

Safety and Protection

Compilation of Survey Results in the Vermillion Community



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Summer 2012

Survey Committee: Jack Powell, Mayor; Bob Fuller, Citizen; Matt Betzen, Chief of Police; Chad Passick, Police Captain; Matt Fairholm, W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership

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Introduction

During the Spring of 2012, 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.

The survey was developed by a committee which determined the manner and method of delivery and dissemination of the results. The committee members are Vermillion Mayor Jack Powell, Vermillion Community Member Robert Fuller, Farber Center Professor Matt Fairholm, Vermillion Police Captain Chad Passick, and Vermillion Chief of Police Matt Betzen.

The survey results will be used by the Vermillion Police Department to improve its management of resources and its delivery of service.

Survey Details

The committee used 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 seven general demographic questions that help in the analysis of the data.

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.

The committee mailed one thousand surveys to residents of Vermillion. 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. The committee thanks all who participated in the survey.

Summary Results

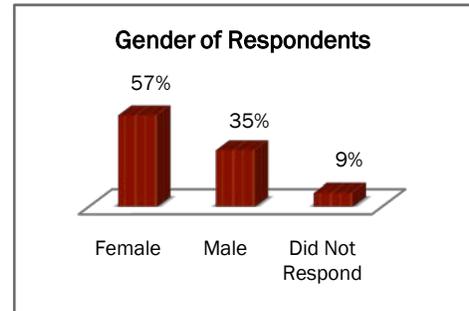
Two hundred citizens responded to the survey. This 20% response rate yields a confidence level of 85% with a 6.87% margin of error for the results. Summary demographic statistics reveal the following data.

General Demographics

Gender:

Female respondents were the majority at 57%. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were male and 9% did not respond to the gender question.

| | # | % |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Female | 113 | 57% |
| Male | 69 | 35% |
| Did Not Respond | 17 | 9% |



Length of Time in Vermillion:

Thirty-nine percent of respondents have lived in Vermillion for fifteen or more years. Only 10% of respondents have lived in Vermillion for less than a year. Almost a third of the respondents lived in Vermillion between 1 and 5 years.

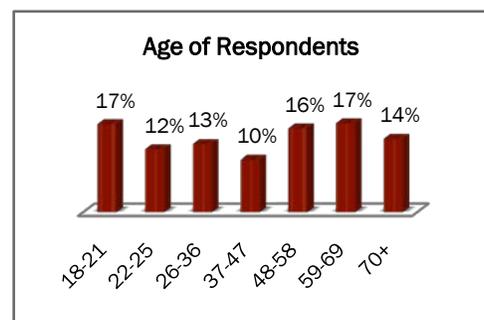
| | # | % |
|----------|----|-----|
| <1 year | 19 | 10% |
| 1-5 yrs | 63 | 32% |
| 6-15 yrs | 33 | 17% |
| 15+yrs | 77 | 39% |



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 groups, the 18-21 years old and the 59-69 years old combined to comprise over a third of the total respondents at 17% each. The 37-47 years old group was the least represented at 10%. However, there was a fairly even distribution of respondents across the age groups.

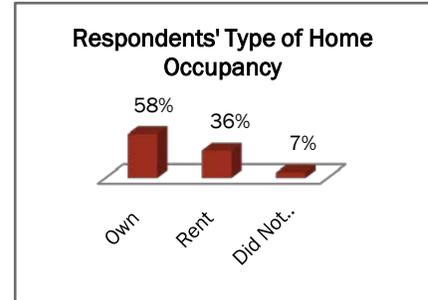
| | # | % | | # | % |
|-----------|----|-----|-----------|----|-----|
| 18-21 yrs | 33 | 17% | 48-58 yrs | 32 | 16% |
| 22-25 yrs | 24 | 12% | 59-69 yrs | 34 | 17% |
| 26-36 yrs | 26 | 13% | 70+ yrs | 28 | 14% |
| 37-47 yrs | 20 | 10% | | | |



Type of Home Occupancy:

A majority (58%) of respondents own their home. Thirty-six percent of respondents rent their home and 7% did not respond.

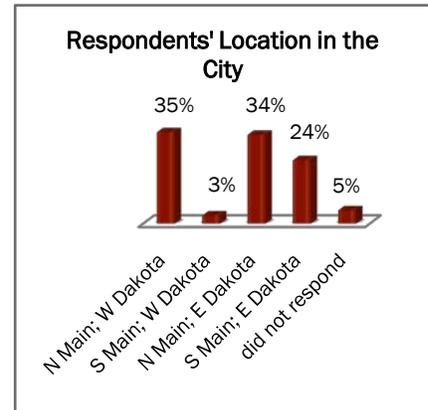
| | # | % |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Own | 115 | 58% |
| Rent | 72 | 36% |
| Did Not Respond | 13 | 7% |



Location in the City:

Dividing the city into quadrants using Dakota Street and Main Street, an almost even number of respondents lived in the N Main and West Dakota quadrant (35%) as the N Main and E Dakota (34%) quadrant. The fewest number of respondents by far (3%) live in the S Main and W Dakota quadrant. Five percent of respondents left this item blank.

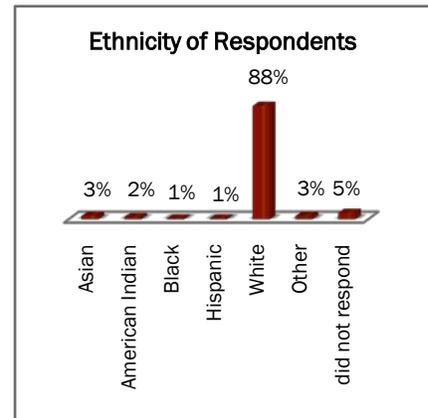
| | # | % |
|------------------|----|-----|
| N Main; W Dakota | 69 | 35% |
| S Main; W Dakota | 6 | 3% |
| N Main; E Dakota | 67 | 34% |
| S Main; E Dakota | 48 | 24% |
| Did Not Respond | 10 | 5% |



Ethnicity:

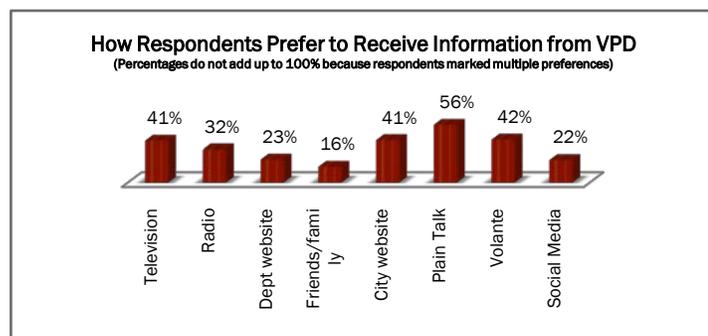
The vast majority of respondents (88%) self-identified themselves as white. No other ethnic group received more than 3% of the total respondents. Five percent of responses did not identify ethnicity.

| | # | % |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Asian | 5 | 3% |
| American Indian | 3 | 2% |
| Black | 1 | 1% |
| Hispanic | 1 | 1% |
| White | 175 | 88% |
| Other | 5 | 3% |



Preferred Information Source:

The most preferred information source about the police department is the *Plain Talk* newspaper. Next is the USD campus newspaper *The Volante*, television and the City Website.

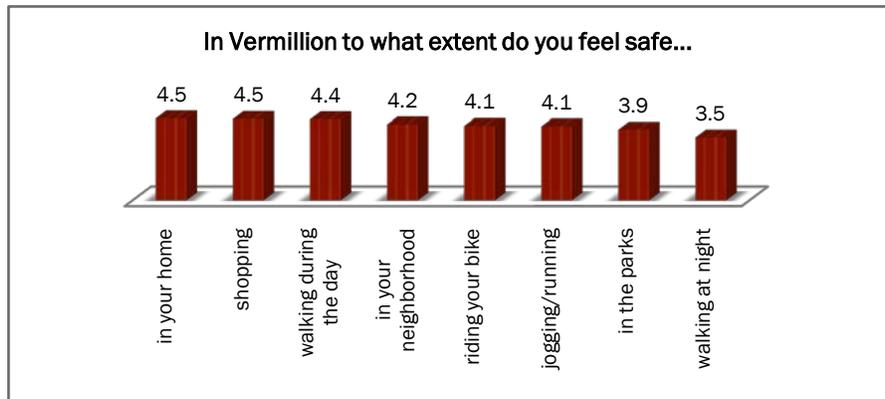


Section 1: Community Safety Perceptions

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 doing specific activities. A score of 1 means that respondents did not feel safe at all. The overall sense of safety indicated in this part of the section is 4.1. This suggests that citizens feel very safe. Further details are listed below.

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

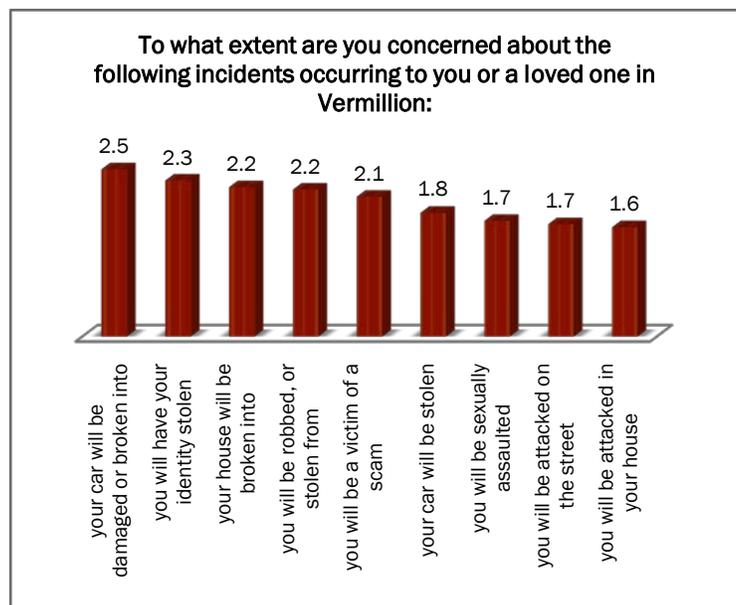
| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| in your home | 4.5 |
| shopping | 4.5 |
| walking during the day | 4.4 |
| in your neighborhood | 4.2 |
| riding your bike | 4.1 |
| jogging/ running | 4.1 |
| in the parks | 3.9 |
| walking at night | 3.5 |
| overall sense of safety | 4.1 |



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 2.0. 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:

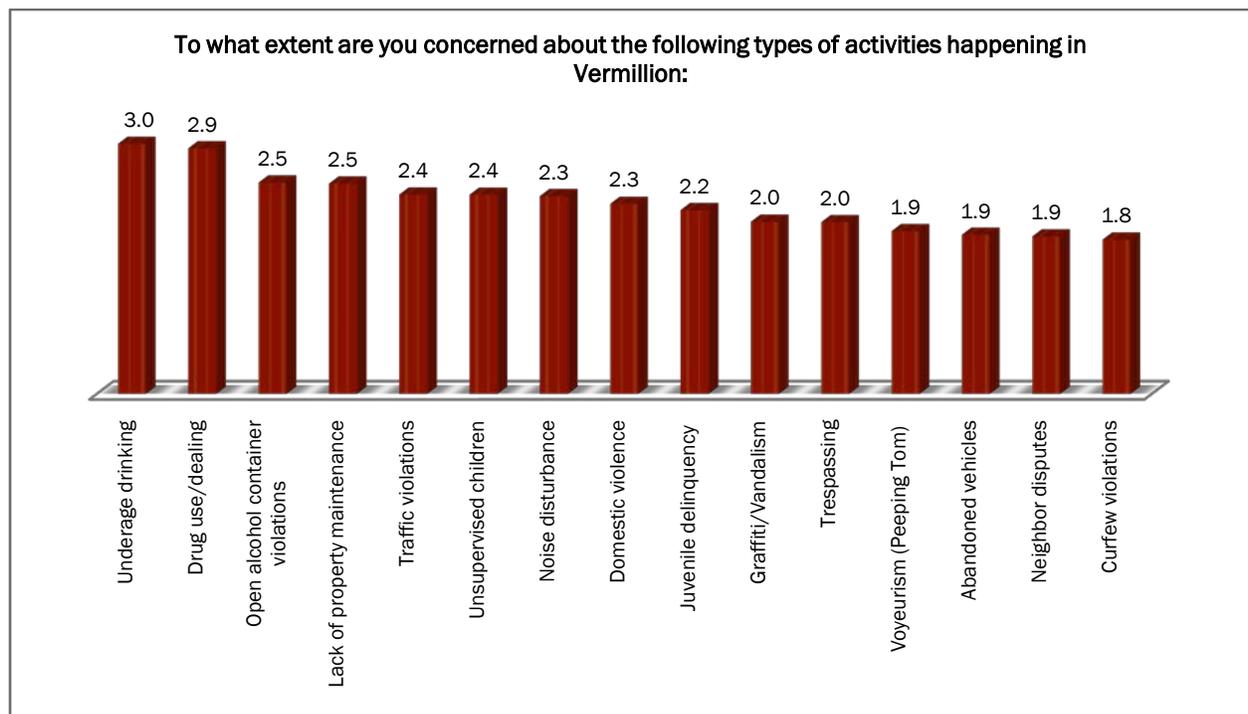
| | |
|---|------------|
| your car will be damaged or broken into | 2.5 |
| you will have your identity stolen | 2.3 |
| your house will be broken into | 2.2 |
| you will be robbed, or stolen from | 2.2 |
| you will be a victim of a scam | 2.1 |
| your car will be stolen | 1.8 |
| you will be sexually assaulted | 1.7 |
| you will be attacked on the street | 1.7 |
| you will be attacked in your house | 1.6 |
| overall sense of concern about certain incidents | 2.0 |



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 2.3. 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 | 3.0 |
| Drug use/dealing | 2.9 |
| Lack of property maintenance | 2.5 |
| Open alcohol container violations | 2.5 |
| Traffic violations | 2.4 |
| Unsupervised children | 2.4 |
| Domestic violence | 2.3 |
| Noise disturbance | 2.3 |
| Juvenile delinquency | 2.2 |
| Graffiti/Vandalism | 2.0 |
| Trespassing | 2.0 |
| Abandoned vehicles | 1.9 |
| Curfew violations | 1.8 |
| Neighbor disputes | 1.9 |
| Voyeurism (Peeping Tom) | 1.9 |
| overall sense of concern about certain types of activities | 2.3 |

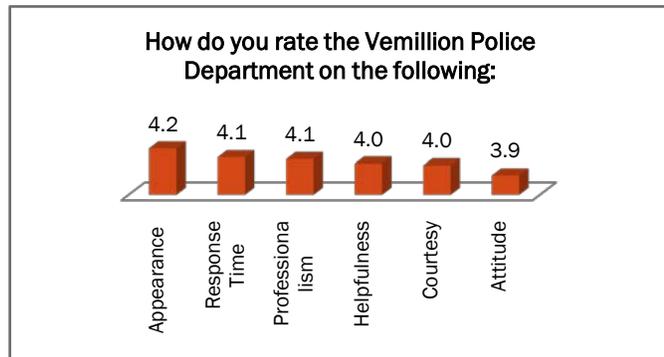


Section 2: Interactions with the Department

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 4.0. 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:

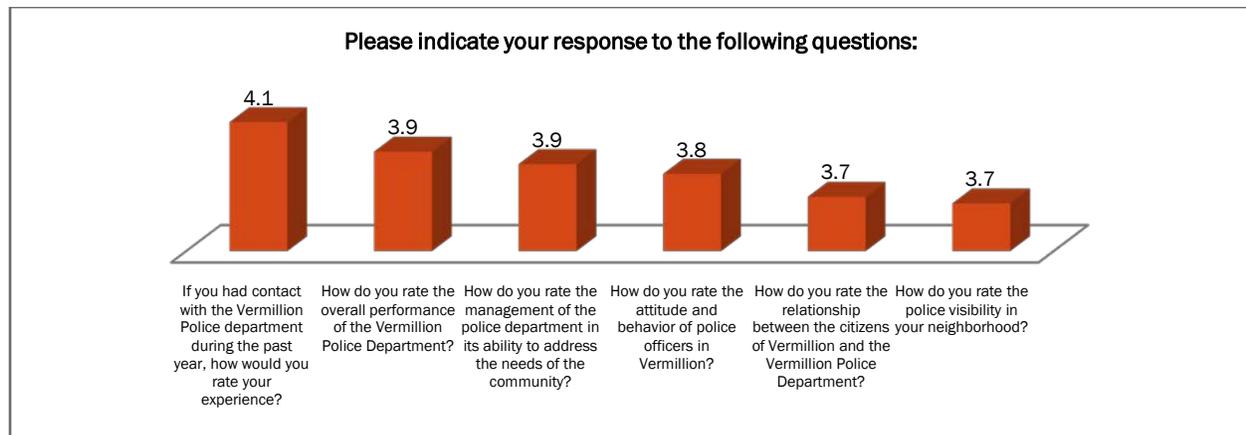
| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Appearance | 4.2 |
| Response Time | 4.1 |
| Professionalism | 4.1 |
| Helpfulness | 4.0 |
| Courtesy | 4.0 |
| Attitude | 3.9 |
| overall rating of VPD | 4.0 |



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 3.8. This suggests that citizens are more likely to view the department’s interactions as closer to exceptional than disappointing. 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? | 3.9 |
| How do you rate the management of the police department in its ability to address the needs of the community? | 3.9 |
| How do you rate the attitude and behavior of police officers in Vermillion? | 3.8 |
| How do you rate the relationship between the citizens of Vermillion and the Vermillion Police Department? | 3.7 |
| How do you rate the police visibility in your neighborhood? | 3.7 |
| overall rating of police interactions and activities | 3.8 |



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, about 5% (+/- 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. More than half of the respondents are unaware of this program. However, 62% feel the program should continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 15 | 7.5% | no response | 68 | 34.0% |
| Not at all | 106 | 53.0% | Yes | 124 | 62.0% |
| Somewhat | 59 | 29.5% | No | 8 | 4.0% |
| Extremely | 20 | 10.0% | | | |

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. Fifty-one percent of the respondents are unaware of this program, though 55.5% feel it should continue. Compared to other programs the percentage suggesting the program should continue is relatively less than other programs, though, of course still a majority.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 12 | 6.0% | no response | 77 | 38.5% |
| Not at all | 102 | 51.0% | Yes | 111 | 55.5% |
| Somewhat | 66 | 33.0% | No | 11 | 5.5% |
| Extremely | 20 | 10.0% | | | |

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. Awareness of this program is split among respondents. Those who are somewhat or extremely aware of the program equals 46.5% and those unaware of the program are 47.5%. Almost two-thirds of the respondents feel the program should continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 12 | 6.0% | no response | 59 | 29.5% |
| Not at all | 95 | 47.5% | Yes | 129 | 64.5% |
| Somewhat | 68 | 34.0% | No | 12 | 6.0% |
| Extremely | 25 | 12.5% | | | |

Escorts for Funerals/Parades/Special Events

The Department is frequently called upon to engage in police escorts for a variety of events. Over 8 out of 10 respondents are aware of this service and the same percentage wants it to continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 11 | 5.5% | no response | 30 | 15.0% |
| Not at all | 27 | 13.5% | Yes | 167 | 83.5% |
| Somewhat | 76 | 38.0% | No | 3 | 1.5% |
| Extremely | 86 | 43.0% | | | |

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 more than half of the respondents. Almost 70% wish it to continue and 30% did not offer an opinion about its continuation.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 10 | 5.0% | no response | 59 | 29.5% |
| Not at all | 82 | 41.0% | Yes | 139 | 69.5% |
| Somewhat | 73 | 36.5% | No | 2 | 1.0% |
| Extremely | 35 | 17.5% | | | |

Youth Explorer Program

The Vermillion Police Department supports a Youth Explorer Post. Only 3 out of 10 respondents are aware of this service. Almost 6 out of 10 respondents feel it should continue. However, 40% did not offer an opinion about whether this program should continue or not.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 11 | 5.5% | no response | 81 | 40.5% |
| Not at all | 127 | 63.5% | Yes | 114 | 57.0% |
| Somewhat | 49 | 24.5% | No | 5 | 2.5% |
| Extremely | 13 | 6.5% | | | |

DUI Focus Patrols

DUI Focus Patrols are special/extra patrols where officers work specifically to identify and arrest drunk drivers. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were aware of this program. Seventy-one percent of respondents feel it should continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 11 | 5.5% | no response | 51 | 25.5% |
| Not at all | 65 | 32.5% | Yes | 142 | 71.0% |
| Somewhat | 80 | 40.0% | No | 7 | 3.5% |
| Extremely | 44 | 22.0% | | | |

Project 8 - Child Car Seat Program

Officers have received special training on the proper installation and inspection of child car seats. This service involves officers who assist members of the public with installing and inspecting child car seats. Just over half of the respondents are aware of this program. More than two-thirds of respondents feel this program should continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 12 | 6.0% | no response | 64 | 32.0% |
| Not at all | 83 | 41.5% | Yes | 133 | 66.5% |
| Somewhat | 70 | 35.0% | No | 3 | 1.5% |
| Extremely | 35 | 17.5% | | | |

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 3 out of 10 respondents are somewhat or extremely aware of this program. Only a little more than 50% feel it should continue. A large percentage (44.5%) had no opinion about continuing this program.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 11 | 5.5% | no response | 89 | 44.5% |
| Not at all | 129 | 64.5% | Yes | 105 | 52.5% |
| Somewhat | 49 | 24.5% | No | 6 | 3.0% |
| Extremely | 11 | 5.5% | | | |

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. A little less than half of the respondents are aware that the department handles lost and found complaints. Sixty-two percent believe this service should continue with 36.5% not responding to that question.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | | Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % | | # | % |
| no response | 13 | 6.5% | no response | 73 | 36.5% |
| Not at all | 88 | 44.0% | Yes | 124 | 62.0% |
| Somewhat | 83 | 41.5% | No | 3 | 1.5% |
| Extremely | 16 | 8.0% | | | |

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). Just over half of respondents are aware of the department's response to service requests that are not criminal in nature. While 35.5% did not offer an opinion, 63% feel this service should continue.

| To what extent are you aware of this program: | | |
|---|----|-------|
| | # | % |
| no response | 11 | 5.5% |
| Not at all | 87 | 43.5% |
| Somewhat | 75 | 37.5% |
| Extremely | 27 | 13.5% |

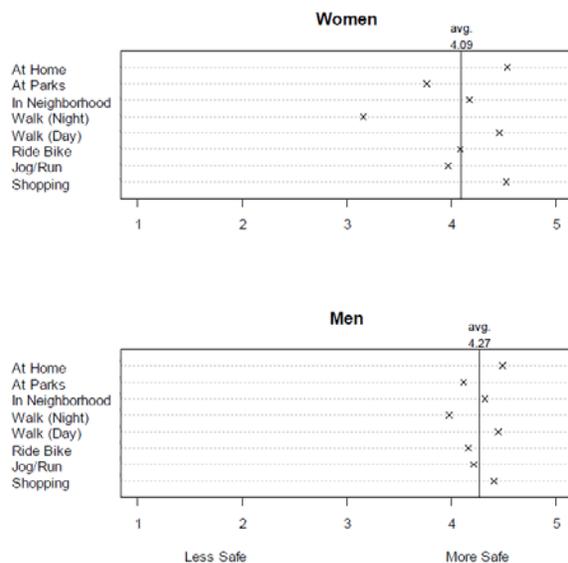
| Should the Department continue this program: | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| | # | % |
| no response | 71 | 35.5% |
| Yes | 126 | 63.0% |
| No | 2 | 1.0% |

Further Analysis of Results

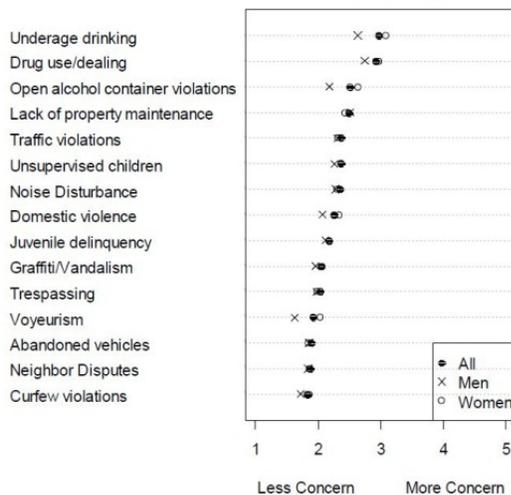
Further analysis of the summary data above yields more detailed information about responses in terms of various demographic concerns. Information below helps unravel such results.

Women responded to the survey almost twice as much as did men. Even with that caveat, it is significant to note that on average women feel less safe than men in terms of specific activities or locations in the city. The average response for all respondents is 4.1 on a 5-point scale. Women had an average result of 4.09 and men had an average response of 4.27. Significantly, women felt considerably less safe walking at night and a little less safe in the parks than did men. Women felt slightly more safe at home and walking during the day.

Feels Safe by Activity, Location, and Gender

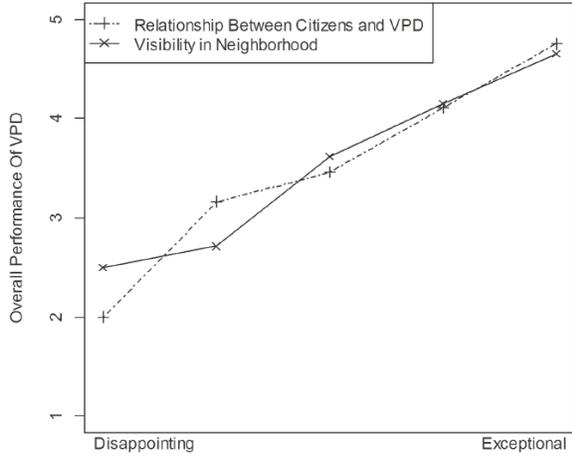


In Vermillion Overall, What Activities Cause the Most Concern



Men and women are fairly consistent in their responses to specific activities of concern in the city. Interestingly, men were less concerned than the average about underage drinking, open alcohol container violations and voyeurism. Responses from women were more in line with the average responses.

Effects of Visibility and Relationship with Citizens on Overall Performance

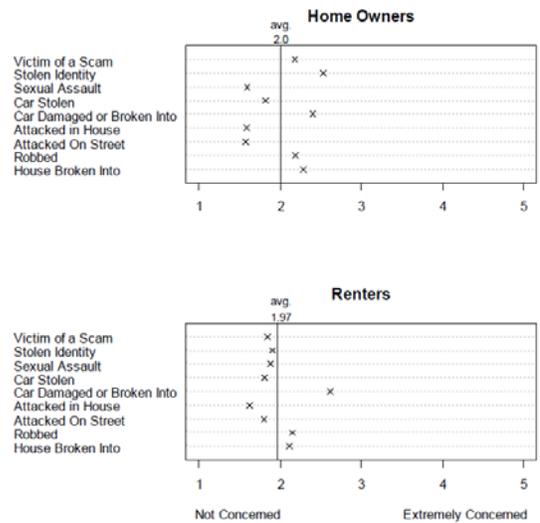


Perceptions of Visibility in Neighborhood & Relationship with Citizens

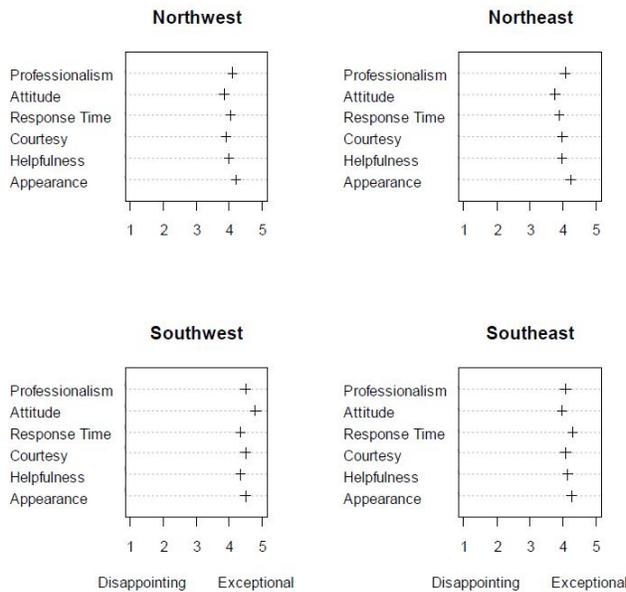
Another interesting finding is that the more citizens feel the police are visible in their neighborhood, the more likely citizens perceive the department as performing in an exceptional manner. Impressions of lower visibility in a neighborhood are tied to opinions of lower overall performance by the department.

Homeowners and renters have fairly consistent responses to their level of concern regarding specific criminal activity. Both have above average concern about having a car broken into, being robbed, or having their house broken into. Homeowners are more concerned than renters about being a victim of a scam or having their identity stolen.

Specific Concerns to You or a Loved One



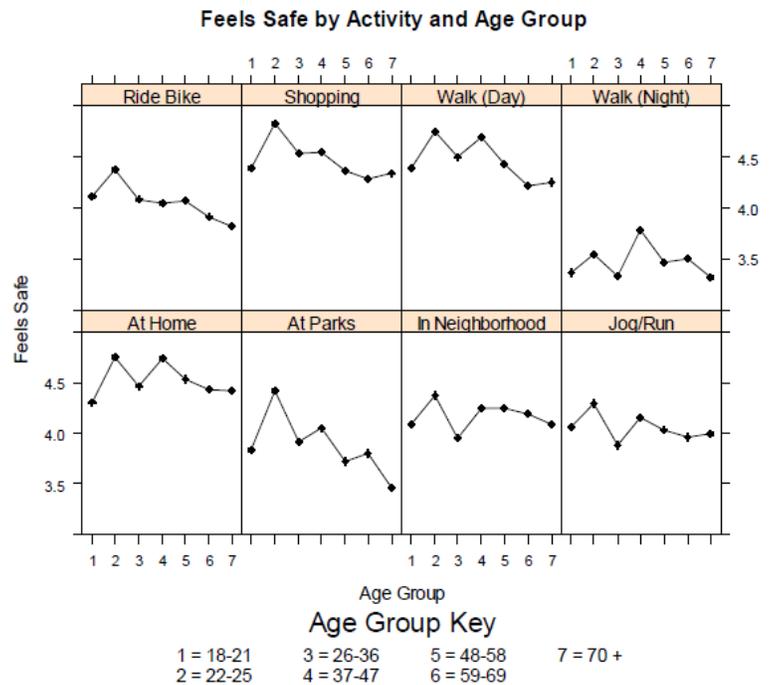
Perceptions of Vermillion Police Department, by Region



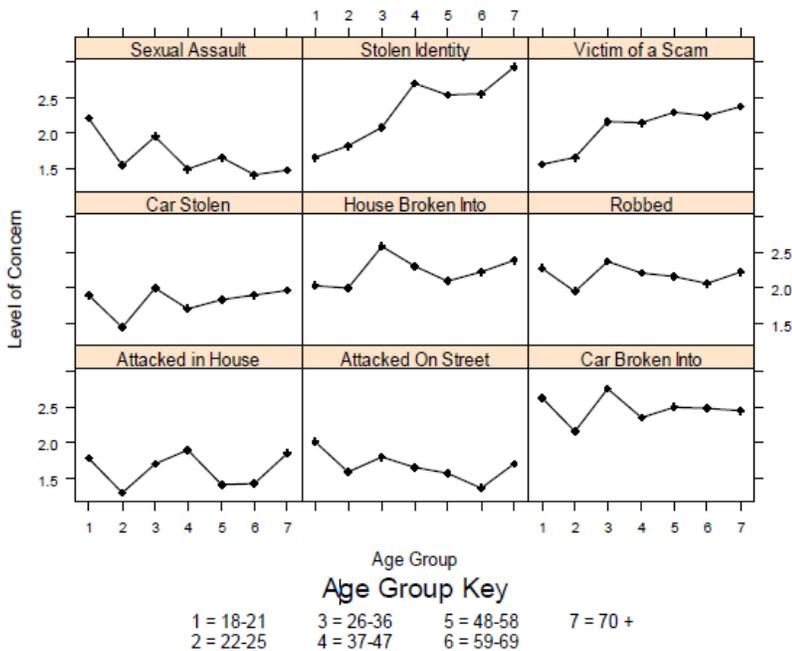
Further information regarding the perception of the police department suggests there is little difference in responses in terms of where respondents live in the city. Only slight and insignificant variations exist in responses to questions about professionalism, attitude, response time, courtesy, helpfulness, and appearance. In general, respondents from all areas of the city view the department and its employees in very positive ways.

The survey used seven age categories to understand better some of the survey responses. All of the age categories agreed that they feel less safe walking in the city at night. But there is a wider variation of opinions about safety in the parks. Younger respondents felt safer than older respondents.

Higher concerns about having a car broken into are fairly consistent across age groups. However, younger respondents were less concerned about having their identity stolen than older respondents and older respondents were also more concerned about being a victim of scams. Concerns about sexual assaults are higher in younger respondents as well. The 26-36 year old population was most concerned about having their house broken into and that same population along with the 18-21 year old respondents is more concerned about having their cars broken into than others.



Concerns by Incident Type and Age Group

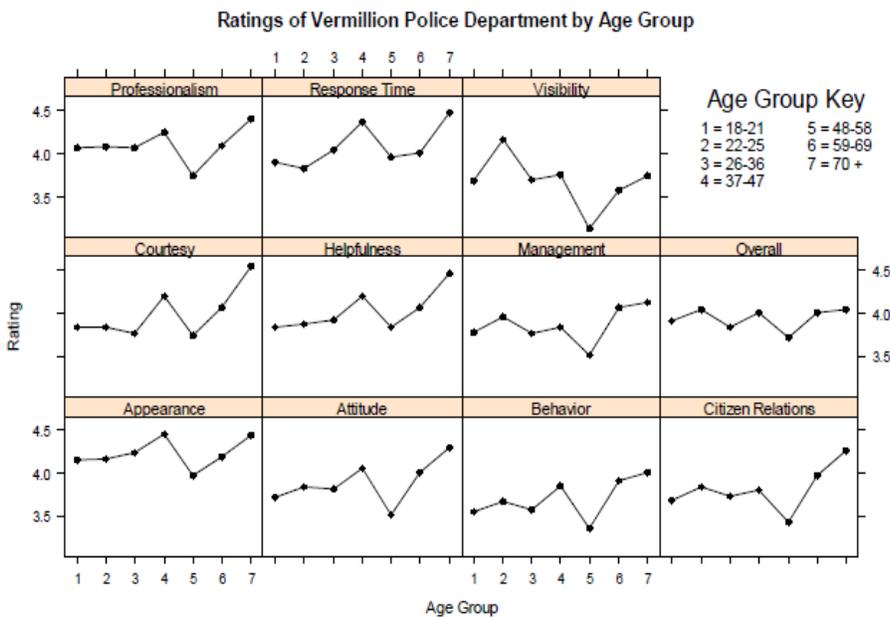
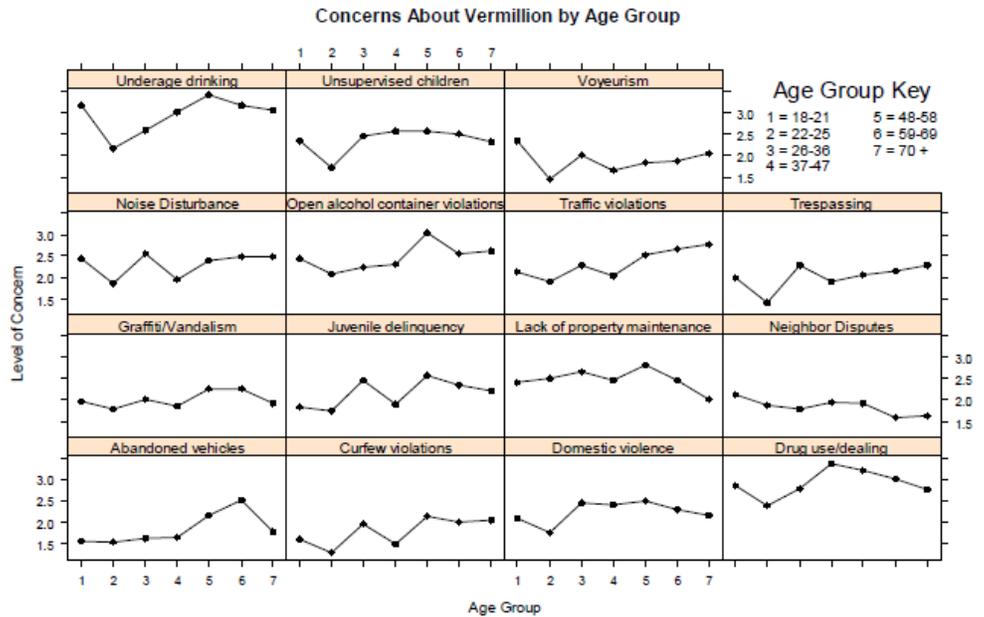


Underage drinking is of a higher concern of the 18-21 year old respondents as well as the 48-58 year old population. The least concerned about underage drinking was the 22-25 year old population.

The 22-25 year old population is less concerned about all of the following than the other age groups: underage drinking, unsupervised children, voyeurism, trespassing, domestic violence, and drug use or dealing.

The 48-58 year old population is more concerned about open alcohol container violations than other groups.

The 70 and older population is more concerned about traffic violations, but relatively less concerned with property maintenance issues.



The 70 and older population was generally more impressed with the department than other age groups, except for the 37 - 47 year old age group which also held a generally high perception.

The 48-58 year old population consistently expressed a less impressive perception of the police department's professionalism and management than the other age groups.

The overall perception, however, is fairly even across all age groups.

Next Steps

Generally speaking, citizens of Vermillion are confident the city is safe and 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.

The intent of the survey is that the Vermillion Police Department can use the results to benchmark the city's climate and the department's own performance and to improve its management of resources and its delivery of services. While the data will continue to be reviewed, there are a few areas that may call for a closer look today.

1. Citizens have suggested more concern about their safety while walking at night relative to other safety issues. Women were even more concerned than men.
2. The three types of activities that citizens are most concerned about are underage drinking, drug use or dealing, and open alcohol container violations. Men are less concerned about these activities than women.
3. There is agreement among homeowners and renters that being robbed, or having their house or car broken into is of greater concern than other specific criminal activities. Homeowners are more concerned than renters about being a victim of scams or having their identity stolen.
4. 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.
5. There is a positive relationship between the perception of citizens that the police are more visible in their neighborhood and perceptions that the overall performance of the department is closer to exceptional.
6. Of the many non-criminal related services delivered by the department, citizens are most aware of escorts for special events and DUI Focus patrols. The least well known programs include the Bike Rodeo, Youth Explorer Program, and Community Policing through Environmental Design. 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.
7. The results suggest that the overall perceptions of the police department are not impacted by where the respondents live in the city; all four quadrants of the city rate the department high.

These are only 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

Almost one-third 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. All my interactions with the Vermillion PD have been positive. I know a few of the officers personally and they are very active in the community in their off duty hours and serve as good role models and citizens.
2. Excellent job, keep up the good work
3. Have not lived in Vermillion long enough to have a real judgment.
4. I am unaware of #49 (Commercial Building checks) and so am therefore unable to comment on continuation of these. There is some crime everywhere and Vermillion is no exception, but I do feel this is a safe and friendly community and a wonderful place to raise my children.
5. I feel we have a very well-run official police dept. Any interaction of police officers as "humans" is always a plus especially for children. Thank you for caring enough to do this.
6. I guess I don't run to the police for every little minor thing - I work it out!
7. I have always had pleasant encounters with the officers involving when I have been cited and fined for speeding. I have faith in the officers and see them often, even here in "lower" Vermillion. I am highly impressed.
8. I have lived here for 2.5 years and never had any problems. Great town and safe place to live. Thanks for your hard work.
9. I think people complain too much, and don't realize how great our VPD actually is, and the amount of time/work/commitment they dedicate themselves (VPD) to keeping the peace in our town. I suggest keeping up the good work, and also making VPD more visible in situations that are conflict-free in order to establish better rapport.
10. I think there needs to be more things for kids to do. I believe Vermillion should have a drive inn movie theater. I think we should make a ski place around out skirts of Vermillion. Good entertainment for college kids as well as students and families. It would bring the community closer I think and a moneymaker as well.
11. Keep the good work!
12. Keep up the great work! Even though it's an ultra-important job, don't be afraid to smile, wave, and have more fun!
13. keep up the work
14. Living here I feel comfortable and safe.
15. Sorry. I have had very little contact with the department so cannot rate all the questions.
16. Thanks for asking! You guys/gals do a great job!
17. thank you for your service
18. Thanks for all you do!
19. Thanks for all you do!
20. The police department is doing a good job with keeping the city of Vermillion a safe place.
21. The Vermillion Police department is doing and overall good job!
22. Think you guys do a great job! Keep it up! Vermillion has been a great town for me so far and I appreciate it!

Specific Stories

23. Appreciate quick response on ambulance call for family member - very helpful and caring - Thank you!
24. Exceptional service when needed. Enforcement has been a problem - twice took enforcement to court and court ruled in our favor - against the city.

25. I called about a neighbor's alarm blasting at 2:20 am during the call the alarm was turned off. No burglary. However, an officer banged on my door at 2:30! The operator was aware that the alarm was a "false alarm" - wasted officer's time...
26. I find Vermillion safe and secure. I find Vermillion police friendly and nice. Most of us parked our cars on the wrong side of the street. Because that day it was snowy we were not sure if the area is non-parking. A policeman gave us a warning and didn't give us tickets when we explained to him. We found that impressive. He was very friendly and respectful. Most/all of the times we find Vermillion police friendly.
27. I have at times felt a little unsafe in the early morning walking on Saturdays and Sundays - when people are not out on their way to school or work - less traffic. And I definitely do not feel as safe at night - but I'm not often out after dark. Noncriminal requests for service - this is important for the elderly and handicapped. Overall I feel the Vermillion police do an excellent job. I haven't had much interaction with them though. I do feel that you have to be cautious at night depending on where you go. I definitely feel safer during daylight hours. There has always been a lot of underage drinking and perhaps DUI or so I've heard. They do seem to be working on this in recent years which make our community safer. I have many elderly neighbors and the police have been very kind and helpful to them - along with emergency response people when needed.
28. I really appreciate when officers knock on my door to let me know that plowing is about to start on mornings of overnight snows. I realize they do not have to do that...Maybe a text message service for announcements of that type could be set up (like School Reach).
29. I have called about a stray dog twice. First time, I was told, unless vicious, you won't pick it up. Second time, after being transferred 5 times, Finally UPD arranged for animal control to pick it up. What's your policy? There is no consistency/ Overall, you do great with the volume of crime in Vermillion.
30. Keeping the community informed. I haven't heard any more on the person with the gun on the West side of town. Should I be concerned or on the lookout for something or someone.
31. My biggest complaint with living here is snow removal. The trucks come through and push all of the snow from the street onto our property (as well as others). At times, this has resulted in a 4-foot tall blockade of snow and large ice chunks. Not only am I annoyed to have to find a place to move the snow, I feel it is a safety issue. What if there was an emergency and a person couldn't be accessed by ambulance? I feel strongly that this should be addressed by the city as a safety concern.
32. My only issue is the lack of animal control in Vermillion. There was a stray pit bull one night that was harassing all the animals in my neighborhood, called animal control and they were closed. Pit bull then attacked my dog, then called 911 and was told that the police couldn't do anything. That type of situation has happened to me several times, and friends have told me similar stories.
33. My only problem is that a friend of mine over 21 was crossing the street around 3 am and was stopped for jay-walking. This seemed a little ridiculous to me and I the police department should handle situations more sparingly, especially since jay-walking occurs a lot during the day and isn't a huge deal.
34. My son bought his first car...an old used vehicle painted with racing stripes. For the first month that he had it police would follow him. He's a good kid and was still perfecting his driving skills so this really upset him. Was this really necessary? (Sorry about my writing...I'm, doing this on a soft surface.)
35. My experience with the Vermillion Police has been very positive. I do have some concerns with the underage drinking as I have has to pick up beer can and bottles on the weekends and my Chevy Tahoe was keyed by persons unknown. Someone who has too much to drink drove across my lawn and knocked out the stop sign in each case I notified the Vermillion police and they responded promptly. I am overall pleased with their performance. Maybe a little more patrols along the return routes from the bars on Thursday and Friday nights might be beneficial.
36. On #s 9-17, My family has been a victim of all but three of those concerns. I used to think Vermillion was "safe" community but these have happened all more recently. Only one time did I call the police to have help, but nothing was done. So now we just lock everything up and I carry a gun for self-protection (legally of course, I have a pistol permit issued by the State of South Dakota.) I do believe prior administration was helpful to reduce alcohol related crime but those are not the only things to focus on. Having more "rounded coverage" may be beneficial- different areas can be focused on as needed.
37. Since living here I have only had one contact with the police (more than 2 years ago). It was connected to a 911 call. They were prompt, helpful, professional, friendly, an A+ plus rating. One suggestion - turn off the flashing lights once they arrive.
38. Stop targeting bars. Last time I was in one sober I left and they followed me for 4 miles before breaking off their tail. I will no longer even go down town anymore because of the police intimidation. And grow up. What is the age of our police nowadays? 18? get more experiences MEN not boys.

39. The criminal justice club brought VPD/UPD to USD for a Q&A. It was very helpful, learned a lot! More of those would be amazing! Also, thank you for asking my views. It means a lot.
40. Well, to tell you the truth I am afraid of the police. When I was a little girl the police were only around when something bad happened - they still are. I just don't want other children to feel this way. Perhaps you can do more things to make children less afraid. Things to do could be: going to the movies (popcorn and cops:)) or a day with a cop (go to the park and play games).

Suggestions for Improvements

41. Better ticketing of cars illegally park on the street.
42. Can be rude - I know it's a college town but we aren't all college kids. I understand the town has many challenges due to the college and younger adults. However, I feel the police can stereotype people as all being college kids and treat them rude when there is no need.
43. Catch more speeders and stop sign (light) jumpers
44. Continue or increase patrol at time schools get out at end of day, also parks. (Thank you for all you do. You are appreciated)
45. Great city - Thank you! (Just a little concerned about the number of barking dogs @ night and that there are so many wild pets around.)
46. I am concerned about driving under the influence
47. I feel like the officers in Vermillion tend to be overly rude and suspicious to younger citizens when dealing with us. They should not treat us like we are all criminals when they come in contact with us before they knew the situation or who we are.
48. I feel that the Vermillion Police Department is doing a very good job. I feel very safe and secure in Vermillion. The only complaint I have is that sometimes it appears that the police spend a lot of time in the bar area weekend nights. I realize it is due to them being more visible in a small area and that is where most of the weekend issues occur, but it seems to be a complaint of several citizens. I would like to see the police do more walkthroughs of bars after midnight around 1am; not to do underage compliance checks but to show a presence to the bar patrons. That may cut down on [unclear] downtown at closing time.
49. I would like the Police Department to help with City Code violations. My neighbor has huge amounts of branches and junk in the yard. It is a fire hazard and pest attraction. It devalues the property on the street and it is not safe. Code Enforcement is not doing their job if they only respond when a complaints is filed.
50. I would like to see more and consistent enforcement around the schools. Students should not be let off or picked up in traffic or across the street where they would cross without a crosswalk. PTA would get on the scene to help.
51. More contact between officers and retired officers. Don't know most of them.
52. Just treat all age groups the same. It seems as though the PD targets certain ages and that is not fair. Just treat all citizens the same.
53. More community awareness of police programs - what they are and when they are.
54. Perhaps more information/visibility by news media/advertising what's happening with police dept. - community.
55. Thanks for all your department has done for Vermillion. My only comment is that I hope you will reinstate the policy of letting people leave their cars overnight on Main Street if they have been drinking.
56. The amount of speeding on Rose St by Coyote Village concerns me. If the police didn't focus as much on other areas of town, this could be addressed. Thank you for your service.
57. The biggest problem I see on an everyday basis is drunk driving. The ads sate buzzed driving IS drunk driving. I see at least buzzed driving every day from early afternoon till 2am.
58. The corner of Walnut and Cedar Street. Persons using this route from Hy-Vee do not stop at stop signs. Too many speeders on West Cedar. Too many people parking their vehicle on lawns. Looks terrible. Don't we have ordinances against this?
59. The Department needs to reinstate the ticketing of vehicles parking illegally on private property when a complaint is made.
60. The more officers take part in community functions the better. I don't like it when departments get the "brotherhood bond" going. It creates the mentality of, "if you are not in the brotherhood, you're not one of us." There should be this separation between brotherhood and citizens. Its' the first step towards the breaking down of communication between officers and community.
61. Treat everyone the same with the law.

62. Unrelated to Police Department but a police safety issue - the speed limit on Crawford north of main should be reduced. It now has a significant amount of residential properties and a tremendous amount of pedestrian traffic. The speed zone by Wal-Mart is less than this area. It is extremely hazardous.
63. We used to have such friendly police officers when we had Offerdahl-Larson-Nelson, etc. They waved whenever they saw you- Policemen are our friend. Right now we have some friendly ones and that is good - maybe it is because I have gotten acquainted with some and so they say "Hello" with a wave - they are not out to get us - they are there to help.
64. Would like to see cars off the Street so the plows can do their work after 2 inches or more of snow in the winter time. It would save time and money.