

Safety and Protection 2016

Compilation of Survey Results in the Vermillion Community



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Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
SURVEY DETAILS.....	2
SUMMARY RESULTS FOR 2016 SURVEY	3
GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS	3
SECTION 1: COMMUNITY SAFETY PERCEPTIONS.....	5
SECTION 2: INTERACTIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT.....	7
SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.....	8
COMPARING 2012 AND 2016 SURVEY RESULTS.....	11
GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS: COMPARISONS.....	11
COMMUNITY SAFETY PERCEPTIONS: COMPARISONS	13
FURTHER ANALYSIS OF RESULTS	16
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	19
APPENDIX – WRITTEN COMMENTS.....	20
GENERAL COMMENTS.....	20
SPECIFIC STORIES.....	21
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS	22



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Introduction

During the Fall of 2016 the Vermillion police department conducted a community survey to help the department better understand the community's perceptions about

- 1) the level of crime and danger in the community,
- 2) the quality of interactions citizens have with the department, and
- 3) the quality and usefulness of services the department provides.

This survey served as a 4 year follow-up to the 2012 survey. It follows the same format and questions as the 2012 survey except for two minor changes as projects and programs change. The survey results will be used by the Vermillion Police Department to improve its management of resources and its delivery of service.

Survey Details

In 2012, the survey was developed using two general sources to determine the survey questions: reviews of several community surveys from around the country and general needs specific to the Vermillion Police efforts. A total of fifty-five questions emerged with six general demographic questions that help in the analysis of the data. The 2016 version adds two questions, replaces one question, and deletes one. The survey added a question regarding how many interactions the respondent had with the Department in the last year and a question about the uses of School Resource Officers and the DARE program. The survey deleted the question about the Project 8 – Child Car Seat Program and replaced it with a question regarding the use of social media outreach. The demographic question about the general city quadrant in which respondents lived was also deleted.

Section 1 used a five point scale to measure how safe citizens feel in the city when asked about specific situations or potential criminal activities. Section 2 used a continuum scale to see how citizens perceive their interactions (if any) with the Department or its officers. Section 3 uses a three point awareness scale to gauge how useful specific programs are in the city and further asks citizen whether they think the programs should continue. A series of demographic questions includes questions about age, length of time in the city, whether the respondent rents or owns a home, where respondents live in the city, gender, ethnicity, and how respondents prefer to receive information about the police department. Respondents were also given an opportunity to make additional comments if desired.

Three thousand postcards were mailed to residents of Vermillion introducing the survey and including a QR code to be used to access the online survey. Another two thousand seven hundred forty-five follow up postcards were mailed three weeks after the first mailing. About half of the surveys were sent to residents from a random selection of utility addresses. The other half was sent to addresses on the University of South Dakota campus. This strategy was used to gather perceptions from both permanent residents and university students – two populations with which the police department interacts. Paper versions of the survey were also available at four different locations around the city.

Summary Results for 2016 Survey

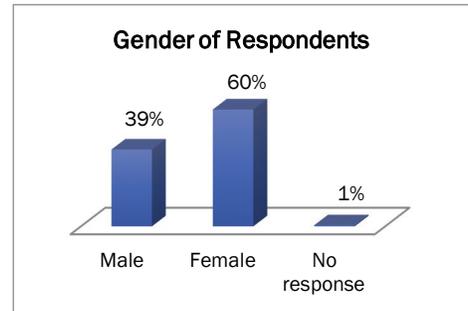
Three hundred fifty-five usable responses were received from the citizens. This response rate yields a margin of error of 5.28% for yes/no questions and 0.21 for Likert-scale questions using a 95% confidence level. Summary demographic statistics reveal the following data.

General Demographics

Gender:

Female respondents were the majority at 60%. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents were male and 1% did not respond to the gender question.

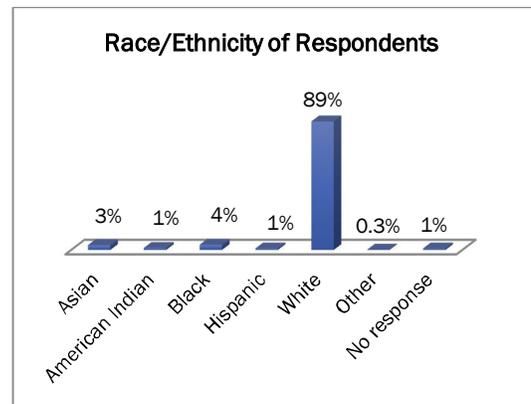
	#	%
Male	140	39%
Female	213	60%
No Response	2	1%



Race/Ethnicity:

The vast majority of respondents (89%) self-identified themselves as white. No other ethnic group received more than 4% of the total respondents. One percent of responses did not identify ethnicity.

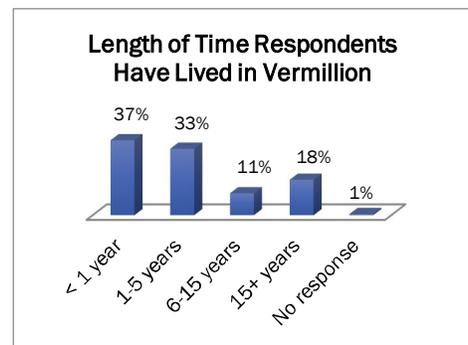
	#	%
Asian	12	3%
American Indian	5	1%
Black	13	4%
Hispanic	4	1%
White	316	89%
Other	1	0.3%
No Response	4	1%



Length of Time in Vermillion:

Thirty-seven percent of respondents have lived in Vermillion for less than one year. Eighteen percent of respondents have lived in Vermillion for more than 15 years. A third of the respondents lived in Vermillion between 1 and 5 years.

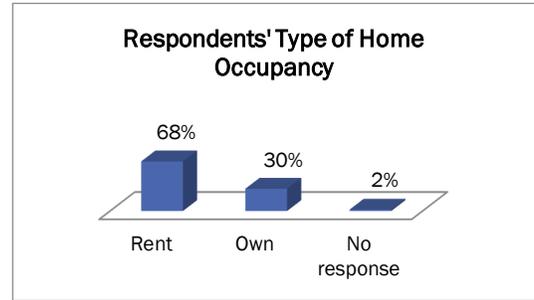
	#	%
< 1 year	133	37%
1-5 yrs	118	33%
6-15 yrs	39	11%
15+yrs	63	18%
No response	2	1%



Type of Home Occupancy:

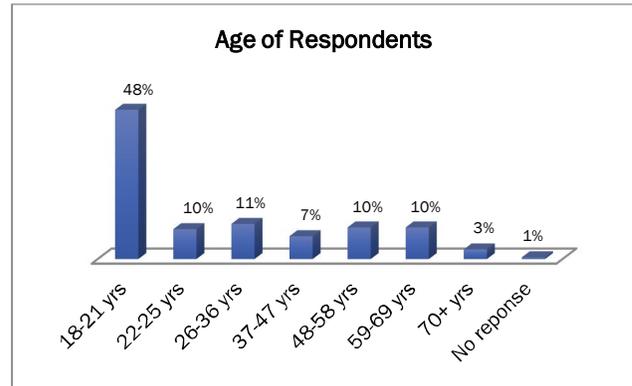
A majority (68%) of respondents rented their residence. Thirty percent of respondents owned their home and 2% did not respond.

	#	%
Rent	240	68%
Own	108	30%
No Responses	7	2%



Age of Respondents:

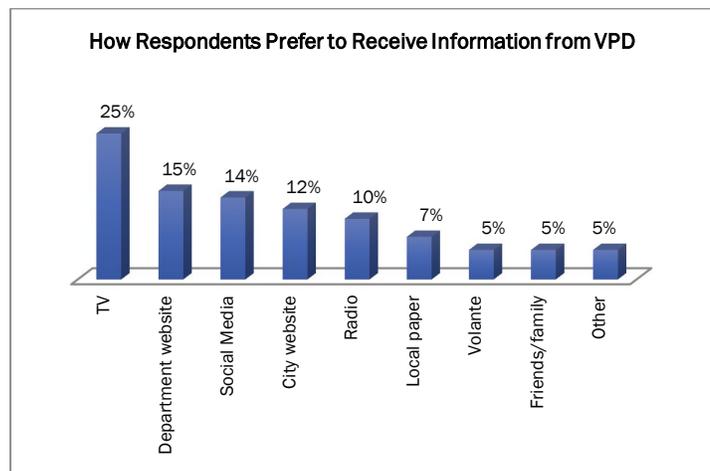
The survey divided respondents into seven age groups. The 18-21 years old group is assumed to be mostly undergraduate college students and the 22-25 years old group captures the older college students who often live off campus, the graduate student population, and adults who are beginning their careers. The remaining age groups are divided by 10 year increments. Of the age groups, the 18-21 years old comprised 48% of respondents. The 70+ group was the least represented at 3%. The remaining age groups were fairly even split.



	#	%		#	%
18-21 yrs	170	48%	48-58 yrs	36	10%
22-25 yrs	34	10%	59-69 yrs	36	10%
26-36 yrs	40	11%	70+ yrs	11	3%
37-47 yrs	26	7%	No response	2	1%

Preferred Information Source:

The most preferred information source about the police department is the *Television*. Next are the departmental website, social media and the city website. Five percent mentioned other methods, most of which were U.S. Mail.

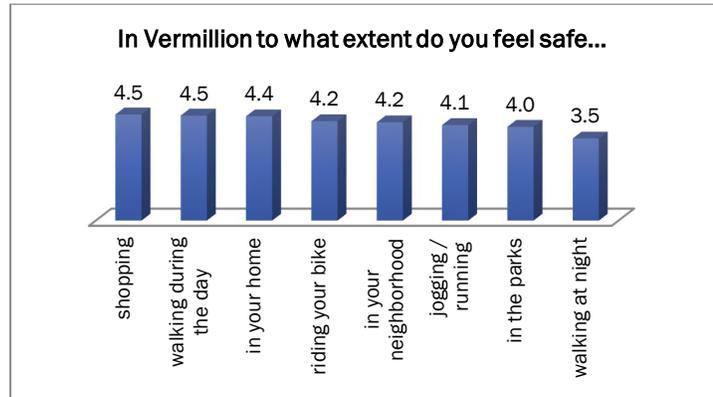


Section 1: Community Safety Perceptions

This section of the survey used a five point scale to measure how safe citizens feel in the city when asked about specific situations or potential criminal activities. In the first part of this section, citizens were asked to what extent they feel safe doing certain activities in the city. A score of 5 indicates the respondent felt extremely safe (had no concerns) doing specific activities. A score of 1 means that respondents did not feel safe at all (had concerns). The overall sense of safety indicated in this part of the section is 4.2. This suggests that citizens feel very safe. Further details are listed below.

In Vermillion to what extent do you feel safe...

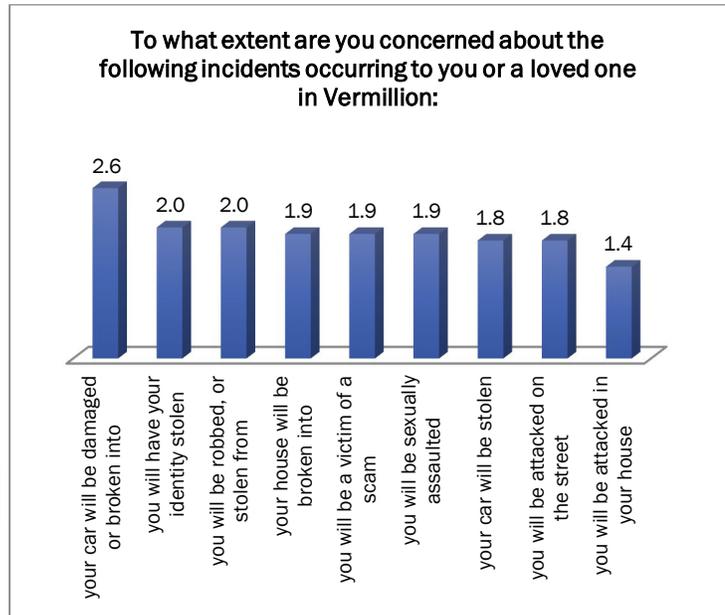
shopping	4.5
walking during the day	4.5
in your home	4.4
riding your bike	4.2
in your neighborhood	4.2
jogging / running	4.1
in the parks	4.0
walking at night	3.5
overall sense of safety	4.2



The second part of this section asked citizens to what extent they are concerned about certain incidents happening in Vermillion to them or a loved one. A score of 5 indicates they were extremely concerned these incidents would occur. A score of 1 means they were not concerned at all. The overall sense of concern indicated in this part of the section is 1.9. This suggests that citizens are just a little concerned that these incidents would occur to them or a loved one. Further details are listed below.

To what extent are you concerned about the following incidents occurring to you or a loved one in Vermillion:

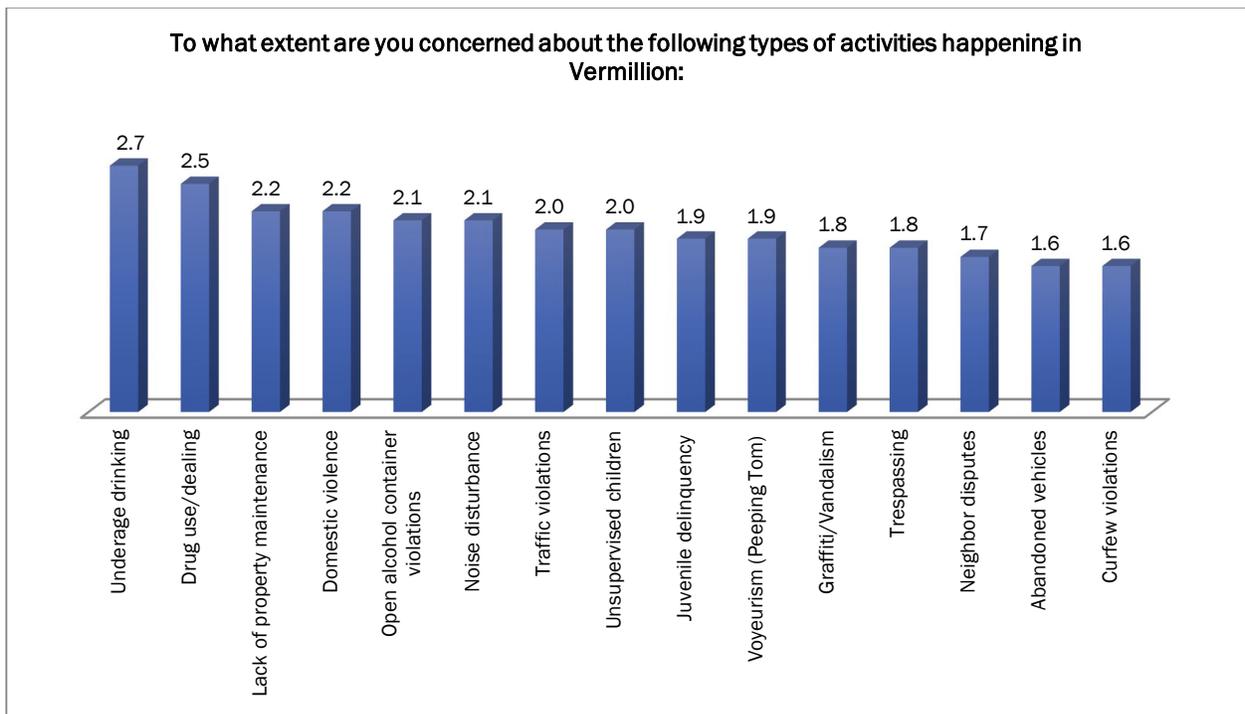
your car will be damaged or broken into	2.6
you will have your identity stolen	2.0
you will be robbed, or stolen from	2.0
your house will be broken into	1.9
you will be a victim of a scam	1.9
you will be sexually assaulted	1.9
your car will be stolen	1.8
you will be attacked on the street	1.8
you will be attacked in your house	1.4
overall sense of concern about certain incidents	1.9



The third part of this section asked citizens to what extent they are concerned about certain types of activities happening in Vermillion to them or a loved one. A score of 5 indicates they were extremely concerned these incidents would occur. A score of 1 means they were not concerned at all. The overall sense of concern indicates in this part of the section is 2.0. This suggests that citizens are just a little concerned that certain activities happen in the city. Further details are listed below.

To what extent are you concerned about the following types of activities happening in Vermillion:

Underage drinking	2.7
Drug use/dealing	2.5
Lack of property maintenance	2.2
Domestic violence	2.2
Open alcohol container violations	2.1
Noise disturbance	2.1
Traffic violations	2.0
Unsupervised children	2.0
Juvenile delinquency	1.9
Voyeurism (Peeping Tom)	1.9
Graffiti/Vandalism	1.8
Trespassing	1.8
Neighbor disputes	1.7
Abandoned vehicles	1.6
Curfew violations	1.6
overall sense of concern about certain types of activities	2.0

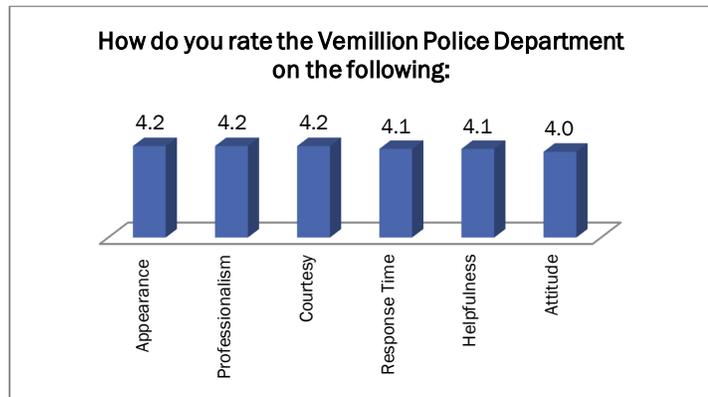


Section 2: Interactions with the Department

Section 2 used a continuum scale to see how citizens perceive their interactions (if any) with the Department or its officers. The first part of this section asks citizens to offer their perceptions of the department and its officers along certain characteristics. Responses were indicated on a continuum anchored on one end by the word “Disappointing” and on the other end with the word “Exceptional.” In scoring this section a 1 was associated with “Disappointing” and a 5 was associated with “Exceptional.” The overall rating of the Vermillion Police Department is a 4.1. This suggests that citizens rate the department as close to exceptional. Further details are listed below.

How do you rate the Vermillion Police Department on the following:

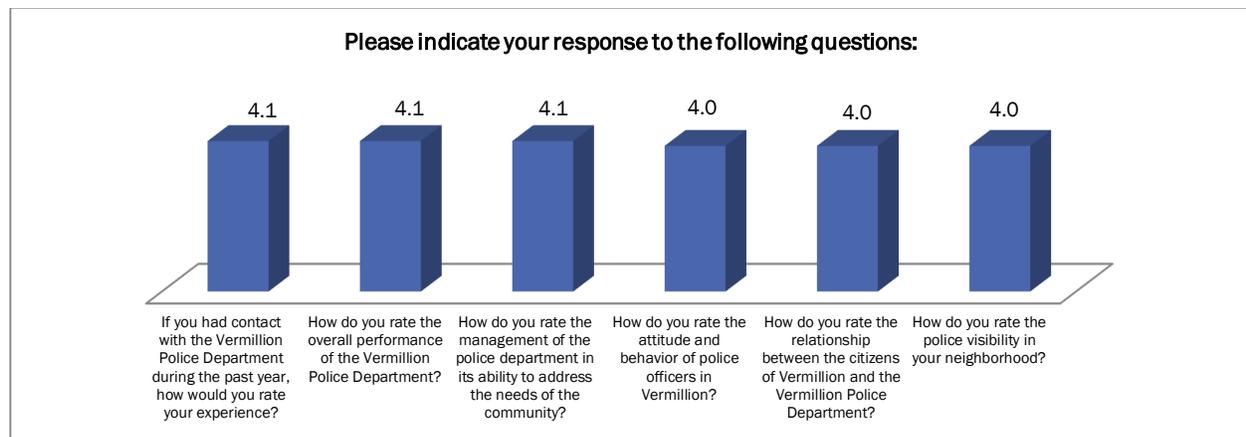
Appearance	4.2
Professionalism	4.2
Courtesy	4.2
Response Time	4.1
Helpfulness	4.1
Attitude	4.0
overall rating of VPD	4.1



The second part of this section asked citizens to indicate their impressions of interactions they have had with the department or overall departmental performance. The same continuum of “Disappointing” to “Exceptional” was used in this section. The overall rating in this part is 4.1. This suggests that citizens are more likely to view the department’s interactions as close to exceptional. Further details are listed below.

Please indicate your response to the following questions:

If you had contact with the Vermillion Police Department during the past year, how would you rate your experience?	4.1
How do you rate the overall performance of the Vermillion Police Department?	4.1
How do you rate the management of the police department in its ability to address the needs of the community?	4.1
How do you rate the attitude and behavior of police officers in Vermillion?	4
How do you rate the relationship between the citizens of Vermillion and the Vermillion Police Department?	4
How do you rate the police visibility in your neighborhood?	4
overall rating of police interactions and activities	4.1



Section 3: Assessment of Selected Programs and Services

Section 3 uses a three point scale to gauge the level of awareness that citizens have regarding specific programs the Police Department conducts in the city and further asks citizen whether they think the programs should continue. Results for each program are reported below. Generally, less than 2% of the respondents did not indicate whether they are aware or not of the programs.

Bike Rodeo

The Bike Rodeo is an annual program where bike helmets are provided to children and bike safety practices are taught. Seventy percent of the respondents are unaware of this program. However, 81% feel the program should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	4	1.13%	no response	46	12.96%
Not at all	250	70.42%	Yes	289	81.41%
Somewhat	66	18.59%	No	20	5.63%
Extremely	35	9.86%			

National Night Out

National Night Out is a community outreach program where Police Officers host a carnival-type event for community members to build trust between officers and the community. Seventy percent of the respondents are unaware of this program, though 81% feel it should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	4	1.13%	no response	47	13.24%
Not at all	249	70.14%	Yes	288	81.13%
Somewhat	67	18.87%	No	20	5.63%
Extremely	35	9.86%			

Halloween Open House

This is a Halloween party that takes place at the Police Department. It involves an open house with tours of facilities and equipment. Sixty-two percent of the respondents are unaware of this program, though almost 82% feel it should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	5	1.41%	no response	47	13.24%
Not at all	223	62.82%	Yes	290	81.69%
Somewhat	90	25.35%	No	18	5.07%
Extremely	37	10.42%			

Escorts for Funerals/Parades/Special Events

The Department is frequently called upon to engage in police escorts for a variety of events. Almost 64% of respondents are somewhat or extremely aware of this program. Eighty-seven percent of respondents wants it to continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	5	1.41%	no response	37	10.42%
Not at all	123	34.65%	Yes	309	87.04%
Somewhat	122	34.37%	No	9	2.54%
Extremely	105	29.58%			

Commercial Building Checks

Officers commit time to check various commercial buildings during night and weekend hours to insure they are secure. This program is known by only 36% of the respondents. However, more than 82% wish it to continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	4	1.13%	no response	50	14.08%
Not at all	222	62.54%	Yes	292	82.25%
Somewhat	87	24.51%	No	13	3.66%
Extremely	42	11.83%			

Youth Explorer Program

The Vermillion Police Department supports a Youth Explorer Post. Only 2 out of 10 respondents are aware of this service. More than 8 out of 10 respondents feel it should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	6	1.69%	no response	54	15.21%
Not at all	275	77.46%	Yes	285	80.28%
Somewhat	55	15.49%	No	16	4.51%
Extremely	19	5.35%			

DUI Focus Patrols

DUI Focus Patrols are special or extra patrols where officers work specifically to identify and arrest drunk drivers. Forty-two percent of the respondents were aware of this program. Almost 82% of respondents feel it should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	5	1.41%	no response	43	12.11%
Not at all	199	56.06%	Yes	291	81.97%
Somewhat	95	26.76%	No	21	5.92%
Extremely	56	15.77%			

Social Media

The Department devoted resources to communicate to residents through a variety of social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, and texting. Almost 62% of the respondents are aware of this program. More than 84% of respondents feel this program should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	5	1.41%	no response	45	12.68%
Not at all	130	36.62%	Yes	299	84.23%
Somewhat	125	35.21%	No	11	3.10%
Extremely	95	26.76%			

Community Policing through Environmental Design

This program is a crime prevention program that focuses on addressing underlying environmental factors that can effectively deter criminal behavior. Only 2 out of 10 respondents are somewhat or extremely aware of this program. A little more than 78% feel it should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	3	0.85%	no response	56	15.77%
Not at all	276	77.75%	Yes	279	78.59%
Somewhat	60	16.90%	No	20	5.63%
Extremely	16	4.51%			

Lost and Found Property Complaints

This program involves the commitment of department resources to accept found property and attempt to locate the owner of that property. Sixty-one percent of the respondents are unaware aware that the department handles lost and found complaints. Almost 85% believe this service should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	5	1.41%	no response	45	12.68%
Not at all	218	61.41%	Yes	301	84.79%
Somewhat	99	27.89%	No	9	2.54%
Extremely	33	9.30%			

Non-Criminal Request for Service

This service summarizes the multitude of different non-law enforcement services that the department provides (e.g., medical first responder services, elderly assistance, agency referrals). Over half (56%) of respondents are unaware of the department's response to service requests that are not criminal in nature. Eighty-four percent feel this service should continue.

To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	6	1.69%	no response	44	12.39%
Not at all	200	56.34%	Yes	300	84.51%
Somewhat	108	30.42%	No	11	3.10%
Extremely	41	11.55%			

School Resource Office (SRO) / DARE Program

This service involves dedicating an officer to serve within the schools. The DARE program is designed to teach students good decision making tools regarding addictive activities. Almost 60% of respondents are aware of these services. Almost 9 out of 10 respondents want it to continue.

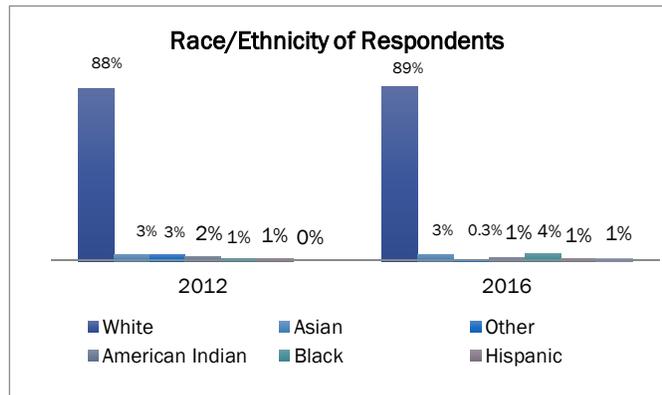
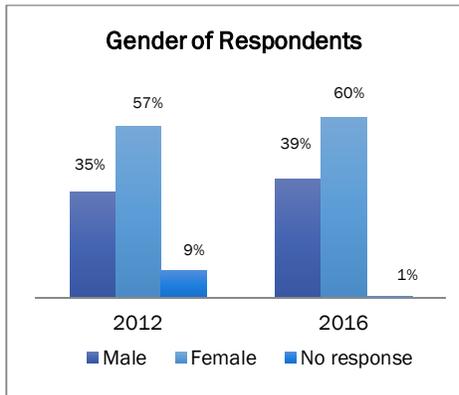
To what extent are you aware of this program:			Should the Department continue this program:		
	#	%		#	%
no response	6	1.69%	no response	40	11.27%
Not at all	139	39.15%	Yes	315	88.73%
Somewhat	105	29.58%	No	17	4.79%
Extremely	105	29.58%			

Comparing 2012 and 2016 Survey Results

General Demographics: Comparisons

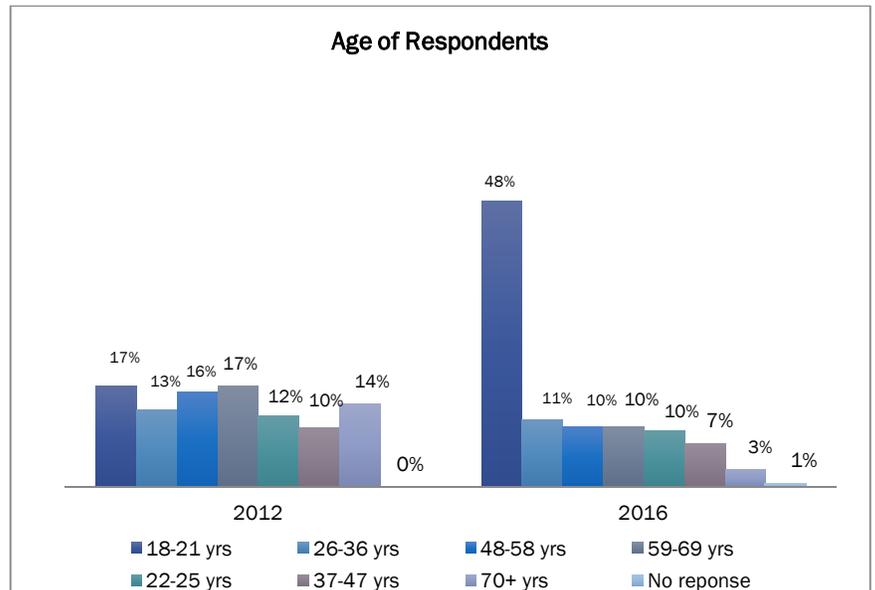
No Changes: Gender and Race/Ethnicity

There was little change in the racial/ethnic makeup of the respondents on the two surveys the vast majority of respondents self-identified as White. The gender mix was consistent on the two surveys; only slightly more females answered the surveys in 2016.

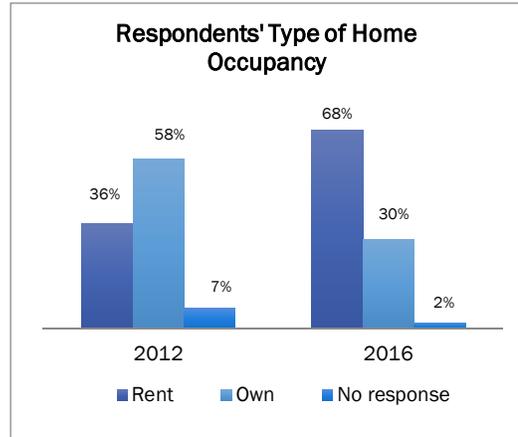
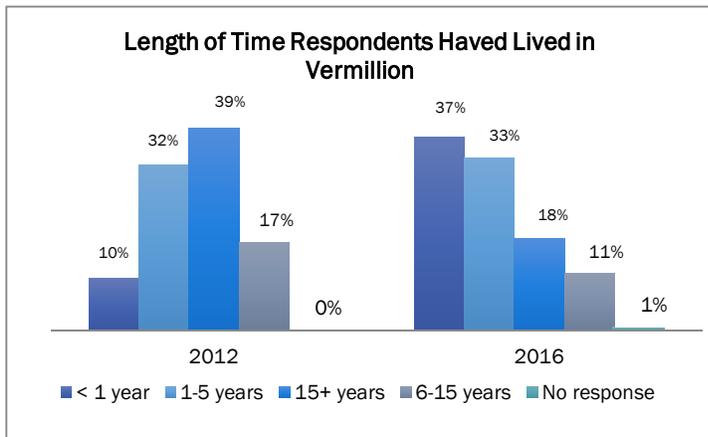


Changes: Age, Length of Time in Vermillion and Type of Home Occupancy

There were considerable changes in three demographic areas from 2012 to 2016. The average age of respondents was much younger in 2016 as compared to 2012. In 2012 the 18-21 year old age range represented 17% of the respondents and the 70+ year old age range represented 14%. In 2016, the 18-21 year old age range represented 48% of the respondents and the 70+ year old age range only 3%. These are dramatic changes in age distribution that likely reflect the preference for younger residents to respond using online forms.

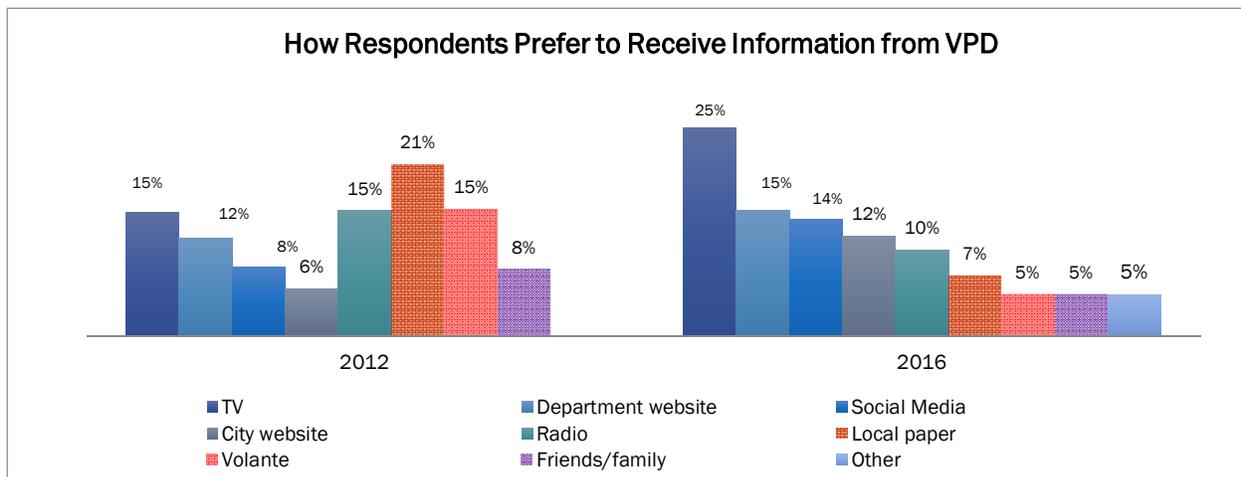


The age demographics in 2016 may account for changes in the breakdown of length of time in Vermillion and home occupancy types. In 2016, 37% of respondents had lived in Vermillion for less than one year, whereas in 2012, only 10% had. The largest percentage in 2012 was the 15+ years range at 39%, whereas in 2016 that range accounted for only 18% of respondents. The type of home occupancy percentages flipped. In 2012 the majority of respondents were home owners (58%). In 2016, a greater majority were renters (68%).



Preferred Information Sources

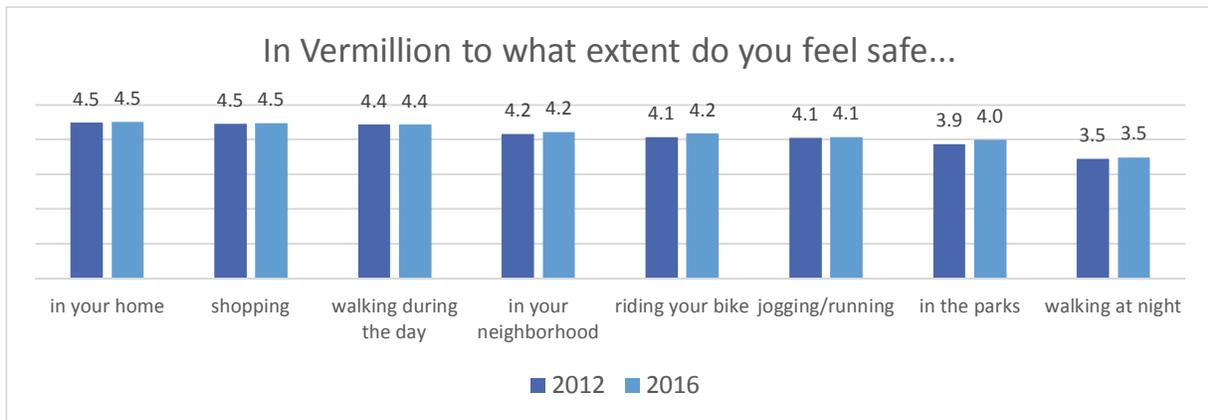
Over the 4 year period, preferences of respondents in how they receive information from the VPD changes as well. In 2012, the local paper, school paper, television and radio were the preferred sources. More respondents in 2016 preferred television, websites and social media as sources.



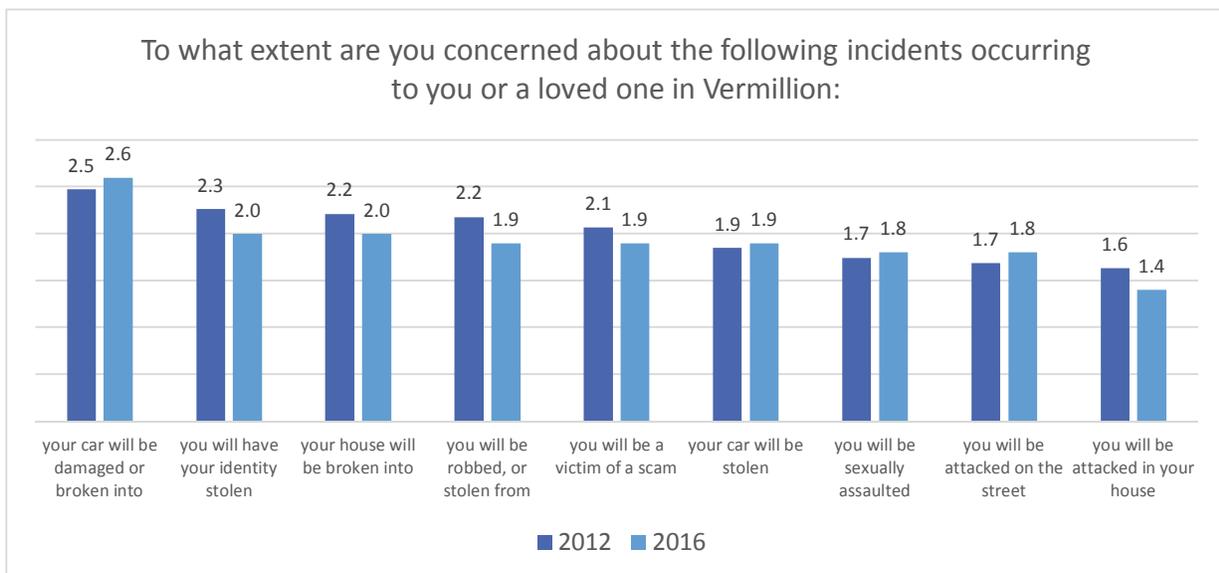
Community Safety Perceptions: Comparisons

Safety and Concern: Comparison

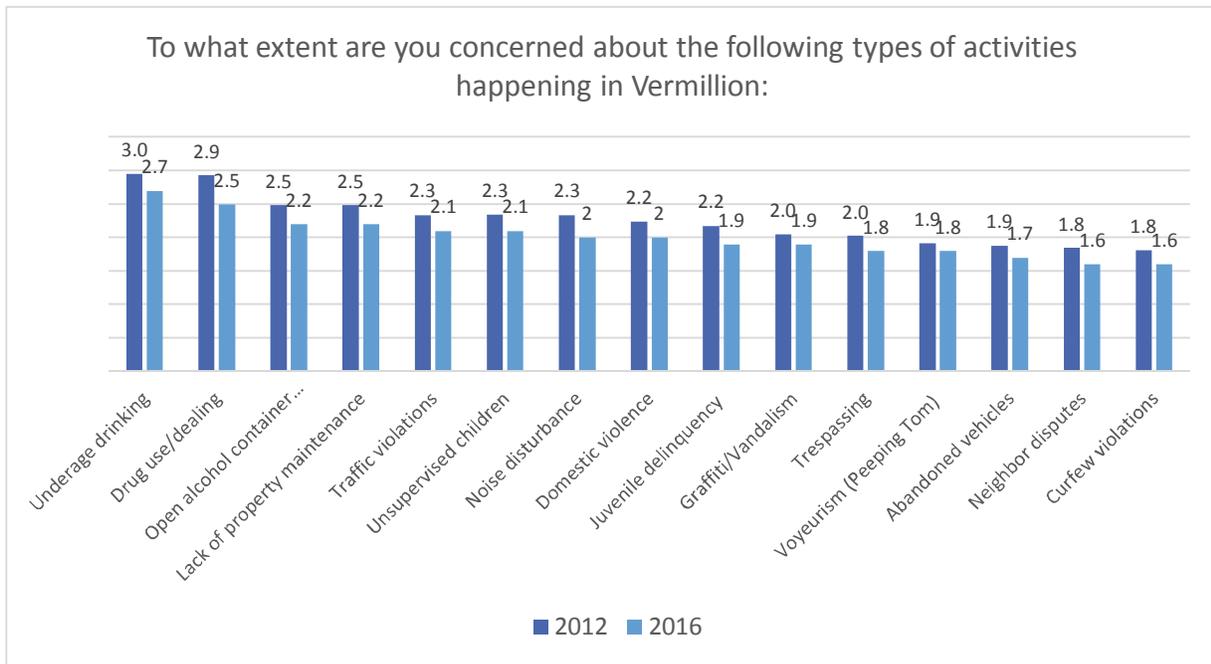
In general, the perceptions of safety in the community improved since the 2012 survey. Though slight improvements, the trends did show positive progress in community perceptions. No dramatic changes occurred in how people felt safe doing certain activities in the city. The overall score improved from 4.1 to 4.2 on the 5-point scale.



In response to who concerned respondents were about certain kinds of incidents occurring in the city, again a slight improvement is recorded from 2012. While concern about one's car being damaged or broken into increased from 2.5 to 2.6 on the 5-point scale, all other incidents dropped to 2.0 or below in 2016. The overall concern score moved from a 2.0 to a 1.9 showing slightly less concern for these kinds of incidents occurring.

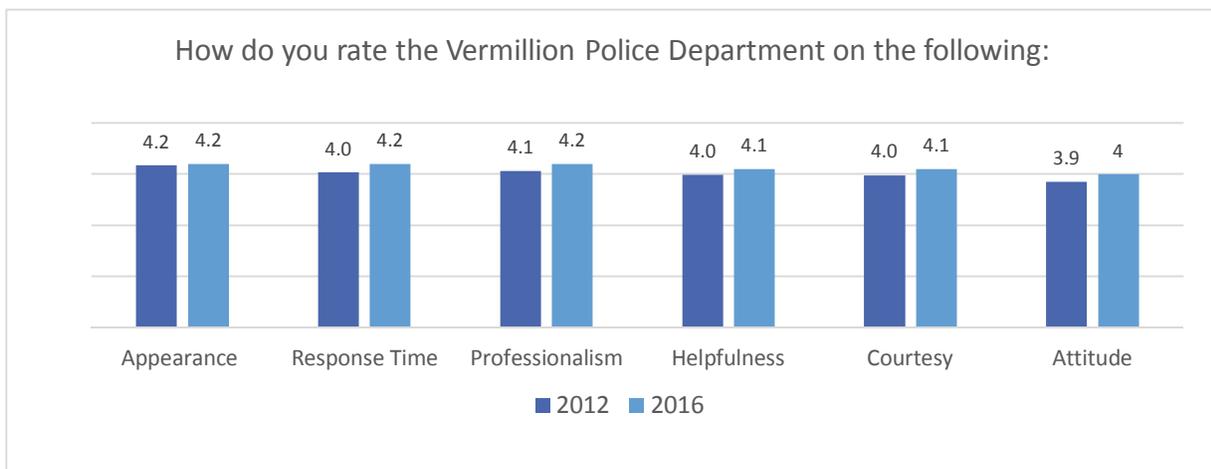


The more generic question about general types of incidents occurring in the city also showed improvement. The overall score moved from a 2.3 down to a 2.0. Concern about each type of activity occurring in the city dropped from 2012 to 2016.

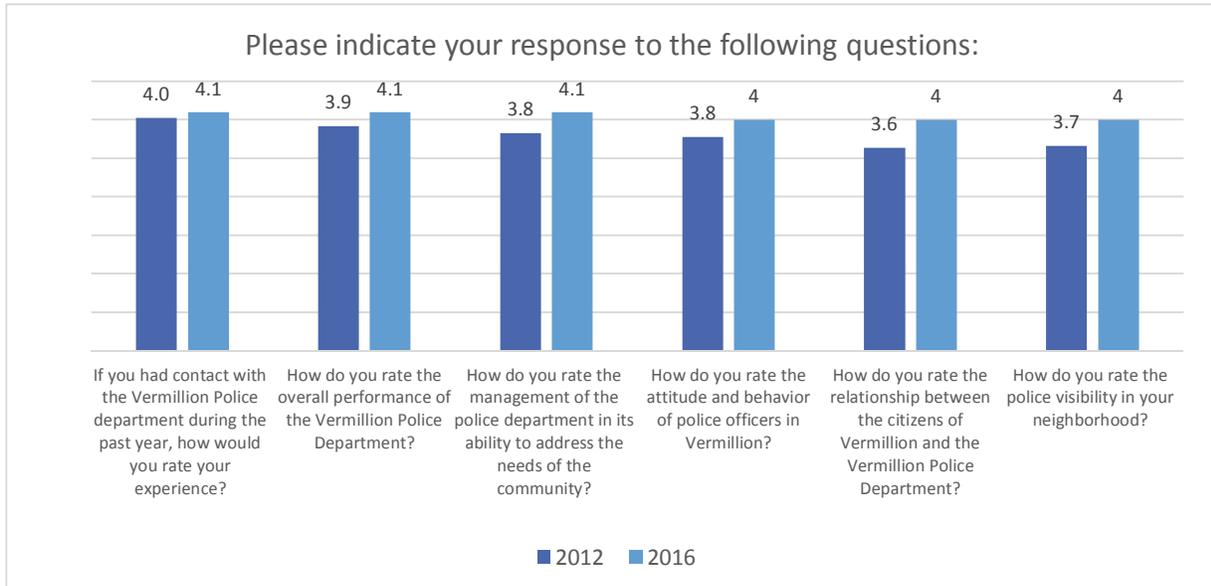


Interaction with the Department: Comparison

Improvements were made over the last survey in the way respondents perceived interactions with the Department. General attitudes improved from 4.0 to 4.1 on a 5-point scale. Response time had the most improvement in the score.



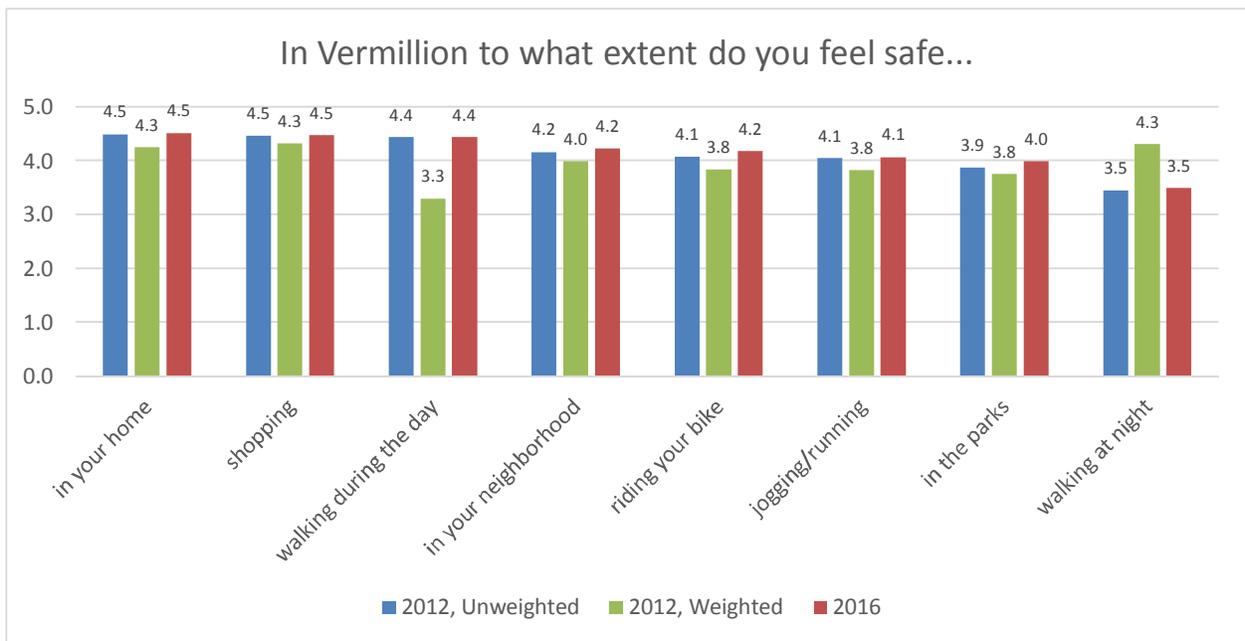
Respondents also noted improved interactions when asked more specific questions about the Department's interaction with the citizens. This section improved from a 3.8 to a 4.1 on a point scale. The Relationship between the Citizens and the Department category received the greatest increase from a 3.6 to a 4.0.

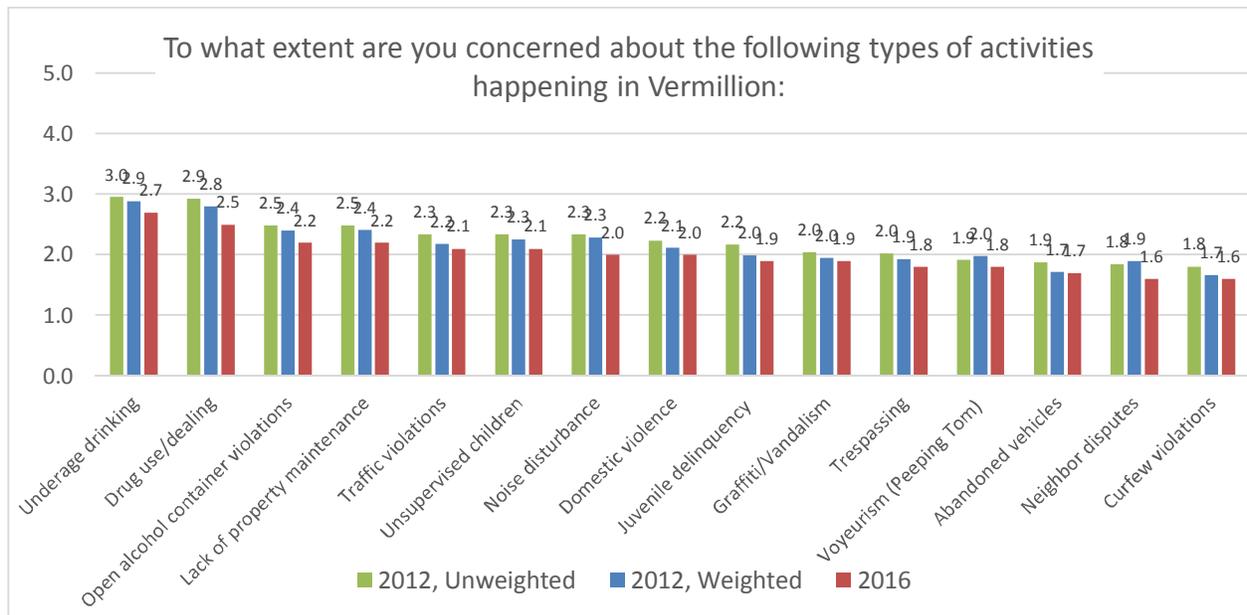
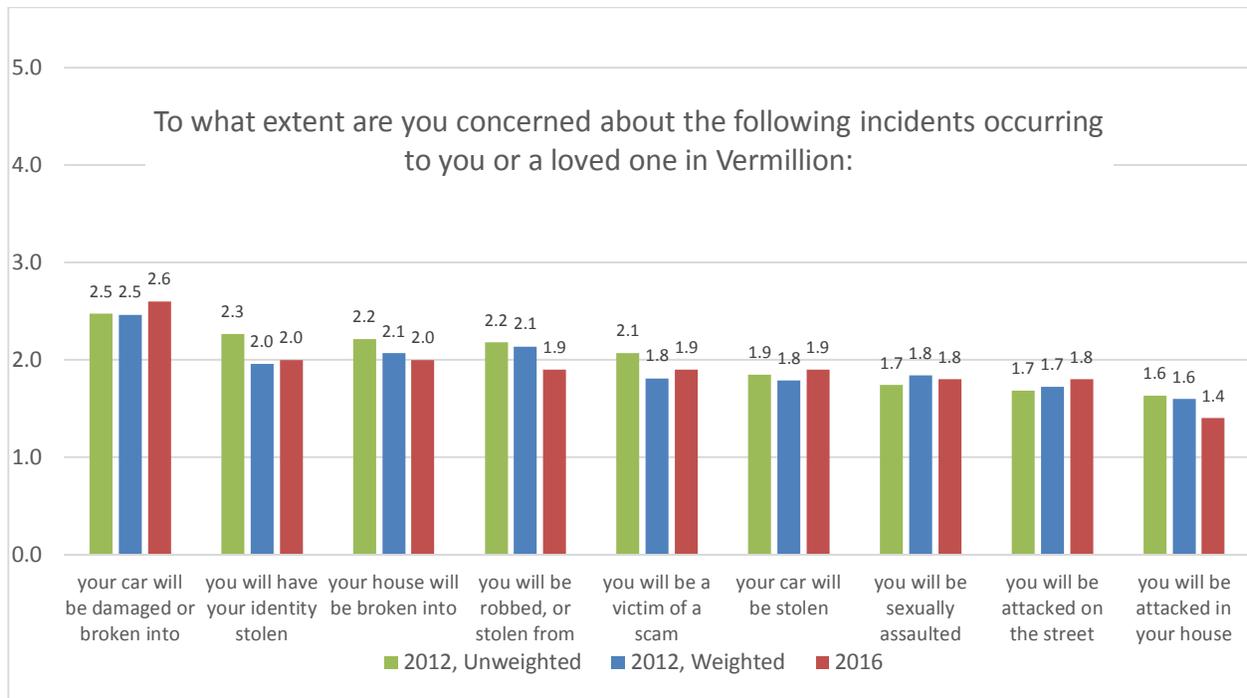


Further Analysis of Results

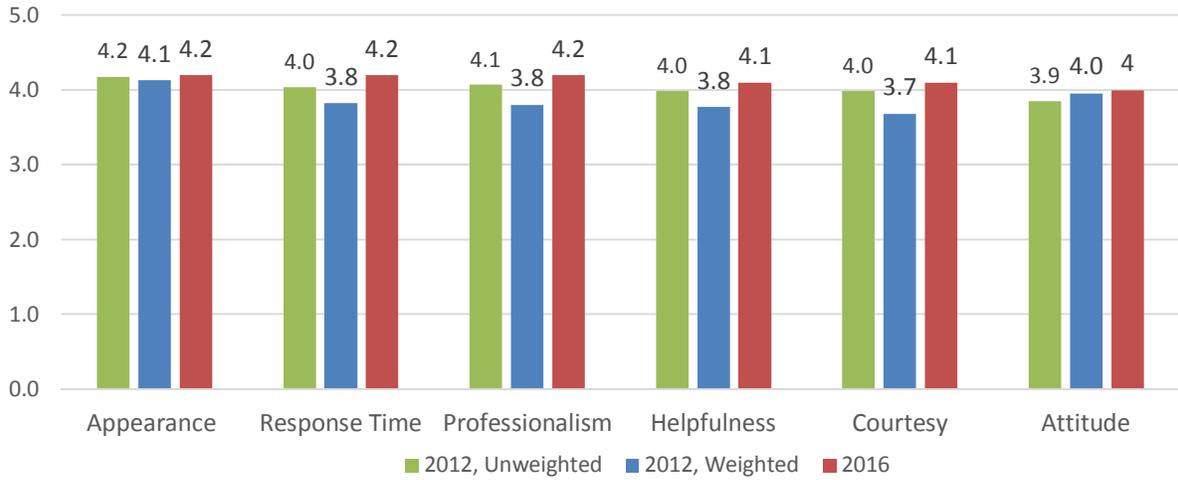
Because of the difference in demographic characteristics between 2012 and 2016, we decided to examine what 2012 responses might look like if the response rate by age would have been similar to 2016. Using weighting techniques, we are able to capture some of the demographic changes with the strong assumption that the types of individuals (both young, middle aged, and older) are similar whether they filled out a paper survey or an electronic one. We have performed the weighting techniques for two series of questions, both ratings of the VPD on characteristics.

We do find that weighting techniques do change the interpretation of the difference between 2012 and 2016 in some instances. With a margin of error of ± 0.21 for responses, some responses are now borderline statistically significant differences. Most importantly, it appears that some bad experiences by younger residents of Vermillion meant that those who had interactions with the department in 2012 were not as satisfied with their experience as those in 2012 after weighting to 2016's demographics. In general, the (younger) survey respondents in 2016 were more satisfied than their 2012 counterparts.

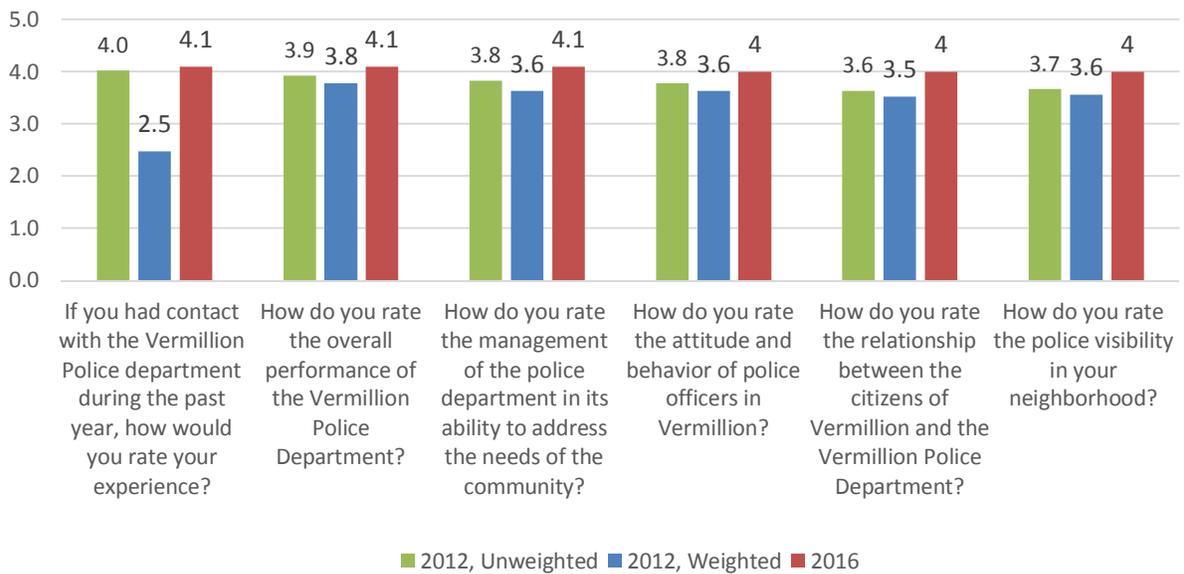




How do you rate the Vermillion Police Department on the following:



Please indicate your response to the following questions:



Conclusions and Next Steps

Generally speaking, in 2016 citizens of Vermillion expressed confidence that the city is safe and that they feel secure as they go about their various activities. They also generally appreciate and approve of the professionalism and management of the Police Department. If anything, scores improved slightly from the 2012 results.

The survey is designed to help the Police Department measure its performance and seek areas for focused improvements. The results suggest that over the last four years none of the indicators declined in any real way and many of them improved. While the data will continue to be reviewed, there are a few areas that may call for a closer look today.

1. Generally speaking more respondents felt safer in the city than in 2012.
2. More student-aged respondents answered the survey this year than four years ago; the number of other respondents was comparable.
3. Weighted comparisons from the 2012 survey suggest a real increase for student-aged respondents in the satisfaction of interactions with the department.
4. More respondents felt safer walking in the city during the day than in 2012, though there was a decrease in that feeling while walking at night.
5. The three types of activities that citizens are most concerned about are underage drinking, drug use or dealing, and lack of property maintenance; open alcohol container violations were number three in 2012 but in 2016 are number five.
6. The overall rating of the Vermillion Police Department on a scale from disappointing to exceptional suggests that citizens rate the department as close to exceptional.
7. Of the many non-criminal related services delivered by the department, citizens are most aware of escorts for special events and the School Resource Office (SRO) / DARE Program. A close third is the social media programs of the department and then followed by DUI Focus patrols. The least well known programs include the Youth Explorer Program and Community Policing through Environmental Design; no change from 2012. No matter the awareness level, respondents were clear that all of the services should be continued. However, because many did not offer an opinion about whether to continue programs or not, this group of questions needs further analysis.
8. Respondents seem to change their preferences from 2012 about how they received information from the Department. Television, the department's website, and social media were the preferred methods in 2016. In 2012, newspapers, television, and radio were preferred.

These are a few of the results that can be determined from the data. Written comments are found in the appendix and offer anecdotal information that may inform future decisions. The city and the department will continue to use the data from this survey in conjunction with other sources of information to improve management and the allocation of resources.

Appendix – Written Comments

More than 20% of the respondents took the time to write comments in response to the open ended question *“Please add additional comments and suggestions you feel will improve the effort of the Vermillion Police Department to serve you and the City better.”* The vast majority of comments are positive. Comments were removed if personal information was included or revealed. Comments are listed in three categories: General Comments, Specific Stories, and Suggestions for Improvement. Comments are copied down as written by the respondents.

General Comments

1. Officer Foley is your best representative to the community...truly a man above men...
2. Keep up the open communication; it is appreciated!
3. I recently moved to Vermillion and happy to see Police cars in my neighborhood and feel safe. Please continue to maintain this peaceful environment in Vermillion. Thanks for all your hard work.
4. Keep up the great work!
5. Thank you for all your concerns about vermillion.
6. Thank you for all your concerns for vermillion.
7. Section one of this survey was confusing. I would like my answers to reflect that I feel safe, and am not concerned while out in the community.
8. Have only lived in vermillion a few weeks, but it seems like a very safe neighborhood and city.
9. I just wanted to thank the Vermillion Police Department for the excellent job they do. Police have been under a lot of scrutiny the past few years, and it is important for officers to know that there are still people that will support them. Thank you."
10. Are you hiring for part time?
11. I don't think I've had enough experience with the VPD in the past (literally none) to give totally quality answers, but I believe they're doing a good job from what I've seen. So, they got above average (4's) where I didn't entirely have an answer.
12. Just wanted to say good job and keep up the good work. The vpd and campus police are on point and professional!
13. Keep doing a good job!!
14. I think that UPD has done an exceptional job in the time that I've spent here in Vermillion!
15. Thanks for your efforts in support of our community.
16. I'm not certain you hear it enough: THANK YOU!
17. I'm sure you guys are doing just fine. Keep up the good work, and thanks for putting up with us college kids.
18. I think that the Vermillion PD does a great job making students feel safe on and off campus.
19. I haven't had much experience with the Police Department so far, however, from what I've seen, the Police Department is relatively fair and good at what they do.
20. All of the questions answered regarding Police performance, are based on my own personal experiences. I've never actually seen them interact with other non-police individuals.
21. I felt my officer was sincere. I feel lucky to live in Vermillion.
22. Other than tickets and DU I/mop, I'm not sure what the Vermillion Police does.
23. With the exception of one officers attitude, myself and others I know are very pleased with our experiences with the Vermillion PD. I personally appreciate their efforts to help others and make themselves present within the community. They should keep up the good job.
24. Most police officers have shown great courtesy but a few have not. This is worrying especially when you are taking a walk and one police officer keeps trailing you it makes you unsafe.
25. Thanks for asking and for your service.
26. I see more of the vermilion Campus Police than i do the regular officers
27. Most officers are exceptional. Some officers need much closer scrutiny, more training, or firing.

28. We do not watch television. We did not know about most of the programs listed and the ones that I said to not continue I more-so mean I don't know anything about them. Did not know about social media use by the police department (I will follow you now). I hope to learn more about your programs in the future. Thank you for your service to our community!
29. I have had good experiences with the VPD.
30. I have no suggestions, I think you are doing very well

Specific Stories

31. I live south of campus and have extreme concern crossing Clark Street to campus. It is obviously unclear to drivers whether the white lines at sidewalk crossings are actually crosswalks. I believe you need to paint additional stripes and, most importantly, add pedestrian crossing signs. I have never lived in a place where it is dangerous to cross the streets to campus. Cars drive incredibly fast and almost never yield to pedestrians.
32. "I have only been living in Vermillion for a few months, but overall I can tell the Vermillion Police Department is well-respected and does an excellent job in the city. The saturation patrols during Fridays and Saturdays make myself and others feel safer. I do not feel overly worried to walk around in the city during the day, but walking home late at night is a lot more intimidating.
33. I was not able to complete this survey in its entirety because my family moved here this summer and I am not aware of the community outreach programs and I have not had any interactions with the Vermillion Police Dept. I will say that I am and continue to be impressed with the presence I see every morning when I drop my 6th grader off at VMS and my first grader off at Austin. I'm comforted by their daily presence in the neighborhoods. Thank you!
34. They did a great job tweeting for D-day's last year - it made them seem so much more community oriented and not 'out to get' people. I think they are basically great guys. There are just a few who seem to be arrogant or have attitudes and spoil it for the rest.
35. "I work with many USD students as well as many of the members of the community. I have consistently heard of complaints of an officer in particular fabricating circumstances to initiate a stop. If this is indeed happening the Department and the City are at risk for a wrongful civil rights case. In addition to the initial fabrications it is a good indicator that any testimony will also be tainted to make things look as that officer wants them to look. Also many of the Students seem to present the attitude of the department as being they are out to pick on the students. Little leeway. I do not have enough contact with the individual officers to know if the present day attitude is similar to what it was say 7 to 10 years ago of "" well it's a student, they deserve it ""
36. Over the past few years, we called for ambulance service several times; performance by police officers and emergency personnel was excellent in every case. I wish response time were shorter, but recognize the resource shortages.
37. I have a lot of faith in and respect for VPD leadership. My experiences with individual officers has been positive, but I worry about one-off interactions, especially with the USD community and citizens of color. I hope our officers continue to focus on community policing and de-escalation. Maybe there are ways to create stronger bonds between officers and citizens that would support that.
38. We own a house in Vermillion and rent it out to college students. We have only been owners since January of 2015. We like the Vermillion area and our daughter is living there while attending USD. We feel that she and her friends are safe. Thanks for a nice town. We like visiting.
39. The news did a story about Brookings before Hobo Day and interviewed the police chief there who said, "If you're having a party and it gets out of hand, just call us and we will help you disband the party with no repercussions to you." I wish our force was as open minded and collaborative. Here, they opted to start a new program on Dakota Days last year, which Dave Lorenz told the chief felt like it was targeting students.
40. I understand that dealing with students can be frustrating which can lead to a poor attitude but when someone is scared and asking for police help it is important to be approachable and kind.

If the police officers have a bad reputation then they won't be called and situations will escalate into dangerous situations

Suggestions for Improvements

41. More focus on abandoned cars
42. More patrols 11:00 pm to 2:30 am on weekends in my neighborhood for noise. I live in an area with a lot of student rentals.
43. Overall I would say that the police department does very well, but may want to focus a little more on activities in bars that endanger women in the community. Universities tend to be a breeding ground for sexual assault and it often appears to be swept under the rug or have no ramifications for the attacker. I realize this isn't solely a VPD issue, but it isn't confined within the campus either.
44. Being more understanding with college kids. They were in their shoes at one point in their lives.
45. You have a tough job. Focus on protecting instead of trying to nitpick people for little violations. But of course college kids will always not trust police because of minors and what not.
46. If kids have been drinking and are walking home be great full they decided to walk too many people are driving because they don't want to risk the chances of getting an underage.
47. Please step up enforcement of law/ordinances pertaining to texting while driving. Happens way too much - it is the reason nervous about walking jogging, biking,
48. I can only imagine how hard it is to deal with domestic disputes, but please continue to educate your officers on the mental toll of domestic violence on victims. They are emotionally exhausted from coping with abuse and do not always make the choices the rest of us want to see them make. They are doing their best and we must support them even when the abuse has clouded their judgment. Fear is powerful and can force people to do things that don't make sense to those of us not in their shoes.
49. At times I see a lack of professionalism. The PD is meant to make everyone safe (which they do), but should also have that "intimidation" factor as well. A lot of people view the PD as a best friend—which is fine to a certain extent—but they should be more professional about it.
50. Be wary of the overall commitment to serving and disciplining each individual equally under the law. Respectfully be mindful of other people's backgrounds and values as well.
51. I feel that VPD need to focus more on settling down the house parties at night and not searching the bars for fake ID's for most of the night.
52. Quit wasting time ruining the lives of non-violent drug offenders.
53. I think they could do better by getting word out about those activities around town, I have never heard of any of them. I also think the Vermillion Police Department should have better attitudes towards college students, as this is a college town. I have had a couple instances where they have not been very polite or helpful during situations with the college students. I have heard many negative comments about the Vermillion Police. Please just keep in mind we are young adults and have a lot we ourselves are dealing with.
54. Certain sides of town are not well lit. I'm not sure if the police department can advocate in promoting more lighting in the community but that would make me feel safer having streetlights more frequently in the residential areas. Until then, heavier patrolling in areas that are not as well-lit rather than just the downtown scene would make me feel safer. Perhaps, having some event the department could put on to help women learn self-defense or what to do in scary situations would also be helpful. I like that campus has emergency hubs to call an emergency contact. Perhaps placing those in the "problem areas" in the community would help women and men feel safer. Thanks for all you do!
55. They should take more care of the victims who has any kind of problems in Vermillion city.
56. Be involved with all City functions in a positive manner.
57. Having something as simple as a presence will hinder things happen I think. It isn't a bad thing to make presence known.

58. The speed limit on Main Street is virtually never observed, and the police presence on Main Street is frequent but brief, never addressing the speed of the drivers. Either raise the speed limit, or occasionally spend time on Main Street to promote drivers following the speed limit. I prefer the latter.
59. Too much emphasis on DUI. Property damage and other complaints there is no follow through. I've had significant damage to my property and vehicle from neighbors and USD students and have received little or no help and no follow through from the police department. Plenty of harassment for tail lights, not stopping long enough (did complete stop, but not long enough REALLY?)
60. Have a little perspective when it comes to citizens of this town. Some people in Vermillion are dangerous and deserve to be arrested for the safety of our community. However, not everyone is like that. I feel like every interaction I have with the police in Vermillion, the police try to bully me, and they harass me. It is very disappointing, and incredibly frustrating.
61. Always strive to be kind and caring.
62. Better enforcement and Control of Center/ Main, Court/Main intersection for speeding and pedestrian access and safety.
63. Watch for people drinking
64. I think the attitudes are professionalism of the department could be lacking at times, especially when it comes to college kids and drinking. However, overall I think the VPD is helpful and kind. I have never had a bad interaction with them personally, but I know people that have.
65. The lack of maintenance of rental properties is an embarrassment to the university. City inspectors have blatantly ignored code violations and I am concerned about reprisals if I complain.
66. I am concerned about main street outdoor festivals that go deep into the night, the music is loud and continues well past midnight. i don't understand why these events are limited to a 10 pm curfew, we all need to get our sleep....
67. More prevalent
68. More fundraisers
69. Please continue the night time patrol
70. Roll down the window-engage with folks in a friendly and positive manner saying hello and a wave is helpful. Problem solve before enforcement. Supervisors need to be role models for community policing and need to be approachable. The chief is approachable and friendly most line officers are approachable and friendly detectives are approachable and friendly but several of the supervisors seem to be very standoffish and have an aloofness about them.
71. Stop busting parties and giving out mips. It really creates a divide between the students and the police. A good relationship with students could help keep people safe.
72. To many bikes don't stop for stop signs maybe need school attention but many are adults
73. More radar, speeding is bad in town. A law against playing on cell phones while driving. Thank you.