

PULSE OF TORONTO - MUNICIPAL POLITICS

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Torontonians Want to Talk Trash: Top Issues for New Municipal Council are Garbage Collection (29%), Homelessness (24%) -- But Majority (56%) Not Prepared to Support Property Tax Hike To Address Top Issues on Future Council Agenda

Mayor Mel's "Moose in the City" (57%) and "Charter City" (60%) Garner High Levels of Support



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Toronto, ON – A full majority (58%) of Torontonians were opposed to the recently cancelled plan by Toronto council to send approximately 1 million tonnes of garbage a year to the abandoned Adams mine in Kirkland lake. Further, it would appear that despite a report card which gives the mayor consistently positive results for his performance on issues since last year, Torontonians indicate that because of the garbage issue their opinion of the Mayor has worsened and they are less likely to vote for councillors who voted for the Kirkland Lake shipment and who are running in the upcoming municipal election.

In fact, while the mayor gets an overall "B-" on issues including: "defending Toronto's interests" (B+), "leadership" (B) and "having a vision for the future of Toronto" (B) "managing city council" (C+) "amalgamation" (C+) and "public behaviour (C+), 44% of residents indicate their opinion of Mayor Lastman has worsened as a result of his management of the Kirkland



Lake garbage issue and 43% indicate that they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who voted in favour of shipping Toronto's garbage to Kirkland Lake.

The poll also finds that the top three issues that residents feel should receive the greatest attention from the Mayor and city council following the up-coming municipal election are: garbage collection (29%), homelessness (24%), education/schools (13%).

However, a majority (56%) of respondents are not prepared to support a property tax increase to address those issues which they seen as important in the city of Toronto, and in particular, a substantial majority (73%) disagree that businesses, instead of residents should bear the brunt of any tax increases that are necessary.

On the issue of amalgamation of the City of Toronto which took place on January 1, 1998, the majority (54%) indicate that the quality of municipal services since amalgamation have stayed the same and a full majority (68%) indicate that access to their own city councillor in the wake of amalgamation and the downsizing of the Toronto City Council has stayed the same.

Earlier this year, Mayor Mel Lastman floated the idea that Toronto should pursue more independent status in order to have more control over such issues as taxation and matters of local concern. While not specifically addressing the "charter" objective, six-in-ten (60%) respondents agreed with the statement that Toronto's City Council should seek specific constitutional powers so they can have broader responsibility for taxation and matters of local concern.



Ipsos Reid

On a lighter note, it would appear that the "Moose in the City" campaign was received positively with 57% indicating that they liked it and "think something similar should be repeated next year".

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CFRB/Globe and Mail poll conducted between October 13th and October 17th, 2000. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 404 adult Torontonians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Toronto population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Toronto population according to the 1996 Census data.



Despite Trashing Mayor on Garbage Issue (45% Think Worse of Him Because of Adams Mine Issue), Torontonians Still Give Him "B-" Grade

As a result of his management of the Kirkland Lake garbage issue, 44% of Torontonians say their opinion of Mel Lastman has "worsened". In contrast, a quarter (26%) of residents say their opinion of him has "improved" while almost a third (31%) say they "don't know".

Similarly, a plurality (43%) Torontonians indicate that they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who voted in favour of shipping Toronto's garbage to Kirkland Lake. One in five (22%) say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who voted for the garbage plan while a third (33%) say they would be neither more nor less likely to vote for a candidate because of their position on this issue.

Overall, Torontonians give Mel Lastman a "B-" grade. This overall grade is based on an average of his grade on each specific issue and is unchanged from last year, when Torontonians were asked to grade him using the same report card. On specific issues his ratings are as follows (calculated as an average of scores):

His highest grade is a "B+" for "defending Toronto's interests" and is up slightly from last year (B).

"Leadership": B (up slightly from a "B-" last year)

"Having a vision for the future of Toronto": B (up slightly from a "B-" last year)

"Managing city council": C+ (same as last year)

"Public behaviour": C + (up slightly from a "C" last year)

"Amalgamation": C+ (same as last year)



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A majority (58%) of residents say they oppose the plan to ship 1 million tonnes of garbage a year to Kirkland Lake. This includes almost four in ten (38%) who say they "strongly oppose" the plan and 20% who "somewhat oppose" the plan. Four in ten residents support the plan (12% "strongly support", 28% "somewhat support"). Women (62%) are more likely than men (54%) to oppose the plan.

The top issues which the public feels the Mayor and City Council should address following the upcoming municipal election include: garbage collection (29%), homelessness (24%), education/schools (13%), crime/violence (12%) and development (11%).

A majority (56%) of Torontonians would not support a tax increase to address the issues they deem to be important while four in ten (42%) say they would support a tax increase to address these issues. Younger residents (67%) are more likely than 35 or older (50%) to say they would not support a tax increase.

Furthermore, almost three quarters (73%) disagree that any property tax increases should be borne mostly by business instead of residents. In contrast, a quarter (25%) agree that tax increases should be borne mostly by business.

A majority of Torontonians (54%) say that the quality of municipal services has stayed the same since amalgamation. However, approximately a third (32%) indicate that the quality of municipal services has worsened compared to 9% who indicate they have improved.



Similarly most residents (68%) say the access they have to their city councillor has stayed the same since amalgamation with only one-in-five (16%) who indicate that it has worsened, and 6% who indicate it has improved.

Mayor Mel's "Moose in the City" (57%) and "Charter City" (60%) Garner High Levels of Support

60% of residents agree that "Toronto's City Council should seek special constitutional powers so that it can have broader responsibility for taxation and matters of local concern". In contrast, 37% do not agree with this statement.

As the "Moose in the City" campaign approaches its close, a full majority (57%) of Toronto residents say they liked the campaign and think something similar should be repeated next year. Meanwhile four in ten residents (39%) disagree.

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