



Media Release
For Immediate Release

Calgary gets top grade in opinion survey

Calgary residents have given their city the highest national rating for overall quality of life in a recent opinion survey. The survey, conducted by Prairie Research Associates (PRA) Inc. reveals that Calgarians enjoy their scenery and green spaces, although they have concerns about health care services and traffic.

“Calgarians are obviously happy with their city and its local economy. There is confidence about job prospects that, while similar to Edmonton’s rating, leads among the Canadian cities surveyed,” said Dr. Greg Mason, an economist with the University of Manitoba, and managing partner at PRA. “Clearly Calgary residents have a positive view of their city and its economic development. Unfortunately, it looks like recent health care issues seem to have taken a toll on opinion of access to medical services.”

Traffic woes were cited as the single most common “least liked” aspect of the city. The crime rate appears to be considered reasonable. Calgarians gave their city one of the lowest ratings for arts and culture.

“Calgarians have given their city an A,” Dr. Mason said, “the highest mark of all the cities we surveyed, in terms of being the best place in Canada to live. At the same time, residents rated the city among the lowest for arts and medical services, reflecting perhaps that rapid urban growth can outpace social and health infrastructure. Cultural institutions need time to develop.”

The survey was a random telephone survey of 1,525 urban dwellers (305 per city) in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Halifax. The sample margin of error for each city is ± 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. This survey is independent, and fully funded by PRA as a public service.

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Backgrounder

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calgarians speak out on what they like – and don't like about their city

Calgary may be famous for its traffic tangles and rapid growth, but local residents also say it is a friendly city with clean air and ample green space, according to a recent Prairie Research Associates (PRA) Inc. survey.

The survey of 1,525 urban dwellers – 305 each in Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton – shows 84% of Calgary residents report they are likely to be living in the city five years from now, compared to 86% in Halifax, 89% in Ottawa and 84% each in Edmonton and Winnipeg.

Table 1: Likelihood of still living in the same metropolitan area in five years "Thinking of five years from now, how likely do you think it is that you will be still living in the greater _____ area?"		
City (n=305 per city)	Likely	Unlikely
Ottawa	89%	10%
Halifax	86%	13%
Winnipeg	84%	15%
Calgary	84%	14%
Edmonton	84%	15%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

How residents see their city as a place to live

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in their cities on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it is *a very poor place to live* and 10 means it is *one of Canada's best places to live*. Calgarians gave their city the highest rating of the five cities surveyed.

Table 2: How respondents rated their cities as places to live "Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it is a very poor place to live and 10 means it is one of the best places in Canada, how would you rate your city as a place to live?"		
City	Average rating	% rating city 8 or higher
Calgary	8.5	77%
Ottawa	8.3	77%
Halifax	8.2	72%
Edmonton	8.1	72%
Winnipeg	7.5	55%

How Calgarians rated various quality of life indicators

To better understand why Calgarians rated the city the way they did, we asked respondents to rate the city in various quality of life indicators. These indicators covered several areas:

- quality of public services and health care
- lifestyle, such as arts, culture and suitability as a place to raise a family
- economic considerations, such as job prospects and property taxes
- perceived severity of crime.

In each of the following areas except for severity of crime, respondents were asked to rate the city on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means the city is *very poor* in that particular area, and 10 means the city is *excellent*. To measure their concern about crime, respondents were asked to use a similar scale, with 1 meaning it is *not at all a problem* and 10 meaning it is *a very serious problem*.

Calgarians rated their city competitively with the other four cities in many of these areas. In two areas, Calgary respondents rated their city considerably better than average – *job prospects* and *property taxes*. Calgarians were also less likely than average to see *crime as a serious problem* in the city. Only two areas scored lower average ratings than average: *arts and culture* and *medical services*.

Table 3: How respondents rated various quality of life indicators – Calgary		
<i>"Using a scale of 1 to 10...please rate your city in terms of the following..."</i>		
Indicator	Average rating – Calgary (n=305)	Average rating – other four cities (n=1,220)
Quality of public services and health care (1 = Very poor, 10 = Excellent)		
Fire protection services	8.6	8.3
Parks and recreational services	8.4	7.9
Police services	8.1	7.6
Maintenance and garbage/recycling collection	7.8	7.8
Road and sewer repair	6.4	6.1
Medical services, such as access to doctors and nurses	6.2	6.7
Lifestyle (1 = Very poor, 10 = Excellent)		
As a place to raise a family	8.2	8.3
Arts and culture	7.1	7.8
Economic considerations (1 = Very poor, 10 = Excellent)		
Job prospects	8.2	7.1
Property taxes	6.6	5.7
Severity of crime (1 = Not a problem at all, 10 = A very serious problem)		
Crime as a serious problem in the city	5.1	5.7

Scenery, clean air, and friendliness cited as Calgary's best attributes

Residents in each of the five cities were asked what they like best about their respective cities. Calgary residents most often mentioned the city's *scenery, green space and clean air, sense of community and friendliness*, and *variety, entertainment and sports* as the city's best attributes.

Top 5 most-liked attributes, by city

<u>Calgary</u>	<u>Halifax</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>
43% Scenery, green space, clean air	33% Size of city, comfort level	52% Scenery, green or clean air
19% Sense of community, friendly people	30% Scenery, green space, clean air	20% Size of city, comfort level
13% Variety, entertainment, sports	24% Sense of community, friendly people	18% Variety, entertainment, sports
11% Size of city, comfort level	16% Variety, entertainment, sports	15% Easy to get around
11% Local economy or cost of living	10% Easy to get around	9% Sense of community, friendly people

<u>Winnipeg</u>	<u>Edmonton</u>
22% Sense of community, friendly people	30% Scenery, green space, clean air
22% Size of city, comfort level	22% Variety, entertainment, sports
19% Scenery, green space, clean air	17% Sense of community, friendly people
14% Variety, entertainment, sports	16% Size of city, comfort level
13% Local economy or cost of living	12% Easy to get around

Traffic and city's size and busyness the leading down-side of living in Calgary

We also asked respondents what they liked least about their cities. Calgary respondents were most likely to say *too much traffic*, *size of city/too busy* and *the weather* were the things they dislike about living in the city.

Top 5 least-liked attributes, by city

<u>Calgary</u>	<u>Halifax</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>
25% Too much traffic	17% Weather	12% Weather
12% Size of city/Too busy	10% Too much traffic	11% Government or politicians
11% Weather	8% Crime rate	9% Too much traffic
7% Poor roads/Road construction	7% Government or politicians	6% Size of city/Too busy
6% High cost of living/Expensive housing	7% Size of city/Too busy	6% Nothing to do/Lack of entertainment

<u>Winnipeg</u>	<u>Edmonton</u>
19% Weather	24% Weather
14% Mosquitoes	10% Poor roads/Road construction
11% Crime rate	10% Crime rate
11% Poor roads/Road construction	7% Size of city/Too busy
9% Government or politicians	7% Too much traffic

NOTE: The questions reported here are sponsored solely by Prairie Research Associates (PRA) Inc. and are distributed as a public service. No public or private party has funded these questions.

METHODOLOGY

PRA interviewed 1,525 adults in five cities (305 each in Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Edmonton) about a variety of issues.

The respondents were interviewed by telephone and selected by random-digit dialing (allowing us to include those with unlisted or new numbers). This technique produces a random sample with the highest possible percentage of eligible respondents.

Survey dates	Aug. 9-26, 2002
Interviewing method	Telephone
Sample selection	Random digit dialing
Calgary sample size and approximate error	305 respondents (± 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20)

A random sample may not represent the population. Non-response bias often produces too many members of one age group or too many from one gender. In these cases, we correct statistically for discrepancies in gender, age, and income to ensure the sample represents the population. For example, men tend to participate in interviews less than women, and younger respondents (18-24) are more difficult to find at home in the evening. We re-balance the data to conform more closely to what is generally known about the population using Statistics Canada and Revenue Canada information.

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