

LIFE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S MUNICIPALITIES

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Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the National Post and CanWest News Service/Global News finds that British Columbians feel positively towards their quality of life. Overall, 98% of British Columbians say the overall quality of life in their community is good and one-third (32%) feel the quality of life has "improved" over the past three years.

Ipsos Reid's "Hope Index" (a measure of near-, mid-, and long-range expectations about well-being) also shows that the majority (64%) of Canadians are hopeful for the future. In British Columbia, the level of hope stands at 63%. Putting this in context with Ipsos Reid's comparative data from across the world reveals that Canada (including British Columbia) is the world leader in hope. For example, the level of hope is 61% in the United States, 45% in Australia, 38% in the United Kingdom, and 23% in Russia.

While British Columbians feel positively towards their quality of life and are hopeful for the future, their perceptions of local governments are more tempered, indicating local governments may have little to do with British Columbians' overall positive attitudes towards quality of life. This same trend is consistent across the country, with

Canadians – including those in British Columbia – giving their local government a “C” grade for spending, responsiveness, and leadership. Overall, local governments receive the highest marks for “spending taxpayers money wisely” (44% of British Columbians and 42% of Canadians grade their local government’s performance in this area as a “C”). Local governments are seen as performing slightly less well at “being responsive to the real needs of the community” (41% of British Columbians and 40% of Canadians provide a “C” grade), while the lowest grade is reported for “showing leadership where it counts” (43% of British Columbians and 38% of Canadians provide a “C” grade).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the National Post and CanWest News Service/Global News between February 24th and March 2nd, 2006. The poll is based on a representative sample of 8,431 Canadians who were interviewed via the Internet. Of this, 1,089 interviews were conducted in British Columbia. With a sample of this size, overall results for Canada are considered accurate to within ± 1.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions (margin of error for BC results is ± 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20) 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 Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

British Columbians overwhelmingly say the quality of life in their community is good (98%)

Despite increasing costs of living, the vast majority (98%) of British Columbians rate the quality of life in their community positively. Of this, 46% feel the quality of life is “very good”, while half (51%) say the quality of life is “good”. Only 2% of British Columbians feel otherwise, with 2% saying “poor” and 0% saying “very poor”.

British Columbians’ perceptions of quality of life are consistent with what is reported by Canadians as a whole; 97% of Canadians rate the quality of life as “very good” (44%) or “good” (52%). However, British Columbians are more likely than those living in Ontario to feel positively towards their quality of life, both overall (96% in Ontario) and in intensity (42% of Ontarians provide a “very good” rating).

- British Columbians' overall perceptions of quality of life are consistent across all key demographics.

One-third (32%) feel the quality of life has improved over the past three years

Not only are British Columbians' overall perceptions of quality of life positive, but there is a sense that quality of life has improved over the past three years. In total, 32% of British Columbians feel the quality of life in their community has "improved" over the past three years; this is double the proportion who feels the quality of life has "worsened" during this same time frame (15%). Meanwhile, half (52%) of British Columbians feel the quality of life in their community has "stayed the same" over the past three years.

Perceptions of how quality of life has changed over the past three years are slightly more positive in British Columbia than Canada as a whole; 27% of Canadians say the quality of life has "improved", 13% say it has "worsened", and 59% say it has "stayed the same". Furthermore, British Columbians are also more positive than those living in Ontario, where 24% say the quality of life has "improved", 15% say it has "worsened", and 61% say it has "stayed the same".

- British Columbians earning higher incomes are more likely to feel the quality of life has "improved" over the past three years (37% of those earning \$60,000 or more compared to 27% of those earning \$30,000 to less than \$60,000).

Ipsos Reid's "Hope Index" shows that Canadians, including British Columbians, are the World Leaders in Hope

Ipsos Reid's "Hope Index" (a measure of near-, mid-, and long-range expectations about well-being) finds that the majority (64%) of Canadians are hopeful for the future. In British Columbia, the level of hope stands at 63%.

Putting this in context with Ipsos Reid's comparative data from across the world reveals that Canada (including British Columbia) is the world leader in hope. Canadians' level

of hope is higher than we have seen in any other country, including the United States (61%), Australia (45%), the United Kingdom (38%), and Russia (23%).

- British Columbians' hope for the future decreases with age; 75% of those aged 18 to 34 feel hope, 65% of those aged 35 to 54 feel hope, and 49% of those aged 55 plus feel hope for the future.

Local governments across the country receive a “C” grade when it comes to spending, responsiveness, and leadership – no different in British Columbia

While the poll finds that Canadians - British Columbians included - feel positively towards their quality of life and are hopeful for the future, they hold a more tempered view of their local government's performance. Overall, local governments receive a “C” grade when it comes to spending, responsiveness, and leadership. Of these, the highest mark is seen for “spending taxpayers money wisely”, with 44% of British Columbians and 42% of Canadians providing a “C” grade to their local government in this area.

Local governments are seen as performing slightly less well at “being responsive to the real needs of the community” (41% of British Columbians and 40% of Canadians provide a “C” grade). The lowest grade is seen for “showing leadership where it counts” (43% of British Columbians and 38% of Canadians provide a “C” grade to their local government in this area).

While local governments across the country receive a “C” grade in all of the above areas, Canadians as a whole are slightly more critical of their local governments' performance than are British Columbians. Specifically, 23% of Canadians provide a grade lower than a “C” for “spending taxpayers money wisely” compared to 17% of British Columbians; 23% of Canadians provide a grade lower than a “C” for “being responsive to the real needs of the community” compared to 21% of British

Columbians; and, 27% of Canadians provide a grade lower than a “C” for “showing leadership where it counts” compared to 22% of British Columbians.

- British Columbian women are more likely than men to rate their local government’s performance as a “C” in all of the above areas.

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