



# LOOKING WEST 2007

Segment 3: Urban Transportation



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## Urban Transportation

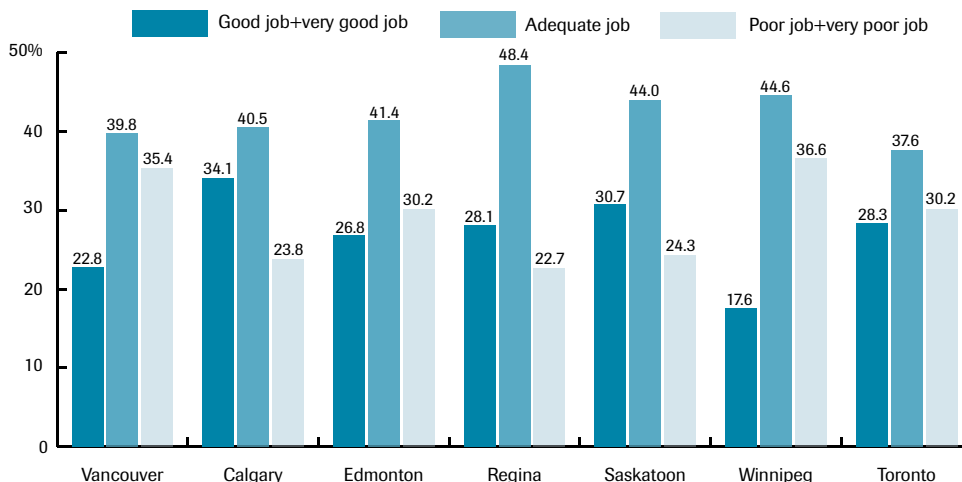
Transportation systems—both roads and public transit—are critical to the successful functioning of cities. Unfortunately, as numerous researchers have documented, Canada's urban areas face a growing backlog of transportation infrastructure construction, maintenance and replacement. This infrastructure debt impedes the ability of cities to accommodate population growth, and has negative long-term consequences for the environment, economy, public health and safety, and the operating costs that taxpayers will have to cover. The Looking West 2007 Survey finds that many urban residents consider transportation to be a key issue for their city. However, urban residents are also opposed to many of the funding options—such as increased taxes, debt and user fees—that are available to finance transportation infrastructure projects.



**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.

## Urban Road Systems

Figure 1:



### Urban Road Systems

*Less than half of urbanites feel that their local government is doing a good job to ensure an efficient road system; Calgary, Saskatoon and Regina residents are the most likely to be satisfied while Winnipeg and Vancouver residents are the most likely to be dissatisfied*

	Very good job	Good job	Adequate job	Poor job	Very poor job
Vancouver	4.0%	18.8%	39.8%	28.4%	7.0%
Calgary	8.0	26.1	40.5	18.6	5.2
Edmonton	3.8	23.0	41.4	25.0	5.2
Regina	5.0	23.1	48.4	18.1	4.6
Saskatoon	5.8	24.9	44.0	17.7	6.6
Winnipeg	2.4	15.2	44.6	30.2	6.4
Toronto	3.8	24.5	37.6	21.9	8.3

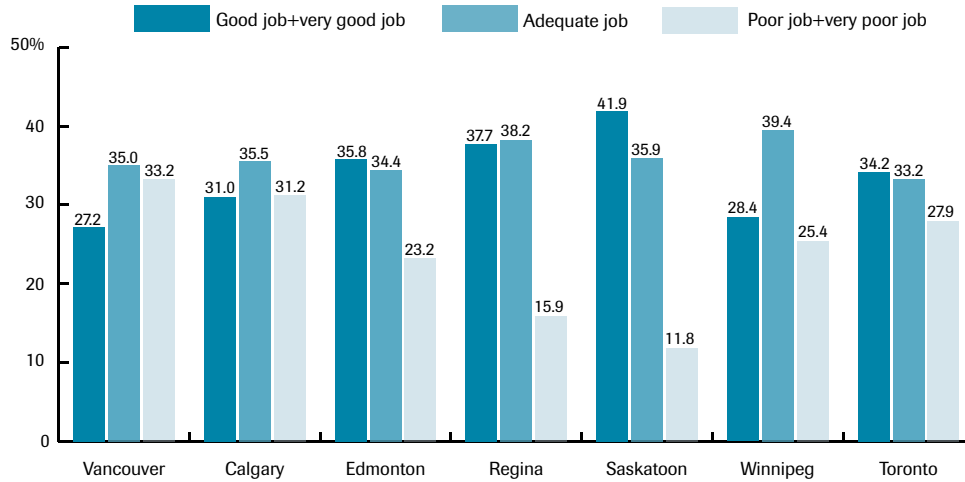
Looking West 2007 respondents were asked, "In your opinion, how good a job is your local government doing to ensure an efficient road system? A very good job, a good job, an adequate job, a poor job, or a very poor job." In all seven cities, less than a third of the residents state that their local government is doing a good or very good job. Calgary, Saskatoon and Regina are the only cities in which the number residents stating that the local government is doing a good or very good job is greater than the number stating that it is doing a poor or very poor job. Residents of Winnipeg and Vancouver are the least likely to be satisfied: almost 4 in 10 state that the local government is doing a poor or very poor job.





## Public Transit

Figure 2:



	Very good job	Good job	Adequate job	Poor job	Very poor job
Vancouver	6.0%	21.2%	35.0%	24.4%	8.8%
Calgary	7.6	23.4	35.5	24.6	6.6
Edmonton	5.4	30.4	34.4	18.0	5.2
Regina	7.4	30.3	38.2	14.1	1.8
Saskatoon	8.4	33.5	35.9	8.0	3.8
Winnipeg	5.0	23.4	39.4	22.0	3.4
Toronto	6.6	27.6	33.2	21.9	6.0

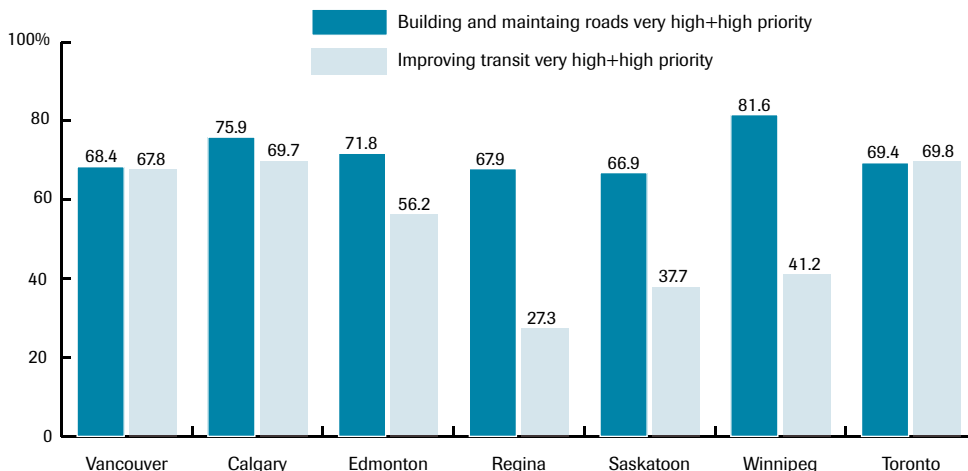
### Public Transit

*Saskatoon and Regina residents are the most likely to be satisfied with the job the local government is doing to ensure the efficiency of their public transit system.*

Looking West 2007 respondents were asked, "In your opinion, how good a job is your local government doing to ensure an efficient public transit system? A very good job, a good job, an adequate job, a poor job, or a very poor job." Saskatoon and Regina residents are the most likely to be satisfied with the job their local governments are doing to ensure an efficient public transit system, with over three-quarters of respondents in these cities stating that their local government does a very good, good or adequate job, and less than 2 in 10 in each city stating that the government does a poor or very poor job. Edmonton residents are also relatively satisfied, while Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto residents provide somewhat mixed reviews of local government performance in this area. Vancouver is the only city in which the number of residents stating that the local government is doing a good or very good job is lower than the number stating it is doing a poor or very poor job.

## Priority of Roads and Transit

Figure 3:



### Priority of Roads and Transit

*Toronto and Vancouver residents place equal priority on the road system and the public transit system, while Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon residents clearly favour investing in roads over investing in public transit*

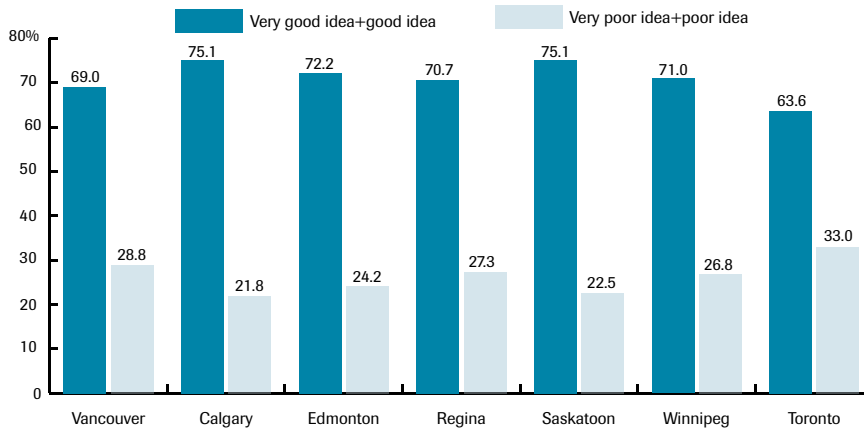
	Building and maintaining roads		Improving transit	
	Very high priority	High priority	Very high priority	High priority
Vancouver	17.8%	50.6%	23.4%	44.4%
Calgary	20.2	55.7	21.8	47.9
Edmonton	18.6	53.2	17.0	39.2
Regina	16.3	51.6	5.2	22.1
Saskatoon	12.7	54.2	7.2	30.5
Winnipeg	21.6	60.0	10.0	31.2
Toronto	19.1	50.3	23.3	46.5

Respondents were asked to rate both “building and maintaining the road system” and “improving public transit systems” as not a priority, a low priority, a medium priority, a high priority, or a very high priority. In Toronto and Vancouver, residents rate roads and transit equally, with almost 7 in 10 in each city rating these areas as high or very high priorities. For the other five cities, building and maintaining the road system is more frequently rated as a high or very high priority than is improving public transit systems. The difference is modest in Calgary, somewhat larger in Edmonton, and considerable for Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. Indeed, in Winnipeg, the number of residents who rate roads a high or very high priority is twice as large as the number who rate transit to be a high or very high priority.



## Financing Urban Infrastructure

Figure 4: Increase Federal and Provincial Infrastructure Grants



	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	15.2%	53.8%	21.4%	7.4%
Calgary	23.6	51.5	17.6	4.2
Edmonton	17.4	54.8	19.4	4.8
Regina	17.3	53.4	22.3	5.0
Saskatoon	15.5	59.6	18.7	3.8
Winnipeg	17.2	53.8	20.6	6.2
Toronto	21.7	41.9	25.0	8.0

Looking West 2007 respondents were asked: “Due to the need to both maintain existing roads and build new transportation infrastructure, [city] has a number of large transportation infrastructure projects for the years ahead. I am going to read a list of methods by which governments might pay for these projects. For each method, please indicate if you think that this is a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea.” The financing methods presented are:

- increase property taxes;
- increase user fees, such as fuel taxes, transit fares, toll roads, and parking taxes;
- increase federal and provincial infrastructure grants to my city, even if it means a small increase in income taxes;
- introduce a new city fuel tax or sales tax;
- allow the private sector to build and operate transportation projects and administer user charges; and
- increase municipal debt to be paid back at a later date through property taxes.

In all seven cities, the most popular funding option—by a large margin—is federal and provincial infrastructure grants. Calgary and Saskatoon residents are the most likely to state that increasing infrastructure grants to their cities is a good or very good idea. Toronto residents are slightly less enthusiastic about grant funding, but still over 6 in 10 state that increasing infrastructure grants is a good or very good idea.

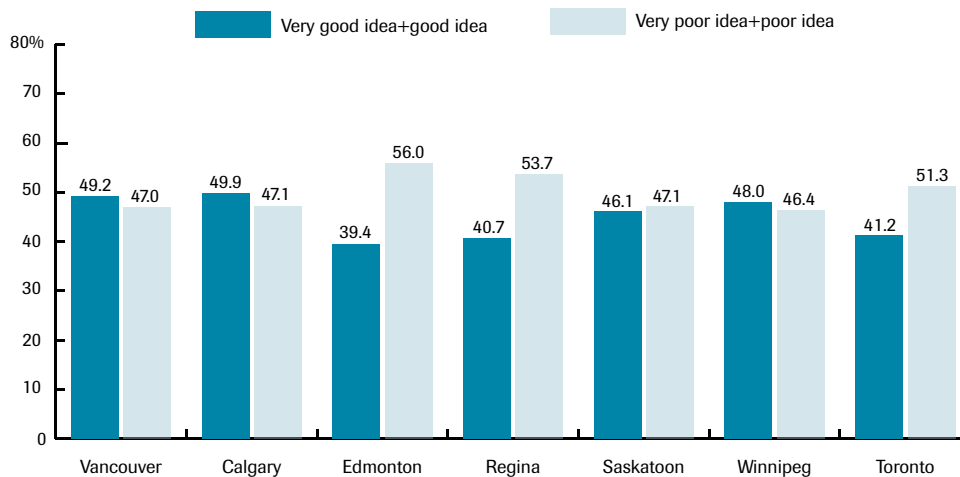


### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*Increasing federal and provincial grants is the most popular infrastructure funding model*

## Financing Urban Infrastructure

**Figure 5: Allow the Private Sector to Build and Operate Transportation Projects and Administer User Charges**



### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*Calgary, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Saskatoon residents are somewhat more open to private sector transportation projects than are Toronto, Edmonton and Regina residents*

	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	11.4%	37.8%	30.0%	17.0%
Calgary	12.8	37.1	34.5	12.6
Edmonton	3.6	35.8	37.0	19.0
Regina	8.0	32.7	38.2	15.5
Saskatoon	9.2	36.9	35.5	11.6
Winnipeg	7.6	40.4	34.2	12.2
Toronto	8.2	33.0	32.8	18.5

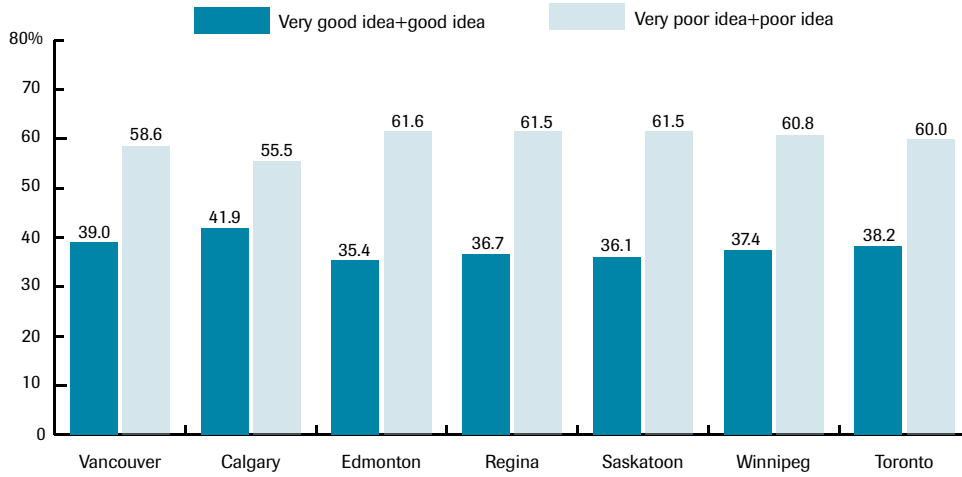
The second most popular idea is to allow the private sector to build and operate transportation projects; this option is rated as a good or very good idea by almost 5 in 10 residents in Calgary, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Saskatoon, and by 4 in 10 residents in Toronto, Edmonton and Regina.



## Financing Urban Infrastructure



Figure 6: Increase User Fees



### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*Across the cities, 6 in 10 residents state that increasing user fees to pay for transportation projects is a poor or very poor idea*

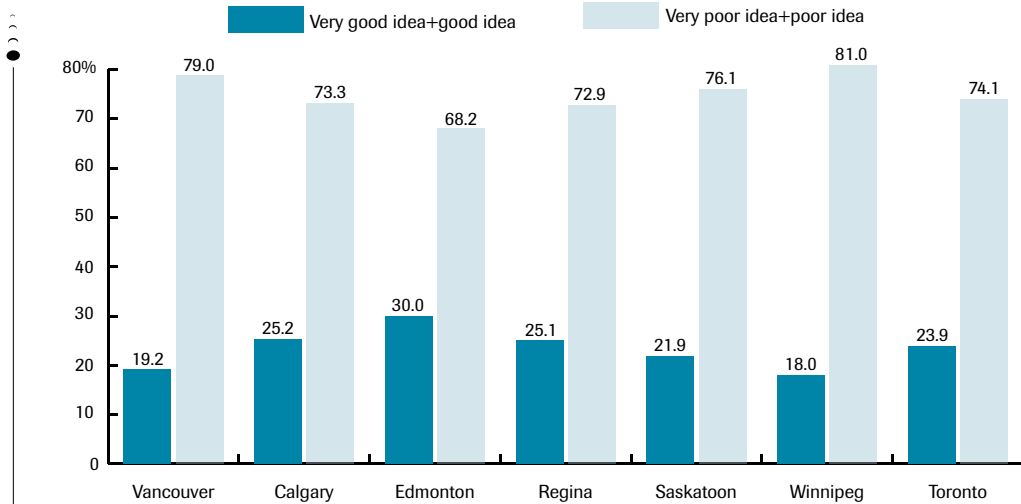
	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	6.4%	32.6%	39.4%	19.2%
Calgary	6.6	35.3	42.5	13.0
Edmonton	3.2	32.2	46.2	15.4
Regina	5.6	31.1	48.0	13.5
Saskatoon	4.8	31.3	47.4	14.1
Winnipeg	4.4	33.0	45.8	15.0
Toronto	8.0	30.2	41.9	18.1

Roughly 4 in 10 residents of each city state that increased fuel taxes, transit fares, toll roads, parking taxes and other such fees are a good or very good idea compared to 6 in 10 who state that increased user fees to pay for transportation projects is a poor or very poor idea.



## Financing Urban Infrastructure

Figure 7: Increase Property Taxes



### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*Urbanites do not see increased property taxes as the solution to transportation infrastructure funding; Winnipeg residents are particularly likely to be opposed to this idea*

	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	2.0%	17.2%	56.0%	23.0%
Calgary	1.6	23.6	52.1	21.2
Edmonton	0.6	29.4	49.4	18.8
Regina	1.8	23.3	49.8	23.1
Saskatoon	2.4	19.5	56.0	20.1
Winnipeg	0.8	17.2	51.0	30.0
Toronto	2.8	21.1	47.7	26.4

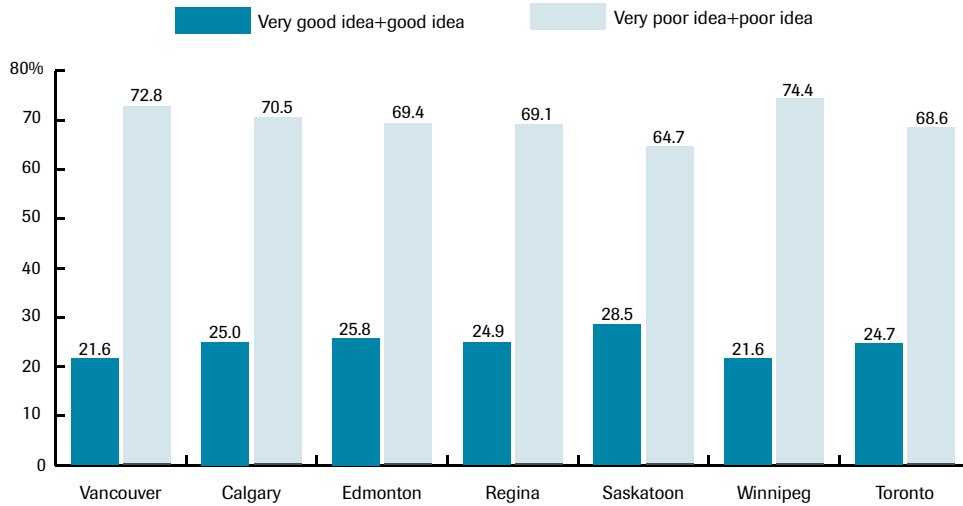
At least 7 out of 10 residents in each city consider increasing property taxes to fund transportation infrastructure projects to be a poor or very poor idea, with opposition being strongest in Winnipeg, where over 8 out of 10 rate it as a poor or very poor idea. Although well short of a majority, Edmonton residents are slightly more likely to be open to increased property taxes to finance infrastructure projects with 3 in 10 stating that it is a good or very good idea.





## Financing Urban Infrastructure

**Figure 8: Increase Municipal Debt**



	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	1.8%	19.8%	52.2%	20.6%
Calgary	2.8	22.2	51.5	19.0
Edmonton	1.8	24.0	52.2	17.2
Regina	3.0	21.9	50.0	19.1
Saskatoon	2.4	26.1	50.2	14.5
Winnipeg	1.2	20.4	53.2	21.2
Toronto	3.0	21.7	46.9	21.7

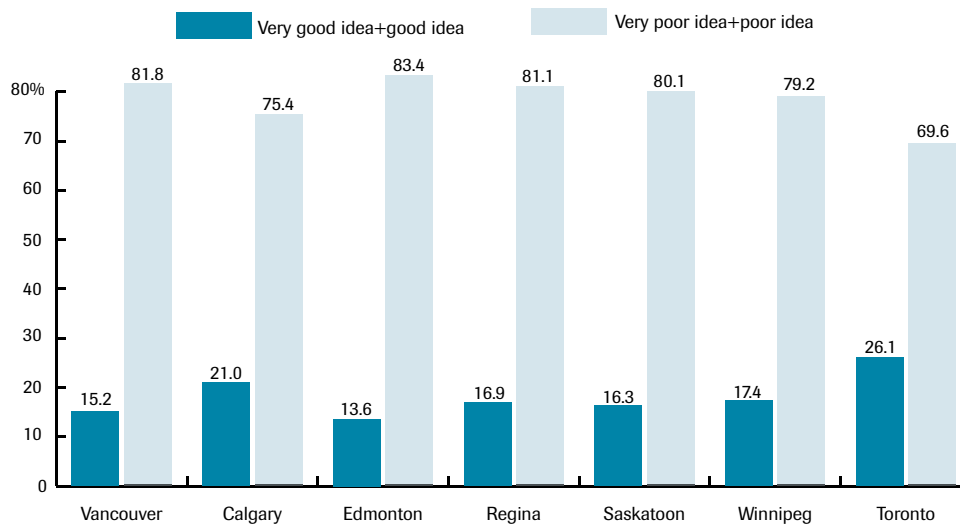
Increasing municipal debt to be paid back at a later date through property taxes is another rather unpopular idea, with between 64.7% and 74.4% of residents in the seven cities stating that this is a poor or very poor idea.

### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*Most urban residents feel that increasing municipal debt to pay for infrastructure projects is a poor idea*

## Financing Urban Infrastructure

Figure 9: New City Tax



### Financing Urban Infrastructure

*At least 7 out of 10 residents in each of the cities oppose introducing a new city fuel or sales tax to help pay for transportation infrastructure projects*

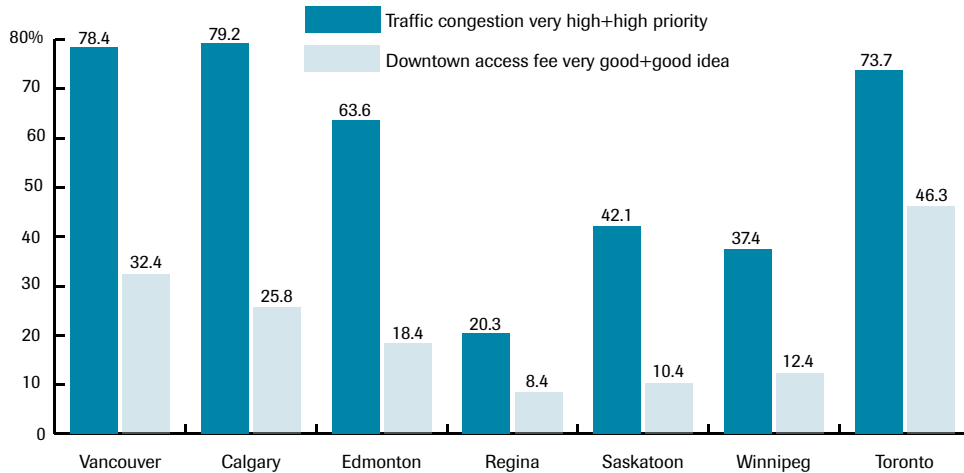
	Very good idea	Good idea	Poor idea	Very poor idea
Vancouver	1.8%	13.4%	52.8%	29.0%
Calgary	4.6	16.4	48.9	26.5
Edmonton	1.8	11.8	54.2	29.2
Regina	3.6	13.3	54.4	26.7
Saskatoon	2.8	13.5	57.0	23.1
Winnipeg	3.2	14.2	52.6	26.6
Toronto	6.0	20.1	46.5	23.1

At least 7 out of 10 residents in each of the cities state that introducing a new city fuel tax or sales tax to help pay for infrastructure costs is a poor or very poor idea.



## Traffic Congestion

Figure 10: Traffic Congestion



	Traffic congestion		Downtown access fee	
	Very high priority	High priority	Very good idea	Good idea
Vancouver	29.4%	49.0%	10.4%	22.0%
Calgary	25.1	54.1	8.6	17.2
Edmonton	18.4	45.2	5.4	13.0
Regina	2.4	17.9	1.8	6.6
Saskatoon	7.4	34.7	3.6	6.8
Winnipeg	8.2	29.2	3.8	8.6
Toronto	26.4	47.3	16.5	29.8

Respondents were asked two questions about traffic congestion. First, they were asked to rate “reducing traffic congestion” as not a priority, a low priority, a medium priority, a high priority, or a very high priority. Second, they were asked to rate the statement “To decrease congestion, automobiles should be charged an access fee to drive downtown during business hours” as a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea.

Almost 8 in 10 Calgary and Vancouver residents, and 7 in 10 Toronto residents, state that reducing traffic congestion is a high or very high priority. This drops to 6 in 10 for Edmonton, 4 in 10 for Saskatoon and Winnipeg, and 2 in 10 for Regina.

Toronto residents are the most open to the notion of a downtown access fee, with over 4 in 10 stating that it is a good or very good idea, and 50.3% stating that it is a poor or very poor idea. One-third of Vancouver residents and one-quarter of Calgary residents feel a downtown access fee is a good or very good idea, and fewer than 2 in 10 Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina residents support the idea.



### Traffic Congestion

*While large numbers of Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Toronto residents feel that reducing traffic congestion is a high priority, the majority of residents in all seven cities feel that a downtown access fee is a poor idea; Toronto residents are the most open to the idea of a downtown access fee, followed by Vancouver*