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Safety feelings eroding in city's core

By [PABLO FERNANDEZ](#), SUN MEDIA

Fewer Calgarians feel safe in the city's downtown core and LRT system, according to the Calgary Police Service's 2007 Citizen Survey.

The survey shows compared to 2005, when 56% of Calgarians felt safe in the core, 54% felt the same way in 2007.

The same is true when residents were asked about how safe they felt on the LRT, where in 2005 54% said they felt safe, compared to last year when 53% felt secure.



The biggest hike was seen in the perception of neighbourhood crime in which 38% of Calgarians said they believed crime was rising last year, up from 31% in 2005.

The fact numbers continue in the wrong direction is a concern, said Ald. Ric McIver, a member of the Calgary Police Commission.

"People still consider the city a fairly safe place to live in ... but they do remain concerned," he said.

"Public perception of safety is always going to be a moving target and we need to keep adjusting our approach because we know criminals will keep adjusting theirs.

"I would like to see more police ... because the best way to address declining safety perception among Calgarians is to increase the number of police officers and to give them the tools they need to stomp out crime."

But there's an attitude shift taking place in policing in the city, which started with the appointment of a new chief, said commission member Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart.

"The new chief is really open and transparent about what really is going on in terms of crime," she said.

For too long, the prevailing wisdom has been to not talk about crime trends to avoid alarming the public, she said, adding what concerns her most is the low crime volume being reported.

"Is there less crime right now? I doubt that," she said.