



# LOOKING WEST 2007

Segment 2: Urban Policy Priorities and  
Assessing Governments



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## Urban Policy Priorities and Assessing Governments

It is often said that municipal governments are the closest to the people and the most efficient form of government. By and large, urbanites in the West and the Toronto area appear to agree with this assessment: a large number of urban residents report that their municipal government has more impact on their daily lives than their provincial government or the federal government, and a large number also report that their municipal government is the least wasteful with its money. In addition, the majority feels that big cities should be treated differently than smaller municipalities. However, urbanites are not convinced that their municipal government needs more money, and public perceptions of urban priorities tend to focus on "conventional" local concerns such as crime, roads and traffic.



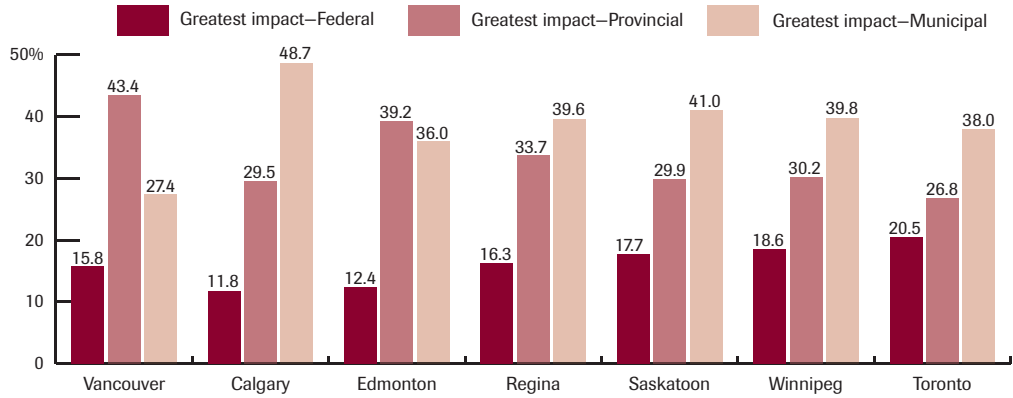
**About Looking West 2007:** The Looking West 2007 Survey is part of the Canada West Foundation's Western Cities Project. Core funding for the Western Cities Project has been provided by the Cities of Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg. The survey was administered by Probe Research between January 2 and February 3, 2007 from their Winnipeg call centre. A total of 3,500 urban residents were interviewed, with 500 from each of the following urban centres: Greater Vancouver Region; Calgary; Edmonton; Regina; Saskatoon; Winnipeg; and Greater Toronto Area. One can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 1.66 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of these cities had been interviewed; for individual cities, results are within +/-4.38 percentage points. Looking West 2007 Survey topics include urban policy priorities; public safety; street level social problems; transportation; quality of life; environment and urban green spaces; urban growth and diversity; and assessing municipal, provincial and federal governments. The survey results will be released in segments over the course of 2007. Visit the Canada West Foundation website for more information.

## Greatest/Least Impact by City

Figure 1:

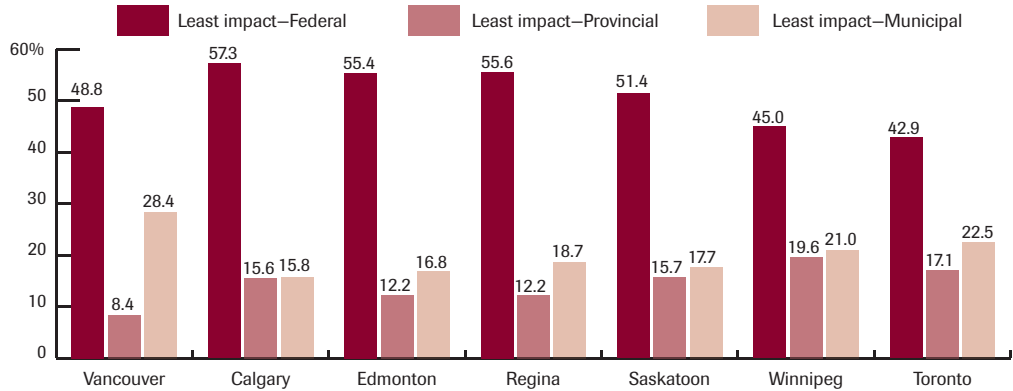
**Greatest/Least Impact of Government**

*Urbanites feel municipal and provincial governments have the greatest impact on their daily lives*



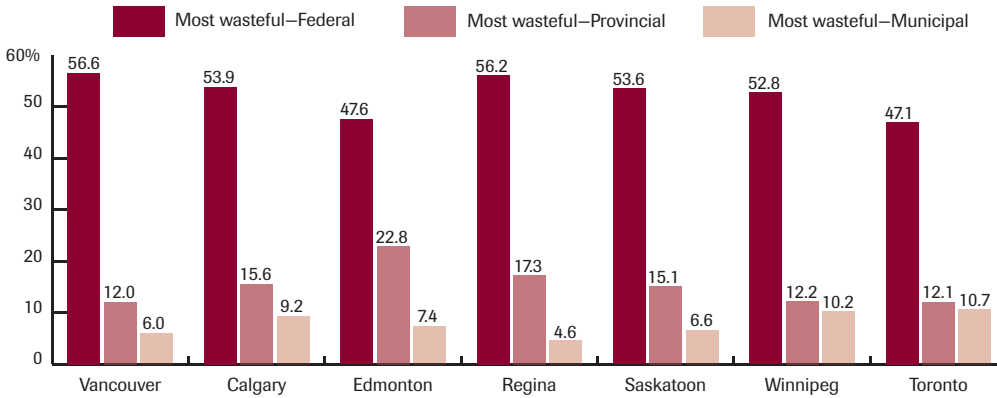
Survey respondents were asked, “Which level of government, if any, do you feel has the greatest impact on your daily life?” Following this, respondents were asked, “Which level of government, if any, do you feel has the least impact on your daily life?”

In five of the seven cities, the largest percentage of residents reports that their municipal government has the greatest impact on their daily lives (Edmonton and Vancouver are the exceptions). Only a small percentage of urbanites feel that the federal government has the greatest impact on their lives, ranging from a low in Calgary of 11.8% to a high in Toronto of 20.5%



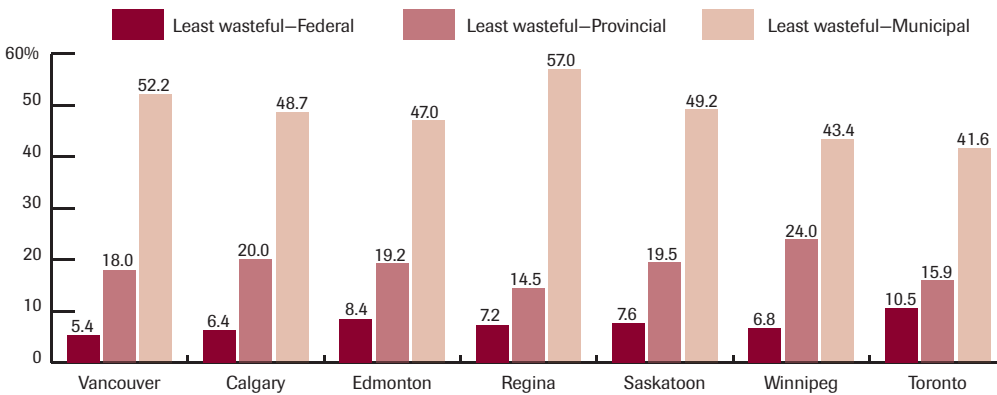
## Most/Least Wasteful by City

Figure 2:



Survey respondents were also asked, “Which level of government, if any, do you feel is the most wasteful with its money?” Following this, respondents were asked, “Which level of government, if any, do you feel is the least wasteful with its money?”

In all seven cities, the largest percentage of residents feels that the federal government is the most wasteful of the three orders of government, and that the municipal government is the least wasteful.

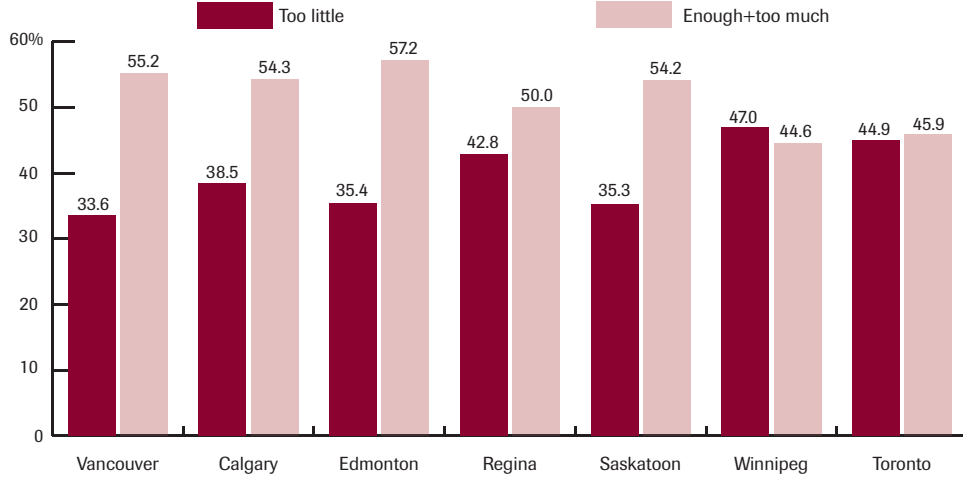


### Most/Least Wasteful Governments

*Urbanites feel municipalities are the least wasteful government*

## Local Government Revenues

Figure 3:



### Local Government Revenues

*Torontonians and Winnipeggers are the most likely to say that their municipal government has too little money*

	Too little	Enough	Too much
Vancouver	33.6%	47.0%	8.2%
Calgary	38.5	41.3	13.0
Edmonton	35.4	47.0	10.2
Regina	42.8	43.6	6.4
Saskatoon	35.3	46.0	8.2
Winnipeg	47.0	39.4	5.2
Toronto	44.9	35.0	10.9

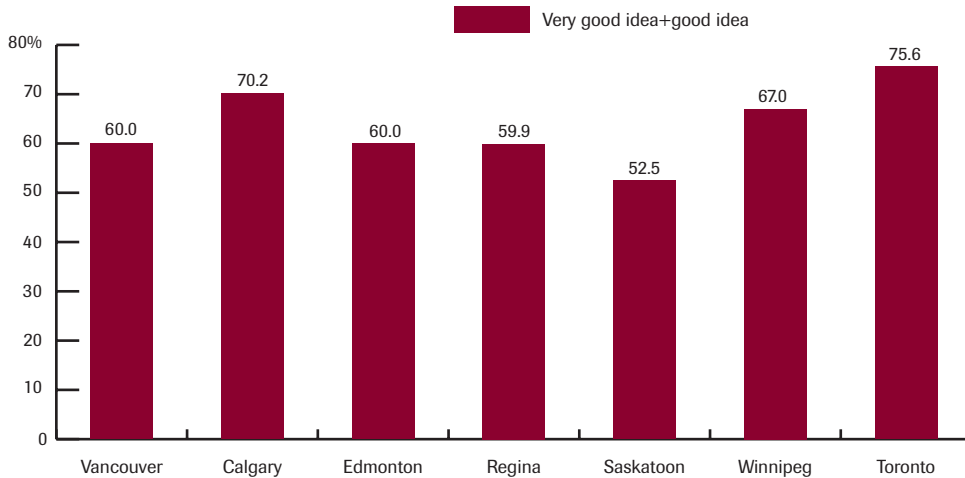
Respondents were asked: “Do you feel the local government has enough, too much or too little money to fulfill its current responsibilities?” In both Toronto and Winnipeg, over 4 in 10 residents feel that their local government does not have enough money to fulfill its current responsibilities—roughly equal to the number who feel that the local government has either enough, or too much, money. Regina residents are split on the issue. In the other four cities, residents are more likely to state that their local government has enough money to fulfill its responsibilities.





## Treat Big Cities Differently

Figure 4:



	Very good idea	Good idea
Vancouver	20.0%	40.0%
Calgary	26.1	44.1
Edmonton	21.4	38.6
Regina	14.7	45.2
Saskatoon	12.9	39.6
Winnipeg	24.4	42.6
Toronto	37.8	37.8

Respondents were asked to rate the statement, “The [provincial] government should treat big cities like [your city] differently than small towns and rural areas” as a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea, or a very poor idea.

In all seven cities, a majority of residents feels that this is a good or a very good idea. Torontonians are the most likely to support this, with three-quarters stating it is a good or very good idea, followed by Calgarians (7 in 10 feel that it is a good or very good idea) and Winnipeggers (67%). The idea has the least support in Saskatoon, where just over 5 in 10 feel that it is a good or very good idea.



### Treat Big Cities Differently

*Urbanites feel that big cities should be treated differently than other municipalities; support for special status for big cities is highest in Toronto and Calgary and lowest in Saskatoon*

## Very High/High Priorities

Looking West 2007 Survey respondents were presented with a list of 13 issues that may be facing their city and were asked to rate each issue as being either not a priority, a low priority, a medium priority, a high priority, or a very high priority. (The list order was randomized by Probe Research.)

The 13 urban issues considered are:

- reducing traffic congestion
- building and maintaining the road system
- reducing homelessness
- increasing the supply of affordable housing
- improving public transit systems
- reducing crime in [city]
- maintaining public parks, pathways and green spaces
- reducing property taxes
- providing funding support for local arts and culture organizations
- improving air quality in [city]
- protecting the environment in [city]
- helping new immigrants to Canada integrate into the city
- providing services for urban Aboriginal people

### High Priorities

*Crime and roads are at the top of urban priorities; funding for local arts and culture is seen as less of a priority.*

## Key Findings

- Reducing crime is the only issue that is among the top five priorities for all cities. For Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon, it is the highest ranked priority, and for Vancouver and Toronto, it is the second highest ranked priority.
- Building and maintaining the road system is among the top five priorities for all of the western cities. In Toronto and Vancouver, the number of residents who rate improving public transit systems as a high or very high priority is almost equal to the number who rate roads as a high or very high priority.
- Reducing homelessness and increasing the supply of affordable housing emerge as high priorities across the seven cities.
- Reducing the property tax does not receive a majority of high or very high priority responses in any of the seven cities; Torontonians (48%) and Winnipeggers (46%) are the most likely to rate reducing property tax as a high or very high priority.
- Providing services for urban Aboriginal people is rated as a high or very high priority by over 4 in 10 Regina and Saskatoon residents.
- Arts and culture funding sits at the bottom of the priority list for all cities except Regina, where it occupies the second last position.



## Very High/High Priorities

Figure 5:

Vancouver	Calgary	Edmonton	Regina	Saskatoon	Winnipeg	Toronto
1. Traffic 78.4% (29.4% very high)	1. Traffic 79.2% (25.1% very high)	1. Crime 80.8% (27.0% very high)	1. Crime 79.7% (23.3% very high)	1. Crime 77.7% (23.1% very high)	1. Crime 85.0% (32.4% very high)	1. Environment 80.1% (28.2% v. high)
2. Crime 77.2% (25.6% very high)	2. Roads 75.9% (20.2% very high)	2. Roads 71.8% (18.6% very high)	2. Roads 67.9% (16.3% very high)	2. Roads 66.9% (12.7% very high)	2. Roads 81.6% (21.6% very high)	2. Crime 77.1% (30.6% very high)
3. Environment 76.2% (24.0% very high)	3. Affordable housing 70.6% (25.5% very high)	3. Affordable housing 69.6% (21.8% very high)	3. Environment 60.2% (12.0% very high)	3. Environment 59.7% (12.7% very high)	3. Environment 66.2% (15.0% very high)	3. Air quality 76.6% (23.7% very high)
4. Homeless 69.4% (24.0% very high)	4. Transit 69.7% (21.8% very high)	4. Homeless 68.8% (18.8% very high)	4. Parks 54.6% (8.4% very high)	4. Affordable housing 54.4% (9.8% very high)	4. Homeless 61.6% (13.8% very high)	4. Traffic 73.7% (26.4% very high)
5. Roads 68.4% (17.8% very high)	5. Crime 68.1% (18.6% very high)	5. Environment 64.2% (16.0% very high)	5. Homeless 53.4% (10.6% very high)	5. Homeless 53.6% (11.8% very high)	5. Parks 59.6% (13.6% very high)	5. Transit 69.8% (23.3% very high)
6. Transit 67.8% (23.4% very high)	6. Homeless 66.9% (22.0% very high)	6. Traffic 63.6% (18.4% very high)	6. Affordable housing 48.2% (6.8% very high)	6. Parks 53.6% (8.8% very high)	6. Affordable housing 50.6% (10.4% very high)	6. Roads 69.4% (19.1% very high)
7. Air quality 63.8% (16.8% very high)	7. Environment 66.3% (18.0% very high)	7. Transit 56.2% (17.0% very high)	7. Aboriginal services 41.1% (7.4% very high)	7. Traffic 42.1% (7.4% very high)	7. Property taxes 45.8% (10.0% very high)	7. Parks 67.2% (18.3% very high)
8 Affordable housing 63.0% (20.8% very high)	8 Parks 60.1% (13.2% very high)	8 Parks 53.8% (12.6% very high)	8 Property taxes 37.7% (8.0% very high)	8. Aboriginal services 42.1% (7.0% very high)	8 Transit 41.2% (10.0% very high)	8 Homeless 62.8% (16.3% very high)
9 Parks 61.6% (14.8% very high)	9 Air quality 51.7% (12.2% very high)	9 Air quality 46.2% (9.6% very high)	9 Immigrant services 30.7% (5.0% very high)	9 Property taxes 39.7% (8.8% very high)	9 Traffic 37.4% (8.2% very high)	9 Affordable Housing 54.5% (16.5% very high)
10 Property taxes 39.8% (9.4% very high)	10. Immigrant services 35.7% (6.8% very high)	10. Property taxes 35.2% (8.8% very high)	10. Transit 27.3% (5.2% very high)	10. Transit 37.7% (7.2% very high)	10. Air quality 35.2% (8.0% very high)	10. Immigrant services 48.5% (11.7% very high)
11. Immigrant services 35.8% (5.4% very high)	11. Property taxes 32.6% (9.8% very high)	11. Aboriginal services 31.8% (7.4% very high)	11. Air quality 26.5% (4.2% very high)	11. Immigrant services 34.7% (4.6% very high)	11. Immigrant services 33.0% (4.8% very high)	11. Property taxes 47.5% (16.7% very high)
12. Aboriginal services 27.6% (5.4% very high)	12. Aboriginal services 30.8% (6.0% very high)	12. Immigrant services 31.2% (7.2% very high)	12. Arts 23.5% (2.8% very high)	12. Air quality 27.3% (4.6% very high)	12. Aboriginal services 32.4% (7.0% very high)	12. Aboriginal services 37.4% (7.0% very high)
13. Arts 20.4% (3.4% very high)	13. Arts 28.0% (6.4% very high)	13. Arts 24.8% (5.2% very high)	13. Traffic 20.3% (2.4% very high)	13. Arts 23.1% (4.0% very high)	13. Arts 21.8% (4.4% very high)	13. Arts 28.5% (5.2% very high)

