

FOCUS GTA

The results of the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted among 1,000 residents of the Greater Toronto Area between October 22 and November 9, 2008. A sample of 1,000 has a margin of error of approximately plus or minus three percentage points.

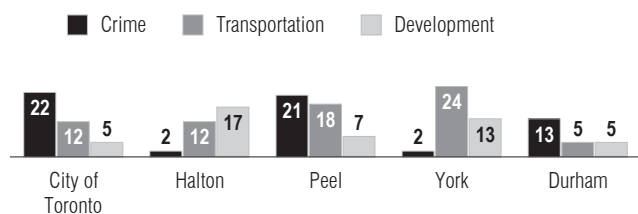
Most important local issue

Mentions of crime-related issues have increased sharply since May 2008, and crime is now clearly the top-of-mind issue facing the City of Toronto. In Toronto, when residents are asked to name the most important local problem, crime issues (a total of 22%, up 9 points from May) now outstrip transportation issues (a total of 12%, down 7) by a considerable margin. Smaller proportions mention the environment (7%), the economy (7%), taxes (6%), development/infrastructure (5%), government issues (4%), poverty/homelessness (4%), health care and hospitals (3%), and road repair/snow removal (3%).

In the 905 area (outer belt), transportation issues continue to dominate the public agenda. When asked to name the most important local problem, the largest proportion cite transportation issues (a total of 16% – including 8% who mention traffic and 8% who mention transit); overall mention of these issues is unchanged since May 2008. One in ten each identify crime (11%, up 4 points), development/infrastructure issues (10%) and taxes (10%, up 4). Smaller proportions mention health care and hospitals (6%), the economy (6%), the environment (5%), road repair/snow removal (4%) and education (3%). Within the outer belt, transportation is the clear top issue in York Region, while it is statistically tied with mentions of development issues in Halton, crime in Peel and the economy in Durham.

Most important local issue

November 2008



Satisfaction with municipal and regional government

A majority of 57 percent of City of Toronto residents are satisfied with their municipal government, essentially unchanged from May 2008. A slightly smaller proportion, 37 percent (essentially unchanged), say they are dissatisfied. However, strongly expressed dissatisfaction

(16%) continues to outweigh strongly expressed satisfaction (7%) by a margin of about two-to-one. Five percent offer no opinion.

In the outer belt, 77 percent express satisfaction with their municipal government, while 20 percent are dissatisfied; these figures are essentially unchanged from May. Moreover, strongly expressed satisfaction (19%) is almost three times greater than strongly expressed dissatisfaction (7%). Three percent offer no opinion.

Among outer belt residents, 77 percent say they are satisfied with their regional government, while 17 percent are dissatisfied; these proportions are essentially unchanged from May 2008. Moreover, the proportion expressing strong satisfaction (16%) is three times higher than that expressing strong dissatisfaction (5%). Six percent offer no opinion.

Approval of the mayor

A majority of Torontonians (59%) continue to approve of David Miller's performance as Toronto's mayor; this figure is essentially unchanged from November 2006, when the question was last asked. Thirty-eight percent (up 4 points) disapprove and four percent offer no opinion. However, strong disapproval has increased (21%, up 7) and now outweighs strong approval (12%) by a margin of almost two-to-one.

A majority of 78 percent of outer belt residents say they approve of their mayor, while 16 percent disapprove and six percent offer no opinion; these figures are essentially unchanged from November 2006. Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion continues to be the most popular of the outer belt mayors, with 89 percent of residents expressing approval.

City of Toronto services

There has been a marginal decline since last year in the proportion of City of Toronto residents who report using City of Toronto services. Just over six in ten (63%, down 5 points from 2007) have used City services in the last 12 months. Of these, majorities say they were treated fairly (63%), staff were courteous (56%), and staff were knowledgeable and competent (53%). Fewer agree that the hours of service were convenient (48%, up 7), the office was conveniently located (45%, down 4) or that staff went the extra mile to make sure they got what they needed (36%, up 4). A large majority (84%) agree that, in the end, they got what they needed.

Among users of City services, a slight majority were satisfied with the accessibility of the service (53%), while a plurality were satisfied with the overall service quality (49%). Only four in ten were satisfied with the amount of time it took to get the service (40%).

Regional services

One-half (52%) of outer belt residents have used the services of their region over the last 12 months. Of these, majorities say they were treated fairly (73%), staff were courteous (67%, down 4 points from 2007), staff were knowledgeable and competent (63%, down 4), the office was conveniently located (57%) and the hours of service were convenient (55%). Fewer (46%, down 4) agree that the staff went the extra mile to make sure they got what they needed. A large majority (90%, up 6) agree that, in the end, they got what they needed.

Among users of regional services, majorities of over six in ten each were satisfied with the overall quality of the service delivery (65%) and the accessibility of the service (64%), and just over half were satisfied with the amount of time it took to get the service (53%).

Municipal spending priorities

In Toronto, between about five and six in ten each say the City should be spending more on public transit (63%), hospital renovations/new health care facilities (59%), services for people with disabilities (59%), public health (56%), improving air quality (55%, down 14 points from 2007), child care (55%), network of roads (51%), mental health services (51%) and social housing (49%, up 6).

Opinion is divided on services for seniors (49%, down 5 points from 2007, favour more spending and 44%, up 5, favour the same spending), police services (42% favour more spending and 47% favour the same spending) and social assistance (44%, up 6, favour more spending and 43% favour the same spending).

Between about three and four in ten each favour increased spending on recreation programs (42%), recreation facilities (41%), improving water quality (41%, down 5 points from 2007), cleaning litter off streets/parks/open spaces (39%), employment services (36%), services for immigrants (34%), ambulance services (32%), parks and open spaces (32%, down 6), financial assistance to community groups (31%), arts and culture (30%), and garbage disposal (28%, down 8). Only about one-quarter say the same about public library services (24%, down 6), and two in ten each say the same about fire services (20%) and garbage collection (19%).

There is little support for spending cuts in most areas, although about two in ten support cuts to arts and culture.

Preferences for increased spending are generally lower in the outer belt than in Toronto. In the 905 area, six in ten think their municipality should be spending more on hospital renovations/new health care facilities (62%, down 6 points from 2007). About five in ten each say the same regarding services for people with disabilities (53%), services for seniors (53%), public health (51%, down 6), network of roads (50%, down 7), improving air quality (49%, down 12), public transit (49%) and child care (47%).

Opinion is divided on spending for police services (45% favour more spending and 47% favour the same spending).

Between about three and four in ten outer belt residents favour greater spending on improving water quality (42%, down 6 points from 2007), mental health services (40%), social assistance (38%),

employment services (38%, up 7), ambulance services (35%), recreation programs (33%), social housing (33%), cleaning litter off streets/parks/open spaces (28%, down 8) and recreation facilities (29%, down 5). Only about one-quarter each say the same about parks and open spaces (26%), garbage disposal (24%) and fire services (23%). About two in ten each say the same about financial assistance to community groups (22%), services for immigrants (21%), public library services (20%), arts and culture (19%), and garbage collection (17%).

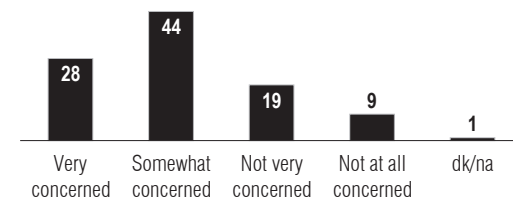
There is little support for spending cuts in most areas, although about two in ten each favour cuts in the areas of services for immigrants, financial assistance to local community groups, and arts and culture.

Economic issues

Seven in ten GTA residents are very (28%) or somewhat (44%) concerned with their current personal financial situation, while only three in ten are not very (19%) or not at all (9%) concerned. Moreover, the proportion that is very concerned is three times that who are not at all concerned. There are no significant differences between Toronto and the outer belt on this question.

Concern about current personal financial situation

November 2008



Majorities think that, given recent global economic problems, if Canada was to be hit by an economic recession, that it would have at least a moderate impact on Canada, the GTA, and themselves and their families. In fact, a bare majority think this would have a major impact on the GTA (51%), while a plurality think it would have a major impact on Canada (49%). Only one-quarter think it would have a major impact on them and their families (24%), and a plurality believe the impact at home would be moderate (43%). Among those who think that an economic recession would have some sort of impact on them and their family, the greatest concern is job loss (34%). Smaller proportions among this group cite losing money on their investments (13%), less disposable income (9%), inflation/cost of living (7%), retirement/reduction of RRSPs (5%), financial security/enough for necessities (5%) and losing their home (4%). Other responses are mentioned by three percent or fewer each, and six percent offer no response. There are no significant differences between Toronto and outer belt residents on these questions.

Transportation issues

Recently, the Regional Transportation Agency, Metrolinx, presented a plan called “The Big Move,” which involves \$50 billion in spending over the next 25 years to expand transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. A majority of three-quarters of GTA residents strongly (35%) or somewhat (40%) support this plan. Only 14 percent oppose the plan and 11 percent offer no response. City of Toronto residents are slightly more likely than those living in the outer belt to strongly support this transit plan.

GTA residents express tentative confidence that this transit plan will actually result in concrete action on expanding transit in the GTA and Hamilton Area. Six in ten GTA residents have a great deal (7%) or some (52%) confidence that this will happen, while three in ten have not very much (23%) or no confidence at all (8%). Nine percent offer no response. Confidence is similar among residents of the City of Toronto and the outer belt.

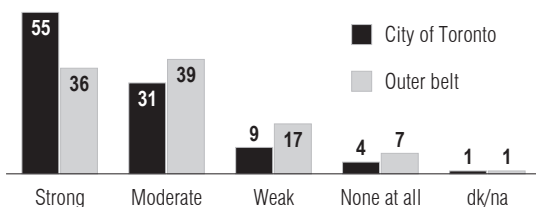
Focus on quality of life and community

When GTA residents are asked to identify, top-of-mind, the issue that has the greatest impact on the quality of life for most people in their region/City of Toronto, no issue emerges as a top mention and two in ten offer no response. About one in ten each mention the economy (11%), transit/transportation (10%), crime/safety (8%) and availability of jobs (8%). Smaller proportions cite health and wellness (7%), housing/lack of affordable housing (6%), environment/pollution (5%), and employment/lack of security and job opportunities (4%). Other issues are mentioned by three percent or fewer each. Responses are similar in the City of Toronto and the outer belt.

A majority of eight in ten have a strong (46%) or moderate (35%) feeling of belonging to their municipality; a total of two in ten feel a weak feeling of belonging (13%) or feel no sense of belonging at all (6%). City of Toronto residents are much more likely to have a strong sense of belonging to their municipality (55%) than do those living in the outer belt (36%); however, a majority of outer belt residents express at least a moderate sense of belonging.

Feeling of belonging to own municipality

November 2008



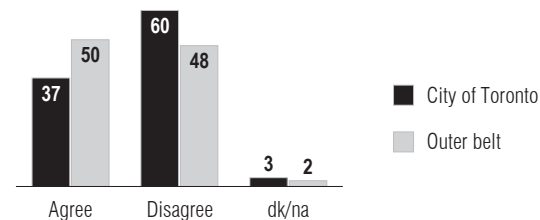
GTA residents are divided as to whether their municipality is a better (32%) or worse (28%) place to live compared with 10 years ago, or see no difference (33%). Seven percent offer no opinion. Outer belt residents (39%) are much more likely than City of Toronto residents (25%) to say their municipality is a better place to live, and Toronto residents are much more likely to say it is worse (36% vs. 21% of those in the outer belt).

When it comes to immigration issues, majorities *disagree* that the way of life in the Toronto area/Toronto is being threatened by high levels of immigration (60%) and that there are too many immigrants coming to the Toronto area/Toronto (53%). A very large majority *agree* that immigrants make a positive contribution to the Toronto area/Toronto (89%). Majorities of both City of Toronto and outer belt residents disagree that immigrants represent a threat to the way of life, but this view is stronger in the former than in the latter. A majority of Torontonians also disagree that there are too many immigrants, while outer belt residents are divided on this issue. Finally, City of Toronto residents are more likely than those living in the outer belt to agree that immigrants make a positive contribution – although a majority of outer belt residents also agree with this assertion.

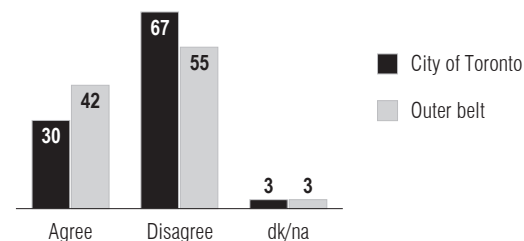
Agreement with statements about immigration

November 2008

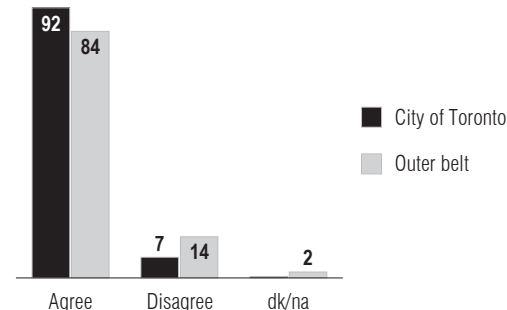
There are too many immigrants coming to the Toronto area/Toronto



The way of life in the Toronto area/Toronto is being threatened by high immigration levels



Immigrants make a positive contribution to the Toronto area/Toronto



A majority of eight in ten (82%) GTA residents believe their region/City of Toronto is a safe community in which to live; however, City of Toronto residents (75%) are less likely than those living in the outer belt (89%) to say this.

When GTA residents who say they feel safe are asked why, the largest proportions say they feel comfortable, physically safe walking in their neighbourhood at any time (22%), low crime rate (20%), police presence (16%) and know their neighbours/people in the community (15%). Five percent say they have no personal experience with crime and smaller proportions mention a variety of other responses. Four percent offer no response. It is notable that City of Toronto residents are more likely than those living in the outer belt to say they feel comfortable/physically safe walking in their neighbourhood at any time (27% vs. 18%); outer belt residents are slightly more likely to cite low crime rate (23% vs. 16%) or knowing their neighbours (18% vs. 13%).

Among GTA residents who do *not* feel safe in their community, the largest proportion by far cite a high crime rate (67%) as a reason for feeling the way they do. Much smaller proportions mention gun violence/lack of gun control (5%), do not feel comfortable/physically safe walking in their neighbourhood at any time (5%) and not enough police presence (5%). Even smaller proportions mention a variety of other things. City of Toronto residents are somewhat more likely to cite gun violence/lack of gun control, while those in the outer belt are slightly more likely to mention not feeling safe walking in their neighbourhood.

When asked to compare the level of crime in their community to that over the past year or two, GTA residents are divided between thinking that crime has increased (43%, down 12 points from 2005) and remained the same (44%, up 7). Only one in ten think

that crime has decreased; this proportion is essentially unchanged. The perception that crime has increased has declined in both the City of Toronto (down 15) and the outer belt (down 9), while the proportions that think crime has remained the same have increased (up 8 and 7, respectively). It is notable that City of Toronto residents are now more than twice as likely as those living in the outer belt to think that crime has decreased (15% vs. 6%).

When those who think that crime has *increased* are asked why they feel this way, the largest proportions mention more gang activity (17%), more media coverage of crime (16%) and increase in violent crime (14%). About one in ten each mention population increase/immigration, increase in drug-related crimes and increase in property crimes/break-ins; seven percent offer no response. Outer belt residents are somewhat more likely than those living in Toronto to mention population increase/immigration.

Those who think that crime has *decreased* are most likely to point to statistics (20%), less media coverage of crime (13%), greater police presence (11%), decline in violent crime (10%), decline in property crime/break-ins (9%) and better economy/more jobs (6%); 11 percent offer no response. City of Toronto residents are more likely to mention statistics and greater police presence, while those in the outer belt are more likely to cite less media coverage and better economy/jobs.

Those who say that crime has *remained the same* cite little/no change in media coverage of crime (27%), little/no change in level of violent crime (13%), greater police presence (9%), or haven't been personally affected or known anyone affected (6%); 13 percent offer no opinion. Responses to this question are similar within Toronto and the outer belt.



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