

2015 Traffic Safety Survey



Executive Summary

Summary Prepared by Debbie Rawson, MSc.
Transportation and Agriculture Services

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In April/May 2015, Strathcona County asked Strathcona County residents to provide feedback about aspects of traffic safety in the community. This is the second time this kind of survey has been completed in the County, the first having been done in 2013. The main purposes of this research were:

- To establish resident perceptions and attitudes towards traffic safety and traffic safety initiatives;
- To identify where resident perceptions and attitudes vary from best practices in traffic safety so that educational resources can be used most effectively; and
- To evaluate traffic safety initiatives in Strathcona County.

II. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire used in this study was jointly created by Strathcona County's Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs and Transportation and Agriculture Services departments. A copy of the full questionnaire can be found in the complete *2015 Traffic Safety Survey Part One: Quantitative Results* report.

Initially, the survey was administered using a random telephone survey methodology to 500 adults living in urban (70%) and rural (30%) Strathcona County. The same survey was then presented online, that allowed residents (and others who accessed the Internet) to complete. Overall, usable data was obtained from 450 people who completed the survey online.

III. RESULTS

This section of the report presents a summary of the results from both the telephone and online surveys. Differences between rural/urban, online/telephone, 2013/2015, gender or age will only be noted when significant.

A. Perceptions about Driving Behavior

Strathcona County residents were initially asked a series of questions about driving behavior in general.

With regards to running a red light, driving over the speed limit on a residential street and talking on a cell phone while driving, the great majority (>75%) of residents indicated that this behavior was Never Acceptable.

Respondents were less consistent in their opinions with regards to the acceptability of rolling a stop sign and speeding up to get through a yellow light. A significant number of residents reported that these behaviours were Seldom Acceptable and Somewhat Acceptable.

Similarly, when asked how fast it is safe to drive on a main road in Strathcona County, over half of respondents reported the posted limit, but many believed 5 km/h or 10 km/h over the posted limit was still safe. For this question, males were more likely to report it was safe to drive 10 km or more over the speed limit.

With respect to construction zones, the majority of residents felt that one should slow down to the posted speed limit any time (night or day); however, a sizable percentage thought this should only be observed if workers are present.

B. Perceptions about Personal Driving Behavior

Strathcona County residents were then asked some questions about their own driving habits.

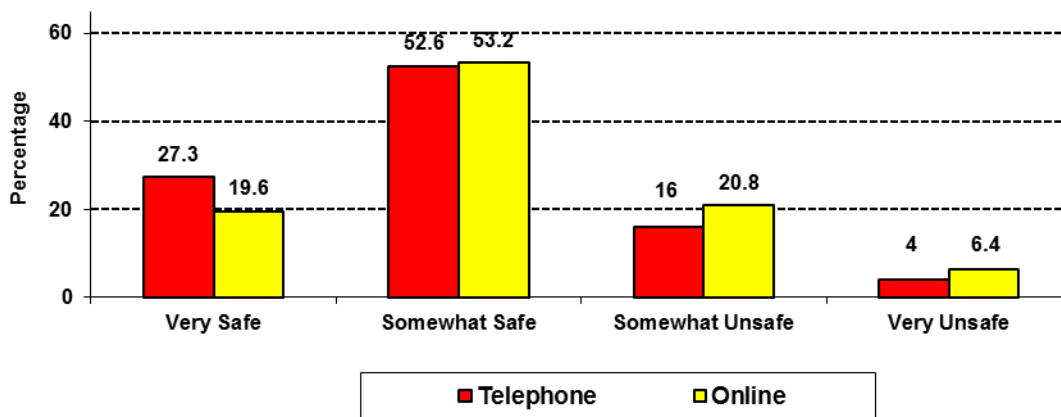
More than 90% of residents indicated that they come to a complete stop at stop signs greater than 80% of the time. Telephone respondents were more likely to report that they come to a complete stop all of the time (59%).

C. Opinions of Traffic Safety

1. Overall, how would you rate the state of traffic safety in Strathcona County?

The majority of residents (both telephone and online) feel somewhat safe, suggesting that there is still room for improvement.

FIGURE 1
Rating Overall Traffic Safety in Strathcona County

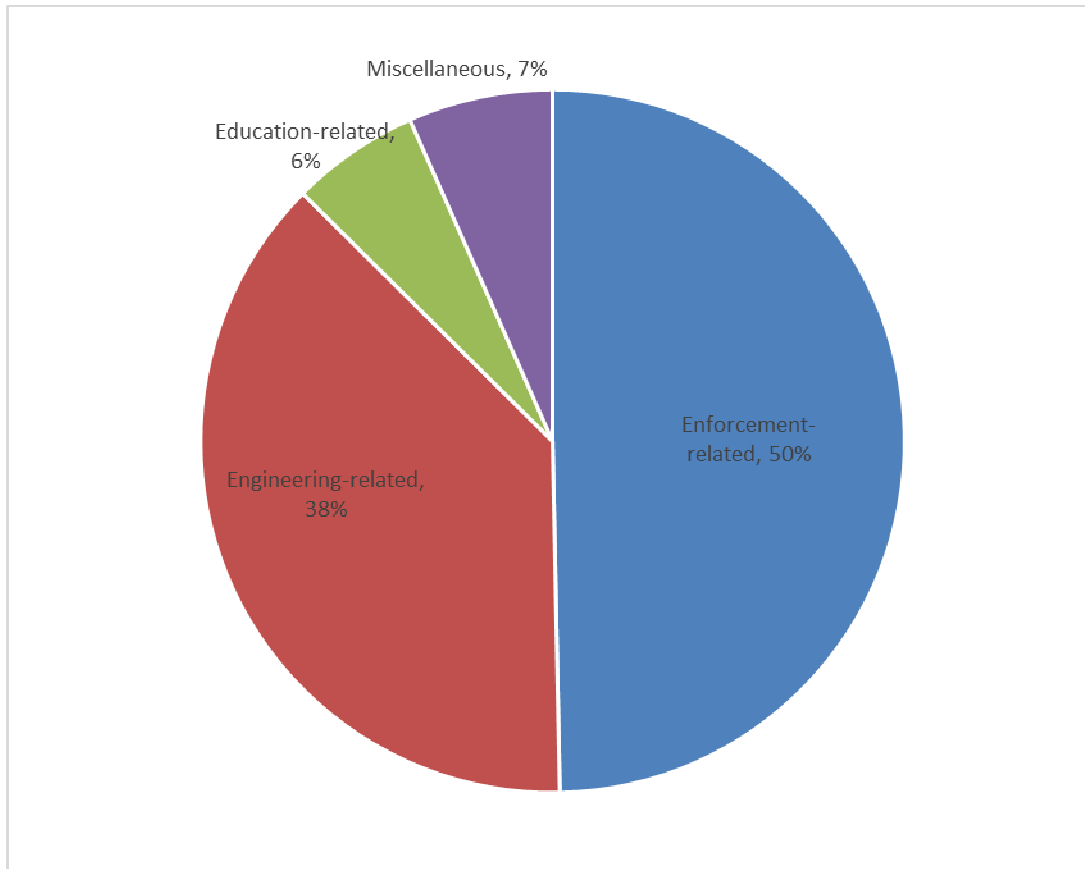


2. What are the top two actions Strathcona County could take to improve traffic safety in the community?

Results illustrated in Figure 2 show that the majority of residents perceive enforcement-related (50%) and engineering-related (38%) actions as solutions to improve traffic safety in the County.

Figure 2:

Resident responses: “What are the top two actions Strathcona County could take to improve traffic safety in our community?”

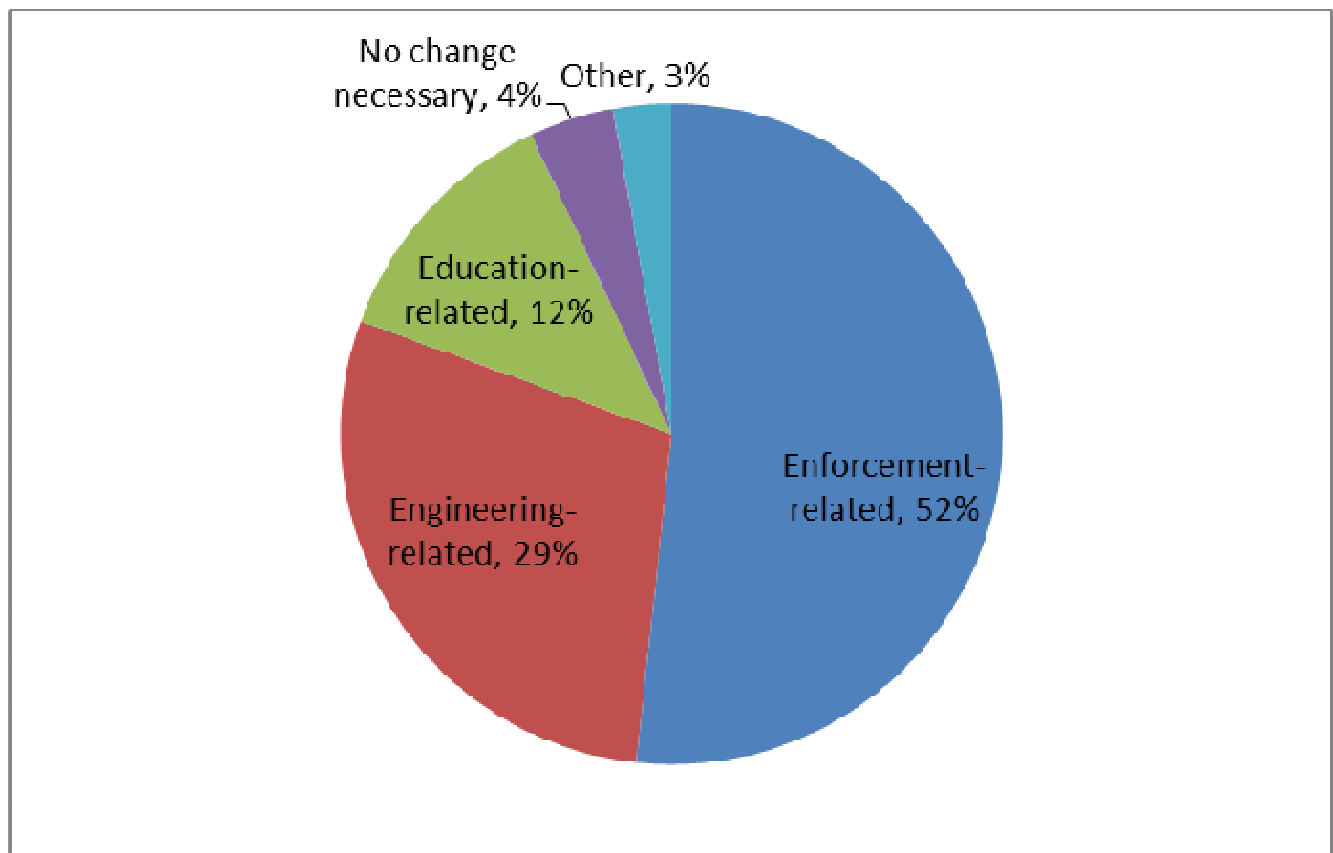


Of the enforcement-related actions, the majority of resident comments indicated speed and distracted driving were the two biggest perceived threats to safety. 48% of the suggestions to increase the enforcement of speed specifically stated that the increased enforcement was needed in residential areas or playground/school zones, as compared to 25% in 2013. This suggests that residential speeding remains a significant and growing concern in our community. Overall, one in six respondents to the survey called for the increased enforcement of distracted driving. This is also a slight increase from 2013.

One-third of engineering-related comments indicated changes to signals would improve traffic safety, including improved coordination and the installation of more protected left turn phases. Many residents also expressed that residential speed limits should be reduced.

3. In the 2013 Traffic Safety Survey, 2/3 of residents agreed that traffic safety was a concern in their neighbourhood. Moreover, 70% of these residents identified speed as the cause of this concern. In your opinion, how should the County best address residential speeding concerns?

FIGURE 3:
Resident responses: “How should the County best address residential speeding concerns?”



Almost all (94%) of the enforcement-related comments stated that more enforcement should be used to address residential speeding concerns. The majority of these comments were quite general, but 17% specifically identified the use of photo radar. Conversely, 3% of comments specifically stated that they wanted residential enforcement to come in the form of manned only.

Half of engineering-related comments related to traffic calming to manage residential speeding. Ninety percent of these comments supported its use. The majority of these comments specifically spoke to the use of speed bumps/humps. Decreasing residential speed limits was the next most common engineering-related response.

D. Attitudes toward Traffic Safety Initiatives in Strathcona County

Residents were then asked to rate a series of statements about traffic safety on the basis of how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

There is very strong agreement (>75%) in the County that traffic enforcement makes our roads safer. There is also a high level of agreement (>60%) that Strathcona County is always working to improve road safety.

The majority of residents also agree that red light cameras make intersections safer, and that there is not enough traffic enforcement in the County, but a significant number of residents also disagree with these statements.

Similarly, support for traffic calming is a more divisive issue, with the majority of residents supporting its implementation, but a significant number of residents opposing it.