

LOOKING WEST 2007  
Segment 4: Urban Social Challenges



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## Urban Social Challenges

The Looking West 2007 Survey finds that the majority of urbanites in western Canada and Toronto rate reducing homelessness as a high priority, and that they tend to favour increased affordable housing and increased programs and services for homeless people over an increase in shelter beds as a solution to homelessness. In addition, the survey finds that many urbanites feel that governments are doing a poor job addressing urban social issues such as poverty.

While most of the residents of the seven cities included in the survey (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Toronto) report feeling safe in their own neighbourhoods during the day, the majority is "scared to set foot in" parts of their city and rates reducing crime as a high priority.

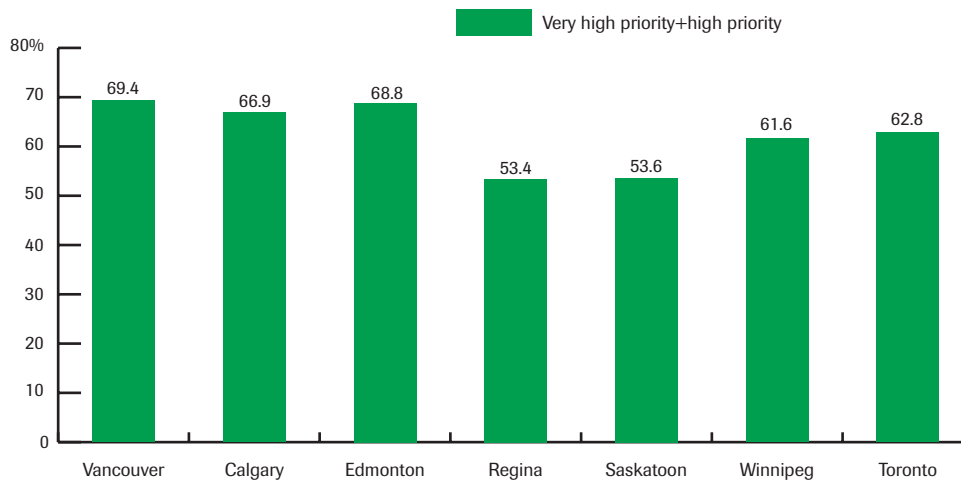
The survey asked about a number of "street level" social problems and found that urbanites tend to favour increased law enforcement when it comes to drug dealers, drug houses and panhandling. While most urbanites feel that drug addiction should be treated as a health issue rather than a criminal issue, there is limited support for safe injection sites.



**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. Additional funding has been provided by an Anonymous Foundation, The Calgary Foundation, The Winnipeg Foundation and the United Ways of Calgary and Area, Regina, Saskatoon, the Alberta Capital Region, the Lower Mainland 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 were released in five segments between March and June 2007. A summary report will be released in the fall of 2007. Visit the Canada West Foundation website ([www.cwf.ca](http://www.cwf.ca)) to download the reports at no charge.

## Homelessness

Figure 1:



	Very high priority	High priority
Vancouver	24.0%	45.4%
Calgary	22.0	44.9
Edmonton	18.8	50.0
Regina	10.6	42.8
Saskatoon	11.8	41.8
Winnipeg	13.8	47.8
Toronto	16.3	46.5

Looking West 2007 Survey respondents were asked to rate “reducing homelessness” as not a priority, a low priority, a medium priority, a high priority, or a very high priority. The majority of respondents in all seven cities rated reducing homelessness as a high or very high priority; Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary residents are the most likely to state that it is a high or very high priority, while Saskatoon and Regina residents are the least likely to rate reducing homelessness as a high or very high priority.

### Homelessness

*Reducing homelessness is rated as a high priority by majorities in all seven cities*

## Homelessness

Figure 2: Response to Homelessness

	Increase support programs for homeless	Increase affordable housing options	Increase availability of shelter beds	Do nothing/ enough done/do less
Vancouver	48.0%	41.6%	21.0%	4.2%
Calgary	39.9	48.5	21.0	4.8
Edmonton	38.6	48.6	24.8	6.2
Regina	40.4	28.5	21.1	6.0
Saskatoon	40.4	29.7	19.5	6.8
Winnipeg	44.0	26.4	21.2	6.4
Toronto	51.5	32.4	20.7	10.0

Survey respondents were asked the following open-ended question: “There are growing concerns about homelessness in your city. What do you think governments should do to address homelessness in your city?” In Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, the most frequently mentioned solution to homelessness is increasing support programs for homeless people. In Calgary and Edmonton, the most frequently mentioned solution is increasing affordable housing. Increasing the availability of homeless shelter beds was mentioned by only 2 in 10 urbanites.

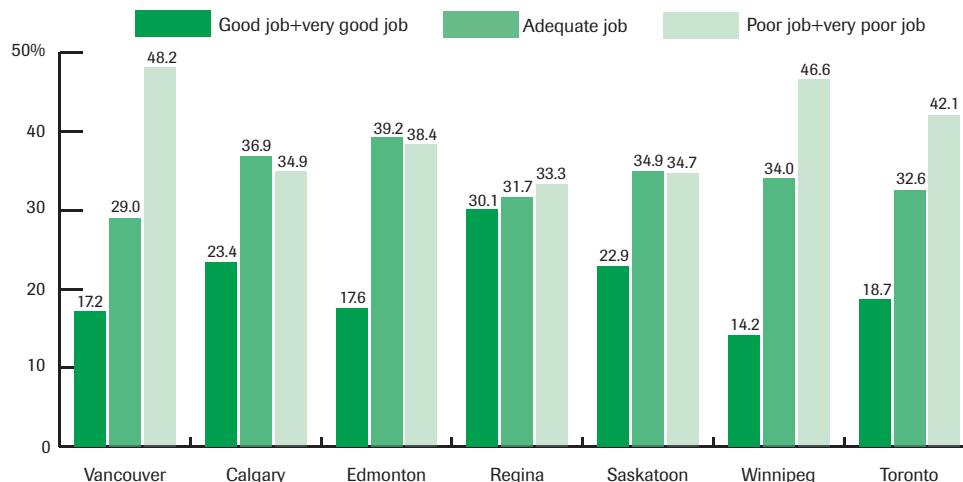
### Response to Homelessness

*Urbanites favour support programs and affordable housing over shelter beds to address homelessness*



## Governments and Social Issues

Figure 3: Government Performance on Urban Social Issues



	Very good job	Good job	Adequate job	Poor job	Very poor job
Vancouver	2.6%	14.6%	29.0%	39.4%	8.8%
Calgary	3.2	20.2	36.9	27.3	7.6
Edmonton	2.2	15.4	39.2	32.2	6.2
Regina	6.6	23.5	31.7	28.1	5.2
Saskatoon	3.6	19.3	34.9	29.5	5.2
Winnipeg	1.6	12.6	34.0	39.6	7.0
Toronto	2.0	16.7	32.6	33.4	8.7

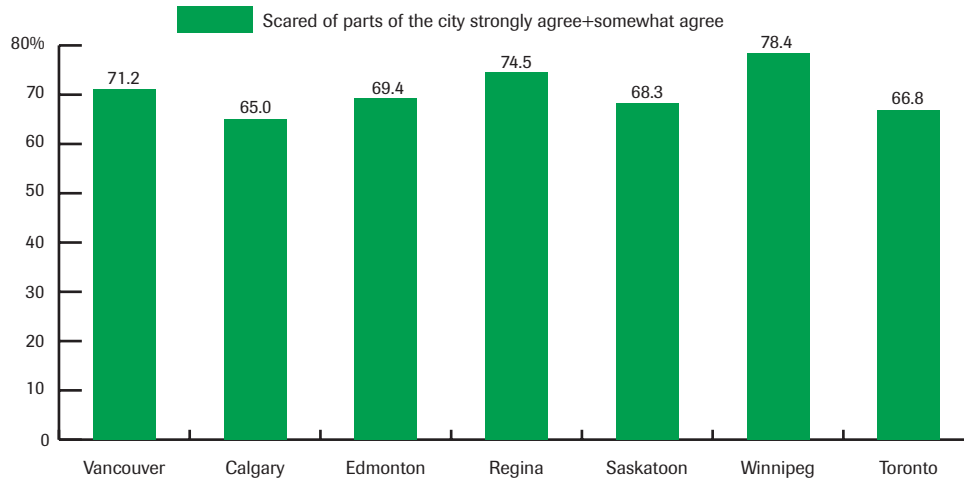
Respondents were asked: "In your opinion, how good a job are governments doing to address social issues such as poverty in your city?" Response categories included a very good job, a good job, an adequate job, a poor job and a very poor job. Regina residents are the most likely to say that governments are doing a good job with over 3 in 10 stating that governments are doing a good or very good job. In Calgary and Saskatoon, 2 in 10 residents give governments a good or very good rating on social issues, and less than 2 in 10 Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg residents state that governments are doing a good or very good job. In all seven cities, the percentage who says governments are doing a poor or very poor job is higher than the percentage who says they are doing a good or very good job.

*Very few urbanites feel that governments are doing a good job to address urban social issues; Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto residents are more likely than other urbanites to state that governments are doing a poor job*



## Public Safety

Figure 4: Dangerous Parts of the City



	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Vancouver	42.6%	28.6%
Calgary	31.9	33.1
Edmonton	38.0	31.4
Regina	44.4	30.1
Saskatoon	39.8	28.5
Winnipeg	52.8	25.6
Toronto	40.8	26.0

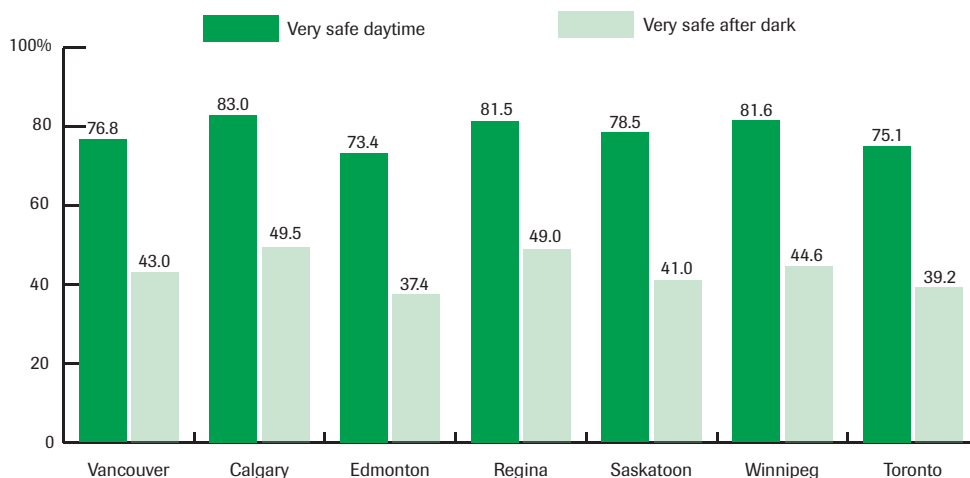
Across the seven cities, residents are apprehensive about public safety. Looking West 2007 Survey respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement, “There are parts of the city I am scared to set foot in.” Winnipeg residents are the most likely to report being scared to set foot in parts of the city, with almost 8 in 10 agreeing with the statement. Three-quarters of Regina residents also agree with the statement. Calgary (65.0%) and Toronto (66.8%) residents are the least likely to report feeling afraid of parts of their cities, but the percentages are still high.

## Public Safety

*A majority of residents in each city is “scared to set foot in” parts of their city; Winnipeg residents are the most likely to state that they are afraid to enter parts of the city, while Calgary and Toronto residents are somewhat less likely to express such fears*

## Public Safety

Figure 5: Neighbourhood Safety



	Daytime				After dark			
	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not very safe	Not at all safe	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not very safe	Not at all safe
Vancouver	76.8%	18.8	3.0	1.2	43.0%	35.6	12.2%	8.6
Calgary	83.0	14.2	2.2	0.4	49.5	31.9	12.0	5.2
Edmonton	73.4	22.2	2.0	1.6	37.4	36.0	16.2	9.0
Regina	81.5	14.5	2.8	1.2	49.0	32.7	10.2	7.4
Saskatoon	78.5	17.1	3.0	0.8	41.0	36.3	13.3	8.2
Winnipeg	81.6	14.6	2.2	1.4	44.6	33.2	12.4	8.6
Toronto	75.1	21.7	1.6	0.4	39.2	40.0	12.5	6.6

While many urbanites are afraid of certain parts of the city, most feel very safe in their own neighbourhoods—at least during the day. Respondents were asked, “How safe would you feel or do you feel walking alone in the neighbourhood where you live during daylight hours? Very safe; somewhat safe; not very safe; or not at all safe.” They were also asked, “How safe would you feel or do you feel walking alone in the neighbourhood where you live after dark? Very safe; somewhat safe; not very safe; or not at all safe.”

Across the cities, the vast majority of residents report feeling very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood in daytime hours, with Calgary, Winnipeg and Regina residents being slightly more likely to report feeling very safe. Feelings of safety are lower after dark: only 4 in 10 Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg residents and 5 in 10 Calgary and Regina residents report feeling very safe walking in their neighbourhood after dark.

### Financing Urban Infrastructure

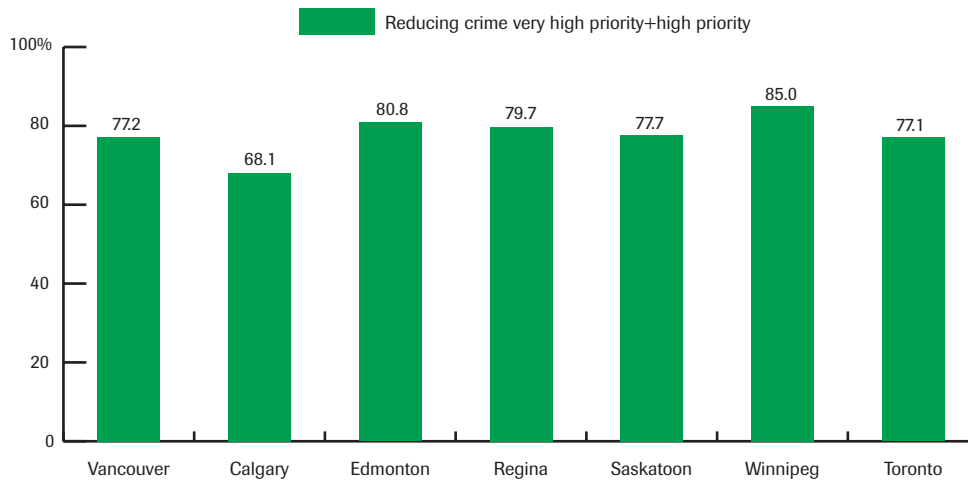
*Across all seven cities, most residents feel very safe in their own neighbourhoods during daylight hours, but less than half feel very safe at night*



## Crime Reduction



Figure 6: Reducing Crime



	Very high priority	High priority
Vancouver	25.6%	51.6%
Calgary	18.6	49.5
Edmonton	27.0	53.8
Regina	23.3	56.4
Saskatoon	23.1	54.6
Winnipeg	32.4	52.6
Toronto	30.6	46.5

Looking West 2007 Survey respondents were asked to rate “reducing crime in your city” as not a priority, a low priority, a medium priority, a high priority, or a very high priority. Winnipeg, Edmonton and Regina residents are slightly more likely to rate reducing crime as a high or very high priority than are the residents of the other cities.

### Reducing Crime

*Reducing crime is rated as a high priority by strong majorities in all seven cities*



## Illegal Drug Activity

Figure 7: Responses to Illegal Drug Dealing and Use

	Increase law enforcement for drug dealers/drug houses	Increase programs for addicts	Legalize and regulate street drugs	Increase law enforcement for addicts	Safe injection sites	Don't care/do nothing
Vancouver	43.2%	31.4%	8.8%	5.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Calgary	51.9	24.8	9.2	4.8	2.4	0.2
Edmonton	52.6	24.2	7.0	4.8	4.2	0.2
Regina	50.6	30.3	5.8	5.2	2.6	0.4
Saskatoon	51.6	25.9	8.2	5.0	3.2	0.0
Winnipeg	52.0	25.4	9.4	4.2	3.0	0.2
Toronto	48.5	24.9	10.3	5.4	4.0	0.4

*Across all seven cities, increased law enforcement for drug dealers and drug houses is a relatively popular solution to illegal drug activity*

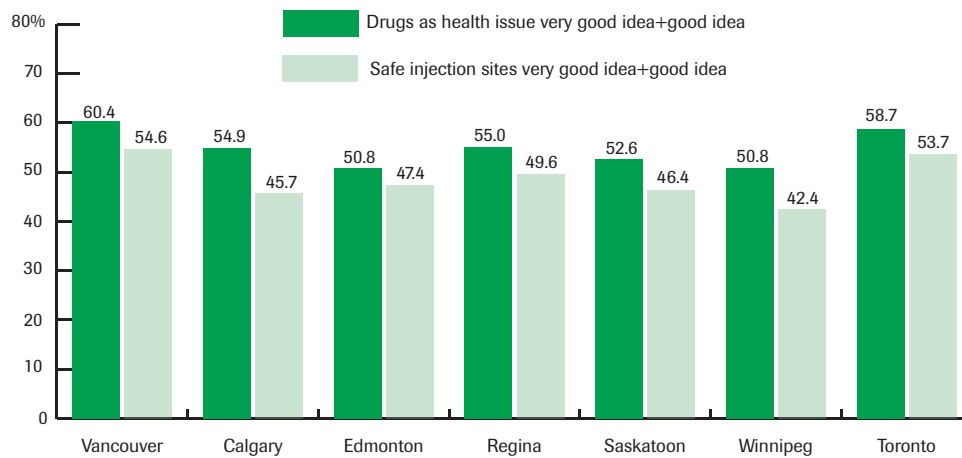
Looking West 2007 respondents were asked: "Of the following options, which is your first choice for dealing with illegal drug activity in your city? Increase law enforcement directed at drug dealers and drug houses; increase law enforcement directed at drug addicts; increase programs for addicts, including addiction treatment and employment training; establish safe injection sites; legalization and regulation of street drugs; or I don't care if anything is done." In all seven cities, the most frequently selected choice is to increase law enforcement directed at drug dealers and drug houses; Vancouverites (4 in 10) are somewhat less likely to select this option than residents of the other cities (5 in 10). Programs for drug addicts is the second most popular option, with Vancouver and Regina residents slightly more likely than residents of other cities to select this option.



## Illegal Drug Activity



Figure 8: Drugs as a Health Issue and Safe Injection Sites



	Treat drugs as health issue		Safe injection sites	
	Very good idea	Good idea	Very good idea	Good idea
Vancouver	24.4%	36.0%	21.6%	33.0%
Calgary	19.2	35.7	14.2	31.5
Edmonton	17.6	33.2	11.8	35.6
Regina	19.1	35.9	15.1	34.5
Saskatoon	17.5	35.1	13.3	33.1
Winnipeg	21.4	29.4	12.8	29.6
Toronto	24.7	34.0	17.3	36.4

Respondents were asked to rate the statement “governments should treat illegal drug use as a health issue, not as a criminal issue” as a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea. A majority of respondents in all seven cities state that this is a good or a very good idea. Respondents were also asked to rate the statement “there should be safe injection sites for drug addicts in your city” as a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea. Vancouver, Toronto and Regina residents are the most likely to be supportive of safe injection sites, with about 5 in 10 stating that such sites are a good or very good idea. However, as Figure 7 on the previous page illustrates, when asked to rank potential responses to illegal drug activity, safe injection sites rank well below increased law enforcement and increased programs for addicts.

### Illegal Drug Activity

*The majority of urbanites feels that drug use should be treated as a health issue*

## Street Prostitution

Figure 9: Responses to Street Prostitution

	Increase law enforcement for johns	Increase programs for sex trade workers	License and regulate street prostitution	Establish red light district	Don't care/do nothing
Vancouver	19.0%	23.2%	28.0%	25.6%	0.2%
Calgary	25.7	24.4	24.2	19.8	0.6
Edmonton	28.0	29.8	18.0	17.8	0.4
Regina	40.0	24.5	16.9	11.4	1.0
Saskatoon	36.1	27.3	15.1	12.4	0.8
Winnipeg	31.6	29.4	19.6	12.4	0.4
Toronto	21.5	23.5	23.9	22.7	0.6

Survey respondents were asked: "Of the following options, which is your first choice in dealing with street prostitution in your city? Increase law enforcement directed at johns; provide more social services to sex trade workers; license and regulate street prostitution; establish a red light district and move prostitutes away from business and residential areas; or I don't care if anything is done." Responses vary considerably across the cities. Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary residents are divided between the options, while Edmonton and Winnipeg residents are divided between law enforcement for johns and programs for sex trade workers. Regina and Saskatoon residents favour increasing law enforcement directed at johns. Looking at individual options, Vancouver and Toronto residents are more likely than other urbanites to select establishing a red light district as their first choice in dealing with street prostitution, and Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto residents are more likely than other urbanites to select licensing and regulating street prostitution.

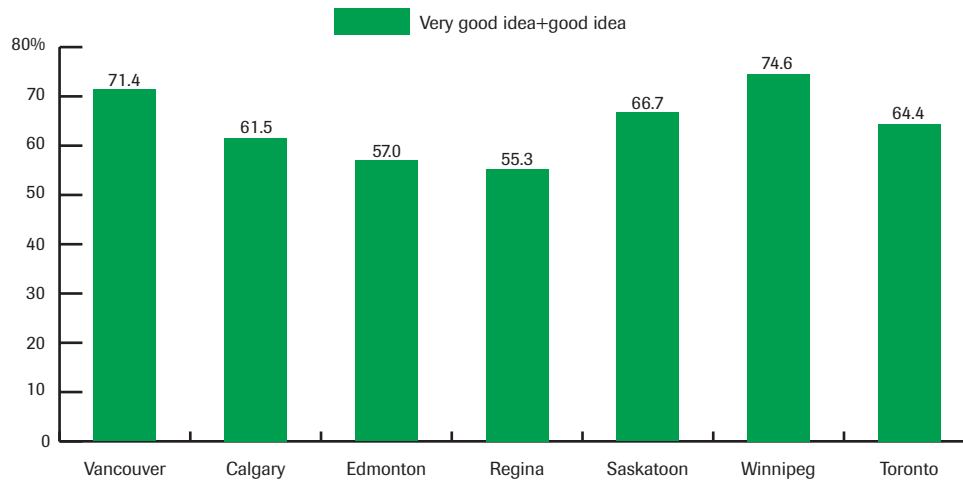
### Street Prostitution

*When it comes to addressing street prostitution, Vancouver residents are more likely to support licensing and regulation, Vancouver and Toronto residents are more likely to support a red light district, and Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg residents are more likely to support increased law enforcement for johns*



## Panhandling

Figure 10:



	Very good idea	Good idea
Vancouver	29.6%	41.8%
Calgary	23.8	37.7
Edmonton	18.8	38.2
Regina	17.3	38.0
Saskatoon	25.5	41.2
Winnipeg	34.2	40.4
Toronto	25.4	39.0

Respondents were asked to rate the statement “police should crack down on panhandling in your city” as a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea. While the majority in each city favours the idea, Winnipeg respondents are the most likely to call for a crackdown on panhandling, with three-quarters stating that it is a good or very good idea. Vancouver residents are also supportive, with 7 in 10 stating that cracking down on panhandling is a good or very good idea. Support is lowest in Regina, where just over 5 in 10 state that it is a good or very good idea.



### Panhandling

*Winnipeg and Vancouver residents are the most likely to call for a crack down on panhandling*