

# **2006 Public Survey on Policing Services Report**

## *Highlights Report*

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**Prepared for:**  
Ottawa Police Services


**Prepared by:**  
Goss Gilroy Inc.  
Management Consultants  
Suite 900, 150 Metcalfe Street  
Ottawa, ON K2P 1P1  
Tel: (613) 230-5577  
Fax: (613) 235-9592  
E-mail: [ggi@ggi.ca](mailto:ggi@ggi.ca)

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**GOSS GILROY INC.**  
Management Consultants  
Conseillers en gestion

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# Foreword

Since its creation in 1995, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) has dedicated itself to providing excellent service. The public survey process has become an important means for the Ottawa Police Service to enhance its knowledge base, and helps identify opportunities for improvement – a central part of the organization’s approach to service. Specifically, the 2006 Public Survey on Policing Services allows comparisons to similar surveys conducted in 2002, 1998, and 1995.

There are, however, a number of important considerations when drawing comparisons across these surveys. The 2002 and 2006 surveys utilize a five-point scale in comparison to the 1995 and 1998 surveys, which utilized a three-point scale. The five-point scale was selected to provide a middle point or neutral point to avoid forcing respondents to express either a positive or negative response and therefore to minimize bias. While the 2002 survey is similar in design to the 2006 survey, some modifications were made to further improve the survey questionnaire. Some new questions were added and some old questions deleted. Therefore, it is not possible to make comparisons of performance over time for every survey question.

The jurisdiction policed by what was then the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service (OCRPS) in 1995 and 1998 is different from the one policed in 2002 and 2006. From 1995 to 1999, the former Gloucester, Nepean, and Ottawa Police Services as well as areas policed by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), were amalgamated into one organization. The jurisdiction policed in both 2002 and 2006 has three divisions and is comprised of six police districts (Rural West, West, Central West, Central East, East and Rural East).

The latest survey was conducted by mail from February 3 to February 24, 2006 with a random sample of 7,500 households. The questionnaire consisted of 53 close-ended questions and 10 open-ended questions. A total of 2,813 completed surveys were returned (out of 7,185 valid addresses), resulting in a response rate of 39%. Given the sample size, the survey results are accurate to plus or minus 1.8 percentage points, 95% of the time. With respect to survey results at the district level, the survey results are accurate to between +/- 4.2 and +/-5.2 percentage points, 95% of the time.

The main purpose of the survey is to better understand citizens’ perceptions of safety and crime in their communities, citizens’ concerns and priorities for the police and their satisfaction with the Ottawa Police Service. The information will be used in many ways, including as a major input to help determine the organization’s priorities for the next three-year business cycle (2007-2009).



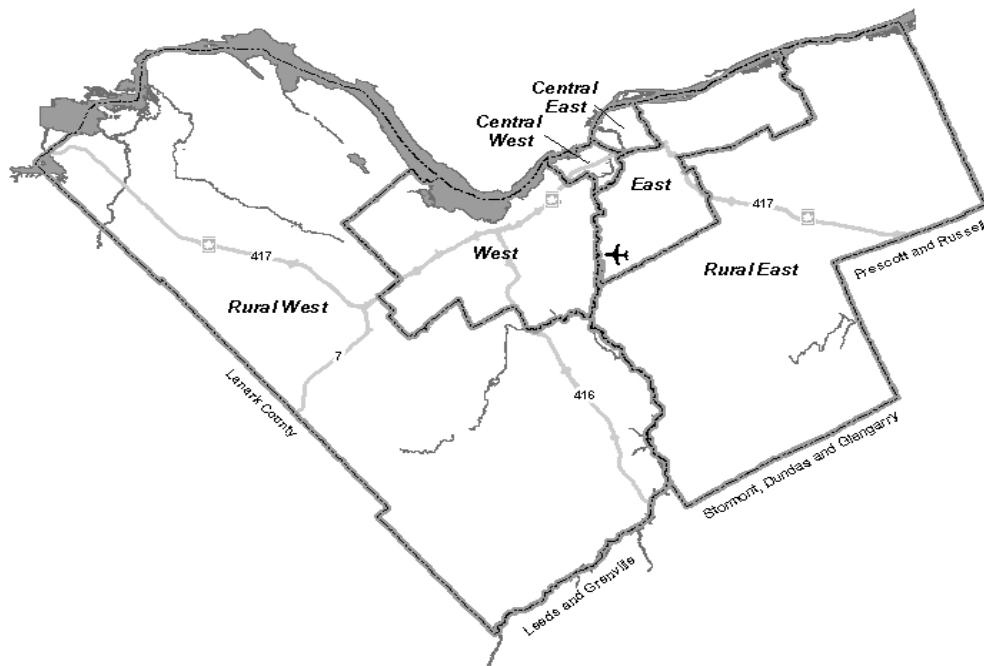
This Highlights Report outlines some of the major findings by subject matter. Data tables of all survey responses will be available on the Ottawa Police web site. For more detailed information, interested parties are encouraged to contact the Ottawa Police Service's Corporate Planning Section at:

Tel: (613) 236-1222, ext. 5656

Postal Address: P.O. Box 9634, Station T, Ottawa, ON K1G 6H5

E-mail: [info@ottawapolice.ca](mailto:info@ottawapolice.ca)

Web site: [www.ottawapolice.ca](http://www.ottawapolice.ca)



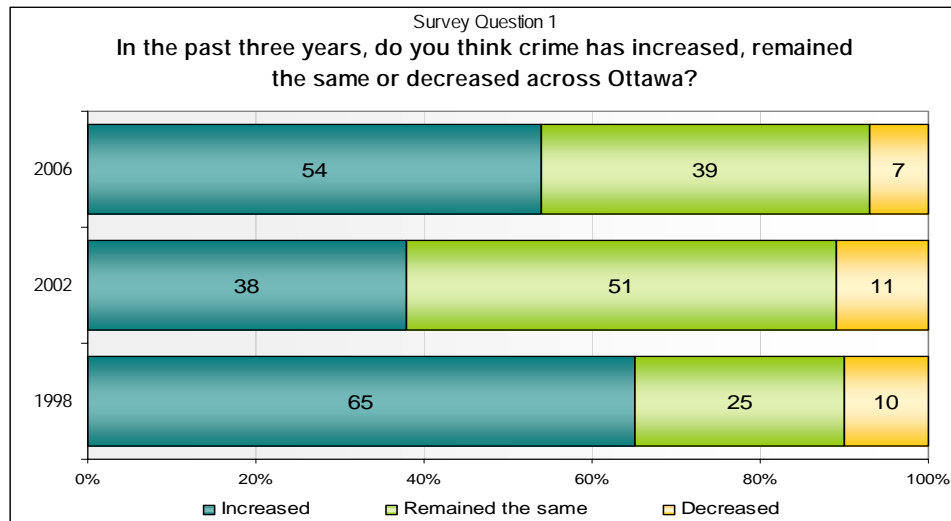
**Ottawa Police Service Jurisdiction and District Structure**

# Perceptions of Crime

## Perceptions of Crime – Ottawa

*Citizens are somewhat more likely to perceive that crime has increased across Ottawa as compared to 2002.*

Citizens are somewhat more likely to perceive that crime has increased across Ottawa since 2002. Fifty-four percent (54%) of survey respondents perceived that crime across Ottawa has increased in the past three years compared with 2002, where 39% of respondents reported that crime had increased. However, perceptions of levels of crime across Ottawa were higher in 1998 when 65% of respondents perceived that crime had increased across Ottawa.

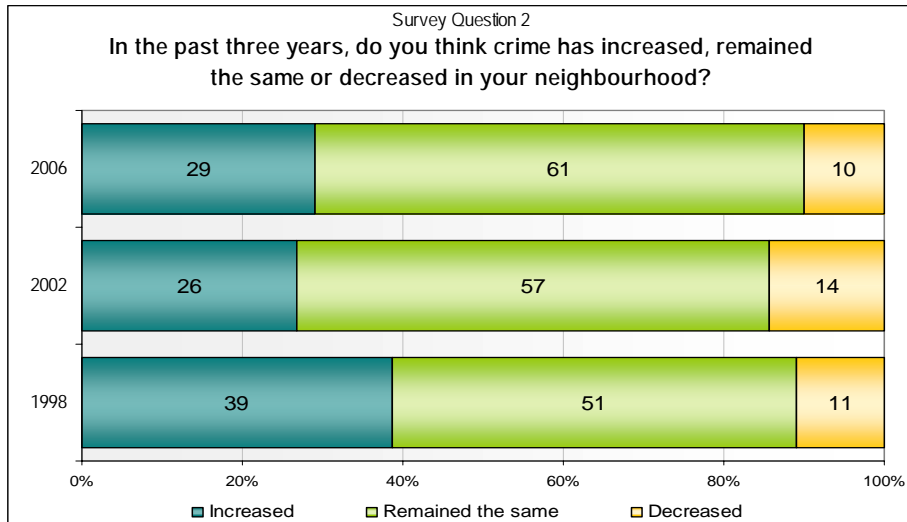


*Citizens express higher levels of concerns about a variety of conditions across Ottawa.* Ottawa citizens are concerned about a variety of conditions across Ottawa including youth crime/youth violence (79%); presence of drugs/drug dealers (75%); homelessness (73%); and speeding cars/aggressive drivers (72%). Citizens are likely to perceive these conditions as more problematic across Ottawa as compared to their own neighbourhoods. Historical comparisons cannot be made in this case, as this question was only introduced in the 2006 survey.

## Perceptions of Crime – Neighbourhood

*Citizens continue to perceive that crime has not increased in their neighbourhoods.*

With respect to perceptions of neighbourhood crime, the majority of respondents reported that crime has remained the same (61%) or decreased (10%) in their neighbourhood in the past three years. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents reported that crime has increased in their neighbourhoods. The 2006 findings follow a similar pattern compared to 2002 where 57% of survey respondents reported that crime remained the same in their neighbourhood and 14% reported crime had decreased. Reported perceptions of level of neighbourhood crime in both 2002 and 2006 have improved since 1998. West District respondents were more likely than average to report that crime had increased in their neighbourhood in comparison to other district respondents. Central West and Rural East respondents were less likely than average to report that crime had increased in their neighbourhoods.



*The majority of citizens continue to believe that their neighbourhood has less crime as compared to other neighbourhoods.*

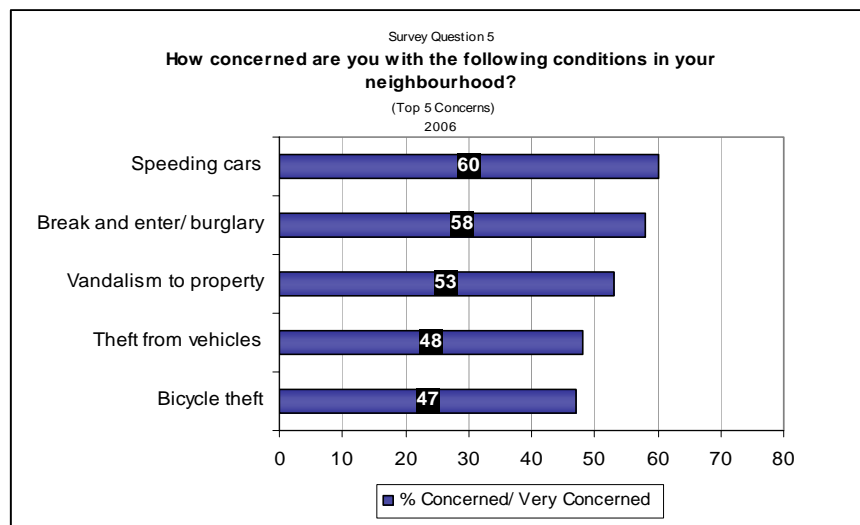
The majority of survey respondents (69%) reported that there is less crime in their neighbourhood in comparison to other neighbourhoods in Ottawa. Only nine percent (9%) reported that they thought their neighbourhood had more crime than other neighbourhoods in Ottawa. These findings are analogous to the 2002 survey results where 67% of survey respondents reported that their neighbourhood had less crime in comparison to others.

*Citizens continue to feel safe in their neighbourhoods, but somewhat less so after dark.*

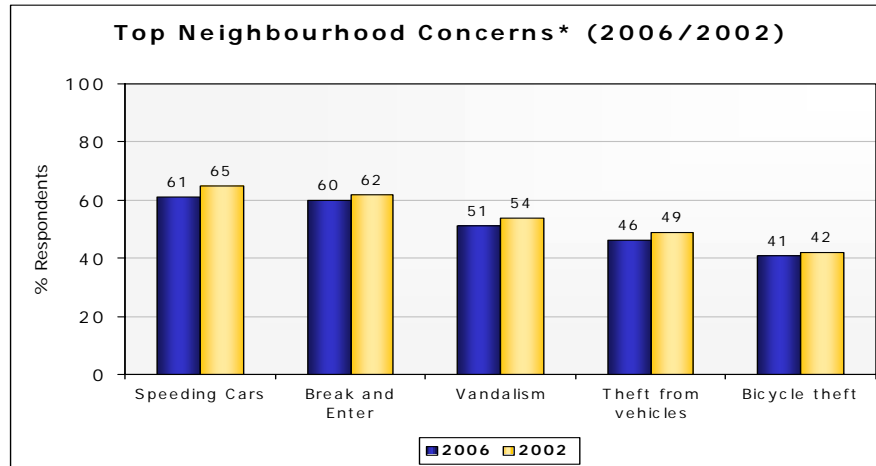
The great majority of survey respondents (91%) reported that they felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood during the day. However, perceptions of safety with respect to walking alone after dark have decreased since 2002. In 2006, over half of survey respondents (56%) indicated that they felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark compared with 65% of survey respondents in 2002. Women are much less likely than men to feel safe walking in their neighbourhoods after dark. Central East residents are more likely than other citizens to feel unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark.

*Citizens continue to have the most concerns about property offences and traffic violations in their neighbourhood.*

Since 1995 top neighbourhood concerns have been consistently centred on property offences (e.g., break and enter, vandalism) and traffic violations (e.g., speeding). These types of crimes and violations are the types of offences people are more likely to experience or witness in their own communities. The majority of survey respondents expressed concern with respect to speeding cars (60%), break and enter (58%), and vandalism to property (53%). Just under half of the survey respondents indicated concern with respect to theft from vehicles and bicycle theft. More than one-third of survey respondents also indicated concern regarding youth crime/youth violence (41%); fraud (40%); and car theft (38%) in their neighbourhoods.



Comparisons between 2006 and 2002 show a similar trend in top reported concerns (see chart below).



\*These percentages were calculated with don't know responses included to ensure comparability with 2002 responses. In addition, the 2006 data presented in this chart is un-weighted. Therefore, the percentages differ from the previous graph.

*There are some similarities and differences across districts as to citizens' concerns in their neighbourhoods.*

An analysis of neighbourhood concerns by district revealed that speeding cars; break & enter; vandalism; and theft from vehicles are top concerns for all districts. In general, Central East residents are more concerned about most neighbourhood issues. Urban residents (Central East and Central West) are more concerned about panhandling, prostitution, intoxicated persons, and noisy neighbours/late parties. Both Central East District and West District citizens are more concerned than average with respect to youth crime/youth violence. West district residents reported higher levels of concern regarding marijuana grow operations. Rural residents (Rural East and Rural West) were more likely than average to report concerns with respect to poor street lighting.

## Perceptions of Performance

### Satisfaction with Quality of OPS Service

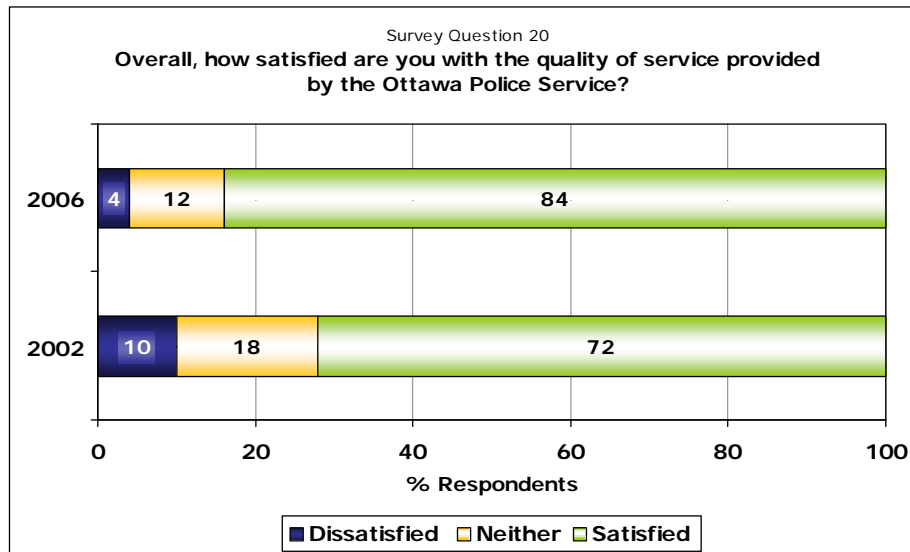
*Overall satisfaction with respect to quality of service has increased since 2002.*

As shown in the following graph, 84% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of OPS service, representing a 12% increase in satisfaction ratings in comparison to 2002.

Residents in each district expressed similar levels of satisfaction with respect to the quality of OPS service.



In comparison to the Citizens First Survey<sup>1</sup> of the Canadian public sector, OPS service quality ratings exceeded the average rating of municipal and provincial/territorial services.



*Citizens continue to perceive that the quality of police services has stayed the same or improved in the past three years.*

When asked whether the quality of the police service had deteriorated, stayed the same or improved in the last 2-3 years, the majority of respondents (58%) indicated that the service has stayed the same. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents reported that the service had improved. Four percent (4%) of citizens reported that the quality of services provided by OPS has decreased in the past three years. These findings follow a similar pattern as compared to 2002.

*The majority of citizens who have accessed specific OPS services indicate overall satisfaction with these services, particularly the emergency and non-emergency call services.*

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with specific aspects of police service: contact with a police officer in the past 12 months; emergency call service; non-emergency call service; and front desk service.

<sup>1</sup> Citizens First Survey 3 (2003). Citizens First is a series of surveys of Canadian citizens, conducted every two years, designed to gain insights about citizens' attitudes with respect to the service quality of public sector services (federal, provincial and municipal organizations). Using a special rating system, the 2003 Citizens First Survey found that on average, citizens rate the service quality of various public sector services in the mid-sixties. The conversion of the overall satisfaction percentage (contained in the 2006 OPS survey) into this type of rating, results in a 74 rating, exceeding the average rating of municipal and provincial/territorial services outlined in the Citizens First (2003) Survey.

- Forty-one percent (41%) of survey respondents reported that they had contact with an OPS officer in the past 12 months. Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents were satisfied with the quality of the service they received with respect to this contact.
- Eight percent (8%) of respondents reported that they have called the police for an emergency situation (i.e. 9-1-1 calls). Ninety percent (90%) of citizens indicated satisfaction with this service.
- Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents reported that they have called the police for a non-emergency matter in the past 12 months. Eighty-three percent (83%) reported satisfaction with the non-emergency telephone service.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of survey respondents have utilized the front desk service at an Ottawa Police station. Seventy-six percent (76%) were satisfied with the quality of the front desk service.

*The majority of citizens believe that the OPS is doing a good job in terms of ensuring their safety and security.*

Overall, the majority of respondents (67%) reported that the OPS is doing a good job in terms of ensuring the safety and security of the citizens of Ottawa. Thirty percent (30%) reported that it is doing an average job while 3% reported it is doing a poor job.

*In 2006, the majority of citizens rate the OPS as doing a good job with respect to a wide variety of tasks. They believe that OPS is doing an average job and less than average job with respect to a smaller number of tasks.*

In 2006, the majority of survey respondents reported that the OPS is doing a good job with respect to ensuring public safety and security at public demonstrations; the OPS website; being approachable and easy to talk to; responding promptly to emergency calls; enforcing the law; doing everything they can to help people and be of service; police presence in local schools; treating people fairly; police presence in police vehicles; working with residents in the neighbourhood to solve local crime; enforcing traffic laws; and relations with different cultural communities.



Citizens believe that the OPS is doing an average job with respect to: apprehending criminals; investigating/solving crime; preventing crime; and dealing with problems that concern people in their neighbourhoods. Citizens perceive that the police are doing a less than average job with respect to: police presence by foot or by bicycle; providing services in other languages; and responding to disorderly youth/youth crime.

*In comparison to 1998 and 2002, citizens continue to perceive that the OPS is doing a good job on many tasks and abilities associated with police work. Citizens' rating of OPS performance with respect to police presence in police vehicles and enforcing traffic laws has improved since 2002.*

Since 1998, Ottawa citizens consistently (see table below) rate OPS performance highly in a number of areas: being approachable, enforcing the law, ensuring public safety at demonstrations, doing everything to help and be of service, responding promptly to emergency calls and treating people fairly. Citizens' rating of OPS performance with respect to police presence in police vehicles and enforcing traffic laws has improved since 2002.

<b>Top Rated Tasks/Abilities By Year*</b> (% of respondents who rated OPS performance as good or very good)		
<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>
Being Approachable (57%)	Being Approachable (60%)	Being Approachable (62%)
Enforcing the law (49%)	Enforcing the law (55%)	Enforcing the law (53%)
Providing information to the public on ways to prevent crime <sup>2</sup> (40%)	Ensuring public safety at public demonstrations <sup>3</sup> (48%)	Police presence in police vehicles (51%)
Responding promptly to calls (40%)	Doing everything to help people & be of service <sup>4</sup> (46%)	Ensuring public safety at demonstrations (48%)
Treating people fairly (39%)	Responding promptly to calls (46%)	Doing everything they can to help & be of service (48%)
	Treating people fairly (40%)	Responding promptly to calls (48%)
	Patrolling in police vehicles (39%)	Treating people fairly (43%)

\* "Don't know" responses are included and 2006 data is un-weighted to allow for historical comparisons.

<sup>2</sup> Discontinued category

<sup>3</sup> New category for 2002

<sup>4</sup> New category for 2002.



*Regardless of district, the majority of residents in each district rate overall OPS performance highly. However, there are some differences in performance ratings for specific tasks/abilities across districts.*

Central East respondents rated some aspects of police performance higher in comparison to other districts: ensuring public safety and security at public demonstrations; enforcing the law; doing everything they can to help people and be of service; police presence in police vehicles; and preventing crime. Central East and Central West residents rate OPS more highly in terms of investigating and solving crime. Rural West and West District residents are less likely to rate OPS performance highly with respect to police presence in vehicles, apprehending criminals, and responding to disorderly youth/youth crime. Rural residents are less likely to rate OPS performance highly in terms of responding promptly to emergency calls. Rural residents and West District residents are less likely to rate OPS highly in terms of police presence on foot or by bicycle. West District residents rate the enforcement of traffic violations lower as compared to other residents.

*Compared with 2002, citizens continue to place priority on the following aspects of OPS performance: apprehending criminals, responding to disorderly youth/youth crime, and preventing crime. In 2006, citizens placed additional priority on the following areas: investigating crime and solving crime; treating people fairly; and working with neighbourhoods to address local concerns and crime.*

In 2002 and 2006, survey respondents rated police performance on the following aspects as lower than average, but of high importance. These areas of police performance should therefore continue to be high priorities.

- Preventing crime;
- Apprehending criminals; and
- Responding to disorderly youth/youth crime.

In 2006, citizens placed higher priority on the following aspects than in the past (i.e., they rated them as lower than average in terms of performance but of high importance) and these are areas the police should focus on to improve performance.

- Investigating crime/solving crime;
- Treating people fairly;
- Dealing with problems that really concern people in (their) neighbourhood; and
- Working with residents in (their) neighbourhood to solve local crime.



Also in 2006 priority areas that should be maintained (areas that were rated above average in terms of performance and were also rated as important) include:

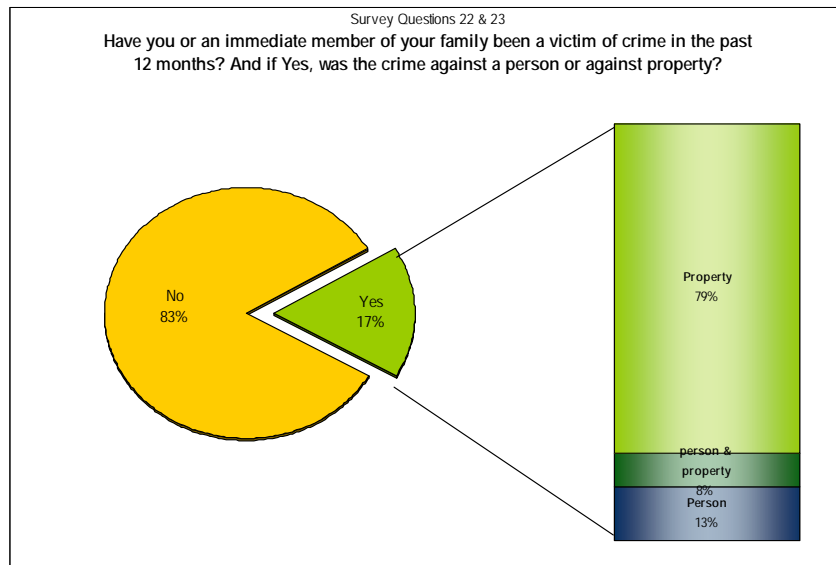
- Enforcing the law;
- Doing everything to help people and be of service;
- Ottawa Police Service Website; and
- Responding promptly to emergency calls.

## Experience with Crime

*Experience with crime in terms of extent of victimization, type of crime, and notification of police have remained consistent since 2002.*

As shown in the graph below, 17% of survey respondents reported that they or an immediate member of their family had been a victim of crime in the past 12 months. Of this 17 percent, 79% of the crimes were against property while 13% were against a person. These findings are consistent with those in 2002.

Central West (22%) and Central East (21%) residents were more likely to report that they or their immediate family members had been victims of crime. Rural West and Rural East respondents were least likely to be victims of crime (11% and 13% respectively).



The most common types of crimes committed against the victims were theft under \$5,000 and break and enter. Just over half of the crimes took place at the victim's home or property.

Respondents reporting victimization (who indicated that they had notified the police) were asked to rate the professionalism of the OPS in responding to the incident and to indicate their level of satisfaction with the actions taken by police in the matter. Of those respondents who reported that they or their immediate family members had been victims of crime, 69% rated the professionalism of the OPS as good. Fifty-nine percent (59%) reported satisfaction with the actions taken by police. Analysis by district revealed consistent ratings with respect to professionalism and satisfaction.

Similar to 2002, about one-third (34%) of the victims did not notify police. Of those respondents who did not notify the police, the most common reasons cited were that they did not believe the police could do anything (27%); and nothing of real value was stolen or damaged (23%).

## Crime Prevention Programs

*The majority of citizens feel safe in their own homes both during the day and after dark.*

The majority of survey respondents reported that they felt safe in their own home. Ninety-two percent (92%) reported that they felt safe in their own home during the day compared with 81% who reported that they felt safe in their own home after dark. Central East residents are somewhat less likely to feel safe in their homes, particularly after dark (76% reported that they felt safe in their homes after dark).

*Consistent with 2002, the most common types of residential security measures are exterior lighting, deadbolt locks, and alarm systems.*

As compared to 2002, the most common types of residential security measures are as follows: exterior lighting, deadbolt locks, and alarm systems.

*Most citizens are aware of the following OPS crime prevention programs: Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers, and Block Parent. A minority of citizens (residents or business owners and operators) participates in OPS crime prevention programs. The level of participation has not changed appreciably since 2002.*

Citizens report higher levels of awareness with respect to Neighbourhood Watch (66%); Crime Stoppers (59%); and Block Parent (50%) crime prevention programs, and lower levels of awareness with respect to crime prevention programs such as Child Print (30%); Operation Identification (24%); Home Security Inspection program (14%); Bait Car (13%); and Crime Free Multi-Housing (2%). Most citizens (87%) have not participated in any OPS crime prevention programs within the last three years. Thirteen percent (13%) of survey respondents



participated in a crime-prevention program either as a volunteer or as a recipient of services. The proportion of citizens participating in crime prevention programs has not changed appreciably since 2002. Seven percent (7%) of survey respondents reported that they are currently members of Neighbourhood Watch. Three percent (3%) of survey respondents indicated that they had participated in a Home Security Inspection conducted by their local Community Police Centre. The majority of survey respondents (89%) reported that they were interested/very interested in information about crime alerts; and crime prevention tips and programs.

## Conclusion

This concludes the key results of the 2006 Public Survey on Policing Services. It is important to note that public perception about crime and the police can be shaped by many variables, including media coverage of events. While it is outside the scope of this report to interpret findings beyond what the survey results can support, it is important to keep in mind that changes in perception may be influenced by a variety of factors.

The detailed results of this public survey are an important element of the Ottawa Police Service's Environmental Scan, which collects information and data from a wide variety of sources including crime statistics, calls for police service, demographic data, and policing and legislative trends. The information collected will contribute to developing the Ottawa Police Service Business Plan and the Service's priorities for the next three years from 2007 to 2009. Thank you to all the citizens of Ottawa who responded to the 2006 Public Survey.

