

**PERSPECTIVES ON CRIME AND POLICING IN
KENTVILLE, NOVA SCOTIA, 1997:
A SURVEY OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS
OPERATORS**

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I. The Survey and the Sample

This report is based on a survey that was carried out at the request of the Kentville Police Service to determine citizens' evaluations of the police service and public perceptions about the optimal way to deliver public policing. The survey was devised by consulting similar strategic planning assessments which had been done for the Goderich Police Service and for Halton Regional in Ontario, as well as a survey conducted in Kings County, Nova Scotia, by the Atlantic Institute of Criminology, in 1989. Questions were added or modified on the advice of the Kentville Police Service and with the assistance of Don Clairmont, the Director of the Atlantic Institute of Criminology.

Three distinct groups within the community were targeted: operators of businesses in the downtown, businesses in the Industrial Park, and residents of the town. The majority of this report provides information in the responses of these three main targeted groups. For each group, a slightly modified version of the questionnaire was distributed. Some specific questions, for example, concerning door checks in the downtown and vehicle patrol in the Industrial Park, were asked for each business sector. Copies of the three surveys are provided in the Appendix.

The questionnaires were distributed to the downtown businesses by the Kentville Board of Trade and returned to the Board. Surveys were delivered to each Industrial Park business and picked up by members of the police service. This method produced a high rate of return. Volunteers distributed the surveys to town residents, being directed to select every fourth household (whether a private dwelling or apartment building). Residents returned the completed questionnaires to one of two drop-off points, Town Hall and the Police Service.

It was important to ensure that the responses reflected the gender distribution in the town, rather than, for example, having the majority of responses coming from women in the community who might be more available in the household. Consequently, the instructions for completing the surveys requested that they be done alternately by the male or female household head. Copies of the covering letters given to the business operators and the residents are provided in the Appendix. In addition, volunteers were requested to distribute surveys in each of the main residential areas in the town, including the suburbs, North Kentville and the areas in close proximity to the downtown core. A question asking respondents to specify their general area of residence was added to the survey. This would possibly allow the police service to determine whether different needs were expressed in the various localities.

Forty-nine representatives of downtown businesses (out of 50 distributed) and thirty-four representatives of businesses operating in the Kentville Industrial Park (out of 35 distributed), returned surveys. The response rate 98 % for the downtown sector and 97.1% for the Industrial Park sector. Volunteers distributed 470 questionnaires to the residents. Two hundred fourteen were

returned, a response rate of 45.5%. Overall, then, 555 surveys were distributed and 297 were returned, for a rate of 53.5%.

II Demographics

1. Gender

As noted above, it was important to have a representative sample from the population reflecting approximately equal responses from men and women. Among residents, this desired gender distribution was closely approximated, reflecting the distribution strategy of targeting both men and women, although slightly more male (51.9%) than female residents (48.1%) responded to the survey. The majority of business respondents, however, were men: 61.2% of respondents from the downtown business sector and 85.3% from the Industrial Park were men.

2. Residence Location

An operator of a businesses in Kentville, whether downtown or in the Industrial Park, does not necessarily live within the town boundaries. In fact, operators in the Industrial Park were most likely not to -- 85.3% (29 out of 34) did not live in the town. This was much less true in the downtown, where just under half the downtown business operators lived in Kentville (21 out of 47, 44.7%). Most business were also well established in the town. The majority of business operations had been in Kentville for more than 10 years (49% of downtown business and 41.2% of those in the Industrial Park). About 20% of each sector had been in town for two years or fewer.

Similarly, over seventy percent of residents who responded had resided in Kentville for ten or more years. A further 13% of respondents had lived in the town between five and ten years. The survey, then, tapped opinions primarily from long-time residents. Thirteen residents (6.1%) had lived in Kentville for less than one year.

The residents were asked specifically to name the area of town in which they lived. Forty-nine respondents (22.8%) indicated that they lived in a subdivision (see Table One below).

A further 27.4% (n=59) defined their place of residence as "North Kentville". An additional half of respondents (n=107) indicated they lived in proximity to the Downtown core (defined as Main Street from Chester Avenue to Memorial Park and then north of Main Street to the Cornwallis River. For the purposes of analysing the results, three areas were designated: the suburbs, North Kentville, and the Downtown.

Table One
Respondents' Residence Location

Area	Number	(%)
Glenwood/Palmer	25	11.6
Orchard Heights	7	3.26
Bonavista Estates	8	3.72
Royal Oaks	5	2.33
Chester Ridge	4	1.86
Tot. Subdivisions	49	22.8
North Kentville	59	27.4
Downtown Core	15	6.98
West of "Core"	18	8.37
East of "Core"	40	18.6
South of "Core"	28	13
North of "Core"	6	2.79
Tot. Downtown	107	49.8
Total	215	100

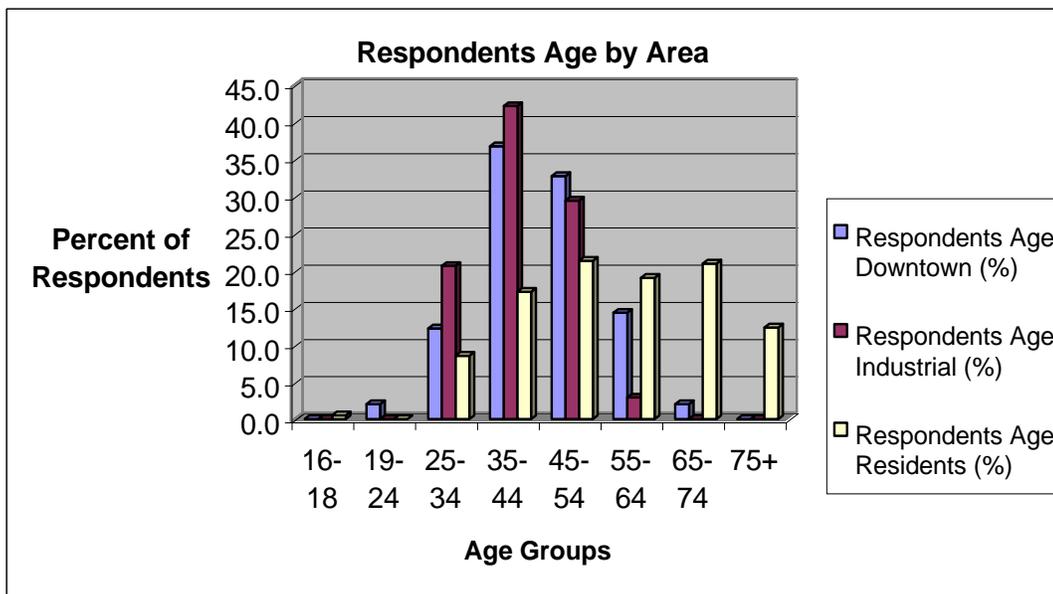
3. Age

There are differences in age distributions among the respondent groups. The two surveys of business operators elicited responses from people who were working in the market economy. Only one was between 18 and 24, and only one was 65 or older. Overall, downtown business operators tended to be somewhat older than those working in the Industrial Park (see the Table below).

Among residents, only one was under 24 years of age. One third (33.2%) of residential respondents were seniors, aged 65 and over. This is a further reflection of the relatively permanent residence of the majority of those who completed the survey. The actual age distribution is indicated in the following Chart. For the purposes of analysis, age groups were designated as: 34 or under, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 and over.

4. Education and Marital Status

The Industrial Park respondents, who tended to be somewhat younger, also tended to be better educated. Over half of them (54.5%) reported possessing a college degree or diploma compared with about a third of both downtown business operators and residents (36.7% and 32.2% respectively). In addition, 30.3% of Industrial business respondents had some college compared with about a quarter of the other two groups (22.4% and 24.8% respectively). As would be expected, then, the Industrial Park respondents were less likely to have only a high school graduation or less. 3.7% of residents had only an elementary education. 12.2% (Downtown) and 13.6% (Residents) had "some high school"



[Note: For the purposes of analysis, age groups were designated as: 34 or under, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 and over.]

compared with 3% (Industrial). Similarly, one quarter of both downtown business respondents and residents had a maximum high school education (28.6% and 24.8% respectively) compared with 12.1% among Industrial respondents.

Most of the respondents indicated they were married or living common law: 87.5% (Downtown), 91.2% (Industrial) and 73.6% (Residential). Among business respondents, about 10% were single, divorced/separated or widowed. Nine percent of residents were single and a further 9% were widowed.

5. Employment and Socio-Economic Status

As expected, almost all of the business respondents were employed full-time (over 95%). Among the public respondents, however, this variable is very important. Fully 42% of respondents (n=89) were retired (a factor related to the age distribution noted above). Only a little over a third were working full time (37.3%); a further 7.5% worked part-time. Only 9% reported their work as “home-work”. Finally, 0.9% for each category indicated they were unemployed or a student.

Considering socio-economic status, respondents were heavily weighted towards those who owned their own house: 81.6% of downtown and 93.9% of Industrial respondents were property owners, which would be expected. However, among the residents, 87.4% indicated they owned their own house as opposed to only 15.2% who rented.

Respondents were asked to indicate their approximate income. Of those who reported this statistic, business respondents tended to report an income on the higher side of the scale, particularly among Industrial Park operators. Half (50%) of Industrial Park respondents had an income of \$60,000 or more

compared with 34.1% (Downtown) and 21.2% (Residential). Most downtown

Table Two

INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY RESPONDENT CATEGORY				
Income	<25,000	25-39,999	40-59,999	>60,000
Category				
Gender				
Male	15.3	21.5	34.0	29.2
Female	29.5	24.1	23.2	23.2
Age				
<35	31.0	17.2	24.1	27.6
35-44	12.3	20.0	33.8	33.8
45-54	6.8	16.9	32.3	44.1
55-64	22.0	29.3	36.6	12.2
65+	42.6	29.5	19.7	8.2
Area				
Suburbs	9.1	18.2	31.8	40.9
Downtown	30.4	28.3	25.0	16.3
North Kentville	38.9	22.2	25.9	13.0

business respondents (39.5%) reported income in the \$40,000-\$59,999 range compared with 30% (Industrial) and 26.8% (Residential). Over a quarter (27.1%) of residential respondents as well as 10.5% of downtown business operators (and no one in the Industrial Park) said they earned under \$25,000 annually. There were significant variations of income by age, gender and residential area. Generally, women and older respondents reported lower incomes. In addition, incomes were significantly higher in the suburbs and lowest in North Kentville. See the above Table.

III Community Perceptions about Crime

1. Changes in Crime Rates

Do people believe that crime rates in their area are different than elsewhere; do they think they are stable, growing or declining? People were asked, first, to compare crime in Kentville with the county as a whole, specifically, whether, in their view, the amount of crime in Kentville was lower, higher, or about the same as in the rest of Kings County (see Table below):

Many respondents were unable to make this comparison: 19.1% (Downtown), 39.4% (Industrial) and 24.1% (Residential) said they did not know. Of those who expressed an opinion, the majority sentiment was that the amount of crime in Kentville was “about the same” as in the rest of the county (61.7% Downtown; 51.5% Industrial; 45.8% Residential). For those who perceived a

Table Three

CRIME RATE IN KENTVILLE			
Group Surveyed	Downtown	Industrial	Residential
Amount of Crime	(%)	(%)	(%)
Lower	14.9	6.1	19.3
About the Same	61.7	51.5	45.8
Higher	4.3	3.0	10.8
Don't Know	19.1	39.4	24.1
(Number)	47	33	212
Changes in Crime	(%)	(%)	(%)
Increased	20.4	17.6	22.7
About the Same	40.8	35.3	37.9
Decreased	8.2	0.0	4.7
Don't Know	30.6	47.1	34.6
(Number)	49	34	211

difference, about twice as many believed that crime was lower in Kentville compared with those who believed it was higher; for example, 19.3% of residents thought it was lower compared with 10.8% who believed the amount of crime was higher in Kentville than in the county.

Statistics from the Kentville Police Service indicate that overall crime rates have declined in recent years, a factor which may be attributed to a slightly lower number of people in early adulthood, a particularly crime-prone cohort. However, crime perceptions are informed by a number of other variables, including a major focus on crimes, especially violent crimes, by the media. In addition to the comparison question above, respondents were asked whether crime rates had increased, decreased or remained the same in the town in the last year or two. Perceptions about crime are determined by a number of factors, including direct experience with criminal events, but they are also powerfully shaped by other factors, including the media. Public perceptions do not reflect the statistics provided by the Kentville Police. While between 30% (Downtown) and 47% (Industrial) of respondents indicated they did not know whether crime had changed or remained the same over the last few years, the majority believed that crime had remained about the same (40.8 Downtown; 35.3% Industrial; 37.9% Residential). Overall, however, about four times as many people believed crime was increasing in Kentville than those who believed it was decreasing; for example, 20.4% of downtown business respondents believed crime was increasing while only 8.2% said it was decreasing.

2. Safety at Night

One of the standard indicators of community safety is the question about walking alone, at night, in your neighbourhood. As the following Table illustrates, most people surveyed feel at least “reasonably safe” walking at night.

Table Four

HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WALKING AFTER DARK?			
Group	Downtown	Industrial	Residential
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Very safe	18.4	14.7	24.9
Reasonably safe	61.2	58.8	46.0
Somewhat unsafe	14.3	23.5	23.5
Very unsafe	6.1	2.9	5.6
(n)	49	34	213

However, between 20.4% (Downtown) and 29.1% (Residential) indicated they felt “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe”.

While most women, like most men, reported they felt very safe or reasonably safe, there was a small variation, with 37.1% of women and 18.5% of men saying they felt “very unsafe” walking alone in their area at night. Among age groups there tended to be a skewed “u”-shaped curve: 42.3% of those over 65 years of age reported themselves to feel very unsafe, while the next highest category (28.1%) was in the youngest group (those under 35). In age groups in between, between 23% and 18.6% felt unsafe.

Finally, there was a small variation by residential area with respondents in the suburbs being somewhat more likely to feel “very safe” (35.4%) than residents in the downtown (24%) or in North Kentville (17.7%).

3. Concerns over Crime and Disorder

Respondents were asked how concerned they were with a number of police-related problems in their area (that is, in the “downtown core”, in the Industrial Park or, for residents, “in their neighbourhood”). Among the business groups, thefts from vehicles, break and enters, vandalism, and theft of personal property elicited the highest amount of concern by both sets of respondents (see Table below).

Considering vandalism, downtown business operators were more likely to state they were “very concerned” (57.1%) while the Industrial Park respondents indicated they were “concerned” (67.6%).

Business operators in the downtown reported the highest number of concerns, compared with both the residents and the respondents from the Industrial Park. Combining those respondents who were “very concerned” with those who were just “concerned”, compared with the Industrial Park operators, the downtown business respondents were more concerned about the following: drinking and driving (87.5% vs. 58.8%); youth problems (91.9% vs. 55.9%);

Table Five

PUBLIC CONCERNS: CRIME AND DISORDER					
Concern		Very Concrn	Concernd	Not Consd	(Number)
	Group	(%)	(%)	(%)	
Noise	Downtown	4.2	20.8	75.0	48
	Industrial	2.9	11.8	85.3	34
	Residential	7.7	19.7	72.6	208
Drink&Drive	Downtown	35.4	52.1	12.5	48
	Industrial	29.4	29.4	41.2	34
	Residential	31.1	29.7	39.2	209
Thft fr Vehicle	Downtown	40.4	44.7	14.9	47
	Industrial	30.3	63.6	6.1	33
	Residential	25.7	38.1	36.2	210
Fam Violence	Downtown	*	*	*	*
	Industrial	*	*	*	*
	Residential	18.4	31.1	50.5	206
Vandalism	Downtown	57.1	38.8	4.1	49
	Industrial	29.4	67.6	2.9	34
	Residential	26.3	42.6	31.1	209
Break&Enter	Downtown	47.9	43.8	8.3	48
	Industrial	50.0	44.1	5.9	34
	Residential	29.8	38.0	32.2	208
Traffic Prob	Downtown	31.3	43.8	25.0	48
	Industrial	14.7	47.1	38.2	34
	Residential	18.3	36.1	45.7	208
Youth Problm	Downtown	38.8	53.1	8.2	49
	Industrial	20.6	35.3	44.1	34
	Residential	22.6	40.9	36.5	208
Shoplifting	Downtown	53.1	34.7	12.2	49
	Industrial	26.5	14.7	58.8	34
	Residential	13.1	35.0	51.9	206
Loitering	Downtown	51.0	40.8	8.2	49
	Industrial	12.1	24.2	63.6	33
	Residential	23.4	34.4	42.1	209
Drugs	Downtown	49.0	36.7	14.3	49
	Industrial	24.2	33.3	42.4	33
	Residential	32.9	34.3	32.9	210
Persnl Theft	Downtown	44.9	49.0	6.1	49
	Industrial	29.4	52.9	17.6	34
	Residential	24.8	44.3	31.0	210

* These respondents were not asked this question.

shoplifting (78.8% vs. 41.2%); loitering (91.8% vs. 36.3%); and the use of drugs (85.7% vs. 57.5%). When asked which police-related problem the respondent was most concerned about in his or her area, downtown business operators divided their concerns equally among traffic problems, theft of property, vandalism and loitering (about 20% each). Loitering and vandalism were listed as the second most serious problem by about one-third of downtown respondents. Theft of property was the overwhelming choice of Industrial Park business operators when they were asked to list their “number one” concern (61.8%). Vandalism, listed as the first problem by 20.6%, was listed as the second most serious problem in the Industrial Park by half of the respondents (51.5%). For residents, traffic problems (21.7%) and theft of property (25.6%) were the problems of highest concern. Vandalism (52.2%) and theft (31.7%) were the most important choices for the problem deemed second in seriousness.

Among Industrial Park respondents, 41.2% said that they were “not concerned” about drinking and driving; 44.1% were “not concerned” about youth problems; 58.8% were “not concerned” about shoplifting (in part reflecting the type of businesses which operate in the Industrial Park); 63.6% were “not concerned” about loitering (again, reflecting the work environment of the Industrial Park); and 42.4% were “not concerned” with drug use. Downtown business operators were also somewhat more likely to be concerned about traffic problems and noise from bars, although these differences were not large.

Among the residents surveyed, more than half said they were “not concerned” with noise from bars (72.6%) or with shoplifting (51.9%) (reflecting the question posed which asked them about their neighbourhood, since many lived in the suburbs). Traffic problems were not a concern of 45.7% of residents surveyed. Their highest levels of concern were expressed over theft of personal property (69.1% very concerned or concerned); vandalism (68.9%); break and enters (67.8%); and drug use (67.2%). Two concerns that have received a considerable amount of publicity, drinking and driving, and drug use, elicited the highest proportion of respondents who indicated they were “very concerned” (31.1% and 32.9%).

If we consider the various concerns of sub-groups of the population (Table 6), we find that, uniformly, the residents who were most concerned with these police-related problems were from North Kentville, while those from the suburbs were the least concerned, with downtown residents in between (see Table above). There were only small differences between the concerns of men and women: only the issue of vandalism elicited some variation, with men (80.7%) being more concerned than were women (70.5%). Finally, with respect to age groups, while there was mostly little variation, where there were differences, the older aged groups tended to express less concern than the younger groups (over, for example, theft from vehicles, vandalism, traffic problems, shoplifting and theft of property).

IV Community Evaluation of Kentville Police Service

1. How KPS Deals with Major Problems

A series of questions were designed to gauge the community's perceptions of the Kentville Police Service. Having identified their "number one" problem, respondents were asked how well they think the Kentville Police Service deals with the problem considered most important in their area. The results were fairly consistent over all three groups, with between 32.6% (Downtown) and 37.5% (Industrial) claiming the KPS deals "very well" with their major problem. Between 53.3% (Residential) and 56.5% (Downtown) said

Table Six

PROPORTION OF THOSE VERY CONCERNED OR CONCERNED			
Area	Suburbs	Downtown	North Kentville
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Category			
Noise from bars	18.4	26.8	35.6
Drinking&Driving	49	58.2	72.9
Theft from Vehicles	55.1	59.6	76.3
Vandalism	53.1	69.1	80
Break&Enter	57.1	64.3	81
Traffic Problems	40.8	51.5	67.8
Youth Problems	49	63.3	70.7
Loitering	46.9	55.1	71.2
Drug Use	53.1	67.3	76.7
Theft of Property	53.1	71.4	76.7

that the problem was handled satisfactorily. 10.9% (Downtown), 9.7% (Residential) and 3.1% (Industrial) reported that the police do not deal with their main problem "very well". Four residents indicated that the problem was handled poorly (2.1%) - no business operator indicated that evaluation.

2. Characteristics of KPS Officers

Both business groups as well as the public agreed that officers "looked professional" (Downtown: 90%, Industrial: 97%, Public: 90%). Similarly, most agreed that the Kentville Police were "courteous and polite" (93.9% Downtown; 80.6% Industrial; 90.0% Residential). Only one business operator from the Industrial Park (3.2%) and four residents (1.9%) disagreed. The majority also agreed that Kentville officers displayed a "caring attitude" (78.7% Downtown; 65.6% Industrial; 68.8% Residential) while two (4.3%) of the downtown business representatives and six residents (2.9%) disagreed.

With respect to the three designated residential areas, compared with

North Kentville and the Downtown, respondents in the suburbs were slightly more likely to say the police service was doing a “good job” of treating people fairly and equally. However, again compared with the other two areas, residents from the suburbs were less likely to agree with the statement that the Kentville Police officers were courteous and polite and less likely to credit them with having a “caring attitude. In both cases, however, it was a case of indicating “don’t know” rather than disagreeing.

On many of the specific evaluations, all groups were reluctant to disagree, either expressing agreement or indicating uncertainty by reporting that they did not know. Whether KPD was “well trained” was not known by 41.7% (Downtown), 51.6% (Industrial) and 48.6% (Residential), while about half of all respondents [50% (D), 41.9% (I) and 49.5% (R)] agreed that officers were well trained. Whether Kentville officers were proud of their work elicited a similar distribution, with 63% (Downtown), 54.8% (Industrial) and % (Residential) agreeing. Again, only two (2.3%) of the business operators disagreed (one from each sector) as did five (2.5%) of the residents.

Police departments are expected to respect human rights in their work. Kentville police do this appropriately according to 72.9% of downtown business operators, 64.5% of respondents in the Industrial Park, and somewhat fewer, 58.4% among the residents. With the exception of one resident who disagreed with the statement (0.5%), the remainder indicated they did not know whether they did or did not respect human rights. Men were more likely than women to claim the police were doing a “good job” in the area of human rights: 41.6% of men, compared with 30.1% of women. Rather than giving a negative evaluation, the women were more likely to claim they did not know. Slightly more respondents (about 8%) believed that the Kentville police should “act in a fairer and less biased way” (10.2% Downtown; 3% Industrial; 7.8% Residential).

3. Satisfaction

Citizens tend to give police departments high overall approval ratings. This is certainly true in Kentville where over 90% of all respondents said that they were “very” or “reasonably” satisfied with the work of the Kentville Police Service. Among this total, 36.2% (Downtown), 47.1% (Industrial) and 43% (Residential) reported that they were “very satisfied”. Two representatives of the downtown business sector, one Industrial Park operator and four residents said they were “not very satisfied”, while two residents (and no one from the business sectors) indicated they were “not at all satisfied”.

Residents in the suburbs and in the downtown were slightly more likely than those in North Kentville to claim that they were “very satisfied” with the work of the police service. Respondents in North Kentville, on the other hand, were more likely to choose “reasonably satisfied”, reflecting the high overall approval rating.

4. Evaluation of Policing Services

Based on their personal experience, or what they had heard, respondents were asked to rate the performance of the Kentville Police Service in a number of areas, including the traditional areas of enforcing the law and keeping order, responding to calls, and investigating and solving crimes. As the following Table demonstrates, people

Table Seven
Evaluation of Kentville Police Service

Category		Downtown	Industrial	Residential
		(%)	(%)	(%)
Enforcing the law	Good Job	61.2	54.5	59.9
	Average	34.7	39.4	30.2
	Poor Job	2.0	0.0	2.8
	DontKnow	2.1	6.1	7.1
Responding to calls	Good Job	56.3	63.6	58.1
	Average	33.3	21.2	26.2
	Poor Job	4.2	0.0	1.4
	DontKnow	6.2	15.2	14.3
Investigating crimes	Good Job	32.7	36.4	32.5
	Average	44.9	33.3	35.4
	Poor Job	14.3	3.0	2.4
	DontKnow	8.2	27.3	29.7
Crime Prevent Info	Good Job	38.8	36.4	30.1
	Average	47.9	30.3	37.3
	Poor Job	10.2	9.1	9.6
	DontKnow	8.2	24.2	23
Work with Community	Good Job	28.6	45.5	34.6
	Average	42.9	18.2	32.2
	Poor Job	10.2	8.8	5.2
	DontKnow	18.4	26.5	28
Assist Crime Victims	Good Job	34.7	27.3	23.2
	Average	24.5	15.2	25.6
	Poor Job	8.2	3	3.3
	DontKnow	32.7	54.5	47.9
Treat all fairly	Good Job	40.8	45.5	34.1
	Average	28.6	18.2	30.3
	Poor Job	4.1	3	2.8
	DontKnow	26.5	33.3	32.2

evaluated the police service positively in the first two areas and less positively in the area of criminal investigations. Even in the investigation category,

respondents were more likely to indicate “don’t know” than give a poor evaluation (although 14.2% of downtown business operators rated the KPS poorly on this crucial police responsibility).

The policing options that reflected more of a Community-Based Policing philosophy were rated in a manner similar to crime investigations. A minority rated the police performance poorly (a maximum of 10.2% in any category). A substantial number indicated they did not know and, otherwise, about one third agreed the police service was doing a “good job.” Such an evaluation was given for providing information to the public on crime prevention and working together with residents to solve community problems.

On the question of providing information to the public on ways to prevent or reduce crime, the downtown business sector was most positive in their evaluation of the work of the police service. The main difference was that about one quarter of both the residents and the respondents in the Industrial Park indicated they were unable to evaluate this work. About 10% of respondents in all categories claimed the police were doing a “poor job” in this area of crime prevention.

Residents of North Kentville and the downtown rated crime prevention more highly in importance than residents of the suburbs, as did women more than men.

Given the sizeable number of “undecided” or uninformed respondents (who indicated “don’t know”), between 65% and 70% of each group still agreed that the police service was doing a good or average job working together with residents in the community to solve local problems. 45.5% of Industrial Park business operators said the service was doing a “good job” in this area. About 10% of business respondents said the police were doing a “poor job”, an evaluation shared by only 5.2% of residents.

Similar generally favourable evaluations were given to the work of the police service in treating people fairly and equally: 40.8% (Downtown), 45.5% (Industrial) and 34.1% (Residential) said the police were doing a “good job” in this area.

The question of evaluating the work of the police service in assisting victims of crime received a somewhat different evaluation. The proportion who considered that the police were doing a “good” or “average” job was lowest for this question, particularly among respondents in the Industrial Park: (59.2% Downtown; 42.5% Industrial, 48.8% Residential). Again, the difference is not created by a large number who rated the job being done as “poor” (only three or four percent indicated this evaluation), but in the large number of people unable to give a rating (54.5% Industrial and 47.9% Residential indicated they did not know). The lack of information in the area of assistance to victims is noteworthy.

V. Public Expectations

1. Reactive Policing

Traditional, reactive policing was still the major expectation of the majority of the respondents. When asked how they would like the police service to deal with problems in their area, 89.8% of downtown and 88.2% of Industrial Park business respondents along with 75.2% of residents, checked “high visibility patrol”. This option was also endorsed more highly in North Kentville (87.5%) than in the downtown (78.4%) or the suburbs (72.9%).

“Quick police response” was the second favourite method of dealing with problems chosen: 63.3% (Downtown), 76.5% (Industrial) and 62.1% (Residential). The various Community-Based Policing strategies were indicated less frequently.

While the Kentville Police Service operates under a Community-Bases Policing philosophy, most respondents continue to rank more traditional policing elements as being especially important. Respondents were presented with a list of seven ways the KPS delivers police services (from foot patrol downtown to drug enforcement). In addition to ranking the importance of police patrol in the respondent’s area highly, both crime investigation and drug enforcement tended to be ranked as first or second in importance by respondents. Specifically, crime investigation was ranked first or second by 57.3% of the Residential), 47.9% of the Downtown and 54.5% of the Industrial respondents, while drug enforcement was ranked particularly highly by residents (67%), but also by 42.9% of the Downtown and 36.4% of the Industrial respondents.

2. Police Patrol and Visibility

Respondents were given some patrolling options and asked to list police services “in the order they were most important” to them. Not surprisingly, with respect to police patrols, highest priority was given to patrols in the respondents’ areas. For example, 81.6% of downtown business operators (as well as 21.2% of Industrial respondents and 59.1% of residents) listed “foot patrol downtown” as being the first or second most important service delivered by the police. Most downtown business respondents strongly agreed (70.8%) or agreed (20.8%) that it was important for the police to check doors and windows in the downtown core every night. Only one downtown business respondent disagreed with the statement.

Vehicle patrol in the sub-divisions was ranked of first or second importance by 66.6% of residents (not all of whom resided in the sub-divisions), but ranked similarly by only 26.5% of downtown business operators and one-third of respondents in the Industrial Park.

Finally, vehicle patrol in the Industrial Park was ranked first or second in

importance by 60.6% in the Industrial Park, 16.7% of downtown business operators, and 21.2% of residents. When asked directly how important vehicle patrol in the Industrial Park was to business operators in that sector, 88.2% rated it “very important” while the remainder (11.8%) said it was “somewhat important”. Most Industrial Park business respondents “agreed” (63.6%) that the Kentville Police Service was currently doing a good job patrolling the park (6.1% strongly agreed). Most of the remainder (27.3%) reported that they did not know how good a job the police were doing. Only one respondent in the Industrial Park said that he disagreed with the statement that the police were doing “a good job”.

Traffic enforcement was also ranked as being most or of second importance by 36.7% of residents, 29.2% of downtown respondents, and by 15.2% respondents in the Industrial Park.

There was some variation in whether or not the police should “enforce laws more strictly”, a position that was endorsed by a little over a third of both the downtown business operators and residents, (38.8% and 35.8% respectively), but only 15.2% of respondents in the Industrial Park. Both older (over 65) and younger (under 35) residents tended to agree most with this statement about treating criminals more harshly (43.3% and 46.9% respectively), compared to the middle age groups; for example, 20.3% of those aged 35 to 44 said the police should be more strict in their enforcement.

A higher percentage of each group agreed on cracking “down harder on criminals” (59.2% Downtown; 39.9% Industrial; 47.5% Residential). These options represented a more traditional – patrol and enforcement – style of policing.

3. Community-Based Policing

Contemporary policing involves more than visibility and a quick response. Under the general philosophy known as Community-Based Policing (CBP), policing is a service agency that seeks to involve the community in determining policing priorities and in crime prevention. In this respect, this survey comes within this community-oriented mandate. Among the options given to respondents in the survey concerning how the police service can most improve the ways in which it deals with community problems, several CBP initiatives were listed.

The most obvious CBP initiative involves crime prevention. Crime prevention programmes were checked by about one quarter to one third of the respondents and were favoured somewhat more by downtown business operators than those in the Industrial Park: (32.7% Downtown; 23.5% Industrial; 29.1% Residential). Compared with the more traditional approaches discussed above, there was less interest in this approach, although crime prevention work is now standard in most police forces. Women more than men believed more

crime prevention work should be done (48.4% vs. 33.8%), as well as younger rather than older respondents (35.5% for those under 35 years of age; 20.6% for those over 65).

If crime prevention is now part of conventional policing, school liaison, community consultation and police-initiated mediation programmes are implemented less thoroughly and less often in policing. In general, Industrial Park operators were less interested in these additional strategies than the other groups. Of these, the school programme received the most favourable notice, being checked by 46.9% of downtown business operators and 41.7% of residents but only 11.8% from the Industrial Park. The Industrial Park is quite remote from the school, a fact that may account for the lack of interest in this option in that sector. There was some area variation on this question. Residents in the suburbs (44.7%) and in the downtown (46.4%) were more interested in this approach than those in North Kentville (30.5%).

Community consultation was approved by about a quarter of the residents and one third of the downtown business sector. Police mediation was

Table Eight

HOW POLICE SHOULD DEAL WITH PROBLEMS			
Group	Downtown	Industrial	Residential
Strategy	(%)	(%)	(%)
High visibility patrol	89.8	88.2	75.2
Quick police response	63.3	76.5	62.1
Crime prevention programmes	32.7	23.5	29.1
Police contact with school	46.9	11.8	41.7
Community consultation	34.7	11.8	24.8
Police mediation programmes	18.4	0.0	14.1

the least favoured, by no one in the Industrial Park and fewer than twenty percent in the other two groups. The results for Question Eight appear in the Table Eight.

There were also some other indications of support for more community-oriented policing approaches. For example, 40.8% of Downtown business operators, 36.4% of Industrial Park respondents and 42.4% of residents agreed that the police service could be improved if the police spent “more time talking to people”, a long-standing tradition and source of strength of small town policing.

Doing “more crime prevention work (through programme delivery) in the community was also endorsed by about 40% of the respondents (42.9% Downtown; 45.5% Industrial; 38.2% Residential). With respect to how the police deliver services, crime prevention programmes were ranked high in importance (first or second) by 42.6% of residents, 31.2% of downtown business operators and 35.5% of respondents in the Industrial Park.

4. Gaining Access to Crime Prevention Programmes

The Police Service was interested in knowing how community members would like to gain access to crime prevention information. Overall, respondents agreed that the police service should distribute a pamphlet outlining their community and crime prevention programmes (95.5% Downtown; 84.8% Industrial; 81.8% Residential), and should advertise crime prevention programmes in the local newspaper (83.3%, 75.8% and 86.6% respectively). Fewer than half agreed that such information should be put on the Internet (37.5%, 45.5% and 46.6% respectively). Most respondents agreed that they would like to gain access to crime prevention information when they chose “to contact the Police Service” (83.3%, 81.8% and 80.1% respectively).

5. 24-Hour Police Patrol

One of the key questions posed to all three groups was how important, in their opinion, 24-hour police patrolling was. This was recognised as “very important” by a considerable majority of each group (89.6% Downtown; 84.4% Industrial; 88% Residential). Only two individuals (one resident and one business operator in the Industrial Park) indicated it was “not important at all”. With respect to how the Kentville Police Service could most improve the way it deals with community problems, a similar majority indicated they thought the police should “do more patrolling and be more visible in the community” (87.8% Downtown; 84.8% Industrial; 79.9% Residential).

6. Business Preferences for Police Patrolling

Business respondents were asked on what particular days it would be most important to have police patrols. For some, it was important seven days a week. Others varied their answer. The days least often listed were Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (about 40% of downtown business representatives thought it was important to have police patrol on those days, compared with about 27% of respondents in the Industrial Park. Patrol on Thursday was more important for both sectors, although there was some variation here with downtown operators considering that day more important than business respondents in the Industrial Park (68.9% Downtown; 42.4% Industrial). The most important days were Friday (93.3% and 82.2% respectively) and Saturday (82.2% and 100% respectively). There was some variation, again, on Sunday with 81.8% of Industrial Park operators considering police patrol to be important compared with 42.2% of downtown respondents.

Business managers were asked to specify what their preferred times were for police patrol. Given that the question was open-ended, a wide variety of responses were elicited. The answers were categorised into five groupings:

morning, noon, afternoon, evening (6 p.m. to midnight) and night (after midnight). Respondents could indicate any or none of these times. Business operators in the downtown deemed evening patrol to be the most important (55.1%). Night, afternoon, and noontime were chosen by over a third of business managers (38.8%, 38.8% and 36.7% respectively). Morning patrols were deemed important by fewer than a quarter of the respondents in the downtown (22.4%).

The replies from the Industrial Park were slightly different. As in the downtown, evening patrols were most important (indicated by two thirds of managers in the Industrial Park, 67.6%). Night patrols, however, were indicated by almost as many (58.8%). Patrols in the morning, noon and evening, however, were deemed important by relatively few in the Industrial Park (8.8%, 11.8% and 14.7% respectively). In short, as was the case for their preference for Sunday patrols, managers in the Industrial park want police patrol primarily when they are closed. In this respect, they wish the police service to fulfil a “watch” function. Compared with the downtown, which is also a residential area, the Industrial Park is often deserted after hours.

VI Size of Police Establishment

The respondents were asked to make a judgement about the size of the police service. The majority concurred that the present strength was about the “right number” (77.1% Downtown; 60.7% Industrial; 62.8% Residential). The minority opinion was skewed heavily in the direction of there being too few officers. Only three representatives from the business community and nine residents (4.8%) said there were “too many”, while 35.7% (Industrial), 24.4% (Downtown) and 32.4% of the residential respondents said there were “too few”. Similarly, about a quarter of the residents (26.6%), one fifth (21.2%) of the Industrial respondents and about one seventh (14.3%) of the Downtown business operators agreed that hiring more officers would “most improve the way” the police service deals with the problems” of the community “and with those who break the law”.

Residents in North Kentville were more likely to check “hire more officers” than either the downtown or suburban residents (35.7%, 23.7% and 21.3% respectively). This option was also favoured by more women (32%) than men (17%).

VII Frequency of Surveys

Finally, the Police Service was interested in knowing how frequently community members felt they should be surveyed on policing matters. Three quarters (73.5%) of downtown business operators, half (50%) of respondents on the Industrial Park and one third (32.3%) of residents thought that an annual survey was appropriate. One quarter of downtown operators (24.5%) and over

40% of the other two groups (46.9% Industrial; 42.3% Residential) thought that every two years was sufficient. One quarter (23.1%) of residents thought once every five years would be satisfactory (along with 2.0% Downtown and 3.1% Industrial). Only five residents (2.4%) indicated that such a survey “should not be conducted again”.