



On July 3, 2016 a protest occurred during the Toronto Pride Parade, organized by Black Lives Matter Toronto, calling attention to the direct, systemic, and cultural violence faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community, specifically members who are non-white, non-male, and, non-cis.

In an effort to resolve the violence that they observed, Black Lives Matter Toronto made 9 demands to the organizers of the Toronto Pride Festival.

1. Continued space, including stage and tents, funding and logistical support for Black Queer Youth.
2. Self-determination for all community spaces at Pride, allowing community groups full control over hiring, content and structure of their stages.
3. Full and adequate funding for community stages, including logistical, technical and personnel support.
4. Doubling of funding for Blockorama to \$13,000.
5. Reinstatement of the South Asian stage.
6. Prioritizing of the hiring of Black transwomen, Indigenous people and others from vulnerable communities at Pride Toronto.
7. More Black deaf and hearing sign language interpreters for the festival.
8. Removal of police floats in the Pride marches and parades.
9. A town hall organized in conjunction with groups from marginalized communities, including but not limited to Black Lives Matter – Toronto, Blackness Yes and Black Queer Youth, in six months, where Pride Toronto will present an update and action plan on BLM-TO's demands

Lethbridge Pride Fest Society found itself at a crossroads, maintain the status quo recognizing that the conflicts that are occurring in Toronto have not occurred to the same level of intensity here in Lethbridge or be proactive and undertake changes to mitigate the violence that affects segment of LGBTQ+ community. The Lethbridge Pride Fest Society decided to take the 9 demands made by Black Lives Matter – Toronto and respond to them as if they had been made here in Lethbridge. We started this process in August in preparation for the festival, 10 months prior to the Lethbridge festival. Lethbridge Pride Fest Society recognizes that there are differing demographics within our own community and Toronto, and that the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and other marginalized groups require attention.

Demand 2 &

Demand 4 These demands do not yet apply to the Lethbridge context, as Lethbridge Pride Fest has not yet grow to have the structure that Toronto Pride has. Lethbridge Pride Fest Society currently does not have or offer input into other organizations hiring practices or content determinations. Additional, *Blockorama* (or a comparable organization) does not occur in Lethbridge. That being said, Lethbridge Pride Fest Society welcomes the opportunity to continue to grow a diverse community and if it were presented with these opportunities (or similar opportunities) Lethbridge Pride Fest Society would endeavour to participate in a way that respects and honours all voices of the LGBTQ+ community.



- Demand 1** Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has reaffirmed its commitment to allow any vendor or performer to participate in Lethbridge Pride Fest, so long as the group has not demonstrated anti-LGTBQ+ sentiments. The Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has also added a commitment for greater representation of marginalized groups. Currently, the board of Lethbridge Pride Fest Society are planning specific events for members of the Lesbian community, Trans community, Two-Spirit community, Asexual community, members of the LGBTQ+ community whose identity comprises intersectionality, along with events located both in Taber and in Stand Off (Blood Tribe reserve). Additionally, making sure that all members of the LGBTQ+ community see themselves in the larger general events.
- Demand 3 & Demand 5** Due to size limitations, Lethbridge Pride Fest has not yet develop to a point where the festival has more than one stage, the main stage in Pride in the Park is the only stage. However, Lethbridge Pride Fest Society does endeavour to hire entertainment that is reflective all aspects of the local LGBTQ+ community and will continue to improve this into the future. Those who are task with arranging the line-up of entertainment have in the forefront of their minds the narrative they are creating while selecting performers and do welcome assistance in selecting performers that broaden the programing beyond the realm of whiteness and cis-ness.
- Demand 6 & Demand 9** Lethbridge Pride Fest Society allows any member of the LGBTQ+ community to volunteer within its organization and any volunteer to hold a position on the board. Lethbridge Pride Fest Society activity encourages members of marginalized groups to participate in the framework of Lethbridge Pride Fest Society and welcomes new ideas and individuals into its framework. Our Board meetings are open to any member of the community that wishes to attend, and Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has worked with individuals so that meaningful participation can be achieved in the face of advise situations.
- Demand 7** Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has had difficultly in the past providing content that was accessible to all members of the LGBTQ+ community, specifically those who are deaf or hearing-impaired. The largest hurdle that has faced the Society in the past with respect to providing this service is that there is no organization mandated to provide ASL interpreters in Lethbridge in a comparable way to places like Calgary or Edmonton. All that being said, for The festival there will be sign language interpreters for the Flag Raising (Monday, June 19, 2017) and for Pride in the Park (Saturday, June 24, 2017). As always, Lethbridge Pride Fest Society welcomes input from the community with respect to this or any other topic.



Demand 8

Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has engaged in a review of the historical context relating to police relations with the LGBTQ+ community and with marginalized groups in North America, Canada, Alberta and Lethbridge. Lethbridge Pride Fest Society has sought input from major Pride Festival organizations that we often look to for guidance in other aspects of planning *pride*, these included Pride Toronto, Vancouver Pride Society, Edmonton Pride Festival, and Calgary Pride. We have contacted local LGBTQ+ organizations and local organizations those mandate relation to race and culture within the Lethbridge and the Southern Alberta areas, soliciting input on this topic. Our focus centred on:

1. Is it appropriate to have uniformed police participating in future Lethbridge Pride festivals?
2. What can the role of the Lethbridge Police Service be in future Pride festivals?

During discussion, two competing opinions came to the foreground. The first opinion voiced concerns regarding safety for the community as a whole, stressing that removing police from *Pride* would only act to further isolate the LGBTQ+ community and the police from each other. The second opinion voiced a need to listen to the members of the LGBTQ+ community that are marginalized, stressing that special attention needs to be paid to the unique members of the LGBTQ+ who are often forgotten or assimilated into a large cluster. It is worth noting, that the divide in opinions seems to relate to the LGBTQ+ members' personal identity, whether it reflected the dominant culture or an identity that comprises intersectionality.

Additionally, it became apparent that two major themes of consideration were being discussed, the first in regards to Operation and Logistics of the Lethbridge Pride Fest and the second to in regards to Respect and Celebration of LGBTQ+ identity. Discussions regarding Operation and Logistics of the Lethbridge Pride Fest centred on the jobs that police could perform during Lethbridge Pride Fest, ranging from threat assessments prior to an event to controlling traffic during an event to acting as a buffer in the event an indecent of violence occurred. Discussions regarding Respect and Celebration of LGBTQ+ identity centred on the Police's direct participation in the events of Lethbridge Pride Fest, highlighting questions whether *all* members of the LGBTQ+ community are respected/celebrated by allowing Police to participate and does the nature of police participation come with added expectations that are not present when other civilian community members participate? In essence, does the uniform change how the LGBTQ+ community interacts with the service individual?

The Lethbridge Police Service has re-affirmed its commitment to work in partnership with the Lethbridge Pride Fest Society and the LGBTQ+ community. LPS will participate in two different areas of pride; the operation and logistics of the Lethbridge Pride Fest and the respect and celebration of LGBTQ+ identity.



In regards to considerations of Operation and Logistics of the Lethbridge Pride Fest, police involvement is encouraged, and actively sought. Paramount within any Pride Celebration is safety. In order to ensure this, the following actions have been agreed to between Lethbridge Pride Fest Society and Lethbridge Police Service:

1. Lethbridge Police Service will meet with Lethbridge Pride Fest Society to review the activities of the festival, with the goal being to identify any safety concerns, and address the concerns when possible;
2. Lethbridge Police Service will provide traffic control during the Lethbridge Pride Parade on Saturday, June 24, 2017;
3. Lethbridge Police Service will provide a noticeable presence within and around all outdoor activities taking place during the festival;
4. Lethbridge Police Service will increase patrols in the areas surrounding indoor activities taking place during the festival as much as their street strength and call volumes allow;
5. Lethbridge Police Service will provide resources to be distributed during the festival that contain information regarding hate crimes, crisis support, and contact information for the Community Diversity Resource Team; and
6. In the event that an act of violence occurs, Lethbridge Police Service will communicate with the LGBTQ+ community and the general public via a news release that will summarize what occurred and what steps were taken (i.e. criminal charges). The Police Service is also willing to meet privately with members of the Pride Fest Society to provide a debrief session and discuss whether any steps could be taken to prevent a similar occurrence in future.

In regards to considerations of Respect and Celebration of LGBTQ+ Identity, police participation will be supported, with the intent of this partnership is to begin to address the aspects of direct, systemic, and cultural violence that have been identified as being of value to the LGBTQ+ community of Lethbridge. Thereby, the following actions have been agreed to between Lethbridge Pride Fest Society and Lethbridge Police Service:

1. Members of the Lethbridge Police Service who participate in Lethbridge Pride Fest 2017 in uniform will be encouraged to wear a button depicting a flag of one of the LGBTTQIAPA communities and be able to offer general and brief information about the symbol. This information will be provided in advance by the Lethbridge Pride Fest Society;
2. During the Lethbridge Pride Parade, Lethbridge Police Service will encourage its members to march in the parade, provide a visible symbol (i.e. car wrap) of their respect to the LGBTQ+ community;
3. During Pride in the Park, Lethbridge Police Service will have a vendor booth whereby recruitment and information about the Lethbridge Police Service's endeavours can be shared with the community;
4. Lethbridge Police Service will host an event that will allow members of the LGBTQ+ community and members of the Lethbridge Police Service to interact in a low-stress environment and to create a new avenue for positive interactions;
5. Lethbridge Police Service will inform both the LGBTQ+ community of Lethbridge and the Lethbridge community at large of the steps that are being



taken to improve the knowledge of members of Lethbridge Police Service with respect to LGBTQ+ concerns and issues.

6. The Chair of the Lethbridge Pride Fest Society and the Chief of the Lethbridge Police Service will release a joint statement summarizing the steps the Lethbridge Police Service have undertaken to honour and educate their members regarding LGBTQ+ issues, the successes Lethbridge Police Services have had in regards to LGBTQ+ issues, and areas that need to be improved with respect to LGBTQ+ issues in the coming year

Robert A. Davis
Chief of Police

Devon Hargreaves
Chair, Lethbridge Pride Fest
Society

June 6, 2017

Date

06/12/2017

Date