

TBPS CSS 2019: What we learned from respondents

Executive Summary

The Citizen Satisfaction & Trust Survey (CSTS) was developed in 2018 to better inform the Thunder Bay Police Service and the community about citizens' perceptions and experiences regarding the delivery of policing services in Thunder Bay and Oliver Paipoonge. Building on the fundamentals of previous satisfaction surveys, the CSTS includes questions that measure trust. The TBPS used the services of Dr. Leisa Desmoulins and her team from Lakehead University to develop and conduct this community survey in 2018 and 2019.

The 2019 CSTS involved the same methods and questions used in 2018. The survey was conducted in October 2019. During that time, the Lakehead University research team went into the community to conduct in-person surveys, which had the same questions as the online version. This dual approach provided a greater representation of Indigenous and racialized persons as well as younger respondents. The content and methods of the CSTS provides important insights into how respondents viewed their experiences with members of the TBPS and how they perceived public safety and the police service as an organization.

A total of 1,848 citizens responded to the survey (1,421 online and 427 in-person). There were clear differences in the demographics of online respondents and in-person respondents.

- Online respondents predominantly identified as White (80%). Only 9% identified themselves as Indigenous and only 1% reported they belonged to a racialized group. The largest age range was between 45 to 65 years (43%). 89% of the online respondents indicated they had been residents of Thunder Bay for 10 years or more. 97% described Thunder Bay as their permanent home.
- In-person respondent identified themselves as White (40%), Indigenous (27%) and as a racialized group (18%). The largest age range was 18 to 24 years (48%). Only 41% indicated that they had lived in Thunder Bay more than 10 years. Only 58% described Thunder Bay as their permanent home.

Experiences with members of TBPS:

Respondents who had direct contact with members of the TBPS reported that they were treated with respect. This was a significant finding from both the online and in-person responses (88% online; 86% in person). The majority of respondents also indicated that they had confidence in calling 911 (58% online; 59% in person).

Perception of the Organization:

Online and in-person respondents differed significantly in their perceptions of TBPS' relations with community. Respondents reported differences in their perceptions that:

- TBPS is sensitive to the needs of their group (47% online; 28% in-person)
- TBPS does a good job of treating people fairly (54 % online; 26% in-person)
- TBPS does a good job of building relationships with community members and groups (49% online; 23% in-person)

- TBPS does a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to (62% online; 41% in-person)

Also, respondents reported differences in their overall confidence in the TBPS. Nearly twice as many online respondents than in-person had a great deal of confidence in their police service (43% online; 24% in-person).

Conclusion:

Online respondents consistently reported higher levels of trust and confidence in the TBPS than their in-person peers. These differences may be attributed to the demographics of each group of respondents: in-person respondents were younger and more representative of Indigenous and racialized groups. These groups traditionally have less trust and confidence in police.

Studies of trust in policing shows that younger and racialized citizens express lower trust and confidence in police [1]. Trust extends beyond citizens' satisfaction that police perform their duties effectively to include a sense that police make decisions fairly and treat citizens fairly [2]. When citizens distrust the police, the delivery of police services to all citizens is compromised by under-reporting, lack of cooperation, and citizens' perceptions that police officers are indifferent to victims [3]. Citizens' distrust compromises police service delivery.

Adding trust questions with a more representative sample through the CSTS has shown differences in citizens' perceptions of trust and confidence in the TBPS. The differences between online and in-person respondents in 2018 and 2019 suggest that the TBPS needs to do three things:

1. continue to attract more diverse members of the community to complete the CSTS.
2. encourage citizens that come to the city on a semi- or non-permanent basis to complete the CSTS;
3. maintain several consecutive iterations of the CSTS to compare year over year and gauge their progress with diverse groups' perceptions of trust and confidence in policing, while continuing its organizational change initiative.

Researcher's Recommendations:

1. The TBPS should repeat the in-person survey methods in a future iteration of the same survey to see if the results stay consistent for Indigenous, racialized, and younger respondents in Thunder Bay.
2. The TBPS should continue to expand the size of the in-person sample.
3. The TBPS should continue to reach out to organizations to advertise the CSTS to more citizens as well as regular visitors to Thunder Bay to gain a more representative sample of respondents to the online survey because in-person surveys done door-to-door are expensive and time consuming.

Background to the CSS (2019) design

Recently, the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) conducted its Citizen Satisfaction Survey (CSS) in an online format (in 2014 and 2016). In 2018, the TBPS revised its survey to hear from citizens who had not responded to the online survey and made changes to the survey format. For its revised Citizen Satisfaction & Trust Survey (CSTS) the service collected data from online and in-person respondents; narrowed the age ranges; and added question about respondents' trust and confidence in the TBPS. These changes gave the TBPS more information about respondents and their perceptions of policing in Thunder Bay. The CSTS was conducted again in 2019 to compare results to 2018.

Satisfaction with policing measures respondents' experiences and a sense that police perform their duties effectively. Trust in policing measures respondents' perceptions on whether police make decisions fairly and treat its citizens fairly [2].

Research Methods

The TBPS hired Dr. Leisa Desmoulins of Lakehead University to conduct the CSTS in 2018 and 2019. The survey was open from October 21 to November 1, 2019 through online and in-person formats with the same questions. By November 1st, a total of 1,848 respondents had completed the survey: 1,421 respondents completed the survey online and 427 completed the survey in-person.

For the 2019 CSTS, Desmoulins recruited, hired and trained graduate students from Lakehead University to go into communities to conduct in-person surveys in neighbourhoods around Thunder Bay and within organizations. Online respondents self-selected to take the CSTS.

Contexts and limitations for the 2018 CSS

When conducting surveys, researchers strive to have the same conditions for all respondents during the survey (i.e. no major announcements by TBPS, no media coverage, etc.). Fortunately, while the 2019 CSTS was open, conditions for policing in Thunder Bay stayed the same. The 2019 CSTS had three limitations:

1. Citizens with a link to the online survey format could complete it, whether they lived in Thunder Bay or not. This is a limitation of the Survey Monkey software.
2. Citizens using different devices (e.g. computer, phone) can complete the online survey more than once. This is a limitation of online surveys.
3. More women than men responded to the CSS 2019 (online=53%; in-person=63%).

Highlights

There were clear differences in the demographics of online and in-person respondents. They differed demographically for race, age, years lived in Thunder Bay, and owning one's residence versus renting it.

Online respondents identified mostly as white (80%) with few identifying as Indigenous (9%) or other racialized (1%) (NB: 10% of online respondents did not answer this question). In-person respondents also identified mostly as white (40%), with more respondents identifying as Indigenous (27%), and racialized (18%). (15% of in-person respondents did not answer the question). Online respondents were older (45-64 years = 43%) than in-person respondents (18-24 years = 48%). Online residents reported living in Thunder Bay for longer (10 years or more = 89%) than in-person peers (41%). Relatedly, nearly all online respondents called Thunder Bay their permanent home (97%), a far

higher rate than their in-person peers (58%). Finally, online respondents reported owning their own home (74%) at higher percentages than in-person respondents (19%).

Taken together, online and in-person respondents represents the population of Thunder Bay. The next section shows similarities and differences between these groups' responses to CSTS 2019.

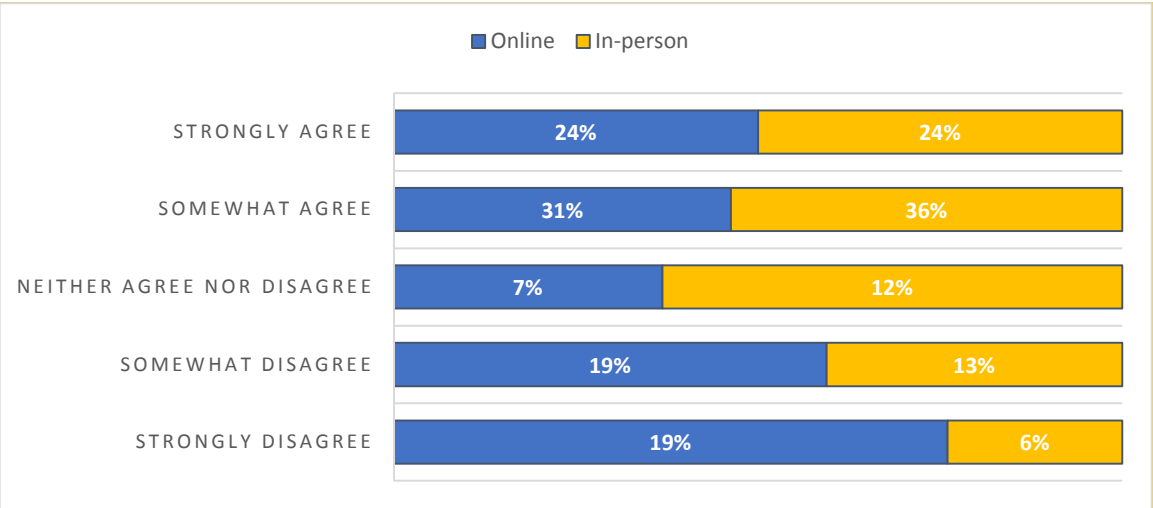
Results

In the charts that follow, online and in-person respondents' answers in Part A showed the strongest similarities. Respondents' answers in Part B showed the greatest differences.

A. Similarities

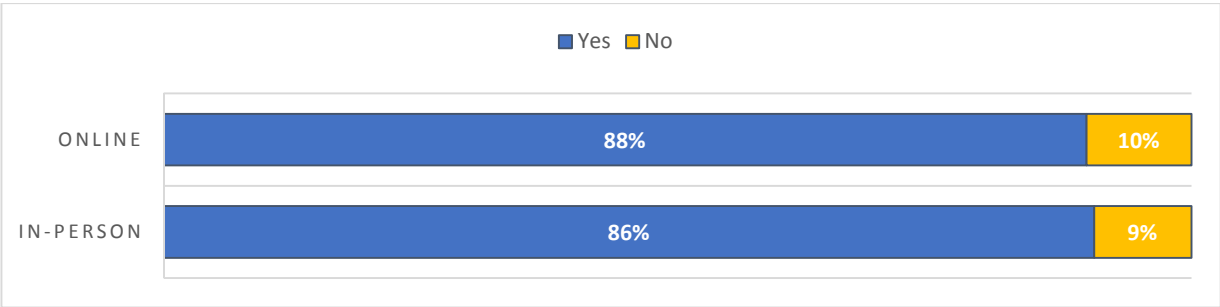
Strong similarities between online and in-person respondents included that: 1. Thunder Bay Police Service provides residents with adequate public safety information; 2. the TBPS treated respondents with respect when they had contact with TBPS officers or staff; 3. respondents had confidence calling 911 in an emergency; and 4. respondents perceived Thunder Bay to be somewhat safe.

Chart 1: Adequate public safety



Online and in-person respondents reported strong agreement that the TBPS provides residents with adequate public safety information (24% online; 24% in-person). (n/a = 0.28% online; 9% in-person)

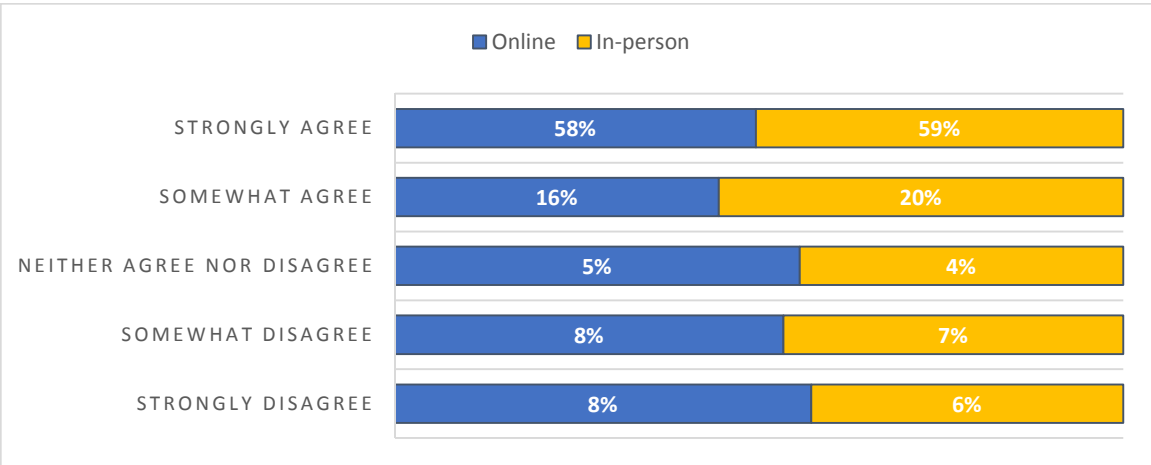
Chart 2: Treated with respect by TBPS members during contact



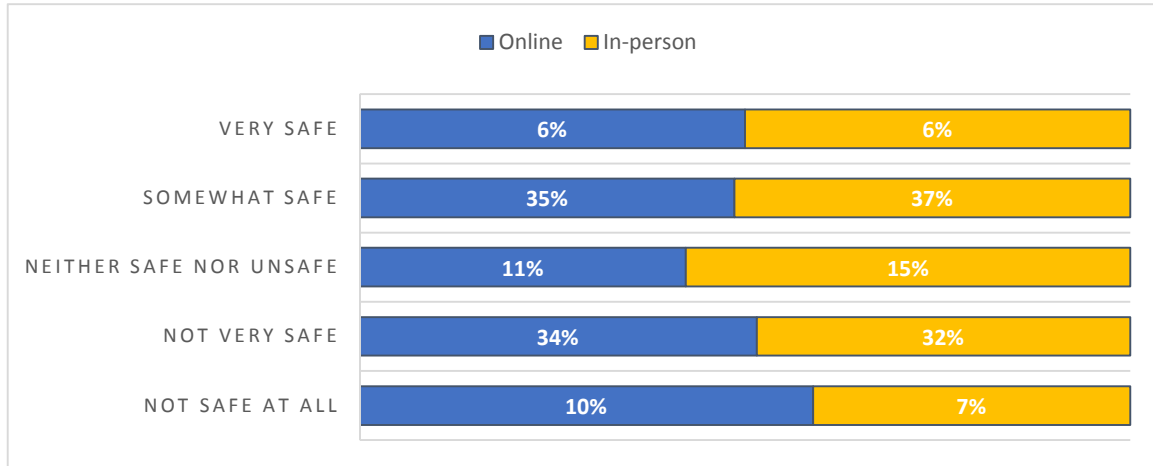
Online and in-person respondents reported strong agreement that they were treated respectfully when they had contact with TBPS officers or staff (88% online; 86% in-person). Contact included calling 911, going to the police station, speaking with an officer at home or place of employment.

(n/a = 2% online; 5% in-person)

Chart 3: Confidence in calling 911



Online and in-person respondents reported that they would have confidence calling 911 in an emergency (58% online; 59% in person). (n/a = 4% online; 4% in-person)

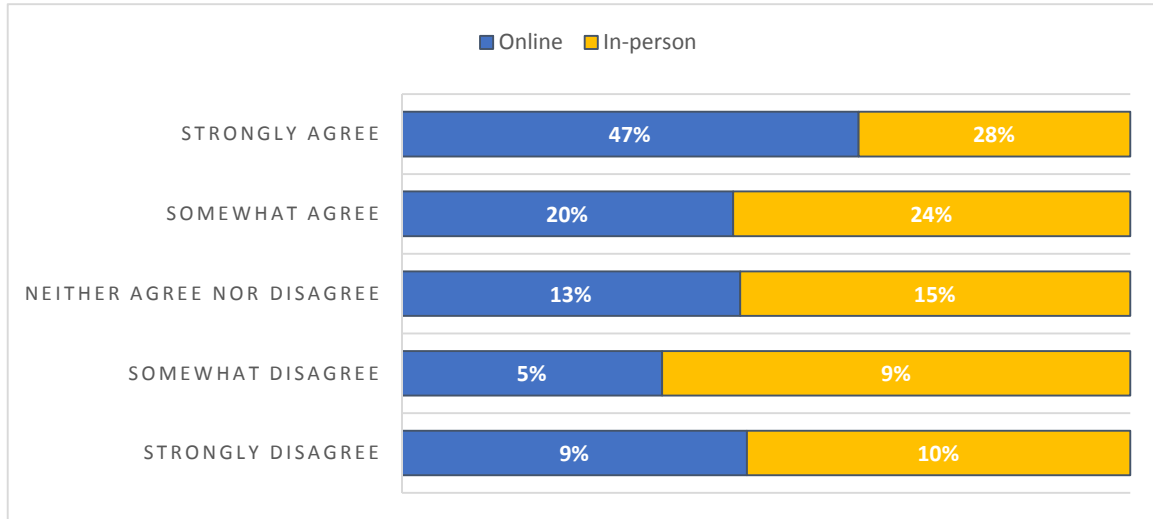
Chart 4: Safety of Thunder Bay

Online and in-person respondents reported their perspectives that Thunder Bay is somewhat safe (35% online; 37% in person). (n/a = 4% online; 4% in-person).

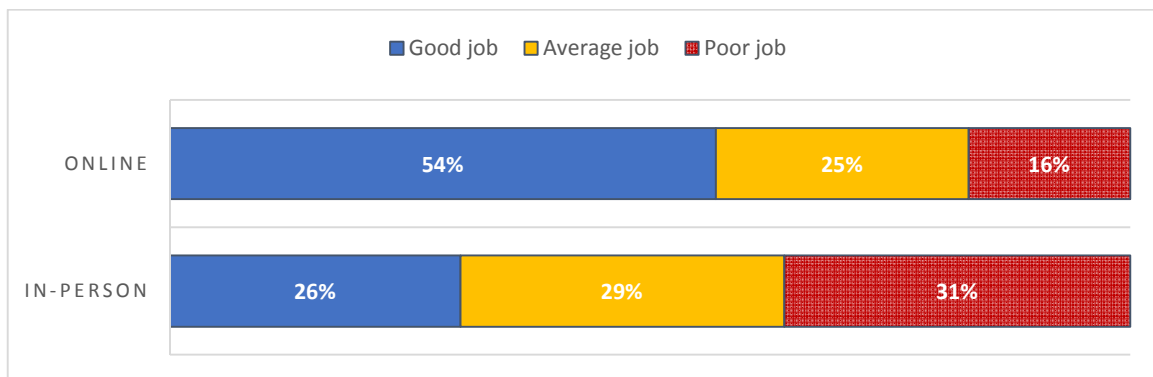
To recall, satisfaction with policing measures respondents' experiences and a sense that police perform their duties effectively [1]. CSTS respondents showed similar, strong levels of satisfaction when they had personal contact with members of TBPS. They reported positive experiences that suggest police perform their duties effectively. Conversely, online and in-person respondents reported differences in their perceptions of trust in policing.

B. Differences

Differences between online and in-person respondents included that TBPS: 1. is sensitive to the needs of my group; 2. does a good job of treating people fairly; 3. does a good job of building relationships with community members and groups; and 4. does a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to. Online respondents consistently reported higher levels than their in-person peers of trust and confidence in the TBPS as an organization.

Chart 5: TBPS is sensitive to the needs of MY group

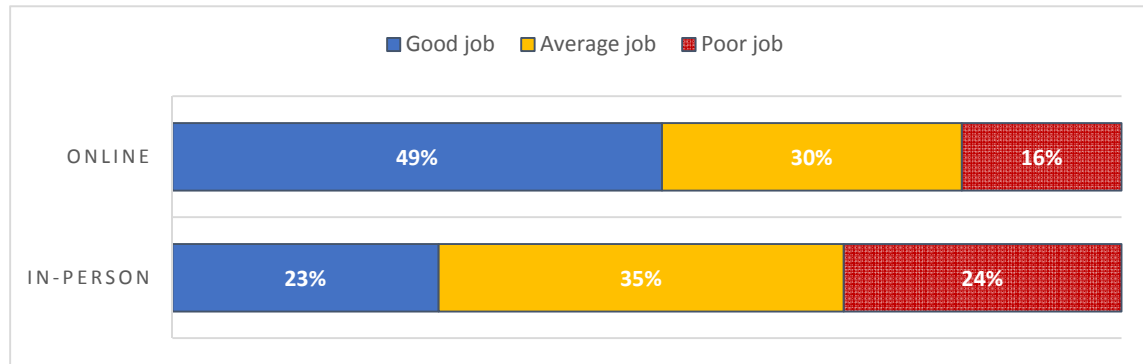
Online and in-person respondents differed when asked about TBPS' sensitivity to the needs of their group (47% online; 28% in person). (n/a = 5% online; 15% in-person). This question probes fairness in policing. To recall, trust in policing measures respondents' perceptions on whether police make decisions fairly and treat its citizens fairly [2], which the next question asked explicitly.

Chart 6: treating people fairly

Online and in-person respondents reported differences to TBPS members doing a good job of treating people fairly (54 % online; 26% in-person). (n/a = 5% online; 14% in-person). Online respondents nearly doubled their in-person peers in choosing 'good job'. In-person

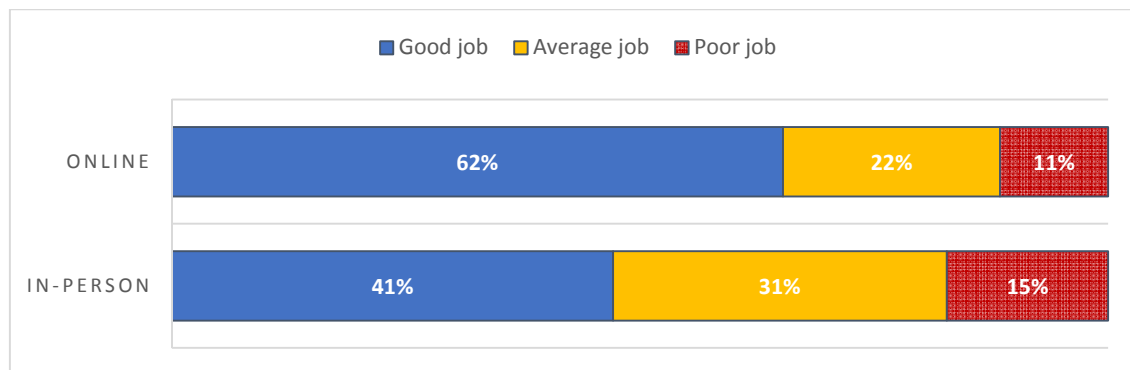
respondents nearly doubled their in-person peers in choosing ‘poor job’ treating people fairly. The chart above shows opposing perceptions of online and in-person respondents.

Chart 7: building relationships with community



Online and in-person respondents reported very diverse responses to TBPS members doing a good job of building relationships with community members and groups (49% online; 23% in person). (n/a = 5% online; 17% in-person). For this question, online respondents doubled their in-person peers for good job. The question shows that the organization needs to improve its relations with Indigenous, racialized and young people within Thunder Bay to build trust.

Chart 8: TBPS members' approachability



Online and in-person respondents reported diverse responses on TBPS members' approachability (62% online; 41% in-person). (n/a = 5% online; 13% in-person).

Respondents' answers to questions in Part B showed that online respondents consistently reported higher levels of trust and confidence in the TBPS than their in-person peers. Citizens' trust and confidence in policing allows police to effectively respond to crime and rely on the public in their efforts. For TBPS as an organization, the responses illuminate the perceptions they need to address.

Next Steps

Literature on youth engagement suggests that if youth have meaningful interactions with police, their attitudes towards police change [1]. Thus, engagement with youth, particularly Indigenous and racialized youth, may contribute to changing their perceptions of police and better relationships between police and racialized youth. In the contexts of Thunder Bay Police/Indigenous relations have drawn media attention, an inquest into the deaths of seven youth, and reports on the Thunder Bay Police Service and the Thunder Bay Police Services Board. Recently Desmoulins (2018) conducted focus groups with youth about ways for police to build trust with them. Youth called on TBPS to foster better relations with them to build trust and gave concrete recommendations [4]. For the 2019 CSTS, researchers' recommendations to improve relations between the Thunder Bay Police Service and racialized youth are for the TBPS to:

1. Re-distribute the CSS with more in-person respondents to narrow the gap between the number of in-person and online respondents
2. Encourage Indigenous and other racialized community members to complete the online survey
3. Continue to collect representative samples of citizen surveys to be able to generalize results to the population of Thunder Bay

4. Engage with Indigenous and other racialized youth.

Using these recommendations for next steps will aid the TBPS to gain insights about citizens' perceptions. Engaging with young, Indigenous and other racialized youth will aid the TBPS to change perceptions and build relationships. This work benefits both police and citizens.

References

[1] younger and racialized citizens express lower trust and confidence in police. See: Brown, B. & Benedict, W. R. (2002). Perceptions of the police: Past findings, methodological issues, conceptual issues and policy implications. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 25(3), 543 - 580. Cao, L. (2014). Aboriginal peoples and confidence in the police. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 56(5), 499 - 525. Taylor, T. J., Turner, K. B., Esbensen, F. & Winfree Jr., L. T. (2001). "Coppin" an attitude: Attitudinal differences among juveniles toward police. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29(4), 295 - 305. Webb, V. J., & Marshall, C. E. (1995). The relative importance of race and ethnicity in citizen attitudes toward the police. *American Journal of Police*, 14(2), 45 - 66.

[2] Trust extends beyond citizens' satisfaction that police perform their duties effectively to include a sense that police make decisions fairly and treat citizens fairly. See:

Tyler, T.R. (2004). Enhancing police legitimacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 593(1), p. 85.

[3] When citizens distrust the police, the delivery of police services to all citizens is compromised by under-reporting, lack of cooperation, and citizens' perceptions that police officers are indifferent to victims. See:

Nair, G., Luqman, A., Vadeveloo, T., Marimuthu, R., & Shanmuggam, S. (2012). Better policing through a paradigm shift in public perception of the police. *Asian Social Science*, 8(3), 113 - 117.

Murphy, K., Mazerolle, L., Bennett, S. (2014). Promoting trust in police: Findings from a randomized experimental field trial of procedural justice policing. *Policing and Society*, 24(4), 405 - 424.

[4] Youth called on TBPS to foster better relations with them to build trust and gave concrete recommendations. See:

Youth focus groups. (2019, July). Presentation at the Thunder Bay Police Services Board.