressing violent crimes and increasing neighbourhood patrols remain citywide priorities, many see broader social issues like addiction, mental health, and housing as critical to enhancing safety and well-being.

These findings highlight opportunities to further explore disparities in safety perceptions and trust among younger residents and those with lower incomes. By delving deeper into resident sentiment and identifying specific areas of concern, there is potential to uncover more actionable insights that can guide future strategies. Continuing to examine engagement, communication, and service equity will provide a clearer understanding of how to foster stronger connections and support a safer, more cohesive community.

Partnership Next Steps

- **Ipsum Lorem**
 - Ipsum Lorem



| Questionnaire

[Link to Questionnaire](#)