



BC FACT SHEET

April 2004

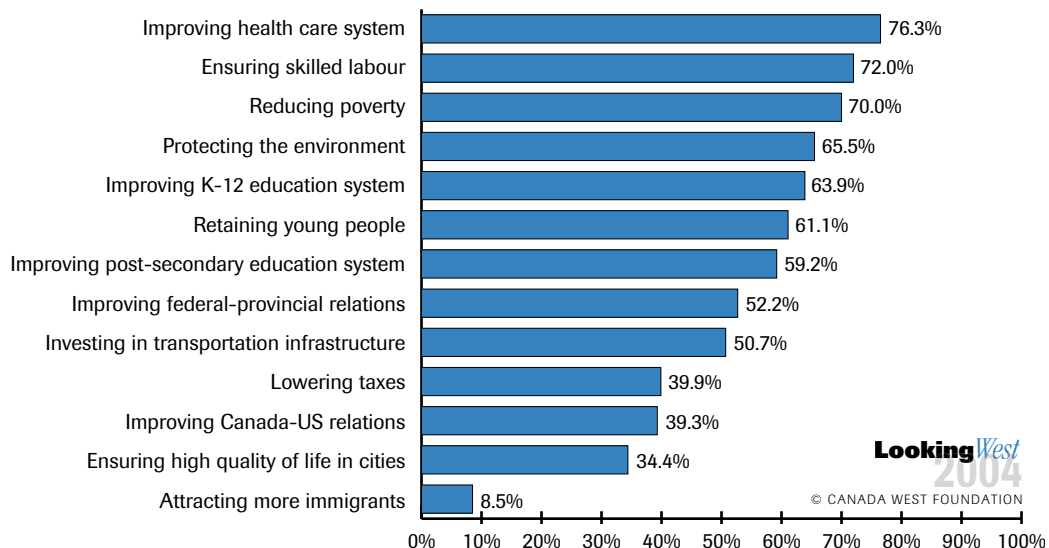
Policy Priorities

The Looking West 2004 survey asked respondents, "Thinking about what governments can do to ensure the future prosperity and quality of life in [province], would you rate the priority of the following as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority?" Thirteen policy fields were explored: lowering taxes; improving [province]'s health care system; improving [province]'s Kindergarten – Grade 12 education system; improving [province]'s post-secondary education system, which includes universities, colleges, technical schools and trades training; investing in [province]'s transportation infrastructure, such as roads, railways, airports and urban transportation systems ("ports" were added for BC respondents); attracting more immigrants to [province]; protecting the environment; retaining [province]'s young people; reducing poverty; improving Canada-US relations; improving the relationship between [province] and the federal government; ensuring [province] has the skilled labour it needs for the years ahead; and ensuring a high quality of life in [province]'s large cities." (Question order was rotated by Western Opinion Research to avoid biases related to placement in the list.)

It must be stressed that there is no presumption that only the 13 policy fields probed are of importance to western Canada. However, the issues included provide an interesting snapshot of the variety of issues that are seen as important to western Canadian life – and of the issues that are seen to be of lesser importance. One caveat in reading the data: respondents were not asked to rank the 13 against each other, but rather to rate each individual policy area as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. The policy issues are then ranked in the analysis stage based on the percentage of respondents indicating a policy area is a high priority.

The percentage of BC respondents stating particular policy fields are a high priority is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Policy Area is a "High Priority," 2004 - BC Respondents



Thinking about what governments can do to ensure the future prosperity and quality of life in [province], would you rate the priority of the following as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority?

The full responses for each policy area are presented in Figure 2.

Eight of the thirteen policy areas – health care, environment, young people, K-12 education, post-secondary education, transportation infrastructure, lowering taxes, and immigration – were included in the Looking West 2003 survey. The stability between the 2003 and 2004 figures is remarkable (see Figure 3). The largest shifts are in retaining young people (dropped six percentage points) and investing in transportation infrastructure (rose seven percentage points).

Figure 2: Policy Priorities 2004 - BC Respondents

	high	med.	low	not a priority
Improving health care system	76.3%	17.3%	4.8%	1.5%
Ensuring skilled labour	72.0%	21.4%	4.8%	1.4%
Reducing poverty	70.0%	22.5%	5.3%	1.8%
Protecting the environment	65.5%	27.6%	6.1%	0.6%
Improving K-12 education system	63.9%	25.8%	8.0%	1.4%
Retaining young people	61.1%	24.9%	9.6%	1.9%
Improving post-secondary education system	59.2%	30.5%	8.2%	1.3%
Improving federal-provincial relations	52.2%	36.2%	8.1%	2.7%
Investing in transportation infrastructure	50.7%	39.9%	8.0%	1.4%
Lowering taxes	39.9%	35.7%	18.5%	5.4%
Improving Canada-US relations	39.3%	35.0%	19.1%	6.0%
Ensuring high quality of life in cities	34.4%	42.3%	16.4%	5.5%
Attracting more immigrants	8.5%	31.4%	43.1%	16.2%

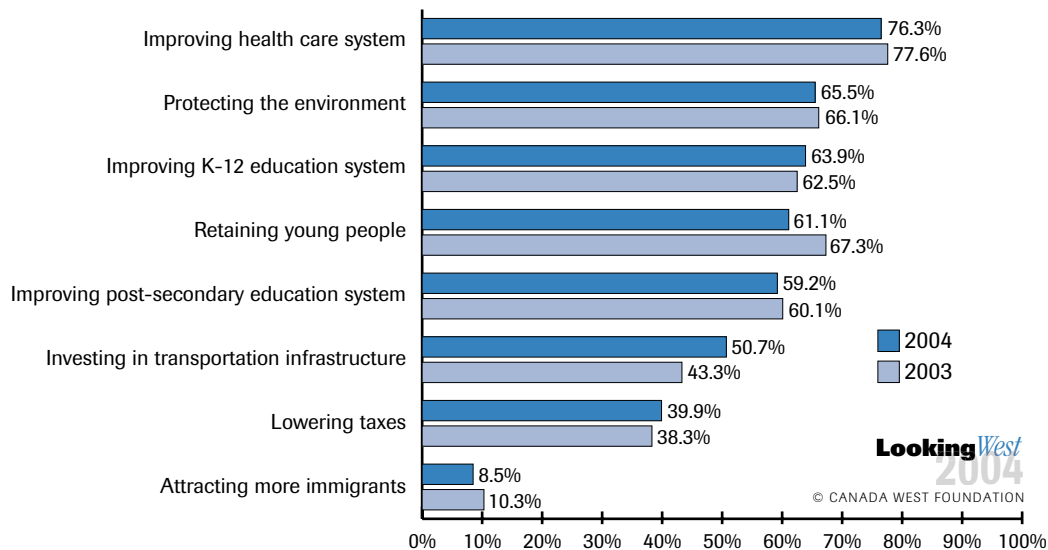
NOTE: Due to non-responses, numbers may not total to 100.

Thinking about what governments can do to ensure the future prosperity and quality of life in [province], would you rate the priority of the following as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority?

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Figure 3: Policy Area is a "High Priority," 2003 and 2004 - BC Respondents



Thinking about what governments can do to ensure the future prosperity and quality of life in [province], would you rate the priority of the following as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority?

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