

PRESS RELEASE #2

New Study Indicates Urban Canadians Want Mayors To Have Formal Role in the Federal Budget Planning Process; Cities Are Viewed As More Accountable Than Provincial or Federal Governments

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According to a comprehensive study of the residents of Canada's seven major cities, 57% want the Mayors of major Canadian cities to be formally included in the federal budget planning process. [See Figure 2.1]

There is also a strong perception that civic governments (77%) are more accountable than either the federal (48%) or provincial (64%) governments for how they spend the tax dollars they collect. [See Figure 2.2] In fact, Toronto is the only major city in the country where a majority of residents (53%) believe the federal government is accountable. The accountability gap between city government and federal government is greatest in Calgary, where 88% feel their municipal government is accountable compared to only 38% in that city who believe the federal government is accountable for tax dollars they raise.

More than 2,500 Canadians living in seven major cities (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal) were interviewed at random by telephone between Nov. 26, 2002 and Jan. 8, 2003.

Urban Canadians were asked their attitudes on a number of topics such as quality of life, empowerment, taxation, civic service quality and accountability. When asked to respond to the statement: *"It does not really matter to me which level of government gets the taxes I pay,"* 67% of respondents disagreed. This suggests urban Canadians want to see a more direct link between the taxes they pay and the services they receive in their cities. [See Figure 2.3]

Scott MacKay, President of Probe Research, said "clearly Canadians care which level of government collects and spends their tax dollars and they trust cities will be more accountable than other levels of government."

By a margin of two to one, urban Canadians believe they currently get good value (63%) rather than poor value (32%) for the property taxes they pay. [See Figure 2.4] The perceptions of good value for property taxes were highest in Calgary and Ottawa.

Bruce Cameron, President of Cameron Strategy, went on to explain "because most urban residents believe they get good value for their property taxes, it is perhaps not surprising that they support local governments in their efforts to increase their role in terms of local governance and taxation."

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"Urban Rule" is a national syndicated study conducted by Cameron Strategy Inc. and Probe Research Inc. It is the first survey of its kind to address the concerns of urban Canadians. The study explores a wide range of issues on urban quality of life, empowerment, taxation and political representation.

This survey was conducted between November 26th, 2002 and January 8th, 2003 by telephone with a random representative cross-section of over 2556 Canadians residing in seven major cities – Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. A survey of this size is considered accurate to within +/-2.0%, 19 times out of 20. At the city level, margins of error vary from +/-4.5% to 7.1%, 19 times out of 20.

Cameron Strategy Inc. is a Calgary-based market research and strategic planning company that conducts extensive research into municipal issues across Canada. Probe Research Inc. is a fully Canadian-owned public opinion and marketing research firm based in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

For further information about these survey results or the methodology, please contact either:

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Figure 2.1: Attitudes Towards City Representation

Q.17: "For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree with that statement?"

"Mayors of major Canadian cities should be formally included in the federal budget planning process"

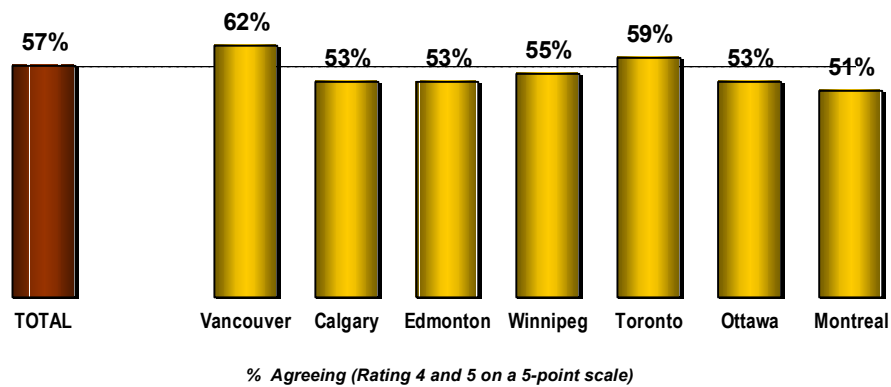


Figure 2.2: Attitudes Toward Government Tax Accountability

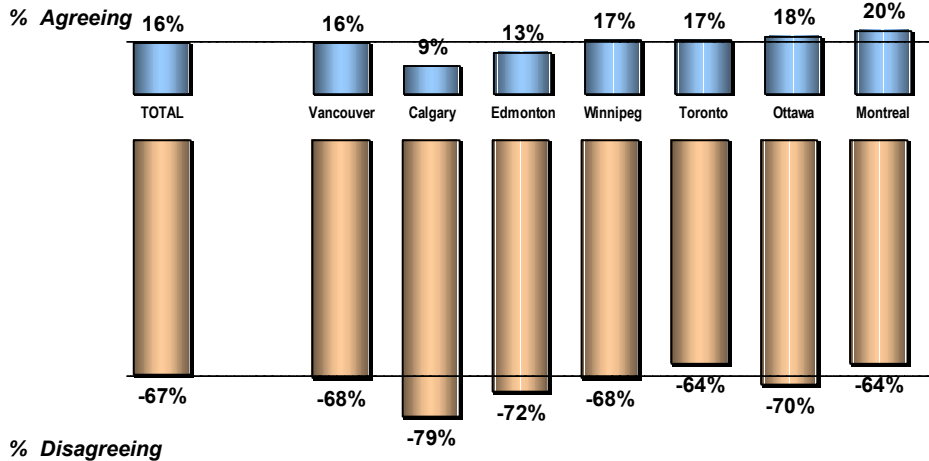
Q.12: "Now I want to ask you about Canada's three main levels of government and I'd like to know how accountable you find each to be with respect to how it spends the tax dollars it collects?"

% saying very/somewhat	TOTAL	Van	Cgy	Edm	Wpg	Tor	Ott	Mtl
Federal Government	48%	39%	38%	38%	40%	57%	43%	53%
Provincial Government	65%	49%	78%	74%	75%	63%	65%	66%
Municipal Government	77%	80%	88%	81%	78%	71%	82%	69%

Figure 2.3: Public Attitudes Towards Tax Transparency

Q.9: "People have different points of view about the taxes they pay to their city government for municipal services. I want to read you a list of statements, and for each one, I'd like to know if you agree or disagree with the statement."

"I am only a single taxpayer, and as such it doesn't really matter which government gets my taxes"



Rating Agreement on a 5-point scale : "Agreeing -"
Rating 4 and 5; "Disagreement" Rating 1 and 2

Figure 2.4: Value for Property Taxes

Q.8: "A portion of property tax bills typically includes an allocation that goes to the Province to fund public schools in your city. The remaining portion of these property taxes is used for providing a range of municipal services. Considering the services provided by your City, and the portion of this tax bill that is used for these services, please rate the value you feel citizens receive from the property tax dollars they pay."

