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City Roads, Infrastructure and Growth Rank Highly with the Proposed Sale of ENMAX as Issues in the Upcoming Election

Calgarians' Views on ENMAX Remain Unchanged: 57% Continue to Oppose a Sale; Majority (55%) Endorse Move to Delay Decision

Most Calgarians (55%) Want the New Mayor & Council to "Stay the Course" For the City Overall, However Large Minority (43%) Feel it is Time for a "Change of Direction" at City Hall



Public Release Date: September 19th, 2001 - 12:01 a.m. (MST)

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Calgary, AB – The results of an exclusive Ipsos-Reid / CFCN / Calgary Sun Municipal Politics poll show that issues such as traffic, city infrastructure needs, population growth and transportation share the top of the issue agenda with the proposed sale of ENMAX. The survey also suggests that public opinion on the proposed sale of ENMAX has not shifted to any degree, as 57% continue to oppose the sale at this point. A majority (55%) of those interviewed for this pre-election poll would also endorse the decision to delay the final decision on ENMAX for the new Mayor and Council (rather than making a decision on Sept. 13th or taking the proposal "off the table" altogether. Finally, the current state of public opinion in Calgary suggests that the campaign may be an interesting combination of themes stressing "continuity" and "change". Just over one-half (55%) of those interviewed maintain that the new Mayor and Council should follow the course established by their predecessors, while a large minority (43%) suggest it's "time for a change in direction" at City Hall.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CFCN/Calgary Sun poll conducted between September 7th and 11th, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 400 adult Calgarians. 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 population in Calgary 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 age/sex composition reflects that of the actual city population according to Statistics Canada Census data.

The detailed findings of this survey are as follows:

The Municipal Issues Agenda & Targeted Issues

When asked to identify the top issues facing the City of Calgary today, rush-hour traffic (mentioned by 26% top-of-mind) is offered as the greatest concern. Close on the heels of this issue, we find concerns about City roads and infrastructure (24%), and the proposed sale of ENMAX (21%). Other areas of concern include the City's transportation system (bussing and LRT) (16%), the fast pace of growth in the City (14%), health care (13%), education (13%) and political leadership (8%).

Comparing the Issue Agenda results to a targeted list of issues (and asking Calgarians to indicate the level of importance they associate with each of these targeted issues), by and large, provides confirmation of the Issue Agenda, however it also identifies a number of "latent" issues (i.e. those which are not "top-of-mind" to voters but which are extremely important to them). City roads and infrastructure continue to top the list on the targeted assessment, with nearly six-in-ten (58%) saying this issue is "extremely important". However, violent crime places second on the list (47% saying this is an "extremely important" issue), followed by the proposed sale of ENMAX (42%), LRT expansion (40%)

and ground contamination in Lynwood (38%). Still further down the list we find property crime (32%) and municipal property taxes (20%).

Public Views on the Sale of ENMAX

Calgarians continue to oppose the City's move to sell ENMAX, the electricity utility company that is wholly owned by the City of Calgary. Currently, 57% of voters maintain they oppose the idea of selling ENMAX (36% strongly), compared to 34% who support it (12% strongly).

Issues related to "process" appear as the primary obstacles to support, as opposed to a conceptual objection to the matter. When presented with three alternative points of view on the sale of ENMAX, nearly one-quarter (23%) of those interviewed believe that the City had completed enough public consultation and a decision on a sale should have been decided on Sept. 13. By comparison, double the number of Calgarians (55%) agrees with the view that "not enough public consultation" has occurred and therefore a decision should be "delayed for the new Mayor and Council". Finally, only one-fifth (20%) of those interviewed suggest that "regardless of the amount of public consultation on the issue, ENMAX should never be sold".

Public Views on the Direction of the City

Survey participants to this pre-campaign poll were presented with two competing views about the direction of the City for the future, and asked their preferred course. In this, a majority of Calgarians (55%) identify with the statement, "the new Mayor and Council should continue to follow the direction set by the current Mayor and Council, because all in all, this direction has been good for Calgary". Meanwhile, a sizable minority is seeking a "change in course" from the next council – 43% say that "the new Mayor and Council should set a new direction for Calgary" as it is "time for a change".



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