



&  
**LACOMBE POLICE  
SERVICE**



**2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



*PHOTO - Cst. Michelle Wilzer & Janna Simmerson*

***TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND SECURE  
COMMUNITY FOR ALL TO LIVE, WORK  
AND PLAY***



**LACOMBE POLICE SERVICE  
LACOMBE POLICE COMMISSION  
Annual Report 2020**

### Message from the Chair of the Police Commission

On behalf of my colleagues on the Lacombe Police Commission, I am pleased to contribute to the Lacombe Police Service Annual Report to the Community.

The Lacombe Police Commission (LPC) is appointed by the City of Lacombe to provide civilian oversight to the Lacombe Police Service in a body that acts independently of City Council. The LPC is the vital link between the community and the police with a mandate to balance requirements of public accountability with those of police independence. In accordance with the Alberta Police Act, the Lacombe Police Commission is responsible to ensure the community receives adequate and effective policing.

While the words, “adequate” and “effective” feel soft and non-descriptive, they are interpreted and applied by the LPC under the supervision of the Solicitor General and Alberta Justice with the following guidelines:

1. Adequate policing is equitable and efficient:
  - i. Equitable means it provides the community the standard of service they both need and desire.
  - ii. Efficient means that they balance the needed and desired standard of service against the cost of providing that service.
2. Effective means it develops and meets community specified levels and standards of services.
  - i. Levels of service means the resources available to police the community including number of members and civilians of an agency, availability of members to do work, and facilities and equipment.
  - ii. Standards of service are the nature and quality of the work provided including skill, knowledge, ability of staff; equipment and specialized resources; and internal oversight which includes supervision, management, policies, procedures, planning and reporting.

Specifics of the responsibility of the Lacombe Police Commission include:

1. The LPC represent interests and concerns of public and municipal council to the Chief of Police.
2. With the Chief of Police, the LPC is to develop yearly plans or priorities and strategies for policing that reflects community and council interests.
3. The LPC is to monitor the implementation and progress of police performance against the yearly policing plan.
4. The LPC is to assist chief to address public complaints and to appoint the Public Complaint Director who acts independently of the Lacombe Police Service.
5. The LPC appoints the Chief of Police subject to ratification by municipal council.
6. The LPC prepares and presents the Lacombe Police Service budget for review and funding by the City of Lacombe and then allocates and supervises use of those funds and compliance with the budget.

During 2020, the Lacombe Police Commission focused heavily on budgeting and supporting the Lacombe Police Service first in its reaction to and then to preparedness for the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Commission also approved a three year Human Resource plan. The coming year of 2021 will see the Commission continue to monitor budget compliance but will turn its energies to commission member education, Oversight Standards compliance, and development of a new three year strategic plan.

I would like to give a special thank you to my Commission colleagues: Judy Lucht, John Walker who has retired from the Commission effective December 31, 2020, Sonja Dykslag, Edith McKinlay, Reuben Konnik (our City Council member), Elaine Willette-Larsen and Brad Pears (our Public Complaints Director) all of whom willingly give of their time to allow us to be an effective governance body. The Commission welcomes Cameron Penstone as a new member for 2021 and will be seeking one new member in the fall of 2021 to commence their term in January 2022.

The LPC thanks the City of Lacombe including Council, management and staff for their ongoing support of the century old foresight of our municipal founders in the creation of the Lacombe Police Service. Having our own police service to serve and protect the City of Lacombe is vital to our community's continued economic and social vibrance.

And finally, on behalf of the Commission we thank Chief Lorne Blumhagen as well as all of the sworn and civilian members of the Lacombe Police Service for their continued exemplary service and dedication to providing adequate (and in our eyes more than adequate) and effective policing to our community.

**Corey Gish**  
**Lacombe Police Commission Chair**

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## Lacombe Police Service - Annual Report 2020

### Message from the Chief of Police

*In partnership with the Lacombe Police Commission, I am pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report to the community.*

*2020 recognized continued growth and change for our Service. The Covid-19 pandemic also presented many challenges as the Service developed and implemented new emergency management plans for the Police Service while contributing to the overall response by the City of Lacombe emergency management team. In 2019 a new (2019 to 2021) 3-year strategic plan was developed which included priorities in the areas of Exemplifying Excellence in Policing, Recruiting and Retention of Staff, Reducing Crime and Victimization, Strengthening Community Partnerships, Improved Traffic Safety, Excellence in Police Service Delivery. In 2020 the Service maintained a focus on all areas identified in the 2019 to 2021 strategic plan.*

*We continued to provide enhanced service delivery to the citizens of Lacombe through our various positions. Unfortunately, due to resourcing issues our Community Liaison Position was suspended in September of 2020. Our Crime Reduction Team continues to focused on serious crime investigations and crime reduction initiatives. In April of 2020 one of our Crime Reduction Team members was seconded to the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team in Red Deer. This partnership provides valuable learning and resource opportunities to enhance our abilities to combat organized crime in our Province and Community. In support of our rural communities and law enforcement agencies the LPS is committed to sharing of information and resources to identify and apprehend prolific offenders who commit crime in our communities.*

*In 2020 the Service formally started an expansion of their dispatch services to include monitoring for Community Peace Officers in Lacombe and neighbouring Counties. This expansion is in support of our partner agencies and helps enhance officer safety for our law enforcement partners.*

*In the area of Improved Traffic Safety, we focused on enforcement around high collision locations, traffic education initiatives and maintained conducted a number of check stops throughout the year. A full time traffic member position has been developed and will be implemented in 2021.*

*To fill vacancies and support expansion of personnel, while addressing Recruitment and Retention, 2020 saw Cst. Marsollier graduate from recruit training in February of 2020. This recognized a total authorized sworn member strength of 22 police members plus one secondment to ALERT.*

*The Service continues to maintain compliance standards and training to ensure Excellence in Policing. In the spring of 2020 the Service received its final audit report from October of 2019 when the Service underwent a Provincial Standards Audit conducted by the Alberta Solicitor Generals Department. The audit concluded that the Lacombe Police Service met or exceeded the requirements in all areas. In alignment with the audit the Lacombe Police Commission completed a Community Survey with the citizens of Lacombe in which the Police Service received an 82% satisfaction rating. We also work with our Public Complaints Director to ensure any complaints against the Service or members are addressed within the set guidelines.*

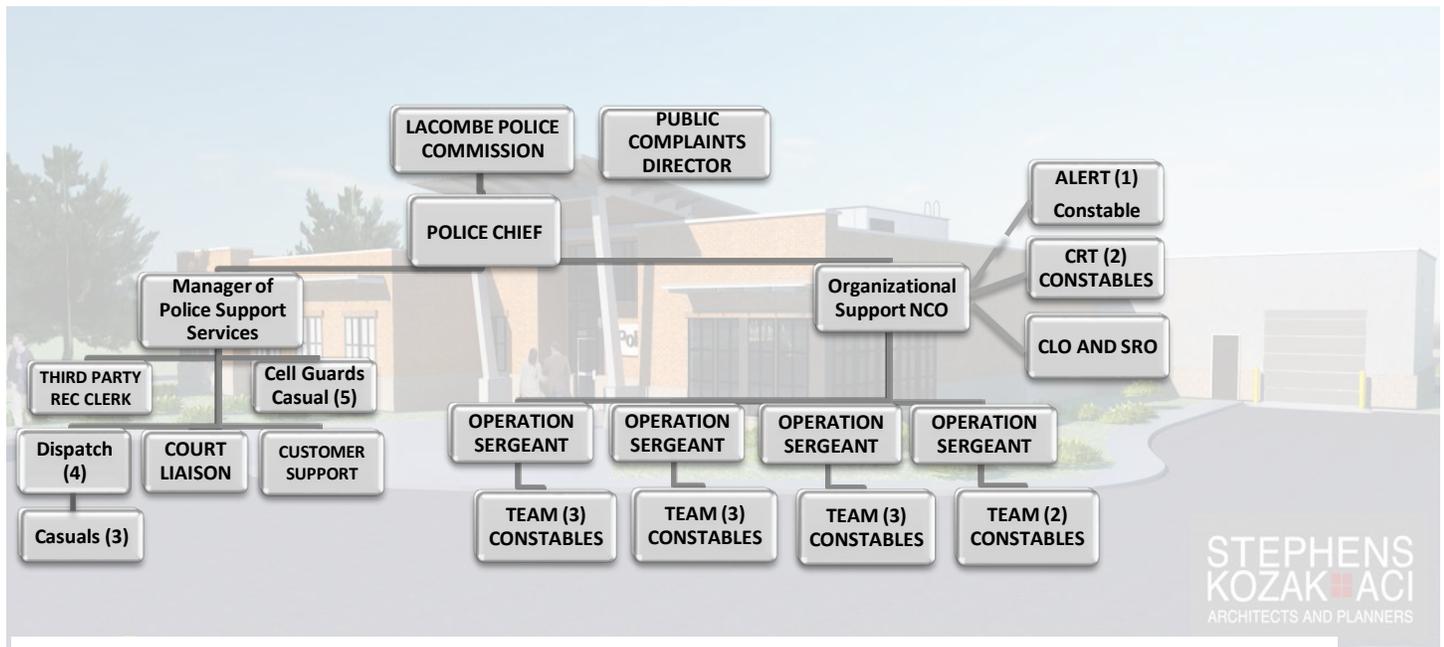
*In 2020, the Lacombe Police Service received 5,254 calls for service. This figure represents a 24% decrease from 2019 where there were a total of 6,953 calls for service. 2020 calls for service were 19% below the 5-year average of 6,472. 2020 recognized an 18% increase in crimes against a person, 15% decrease in crimes against property, 13% increase in drug offences, and 30% decrease in other criminal code offences with impaired driving down 58%. Provincial Act offences saw a significant increase at 51%. This increase is related to additional Covid-19 compliance complaints and Mental Health Act occurrences. In all categories the number of charges laid decreased to 1,877 which represents a 41% decrease below 2019.*

*The Lacombe Police Service remains committed to enhancing public safety and meeting the needs of our community.*

*Lorne Blumhagen  
Chief of Police*



## Human Resources



The Lacombe Police Service experienced only minor staffing changes in 2020. Cst. Brett Marsollier joined the Service in March after completing recruit training with the Edmonton Police Service, while another police officer resigned to explore other opportunities. The LPS maintained four positions outside of general duties with a slight reconfiguring of resources. The Crime Reduction Unit maintained two positions with an additional member being assigned to a 3-year term with the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT). The ALERT Team works collaboratively with Police agencies investigating everything from drug and gun trafficking to child exploitation with the goal of creating safer communities. The Community Liaison position was reassigned back to patrols while the School Resource Officer position continued to support staff and students within WCPS. There were no changes experienced with civilian staff in 2020. The 2020 authorized staffing complement for LPS was:

- **21 sworn police officers (plus one ALERT member position)**
- **8 full time and 2 part-time civilian support staff, with 3 Casual civilian support staff**

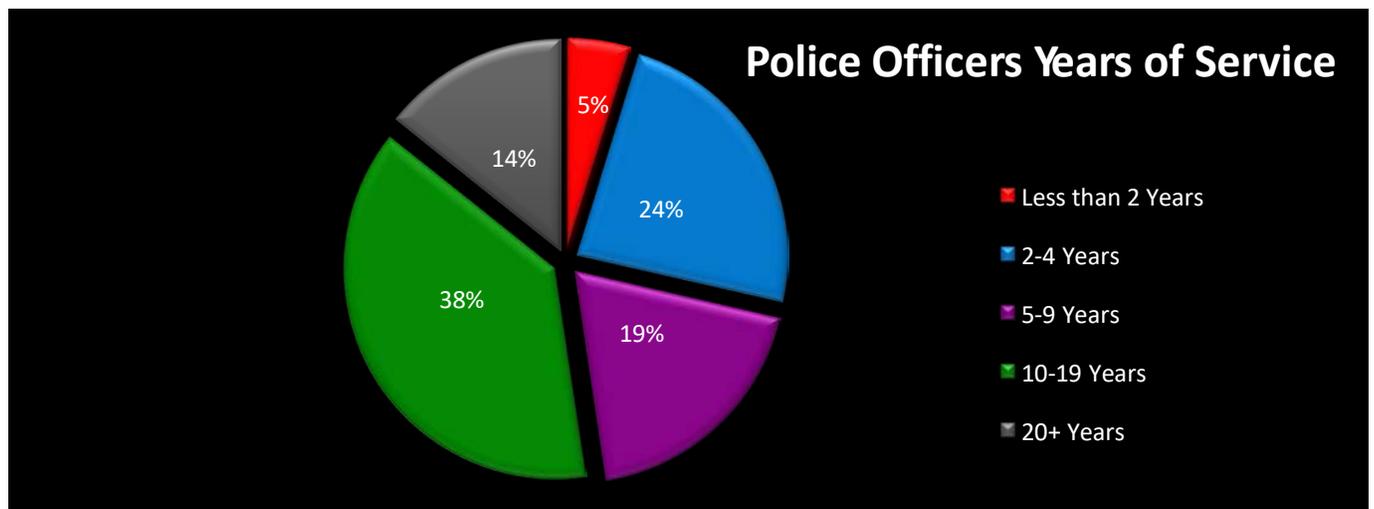
This represents a “Police to Population” ratio of 676 to 1 which is in line with the Human Resource Plan. This is approximately 25% lower than the national average of 541 and 14% lower than the Alberta average of 593. Based on a 1.47% year-over-year increase, the population of Lacombe in 2020 was 14,191 which represents a change of 5.24% from 2015. This compares to the provincial average of 6.86% and the national average of 5.27% for the same time period.

## Human Resources

Authorized Strength - 21 sworn members

Actual Strength - 19 sworn members

Gender Demographics of Police Officers



Support Staff - 19 civilian members

Manager of Police Support Services - 1

Dispatchers - 4

Court Liaison - 1

Front Counter - 1

Permanent Part Time - 2

Casual Administrative Associates - 3

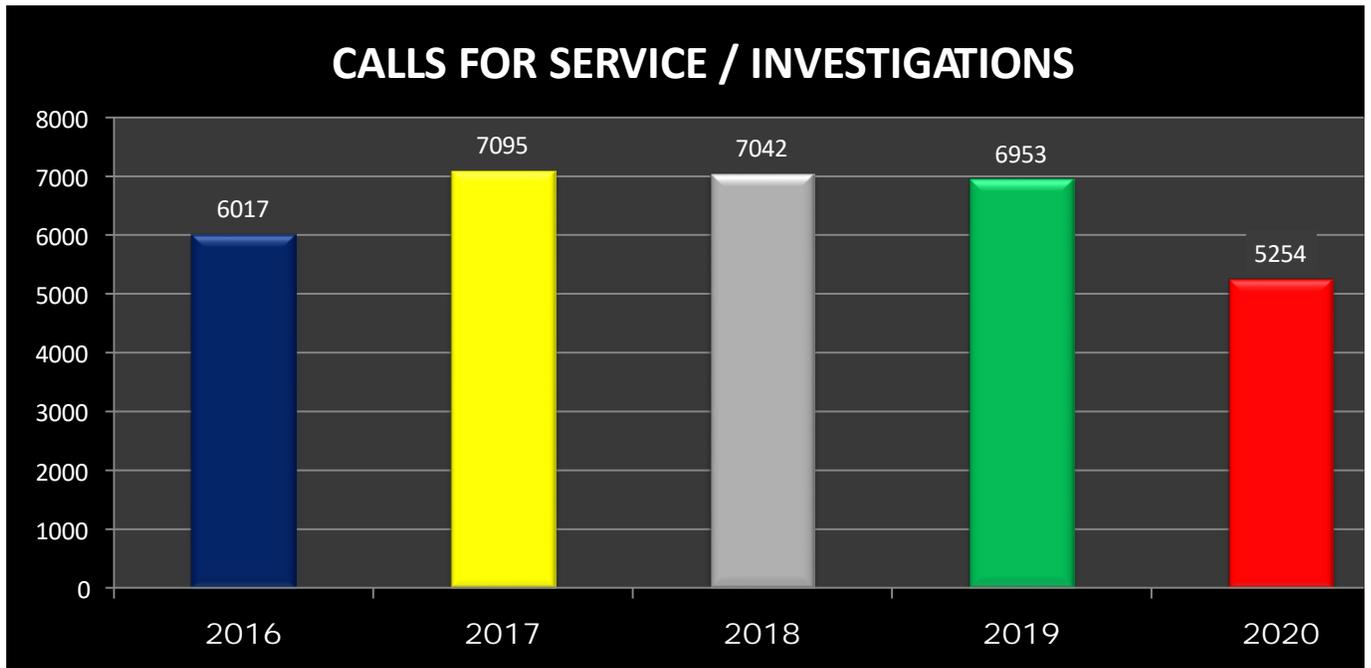
Cell Guards - 5

Criminal Record Check - 1

Casual Maintenance - 1



## Operational Highlights – Calls for Service



### CALLS FOR SERVICE

In 2020, there were 5,254 total calls for service. This figure represents a 24% decrease from 2019 where there was a total of 6,953 calls for service. 2020 shows 19% below the 5-year average of 6,472 calls for service. The numerical breakdown of offences can be found under the operational highlights (Crime Stats).

The year 2020 was an unprecedented and challenging year as a result of Covid-19. A review of the calls for service categories over the past year shows a decrease in calls of uttering threats (-11%), frauds (-15%), break and enters (-49%), mischiefs (-23%), theft over \$5,000 (-7%) and possession of stolen property (-40%). Domestic violence calls in 2020 decreased 16% from 260 calls received in 2019 to 219 calls received in 2020. Mental Health calls in 2020 increased 27% to 136 calls for service up from 107 calls were received in 2019.

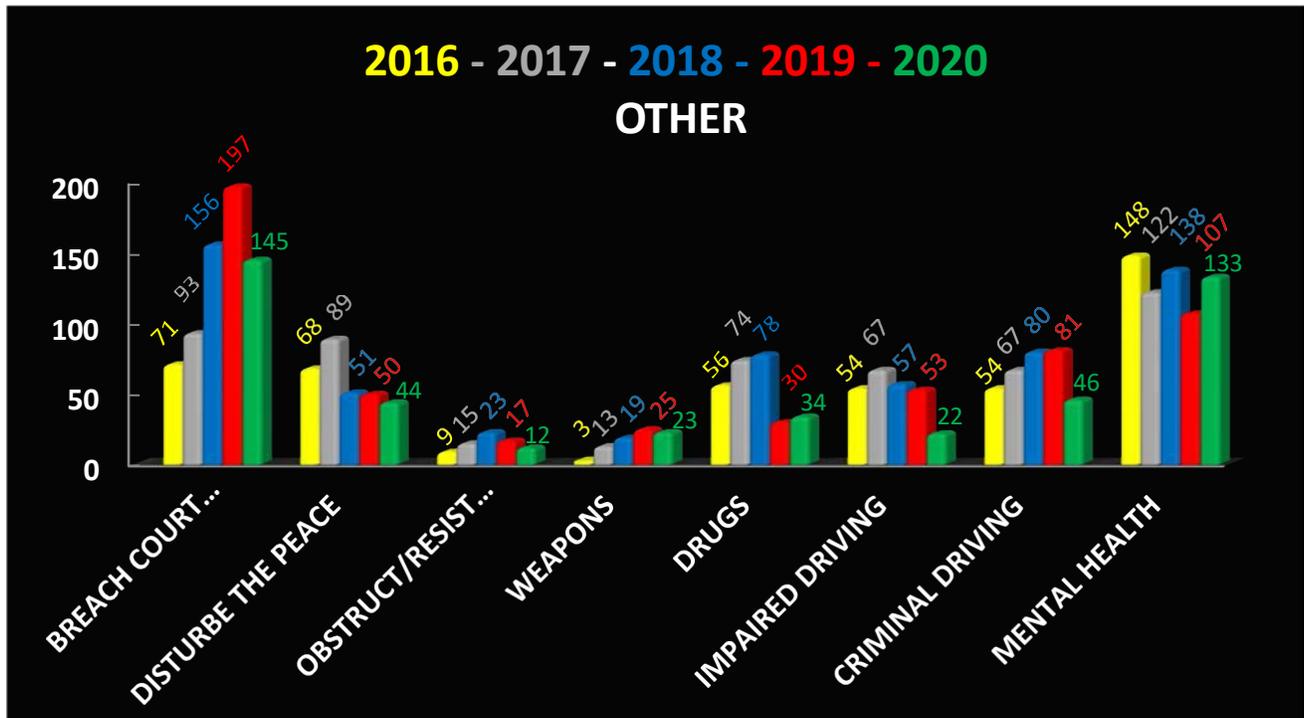
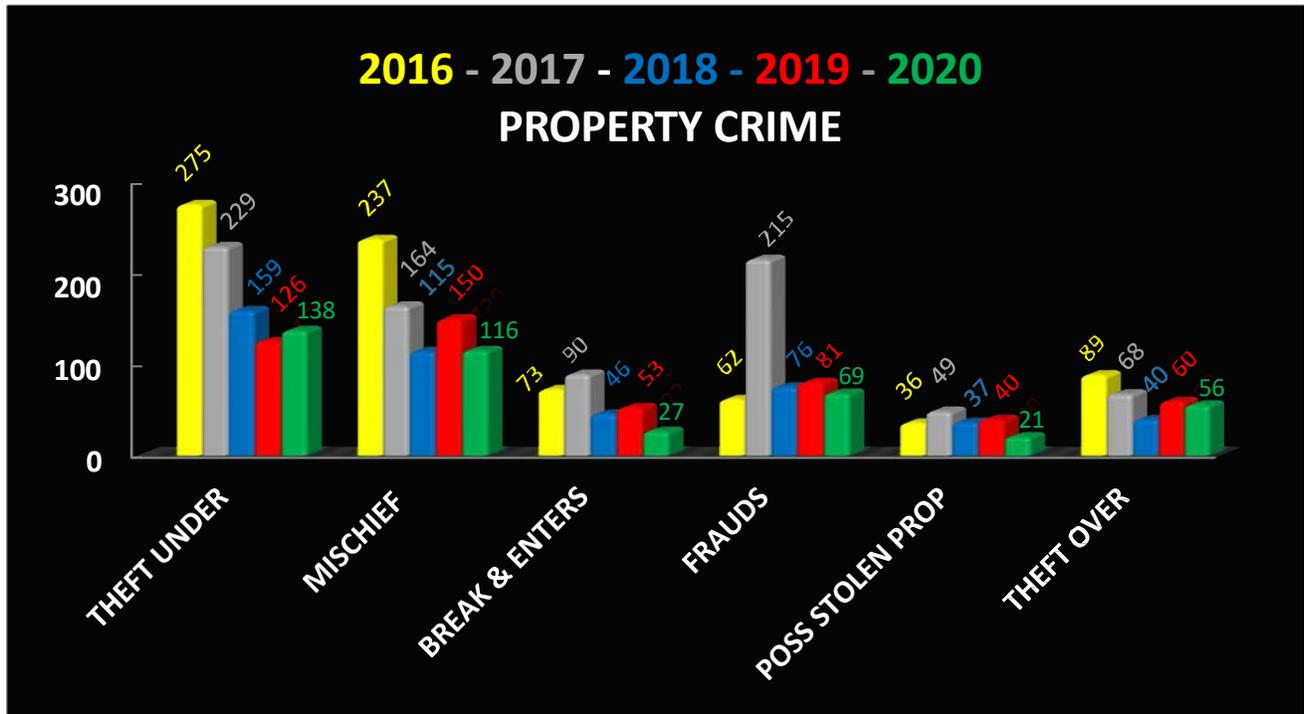
The Crime Reduction Team, continued to build capacity within the Lacombe Police Service in 2020. CRT members led the investigation of a homicide which occurred in December of 2019, as well as co-ordination with front line members focusing on emerging crime trends. This increased focus resulted in the monitoring and eventual closure of local crime properties as well as the execution of several warrants which resulted in the seizure of numerous firearms and drugs. CRT partnered with several external agencies in joint projects focusing on prolific offenders in Lacombe and surrounding communities. These targeted investigations have been very successful in 2020.

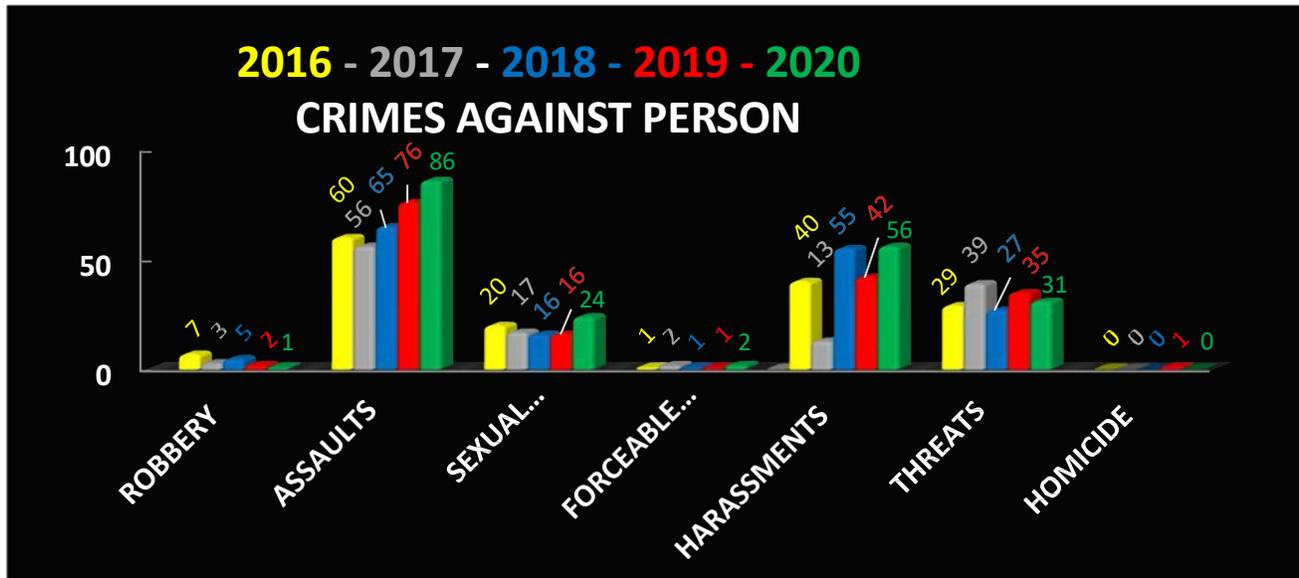
AVERAGE DISPATCH TIME – 1.39 Minutes

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME – 3.83 Minutes



Operational Highlights – Property Crime / Other Stats





**CRIME STATS ↓ ↑ BETWEEN 2020 - 2019**

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ↓ PROPERTY CRIME (-15%)   | ↑ CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS (+18%) |
| ↓ IMPAIRED DRIVING (-58%) | ↑ FAMILY DISPUTES (+14%)        |
| ↓ DRUG CHARGES (+13%)     | ↓ BREAK AND ENTERS (-49%)       |
| ↓ FRAUDS (-15%)           | ↑ MENTAL HEALTH (+27%)          |

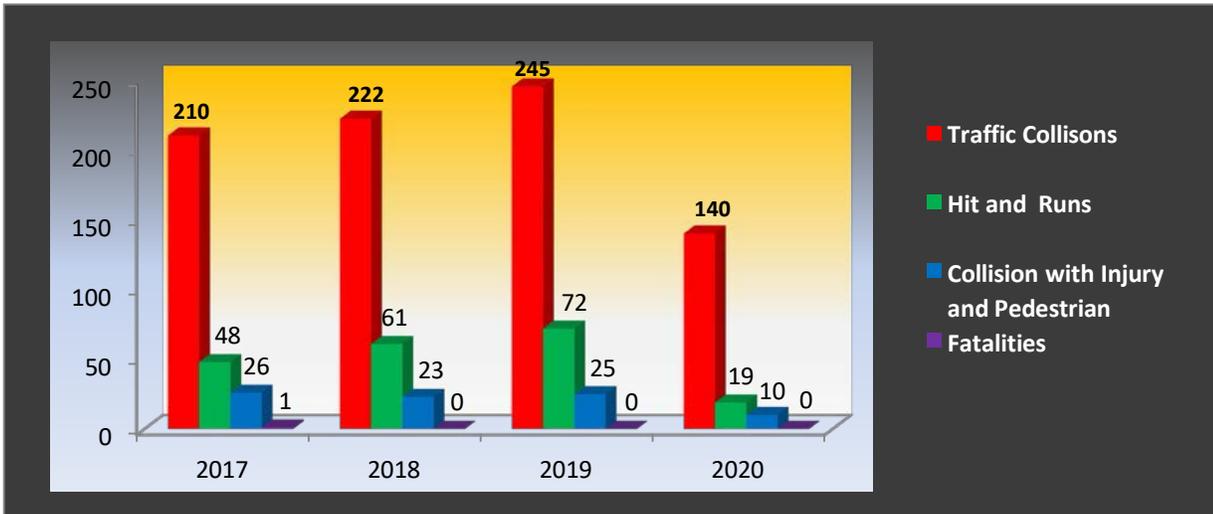
There was an 18% increase in crimes against a person, 15% decrease in crimes against property, 13% increase in drug offences, and 30% decrease in other criminal code offences with impaired driving showing a 58% decrease. Provincial Act offences increased by 51% for 2020. In 2019 a total of 3,194 charges were laid in comparison to 2020 where there were 1,877 charges laid. This represents a 41% decrease in charges laid in 2020. Of note, Impaired Driving offences have changed in Alberta with the implementation of the Immediate Roadside Sanctions Program in December.

CSI (Crime Severity Index) numbers reported from 2019 were favorable again for the Lacombe Police Service with a result of 79. This rating places Lacombe at the Canadian average and 117<sup>th</sup> amongst other communities. This CSI reporting number slightly increased from the 2018 result of 66. In the violent crime category of the CSI, LPS was ranked at 123<sup>rd</sup> in 2019 compared to 210<sup>th</sup> in 2018. The non violent crime did decrease to 113<sup>th</sup> in 2019 from 116<sup>th</sup> in 2018. Future strategic plans will give consideration to the above results when developing new service initiatives and crime analysis reports will continue to monitor these trends and the impacts they have on the community.



Operational Highlights – Traffic Stats

**Figure 1: 2017-2018-2019-2020 Collision Breakdown**



**Figure 2: 2017- 2018- 2019-2020 Traffic Enforcement Breakdown**





## Operational Highlights – Traffic

A collision analysis shows the breakdown of statistics for traffic offences and its related collisions that occur within the city limits of Lacombe in 2020. These statistics will also be compared to ones gathered in previous years to give an indication of areas of concern and will assist with logistic, infrastructure and enforcement plans.

The highest concentration of collisions is still noted to be at the intersection of Highway 12 and Highway 2A with a second area of concern at Woodland Drive and Highway 2A. During peak times these areas continue to be two of the busiest locations in the city especially factoring in the stoppages for trains, service roads and business access. It should be noted that both locations are also truck routes having numerous commercial vehicles traveling in all directions.

In 2020 the City of Lacombe had 140 reported collisions with 10 resulting in injuries with no fatalities. This represents a significant decrease from 2019 which can be directly attributed to lower traffic volumes due to health measures implemented as a result of Covid-19. The majority of collisions remain consistent between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm.

A continued goal of the Lacombe Police Service is visibility and enforcement throughout the city with concentration in heavier high priority areas such as school zones and high traffic areas. As the Lacombe Police Service resource numbers increase, and the upcoming assignment of a member to a traffic specific role, increased education and enforcement will be the focus for 2021. The Police Service will also work with the City to assist with roadway infrastructure issues to enhance traffic safety. This will assist in continuing our trend of reducing property damage and injury related collisions with the City limits.

New tougher Provincial Impaired driving sanctions came into effect in 2020 under the Immediate Roadside Sanction program, commonly referred to as an IRS. These sanctions impose increased fines, license suspensions and vehicle seizures as a result of drug or alcohol related impaired driving. An Immediate Roadside Sanction is not a criminal offence and therefore will avoid the traditional Provincial Court process. Check Stops and mandatory alcohol screening which authorizes police officers to request a breath test for blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from any driver they lawfully stop also continued in 2020. There were 15 drivers charged for operating a motor vehicle with a BAC over 80mg%, 7 charged with Impaired Driving and 2 charged with failure or refusing to comply with a demand.



Photo – Lacombe Against Racism peaceful protest

## Operational and Organizational Priorities

### RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Every four years the Police Service conducts a Community survey. In 2019 a survey was conducted and designed to evaluate our performance and gauge community perceptions and priorities about crime and community safety issues. The results showed that 84% of respondents felt our members were polite, courteous, helpful and professional while 82% felt we did a good job overall on the various functions we perform.

The survey respondents felt our policing priorities should include:

- 1. Crimes against persons**
- 2. Drugs**
- 3. Impaired Drivers**
- 4. Property crime**
- 5. Traffic safety**
- 6. Frauds and scams**

As we saw the increasing and emerging crime trends central Alberta was experiencing, we realized we needed to re-evaluate our Policing Performance and Strategic Plan to not only reflect the citizen survey priorities, but also to properly respond to emerging crime trends impacting Lacombe.

In our three-year strategic plan (2019-2021), we have identified strategies to achieve the following priorities and goals:

- 1. EXEMPLIFY EXCELLENCE IN POLICING**
  - 1. Provide Professional Service Delivery*
  - 2. Maintain High Professional Standards*
  - 3. Cost Effective Service Delivery*
  - 4. Improve Professional Standards*
- 2. RECRUITING, SELECTION AND RETENTION OF QUALITY STAFF**
  - 1. Recruit and Select Quality Applicants*
  - 2. Retention of Staff*
- 3. REDUCE CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION**
  - 1. Reduce Violent Crime*
  - 2. Reduce Domestic Violence*
  - 3. Reduce Property Crime*



## Operational and Organizational Priorities

### RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

#### 4. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

1. *Crime Prevention and Education*
2. *Youth Safety and Empowerment*

#### 5. IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY

1. *Reduce Traffic Collisions*

#### 6. EXCELLENCE IN POLICE SERVICE DELIVERY

1. *Improve clearance (solve) rates*
2. *Enhance Collaboration and Partnerships*
3. *Focus on Diversity and Inclusion*

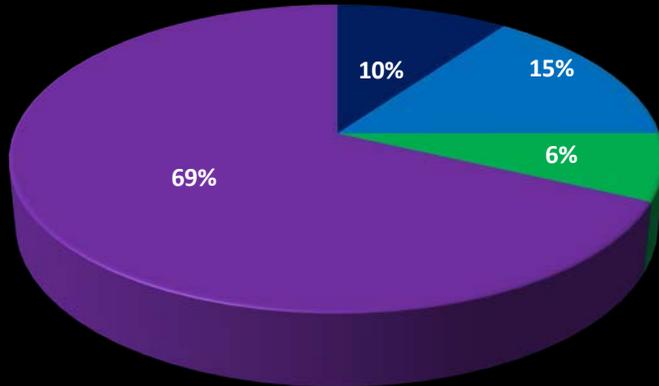
Front counter hours changed temporarily in 2020 to 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday as a result of Covid-19. In order to ensure a healthy work place was maintained, front counter window barriers remained closed to visitors while access to inside the office became limited to essential staff only. Alberta Health Services safety protocols were implemented and followed throughout the year. Complaints were still accepted at the front counter of the police station but were encouraged to be made by telephone. The Lacombe Police Service continues to provide 24/7 local call answering, police dispatch and policing services, monitoring services of external CPO agencies also continued throughout 2020.



Photos – Parade of Gratitude held in appreciation of front line health and essential service workers

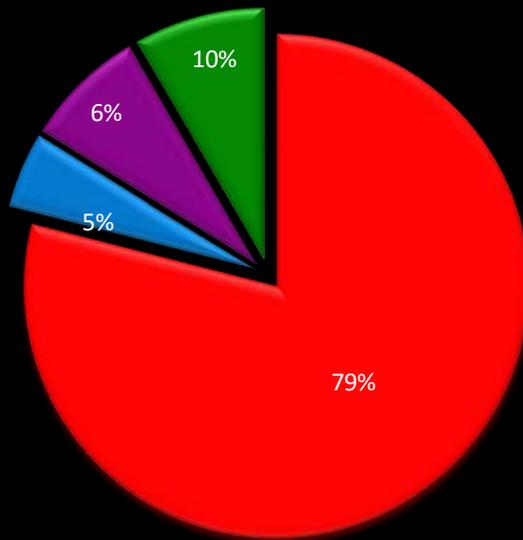


## 2020 REVENUE SOURCES



- GOVERNMENT GRANTS
- SALE OF GOODS/SERVICES
- FINE REVENUE
- TAX SUPPORTED

## 2020 EXPENDITURES



- SALARY / BENEFITS
- EXTERNAL CONTRACTS
- INTERNAL CHARGES
- OPERATIONS

The 2020 Operating Budget of \$5,194,026.00 for the Police Service was approved by Council and is highlighted by percentage above. \$3,532,526.00 of the budget was tax supported. (\$249.00 per capita cost based on population of 14,191).



## Professional Standards – Complaints, Concerns, Compliments

Police officers are not only in positions of authority; they are more importantly in positions of trust. Through our own internal policies and processes, as well as provincial legislation, we hold police officers to the highest legal and ethical standards. If one of our members does not live up to these expectations, whether as a result of a public complaint or an internal review, we investigate the matter, or cause it to be investigated by an independent agency with a view of not only holding people accountable for their actions, but also to provide us with opportunities for learning and best practices.

The Lacombe Police Commission monitors the public complaints process, handles complaints regarding the Chief of Police, and handles appeals regarding the policies of, or services provided by the Lacombe Police Service. The Lacombe Police Commission and LPS track all citizen complaints and concerns.

Under the Alberta *Police Act*, the responsibility for the investigation of complaints against Police Service policies or service provided, as well as against specific police officers lies with the Chief of Police. The Police Commission is the civilian body which is empowered to oversee the complaints process and act as the appeal body for complaints regarding the policies of, or services provided by, the Lacombe Police Service. The Lacombe Police Commission has a Public Complaint Director who:

- **Provides an independent review of the citizen complaints process of the Lacombe Police Service;**
- **Monitors the Police Service investigation of public complaints to ensure the investigations are impartial, fair, thorough and timely;**
- **Reports his or her findings directly to the Lacombe Police Commission;**
- **Makes public presentations to interested groups concerning the complaint process; and**
- **Receives complaints from the public. The purpose of the complaint process is to resolve issues between citizens and the Lacombe Police Service in a fair, transparent and reasonable manner.**

In 2020 there were two (2) instances where the Lacombe Police Service received complaints that were initiated internally and three (3) instances when members of the community brought forward complaints or concerns. In both cases involving Internal complaints, complaints or concerns were resolved by informal means. There were two misconduct investigations completed for Excessive Use of Force and investigated under the Police Service Regulations. One of these investigations was resolved through internal guidance and performance supplements, while the second complaint was determined to be unjustified. This unjustified finding was ultimately appealed to the Law Enforcement Review Board and determined to be frivolous and vexatious. A third misconduct complaint was received but was not accepted as it did not meet the Provincial reporting threshold. Training, mentorship and guidance will continue to be a priority of LPS to ensure compliance in accordance with the Provisions of the Police Act. *(We always welcome your comments, feedback or concerns. We can be reached in person, by phone or by email: 5301 Wolf Creek Drive, Lacombe, AB T4L 2H8; (403)782-3279; [police@lacombe.ca](mailto:police@lacombe.ca)*



## 2020 Organizational Awards & Recognition



In 2020 members and staff of the Lacombe Police Service were presented with a number of awards and recognition for long service:

- ❖ Sgt. John HUBBARD, Cst. Josh SMITH, Cst. Derek LEWKO, Cst. James Cowan, and Aaron Sharpe received the Alberta Long Service Medal which is issued by the Officer of the Fire Commissioner, Public Division, to Emergency personnel who have served as first responders in the Province of Alberta for 12 years or more.
- ❖ Chief Lorne Blumhagen received the Alberta Long Service Bar recognizing 32-years service as a first responder in the Province of Alberta.
- ❖ Sgt. Bryan Zens received the Alberta Long Service Bar recognizing 22-years service as a first responder in the Province of Alberta.
- ❖ Cst. James Cowan received the Lacombe Police Service 10-years Service Medal representing 10 years of Service to the City of Lacombe.
  
- ❖ Cst. James COWAN received a Lacombe ten-year service award
- ❖ Cst. Brett GIRARD received a Lacombe five-year service award
  
- ❖ Cst. Derek LEWKO was advanced to 1<sup>st</sup> Class Constable
- ❖ Cst. Christopher BARRETT was advanced to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Constable
- ❖ Cst. Mackenzie JORDAN was advanced to 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Constable
- ❖ Cst. Kristy WALKER was advanced to 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Constable
- ❖ Cst. Brett MARSOLLIER was advanced to 4<sup>th</sup> Class Constable



## Community Involvement

### SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Thanks to our continued partnership with Wolf Creek Public Schools and Lacombe County, we are able to have a **School Resource Officer (SRO)** dedicated full time to all public schools within the City. In a challenging year, the SRO continued to support staff, students, and parents in Wolf Creek School Division by utilizing various online media platforms and conducting home visits while schools turned to home based learning. The primary role of the SRO is to build relationships with the students and staff to help foster a safe learning environment.



### VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

Lacombe Victim Services opened 402 files in 2020, assisting 944 individuals while accompanying 37 individuals to court for support services. Out of those, 12 were crisis call outs. We provided 60 Victim Impact Forms, 112 restitution and financial requests. COVID affected some service delivery during lock down. We were unable to do crisis call outs, or face-to-face meetings with clients for 4 months, however our office remained open and clients were supported by phone during those unprecedented times. Our dedicated Volunteers provided over 13,000 hours of volunteer time!

VSU was unable to fundraise during 2020 due to COVID; however, we continue to receive donations from Royal Lepage Real Estate. Their Shelter Foundation supports victims of Domestic Violence. VSU hosted Debra DeWahl during Victims and Survivors of Crime Week in November, speaking about Resiliency following all COVID rules that were in place during that time.

“Our volunteer advocate’s complete online training from Justice and Solicitor General and enhanced security screening prior to assisting victims, they are on call one week per month, our dedicated volunteers banked over 13,000 hours in 2020! Last year our advocates attended online training, such as Walking through Grief, Vicarious Trauma-Strategies for Resilience, and the annual Diverse Voices Conference that deals with Domestic Violence. Our advocates also receive in house training.” Deb Barron, VSU Coordinator



## Community Involvement

COMMUNITY LIASON OFFICER (CLO): This sworn member position represented the Lacombe Police Service on a number of Community, Provincial and Police working groups in 2020. The CLO provided a resource in developing programs to reduce crime in the community while working closely with various stake holders. The CLO liaised through social media and local media to keep the community informed and on current concerns and potential problems that impact both the police and community. In September 2020, this position was reassigned to general patrol duty.

KIDS N' KOPS: Kids and Kops is a collaborative program between Big Brothers Big Sisters, Lacombe Police Service and Blackfalds RCMP. This police based mentoring program runs one week each year with a focus on building positive relations between youth and police members. Each year there is a substantial wait list to be enrolled in this 24 spot youth summer program. Due to Covid-19 health restrictions, Kids & Kops was put on hold for 2020. This is the first year it has not been offered since 2008. With health and safety as a priority, the Annual Charity Check stop was also cancelled.

LACOMBE COMMUNITY WATCH: Established in 2014, Lacombe Community Watch Association (LCWA) is a collaborative response by concerned local citizens in order to proactively counteract the measurable increase in crime.

LCWA is a registered non-profit, volunteer based, local crime watch initiative whose mandate is to create and maintain safe communities through partnership and training with local law enforcement and provincial groups.

As a banner organization encompassing **Block Parent, Citizens on Patrol and Neighborhood Watch**, LCWA endeavors to recruit, support and educate community members on the importance of individual involvement, commitment and responsibility with regards to community crime reduction and prevention efforts.

