

Metro Elects

The Region's Top Issues and Opportunities Ahead of the 2022 Civic Election

Survey Results

Survey Methodology

The *Metro Elects* survey included three different groups:

- A random sample of Metro Vancouver adults, 18 years of age or over (n=500)
- Greater Vancouver Board of Trade members (n=180)
- Current mayors and councillors, and candidates in the up-coming election (n=65)

The survey was completed online from August 8th to 28th, 2022.

Key Election Issues

Residents

When asked to identify the most important issues facing their municipality at this time – those they think city hall should give highest priority – Metro Vancouver residents are most inclined to cite (unprompted) affordable housing, followed by transportation/public transit, crime/public safety, and homelessness. In comparison to 2018 survey results, there has been an increase in concern about all these issues except transportation.

The findings by sub-region are as follows¹:

City of Vancouver: affordable housing (38%), homelessness (33%) and crime/public safety (25%) are the dominant issues. Also mentioned more so than in other municipalities are mental health/addiction (18%), concerns about governance (transparency, bureaucracy, fiscal responsibility) 19%, taxes (12%) and core services (9%).

Burnaby/New Westminster: Affordable housing (49%) followed by transportation (32%)

Northshore: Affordable housing (48%), followed by transportation (25%) and overdevelopment (18%)

Northeast: Affordable housing (41%) followed by transportation (25%) and environment/climate change (21%)

Southwest: Affordable housing (30%) followed by overdevelopment/densification/protection of ALR (17%)

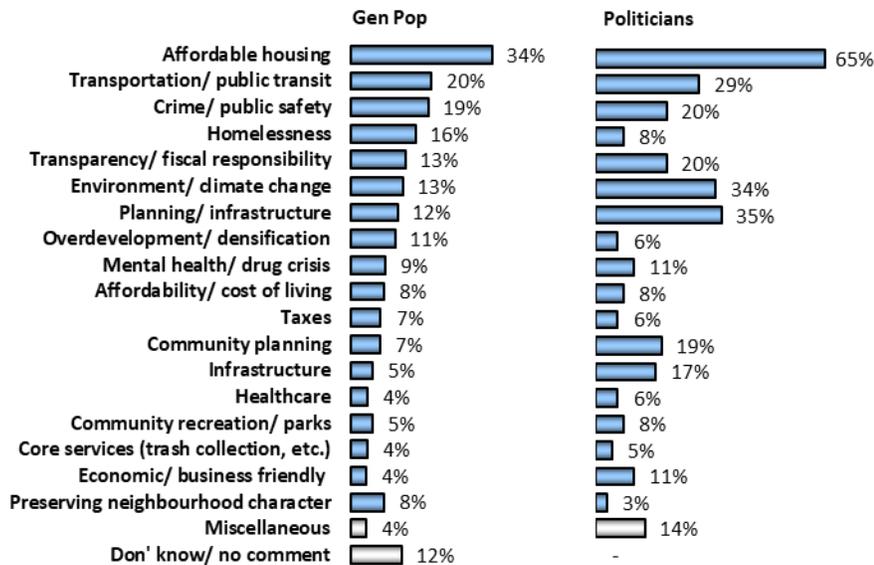
Southeast: Crime (25%), transparency/bureaucracy/fiscal responsibility (20%), affordable housing (19%), transportation (19%)

¹ Northeast: Tri-cities, Maple Ridge
Southwest: Richmond, South Delta, Tsawwassen
Southeast: Surrey, North Delta, Langley, White Rock

Key issues for politicians

Politicians (current mayors & councillors and those running as candidates for mayor, councillor or park board) clearly see affordable housing as the key issue that city hall should be giving the highest priority. They are also quite concerned about – more so than residents – planning/infrastructure, and environment/climate change.

Most Important Issues Facing Your Municipality



Businesses

According to business representatives (Greater Vancouver Board of Trade members), the top five issues facing municipalities are: permitting, licensing and red tape reduction, housing, crime and public safety, economic or business-friendly policies, and taxes. (*Note the list was aided on the business survey.)

Most Important Issue Facing Your Municipality



Performance of Local Governments

Residents, politicians and businesses were asked to rate the performance of their municipal government over the past four years on almost 20 specific services or issues.

Residents:

Residents provide the highest ratings for: core services (trash collection, cleanliness, etc.), parks and greenspaces, and active transit (50-60% rating performance very good or good).

They are most critical of municipal performance with respect to affordability in general and specifically with respect to housing. Local governments were also rated poorly on homelessness, overdose/drug crisis, and crime/public safety (40-60% rate performance as bad or very bad). City of Vancouver residents are also quite critical of downtown revitalization and taxes (over 40% providing poor ratings for each).

Businesses:

Businesses are most satisfied with their local governments' response on core services, climate change, culture/community, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Businesses are most dissatisfied with the response on homelessness, fiscal responsibility, housing, ease of doing business, and public safety.

Politicians:

Politicians are generally more positive about local governments' performance in each area. They provide the highest ratings for: core services, parks/greenspaces (both similar to residents), infrastructure, maintaining neighbourhood character, economic/business friendly policies, active transportation and public transit. They also applaud efforts regarding taxation. Approximately 60-70% provide positive ratings for each area.

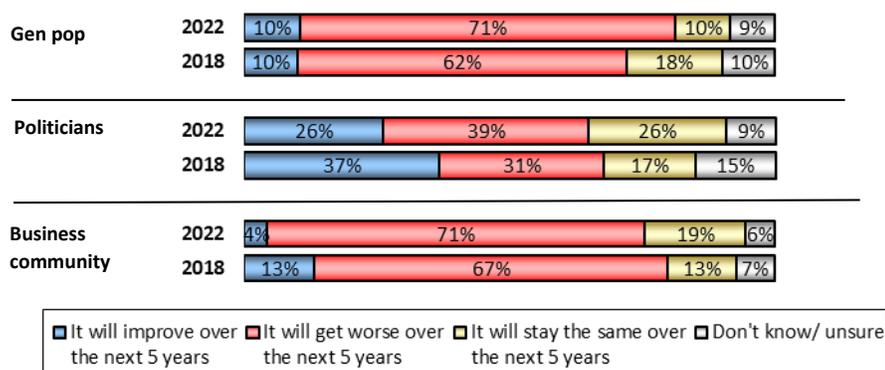
They agree with residents that the areas of weakest performance are affordability and specifically housing affordability, homelessness, and the overdose/drug crisis, but they are not as critical as residents. They also do not provide high marks for permitting/licensing/red tape reduction (similar to businesses).

Quality of Life and Affordability

Residents and businesses expect the quality of life and affordability in the region to worsen over the next 5 years. Politicians are slightly more hopeful but still almost four-in-ten believe it will worsen.

The proportion that believes it will get worse has increased since 2018 among all three groups.

Expectations for Future Quality of Life and Affordability

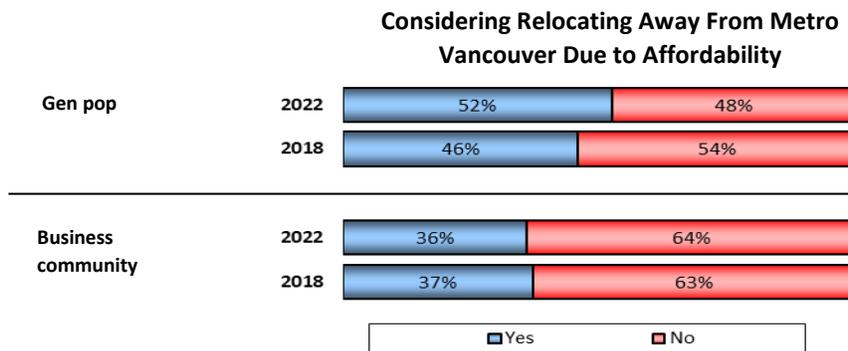


Housing

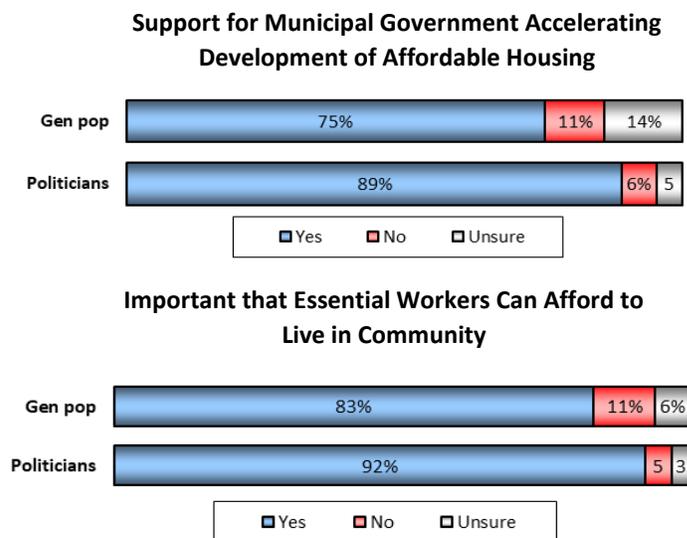
Just over half of Metro Vancouver residents, 52%, have considered moving away from the region due to quality of life or affordability concerns. This is a slight increase from 46% in 2018.

Residents most inclined to move include those under 65 years of age but particularly those 18-34 years of age (71%) and residents of the City of Vancouver (61%). Least inclined to move are residents of the Southwest (30%).

One-in-three businesses (36%) are considering relocating their businesses for the same reason (similar to the level found in 2018).

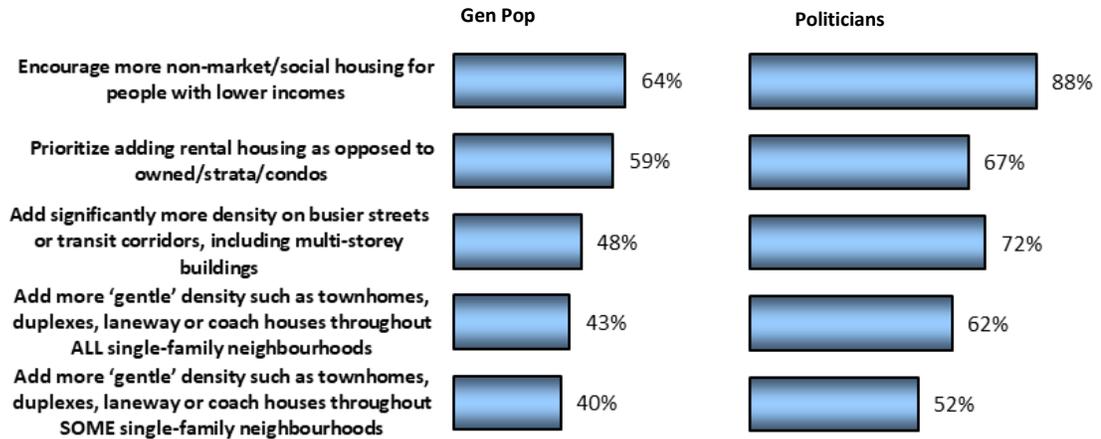


Both residents (75%) and candidates (89%) are supportive of their municipal government accelerating the development of affordable housing, and agree that it is important that essential service workers can afford to live in their community near where they work. Views are consistent across the region.



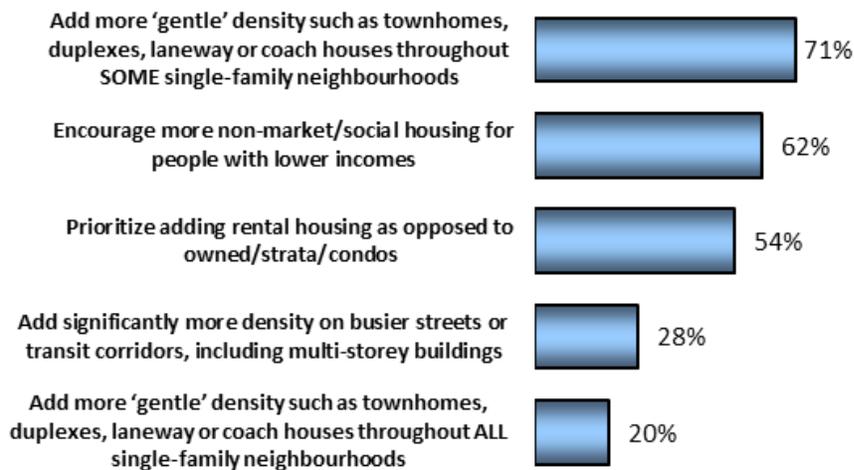
In terms of how they would prefer that their municipal government go about encouraging more affordable housing, among residents there is broadest support for encouraging more non-market/social housing for people with lower incomes, and to prioritize rental housing as opposed to owned/strata/condos. The views of politicians tend to support those of the public, but they would also like to see more density on busier streets or transit corridors.

Preferred Method of More Affordable Housing



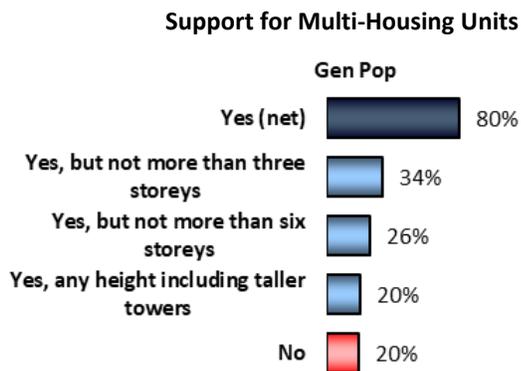
Conversely, politicians *think* the public is primarily interested in gentle density in some (not all) single family neighbourhoods, in addition to more housing for low-income residents, and rental housing.

How Politicians Think Public Prefers More Affordable Housing



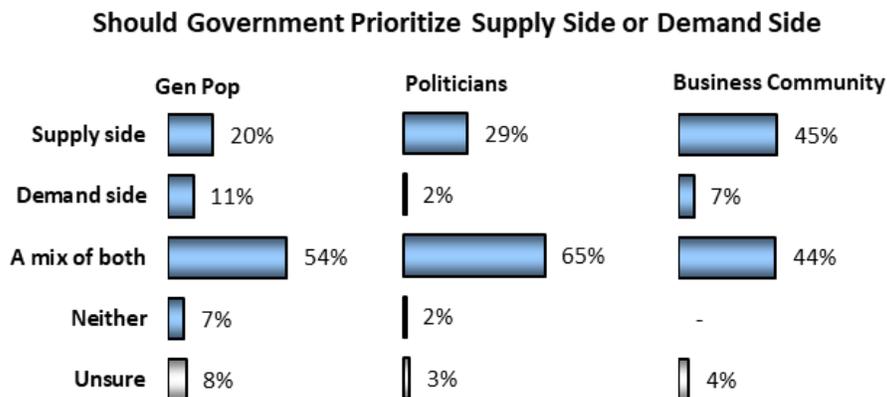
With respect to their own neighbourhoods, the majority of residents (80%) support the addition of multi-family housing in their neighbourhoods but with opinions varying whether the limit should be three storeys, six storeys or taller.

The main reasons for opposition are concerns about maintaining the character of the neighbourhood, lack of adequate infrastructure and parking, and increasing traffic congestion and/or lack of public transit.



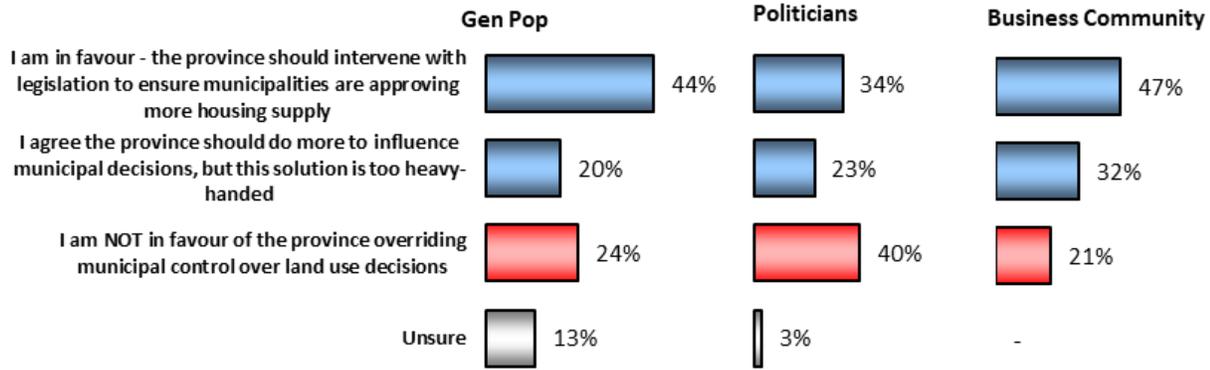
Reasons Against Multi-Family Housing	Gen pop (101) %
Base: Total Don't Support Addition Of Multifamily Units In Neighbourhood	
Does not suit the character of the neighbourhood (single family homes, quiet, etc.)	53
Too much densification/ lack of infrastructure/ parking	39
Increase in traffic congestion/ lack of public transit	32
Neighbourhood already has high density housing	11
Would not be affordable/ increase in property values	5
Don't know/ no comment	9
<i>Q.8b) Why is that?</i>	

Residents and politicians prefer that local governments employ a mix of approaches to combat the region's affordability crisis – policies that address both supply (e.g., permitting more development) and demand (e.g., empty homes tax). Businesses are divided between preferring a focus on supply measures and a balance of supply and demand measures. The findings are similar to those in 2018.



Residents, politicians and businesses tend to support provincial government legislation or at least more action to ensure municipalities are approving more housing supply. But note that four-in-ten politicians would oppose such influence.

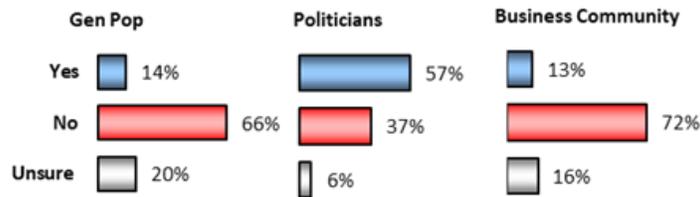
Legislation to Compel Cities to Develop Affordable Housing



Most residents do *not* think their local government is adequately planning for the infrastructure and community services required to meet the needs of a growing population. City of Vancouver residents in particular are concerned.

Politicians on the other hand tend to believe local governments have been planning adequately.

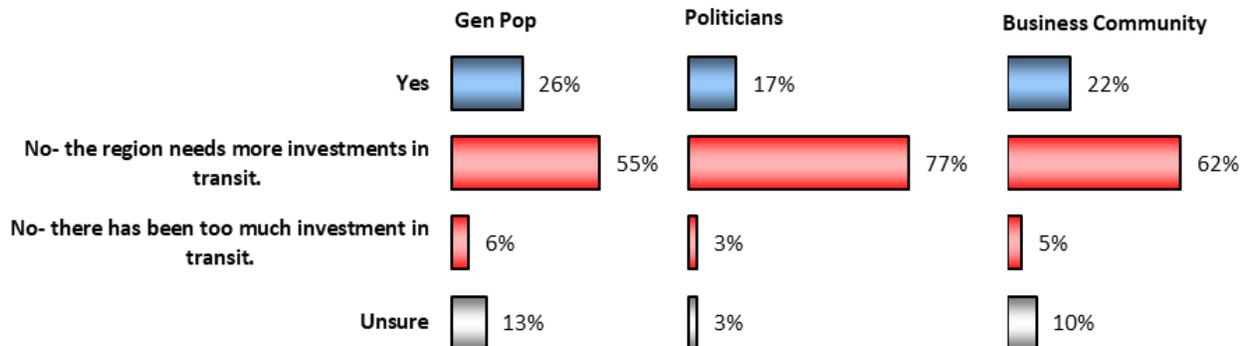
Is Government Adequately Planning for Infrastructure and Community Services



Transportation

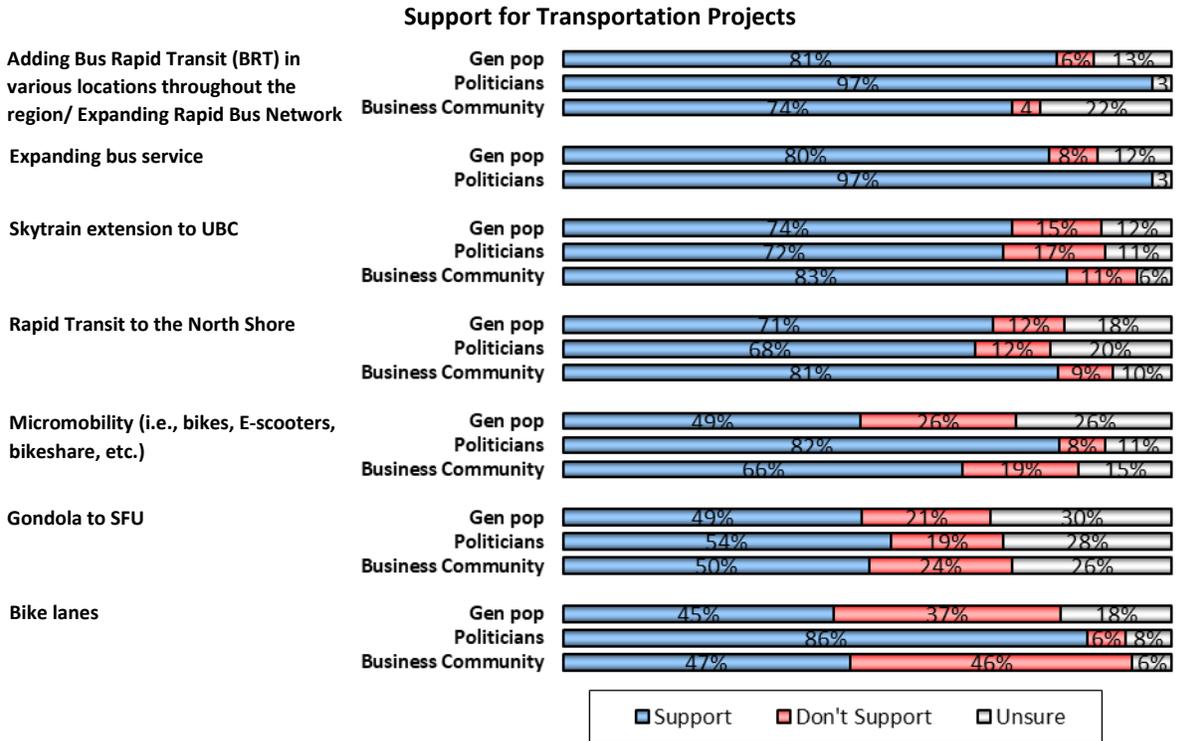
All three groups do *not* think the level of investment in transit services at a regional level has been sufficient to keep up with the needs of the population. Residents south of the Fraser are most critical.

Adequate Regional Investment in Transit Services



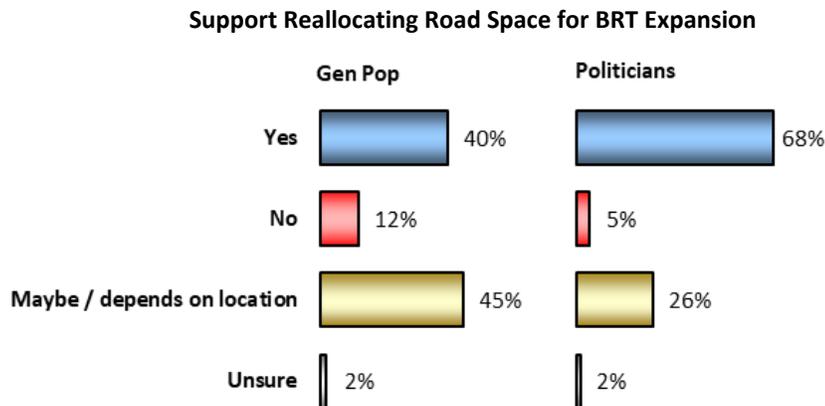
There is widespread support for adding bus rapid transit (BRT) to various locations, expanding bus service, a Skytrain expansion to UBC, and rapid transit to the North Shore.

Politicians are more supportive than the public on adding more bike lanes and micromobility options.



Further on the topic of BRT, residents and politicians were asked if they support reallocating some road space to build more effective BRT in the region. Residents are either in support or unsure (depends on location). Only one-in-ten are opposed, with opposition highest on the North Shore (24%) and in the Southeast region (21%).

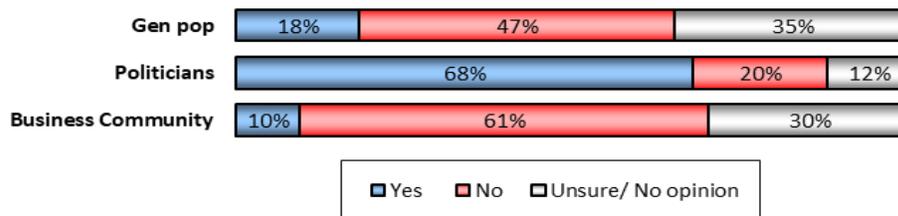
Politicians are generally more supportive.



Taxes and Spending

Both residents and businesses do *not* believe increased property taxes have been invested in a way that improves city services. Politicians on the other hand believe they have been.

Have Increased Taxes Been Invested in Way that Improves City Services



Politicians were asked what they believe the top priorities for municipal spending should be and which are the least important. The responses reveal some differences from residents' priorities, particularly in relation to mental health and drug addiction.

Top Priorities for Politicians:

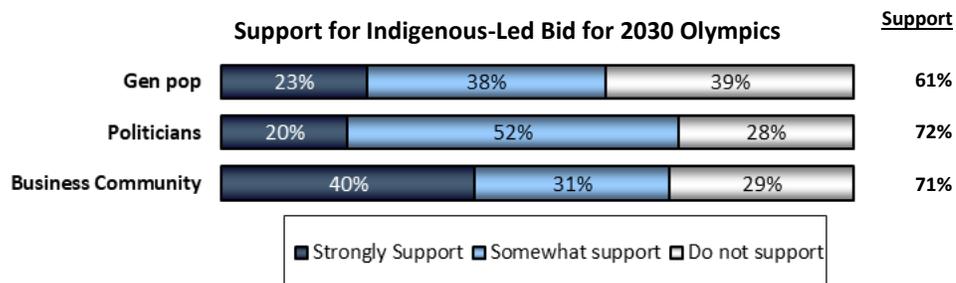
- #1 Climate change adaptation and resiliency
- #2 Social housing and poverty reduction
- #3 Planning and permitting to enable new development
- #4 Community recreation facilities and parks

Least Important Priorities for Politicians:

- #1 Poisoned drug supply
- #2 Public realm cleanliness (street cleaning, litter removal)
- #3 Addressing local impacts of mental health crisis
- #4 Arts & culture

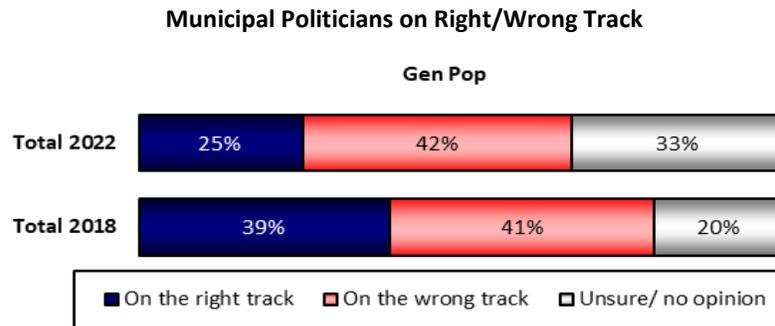
Olympic Bid

Just over six-in-residents and seven-in-ten businesses and politicians support an Indigenous-led bid for Vancouver to host the 2030 Winter Olympics.



Municipal Politicians Right/Wrong Track

Only one-in-four residents are confident that municipal politicians are on the right track. 42% believe they are on the wrong track and the remainder are unsure. There has been a shift from ‘right track’ to ‘no opinion’ since 2018.



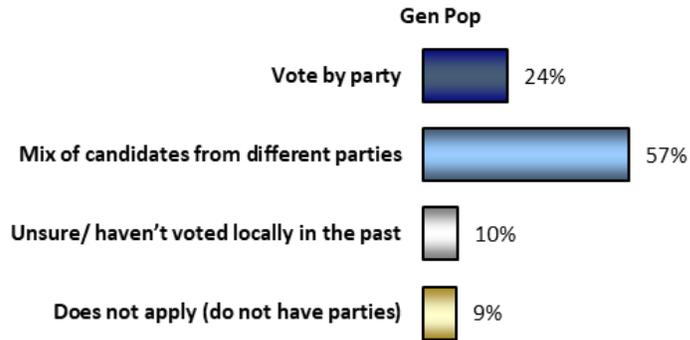
When those who responded ‘wrong track’ were asked what needs to change, increased accountability/transparency and addressing housing issues are the two most common suggestions.

Reasons On The Wrong Track	Gen pop (223) %
Base: Total think municipal politicians are on wrong track	
Increased fiscal accountability/ transparency/community consultation	25
Improve (affordable) housing development (rentals, permits, appropriate for neighbourhood, etc.)	19
Misc. negative comments regarding mayor/ municipal politicians	15
Focus on municipal needs, not issues outside of jurisdiction	14
Social housing and poverty reduction/ better solutions for homeless	11
Better development planning (i.e., infrastructure, schools, parks)	11
Local road maintenance and traffic management (bike lanes, public transit, traffic flow, etc.)	10
Policing and public safety (property crime, violent attacks, Surrey Police, etc.)	9
Mental health and addictions (fentanyl/ opioid crisis, etc.)	9
Taxes	7
Economic development/ support for local businesses	6
Focus on core services (cleanliness, waste collection, water and sewer, by-law enforcement, etc.)	4
Climate change adaption and resiliency	3
More cohesiveness between all municipalities/ amalgamate	2
No comment	22
<i>Q.21) What needs to change?</i>	

Voting Patterns

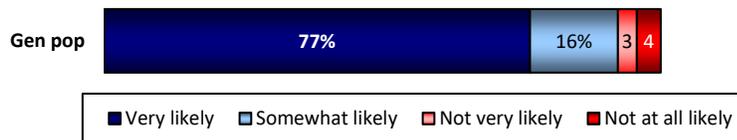
At the polls, residents tend to vote for a mix of candidates from different parties as opposed to choosing from a single party slate.

Vote by Party or Select Mix from Different Parties



Over seven-in-ten Metro Vancouver residents expect to vote in the up-coming municipal elections.

Likelihood of Voting



Involvement in Local Politics

Only one-in-ten residents would consider running for mayor, city councillor, school trustee or other elected positions in their community (13% of men, 7% of women).

Those who would not are discouraged by the level of conflict in politics and the level of scrutiny. Others simply are not interested, feel they do not have the qualifications, or are too busy with their careers and/or families.

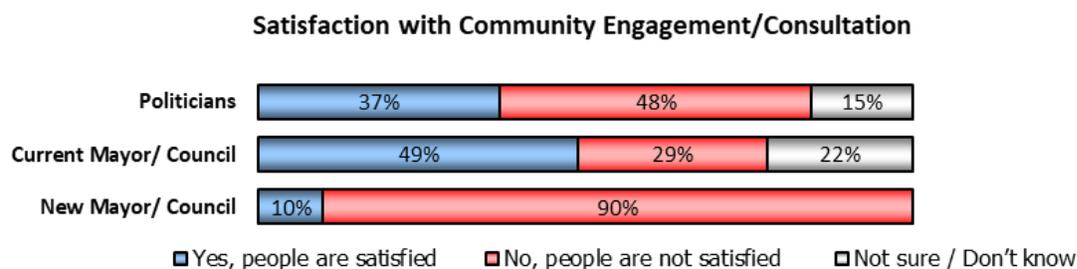
Politicians were asked what if any factors made them hesitate before running. In addition to concerns expressed by the general public, salary is another factor.

What Would Prevent From Running	Gen pop (456) %	Politicians (65) %
Base: Total would not/ maybe would consider running for mayor, city councillor, school trustee or other elected position in their community		
Too much conflict in politics	44	42
Not interested	43	5
Too much public scrutiny/ attention	40	22
Don't have the qualifications/ skills	37	5
Too busy with my career	30	49
Too busy with my family	24	35
Won't be paid enough money (salary)	15	31
Nothing made me hesitate to run for election	-	25
<i>Q.23b) What would prevent you from being a candidate? Q.17) Before you were a candidate for public office, what (if any) factors made you hesitate to put your name forward as a candidate?</i>		

Community Consultation and Accomplishments (Politicians)

Views are divided among politicians whether members of their community are satisfied or not satisfied with the way residents are engaged or consulted on planning, policies, and initiatives in their municipality. New candidates are more critical than incumbents who tend to believe residents are satisfied.

The results are similar to those found in 2018.



Suggestions for improvements include more face-to-face neighbourhood meetings with councillors/mayors, more strategic engagement throughout policy and community planning, better communications (e.g., multiple languages, concise, impartial, explain how and why decisions made).

When politicians were asked what one thing Metro Vancouver municipal leaders have *not* been able to accomplish in the last four years that they wish they had, the most common responses are addressing housing affordability and homelessness, and improving collaboration or receiving increased funding from other levels of government for such areas as healthcare.

Unaccomplished Municipal Issues	Politicians (65) %
Availability of affordable housing	31
Collaboration/ increased funding from federal/ provincial govts (e.g., healthcare)	25
Homelessness	23
Drug crisis	17
Expansion of public transit	11
Fiscal management	8
Economic development/ support	5
Crime/ public safety	3
Miscellaneous	5
Don't know/ no comment	8
<i>Q.19) What is the one thing municipal leaders in Metro Vancouver haven't been able to accomplish in the past four years that you wish they had?</i>	

Politicians were also provided the opportunity to list other issues not addressed in the survey that they believe should be a priority for municipal governments to address in the next term. Increased collaboration with other levels of government is again mentioned.

Outstanding Issues	Politicians (65) %
Collaboration/ increased funding from federal/ provincial govts (i.e., healthcare)	23
Environment/ climate change	15
Availability of affordable housing	14
Improve accountability/ transparency/ code of conduct	11
Drug crisis	6
Economic development/ support	5
Expansion of public transit	5
Crime/ public safety	5
Homelessness	3
Improve fiscal management	2
Miscellaneous	6
Don't know/ no comment	42

Q.20) Are there any issues that haven't been addressed in this survey that you believe should be a priority for municipal governments to address over the next four-year term?

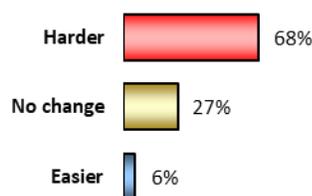
Other Findings from Business Survey

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing business in the region as it relates to municipal policies and decisions by local governments is a challenge, with seven-in-ten businesses reporting it has become more difficult in the last five years.

Furthermore, less than a third (31%) report a somewhat positive/helpful experience engaging with local government on issues related to their business.

Ease of Doing Business in Past 5 Years



Experiences Engaging With Local Government

