

Downtown Sinkhole Provokes Londoners to Call for Increased Spending on Replacing Water and Sewer Pipes

***Majority (56%) 'Strongly' Agrees that Fixing Broken Watermains
More Costly than Preventive Maintenance***

Public Release Date: Wednesday, November 21, 2007, 9:30 AM EST



Ipsos Reid

Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 research professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and on-line panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada—including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country—all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group. To learn more, visit www.ipsos.ca

***For copies of other news releases, please visit
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>***

© Ipsos Reid

*Washington λ New York λ Chicago λ Minneapolis λ Seattle λ San Francisco
Vancouver λ Edmonton λ Calgary λ Winnipeg λ Toronto λ Ottawa λ Montreal*

Downtown Sinkhole Provokes Londoners to Call for Increased Spending on Replacing Water and Sewer Pipes

***Majority (56%) 'Strongly' Agrees that Fixing Broken Watermains
More Costly than Preventive Maintenance***

Toronto, ON – With the broken watermain in downtown London two weeks ago – and the sinkhole and power blackout that ensued – fresh in the minds of local citizens, a new Ipsos Reid poll of more than 500 Londoners who are aware of this news finds that an overwhelming majority (92%) ‘strongly’ (48%) or ‘somewhat’ (43%) agree that ‘the city should increase its spending on replacing old water and sewer pipes’. Just 8% of Londoners disagree with this sentiment.

The poll, conducted on behalf of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association, also reveals that most (83%) Londoners believe the cause of the accident was a result of the pipes being old and needing replacing long ago, while 9% say that it was due to a lack of inspections, and 7% believe that it was a random accident.

As efforts continue to restore the area where the burst and sinkhole occurred, significant costs will no doubt be expended in order to repair the damage caused. To this effect, nine in ten (90%) Londoners either ‘strongly’ (56%) or ‘somewhat agree’ (34%) that ‘it would have cost a lot less to replace the old pipes than it is going to cost now to fix the burst watermain and sinkhole’. Further, most (94%) Londoners either ‘strongly’ (44%) or ‘somewhat’ agree

(51%) that 'maintaining and upgrading our water pipes should be one of the highest priorities for the city'.

Virtually unanimous (98%) in their understanding that 'these situations cause major disruptions for people and businesses', and thinking ahead to the future, nine in ten (91%) Londoners either 'strongly' (48%) or 'somewhat' agree (43%) that 'we'll see more watermain bursts and sinkholes in the future because the pipes are in such poor condition'.

As a possible means of raising funds in order to pay for the maintenance of their pipes and sewers, nearly all (93%) Londoners agree that 'it is prudent for the city to put revenue from water bills into a dedicated reserve so that money is used only for improvements to the water system.' In fact, six in ten (58%) 'strongly agree' with this statement, while just 7% disagree in total. Moreover, nearly one half (45%) of Londoners would be willing to pay more than they are now for their water – approximately 40 cents a day – so that the water system could be improved. A majority (55%), however, would not be in favour of this proposition.

At the very least, situations like this tend to raise awareness of a lingering problem, and this appears to be the case here as well. While seven in ten (70%) Londoners claim to have already been aware of the aging water system in London, for three in ten (30%), this situation is the first time that they've really ever heard or thought about the issue.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association from Oct 13 to Oct 15, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 580 Ontarians living in the City of London, and who were aware of the watermain break and sinkhole that occurred, was interviewed online. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 4.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been

had the entire adult population of beer-consumers been polled. The margin of error will be larger within sub-groupings of the survey population.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Sean Simpson
Research Manager
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 572-4474*

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos.ca. News Releases are available at: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>