

# 2008 Cumberland Police Department Survey



## **Cumberland Police Department Community Survey**

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## **Cumberland Police Department Community Survey for 2008**

In June-July 2008, Chief of Police John Desmarais, initiated a police survey with the intent to determine where improvements are needed within the community and how the citizens of Cumberland feel about their police department. The survey was posted on the Cumberland Police Department's website and at various locations throughout town including: the Town Hall, the Public Library and the Police Station. In addition, a full-page ad containing the survey was placed in the Valley Breeze and press releases were sent to all local newspapers to inform residents of ways to obtain the survey. The Police Department requested that town residents obtain a survey, through either hard copy or the online version, complete it and mail it back to the station. The survey was available to the town from June to July: roughly a two-month period. Allowing residents ample time to complete the survey, Chief Desmarais and the Police Department were hoping to obtain results that would enable them to keep up with the town's fast-paced and ever-changing environment therefore being able to provide a positive, healthy, safe atmosphere for the town.

This survey, along with previous a previous survey in 2003 and the one conducted in 2002 by the students at Salve Regina University, was designed to seek comments and concerns from community residents to improve the quality of life as well as delivery of service by the police department. The Police Department's Mission Statement is; "The mission of the Cumberland Police Department is to provide professional quality policing by a partnership with our community; to enhance the quality of life by creating an atmosphere of safety, reducing the fear of crime, preserving the peace, and impartially enforcing the law. Our services will be rendered with courtesy, civility, and with

adherence to the highest level of integrity and ethical standards.” More than six years have passed since the initial surveys; nonetheless, these standards still remain the goals of the Police Department today.

This particular survey is identical to survey given three years ago and examines the three areas of satisfaction, knowledge, and assessment. The survey reviewed which problems in Cumberland need the most attention and how the Police Department is doing in addressing these issues. The survey also asked citizens which services and programs they are aware of that the police regularly maintain. Finally, respondents were asked to rate the police on a satisfaction scale of 1-5 on professionalism, courteousness, helpfulness, knowledge of duty, and services provided to make sure they are being treated fairly and equitable.

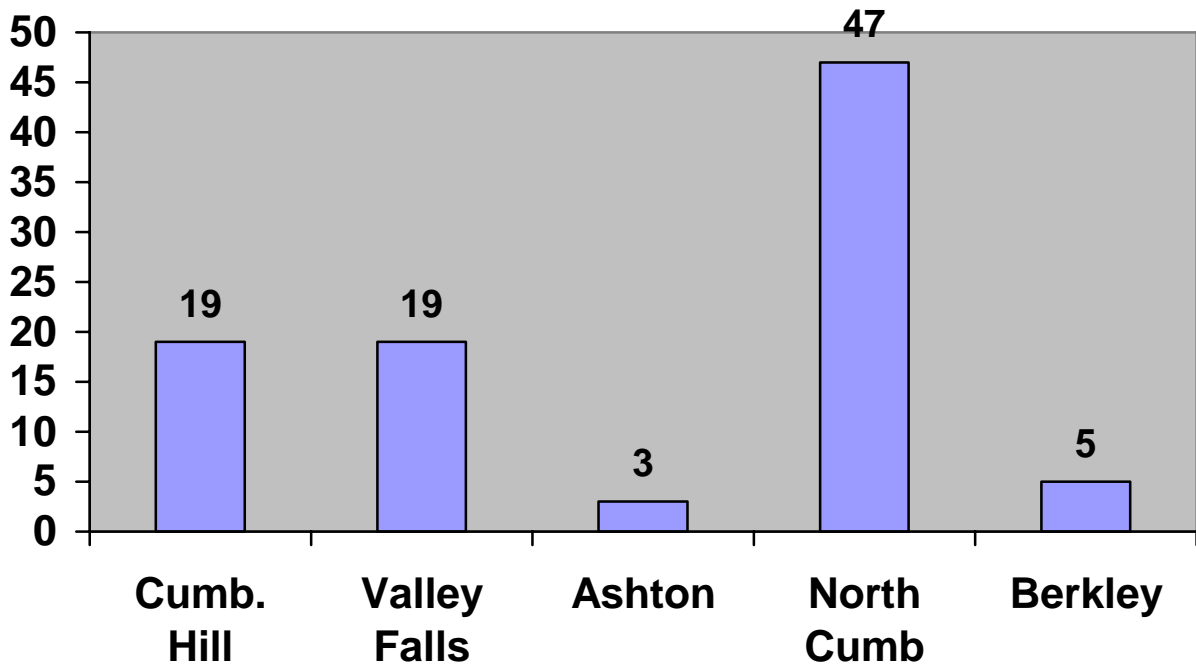
The following document is an analysis of the accumulated surveys and their resulting data. By statistical analysis and compounding the variables into easily accessible charts and graphs, one can see the results of the Cumberland Police Department’s 2008 survey.

## Sections of Town

The first portion of the survey asked what division of Cumberland the residents lived in. The five possible selections included: Cumberland Hill, Valley Falls, Ashton, North Cumberland, and Berkley. In addition to the five locations, there was also a “no response” option where the respondent chose to leave this part of the survey anonymous.

This chart shows the different percentages of responses for each section.

**Percent of Respondents by  
Area of Town they Live in.**



By examining the return percentages of the survey, it is concluded that North Cumberland posts the highest return rate at 47%, followed by, Cumberland Hill and Valley Falls tied at 19%, Ashton at 3%, and Berkeley at 2%.

The second part of the survey dealt with the resident's contact with the Police Department. If there was contact between a citizen and the police, there were four main subdivisions that were analyzed: "Dispatcher", "Patrol Officer", "Detective", and "Police Supervisors/Management". These were then rated on a scale of 1-5 involving matters of Professionalism, Courteousness, Helpfulness, Knowledge of Duty, and Services Provided. Based on a likert scale of Needs Improvement (1-2), Satisfactory (3-4) and Excellent (5).

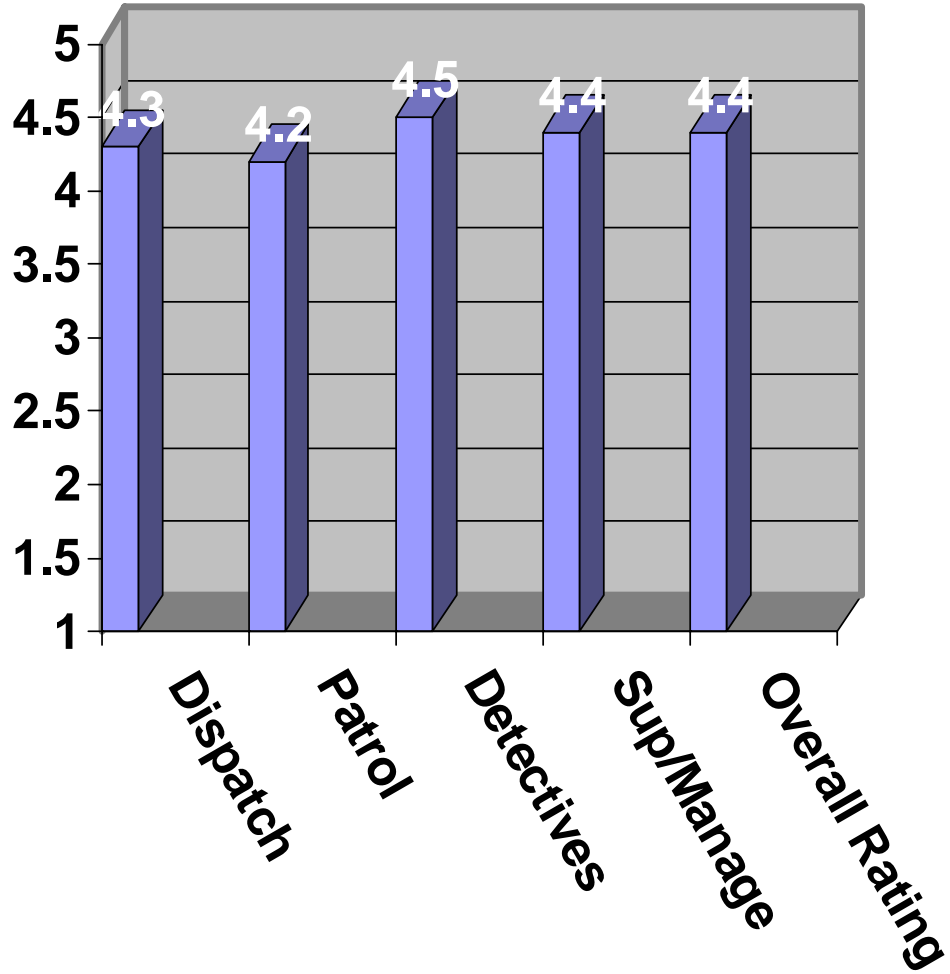
In the first sub-section, respondents reported having contact with Dispatchers and rated them a 4.3 overall, reaching the outskirts of the excellent category.

The second sub-section describing contact with Patrol Officers was closely tied to the first sub-section at an average score of 4.2, which is also extremely high in satisfaction.

The third sub-section dealt with the Detective Division. In this category, just over 50% of the respondents had contact with them, yet of the four sub-sections, it maintained the highest rate of satisfaction. The detective unit maintained a 4.5 satisfaction rate, putting them at an extremely high rate. In the last sub-section, for respondents had contact with a member of Police Supervisors/Management. The average satisfaction rate was over 4.4, which is also an excellent approval rate.

These four sub-sections dealing with Dispatchers, Patrol Officers, Detectives, and Supervisors all maintained an approval rate upwards of 90%, which is an outstandingly high rate of agreement. An overall rating of the police department show a 4.5 rating out of 5, which comes up to be a 90% satisfaction rate. This resulting data speaks very highly of the Cumberland Police Department.

# Satisfaction Rates



## **Crime Problems Analysis**

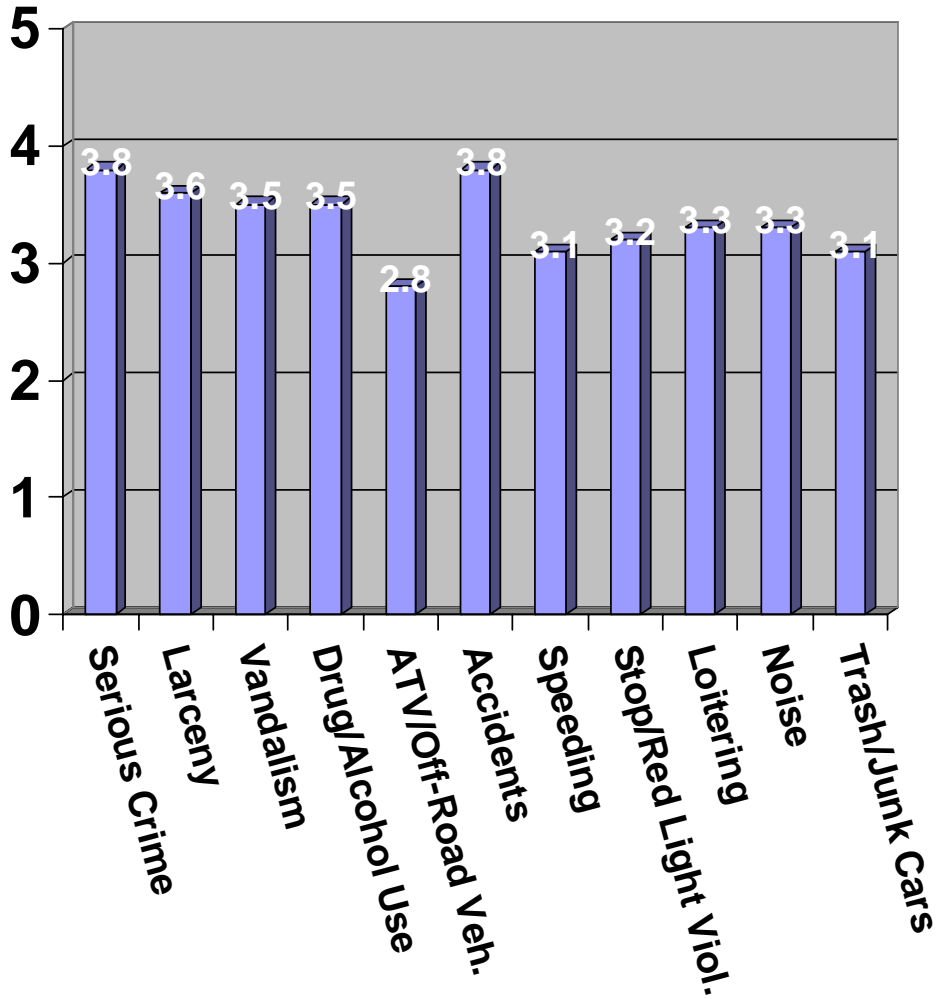
On the topic of Crime Problems in Cumberland, there were 11 major topics that were rated on the scale of 1-5, with 1 being needs improvement, to 5 being excellent. Serious Crime, Larceny, Vandalism, Drug/Alcohol Use, ATV/Off-Road Vehicles, Traffic Accidents, Speeding, Stop Sign and Red Light Violations, Loitering/Congregating, Noise, Trash/Junk/Abandoned Cars were all topics that were addressed. Out of all the topics, the one citizen's feel needs the most improvement in addressing of the problem are the ATV/Off-Road Vehicles. On a scale of 1-5, this problem was rated at a 2.8, which is satisfactory rating and the lowest out of every category.

Two other issues respondents felt were problems were noise (3.3) and trash/junk/abandoned cars (3.1). The noise is connected mostly with the ATV/Off-Road vehicles due to their loud nature. It was clear from the comments section in the survey that many respondents associated the noise issue with the ATV/Off Road vehicles. Trash, on the other hand, dealt with mostly trash on the side of the road and a few complaints of abandoned cars. Speeding (3.1) and Red Light and Stop Sign Violations (3.2) was another issue many people would like the police to crack down on more. What is interesting is many people who thought speeding was a problem indicated that they did not know about the STRESS program. The STRESS program involves overtime shifts where police officers are assigned to chronic traffic problem areas.

Overall, citizens were very happy with the way police are addressing the towns' problems ranging from robbery, burglary to vandalism, trash, and noise. There were no crime problems that citizens felt were completely out of control and that were being

neglected as a whole. Most people believe the police are doing all they can to make the community crime free and a quieter, nicer place for people to live.

## CRIME PROBLEMS

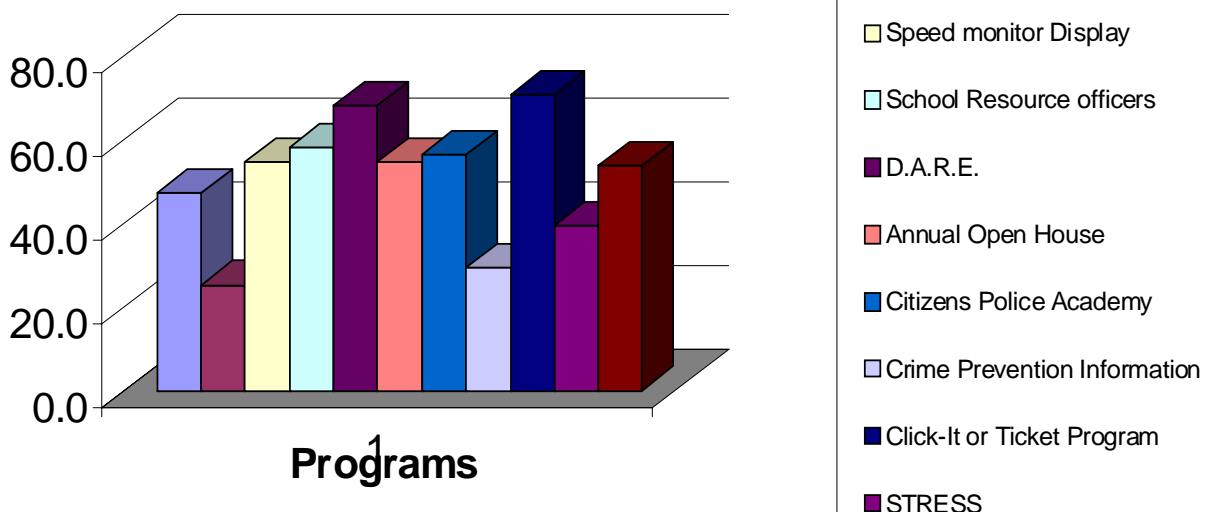


# Cumberland Police Department Community Survey

Of all the Cumberland Police programs in town, the most popular one is the *Click-it or Ticket* program where over 70% of Cumberland residents are knowledgeable. This program is designed to promote seatbelt awareness and the consequences of not following the law. Second in line, resulting with about 68% awareness, is the *D.A.R.E.* program, which is run by Officer Kevin Kolek at all the elementary schools in Cumberland. This program, in which every 5<sup>th</sup> grade student participates, is used to prevent and/or reduce drug use and violence among our youth.

Another popular program that 65% of the population is aware of is the recent *National Accreditation of the Department*. This is a huge step toward the professional affirmation of standardized practices to make sure the Police Department are up to date with the most professional and technological advances being made in the field of Law Enforcement.

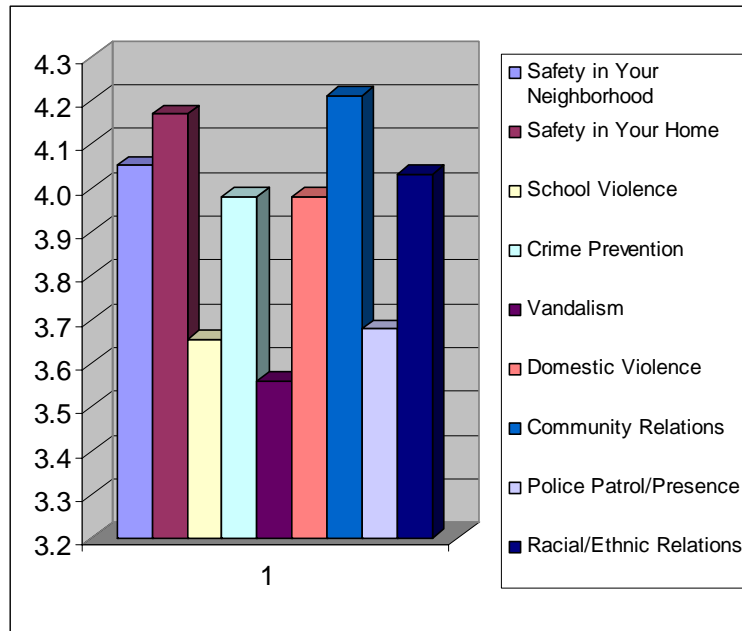
## Cumberland Police Programs



Another program, that over 70% of people in town are aware of, is the *Citizen's Police Academy* that is offered at the Police Station. This academy is a ten-week course including classes in high-risk motor vehicle stops, drug investigations, laws of arrest, D.U.I's, radar, and use of force. These classes are helpful in teaching citizens an insider approach to the in's and out's of a police station.

In addition to these results, there were several programs, which were not widely acknowledged in Cumberland. One example is the *Motorcycle Patrol* program, which came in at a surprising low of 25%. After the recent ATV issues that shook the concerns of many in the town, it was surprising to see this program with such lack of acknowledgement among citizens. This program is designed to better assess issues, like the abovementioned topic, by use of motorcycles and off-roading equipment by the Police Department.

## Quality Of Life Issues



As for Quality of life Issues, there were 9 topics in which citizens rated on a scale of 1-5 in terms of satisfaction of the Police department in addressing these issues. By improving these quality of life issues, it would improve the day-to-day lives of everyone in the community.

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the quality of life in Cumberland. Of all the topics, one which most people feel a need for improvement is the vandalism situation. Vandalism in the crime problem category was one of the less important problems but in the quality of life category, it is the biggest concern.

Along with vandalism, police patrol/presence and school violence were also the biggest concerns in the community. In recent times, there has been more school violence than ever and with school resource officers, they seem to feel safer. Police presence was another concern that people thought would be helpful.

Of all the issues, people feel the most comfortable with safety in their neighborhoods and homes. This is a big step considering many people do not feel safe in their homes/neighborhoods. In addition, people feel that community and racial/Ethnic Relations in the community are good as well being rated a 4.2 out of 5, which is a satisfactory- excellent rating on the likert scale.

Quality of Life issues are how comfortable citizens feel in their communities in terms of safety, crime prevention, relations, violence, and vandalism. Mostly all respondents answered that they were very satisfied with the way the police are currently handling the current quality of life issues and concerns.

## Conclusion

In May 2008, Chief Desmarais, Chief of Police, Cumberland Police Department, initiated a police survey with the intent to determine where improvements are needed within the community and how the citizens of Cumberland feel about their police department. The survey was posted on the Cumberland Police Department's website and at various places around town including: the Town Hall, the Public Library, and the Police Station. The Police Department requested that town residents obtain a survey, through either hard copy or the online version, complete it and mail it back to the station. The survey was available to the town from May to mid-July: roughly a three-month period. By giving the town an ample amount of time to complete the survey, Chief Silva and the Police Department were hoping to obtain results that would enable them to keep up with the town's fast-paced and ever-changing environment and in turn, being able to provide a positive, healthy, safe atmosphere for the town.

The survey contained questions of where the respondents lived, their experience in their contact with the police department, crime problems, knowledge of police programs in town, and other quality of life issues.

As shown earlier in the survey, town was divided into five geographical areas: Ashton Berkley, Cumberland Hill, North Cumberland, and Valley Falls. Cumberland Hill returned the most surveys followed by North Cumberland and Valley Falls tied in second, followed by Ashton and then Berkley. Additionally, there was a no response category where a few residents left out where they lived.

In terms of contact with the police, there were four departments that were rated on a likert scale of 1-5. Dispatchers, Patrol Officers, Detectives, and Police

Supervisors/Management were the four that were rated. All four divisions had a satisfaction rating bordering the 90% range. Detectives and Police Supervisors/Management were the two highest areas followed by Patrol and Dispatchers. As stated earlier, it shows a great deal for the Cumberland Police Department, with all satisfaction rates in the 4-5's and above 90%.

In the crime problem section, the biggest issues in the community are the ATV/Off road vehicles, noise, and trash/abandoned cars. The less acknowledged issues that citizens feel the police handle are serious crimes, larceny and drug/alcohol related problems.

Out of all the Police programs in town, more than three quarters of the population were most aware of the Click-it or Ticket program and the DARE program. The less widely known programs are the motorcycle patrol and the STRESS program where only about a quarter of the population are aware of.

In the Quality of Life section, the biggest concerns are in the areas of vandalism, police patrol/presence, and school violence. Relations in the community with racial/ethnic groups and overall safety do not seem to be a problem with citizens.

In conclusion, the town of Cumberland residents have a 91% satisfaction rate with the current Police Administration/personnel. Citizens feel safe, comfortable, and confident with the current police in town. In addition, several people commended individual officers for the way they helped to citizens in the community with police response.