

LIFE IS GOOD IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

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One Third (34%) Expect Their Economic Situation to Improve Over the Next Year and Seven in Ten (70%) Say They Will Be Better Off 10 Years From Now

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Transportation (38%) is Still Number One Concern



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Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos-Reid poll shows that Lower Mainland residents are upbeat about their quality of life and have high expectations for the future. The vast majority (96%) of Lower Mainland residents say the overall quality of life in their municipality today is good. In addition, one-third (34%) think their personal economic situation will improve over the next year and when it comes to a ten year-forecast, 70% think they will be better off. Transportation (38%) continues to be the number one municipal issue, but concern has dropped over the last two years. Other top priority municipal issues include crime (19%), health care (13%), education (10%), poverty (9%) and drugs (8%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between November 19th and 26th, 2003 among 600 adult residents of the Lower Mainland, including a representative cross-section of 400 City of Vancouver residents and 200 Rest of Lower Mainland residents. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the Lower Mainland according to 2001 Census data. With an overall sample of 600, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the these results are within ± 4.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Lower Mainland population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for population sub-groups.

Residents of the Lower Mainland (96%) Overwhelmingly say their Quality of Life is Good

Over the past few years, many international studies have ranked Vancouver and the Lower Mainland among the best places in the world to live. Residents seem to agree with almost all (96%) saying the quality of life in their municipality is either “good” (67%) or “very good” (29%). Meanwhile, only 4% say the quality of life is “poor” (3%) or “very poor” (1%).

- Vancouver residents (92%) are slightly less likely than those living in the rest of the Lower Mainland (97%) to say that their quality of life is good.
- Residents of east Vancouver (88%) are less likely than those living in the west of the City (96%) to say that their quality of life is good. This difference is even more pronounced when examining “very good” ratings (24% east vs. 44% west).
- Younger people (16%) are much less likely than middle aged (32%) or older (39%) people to say their quality of life is “very good”.
- Upper income households (39%) are more likely than middle (28%) and lower (20%) income households to say that their quality of life is “very good”.

One Third (34%) Expect Their Economic Situation to Improve Over the Next Year and Seven in Ten (70%) Say They Will Be Better Off 10 Years From Now

Not only do residents say their current quality of life is good, but many expect it will get even better. One-third (34%) of residents think their personal economic situation will “improve” over the next year. This is almost three times the number who says that their financial situation will “get worse” (12%). However, the majority of residents (52%) say their financial situation will “remain the same”.

- Men (45%) are almost twice as likely as women (24%) to say that their personal economic situation will “improve”.
- Residents aged 55 and older (62%) are much more likely than those under 55 (49%) to say their economic situation will “stay the same”.



- Upper income households (44%) are more likely than middle (31%) and lower (31%) income households to say their economic situation will “improve”.

When residents look ten years out, the picture becomes more rosy. Fully seven in ten (70%) residents expect to be better off ten years from now. This includes one in five (21%) who expect to be “much better off” and half (49%) who expect to be “somewhat better off”. In contrast only one in five (21%) say they will be worse off (15% “somewhat worse off”, 6% “much worse off”) and 7% say they be “the same”.

- Residents’ ten year forecast worsens dramatically with age. Among 18-34 year olds, 91% expect to be better off ten years from now, compared to 76% of 35-54 year olds and only 38% of those aged 55+.
- Households earning \$70K or more per year (81%) are more likely than those earning \$40-\$69K (65%) and those earning less than \$40K (66%) to say they will be better off.

Looking much further into the future, at what things will be like for their children, residents are slightly more pessimistic. A majority (55%) thinks their children will be better off than they are (19% “much better off”, 36% “somewhat better off”) while one in three (29%) says their children will be worse off (20% “somewhat worse off”, 9% “much worse off”). Only 4% thinks their children will enjoy the same standard of living as themselves.

- Residents of the rest of the Lower Mainland (57%) are more likely than residents of Vancouver (49%) to say their children will be better off.
- People under 35 (67%) are more likely than those aged 35 or older (50%) to say their children will be better off.

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To develop a composite measure of hopefulness, Ipsos-Reid calculates a “Hope Index” by combining respondent answers to the previous three questions assessing their near-term, mid-range and long-range expectations about well-being. Putting the Lower Mainland’s



results in context with Ipsos-Reid's comparative data from 17 countries around the world reveals that the Lower Mainland's level of hope (Index = 43%) is consistent with the national average (45%). This is also broadly similar to the level of hope in the UK (42%) and Australia (45%) but much lower than the U.S. (61%) – the world leader for hope. Looking farther a field however shows that the Lower Mainland is doing quite well, with our Hope Index 16 points higher than France (29%), almost double Russia (23%) and three times Germany (15%).

- Residents of Vancouver (39%) are less hopeful than residents of the rest of the Lower Mainland (44%).
- Residents of east Vancouver (43%) are more hopeful than residents of the west part of Vancouver (34%).
- People under 35 (59%) are much more hopeful than those 35 to 54 (44%) and those 55+ years (24%).

Transportation (38%) is Still Number One Concern

Transportation issues (38%, specifically congestion and transit) continue to top the Lower Mainland's issue agenda as the issue residents feel should receive the greatest attention from their local leaders. However, concern over this issue has dropped nine points from a similar poll conducted by Ipsos-Reid in December 2001. In this poll, transportation was mentioned as the number one issue by 47% of residents. Meanwhile, crime (including police resources) seems to be creeping up the issue agenda, rising two points over the same period to 19%. Despite being provincial responsibilities, healthcare (13%) and education (10%) place fourth and fifth respectively. Finally, poverty issues (including homelessness, and squatters) are mentioned by one in ten (9%) residents and place sixth.

- Residents of the rest of the Lower Mainland are more likely to be concerned about transportation (40% vs. 33% Vancouver) and health care (15% vs. 8% Vancouver).
- Residents of the City of Vancouver are more likely to be concerned about poverty issues (27% vs. 3% rest of Lower Mainland) and drugs (15% vs. 6% rest of Lower Mainland).



-30-

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