

Torontonians speak in a new COMPAS poll

# Is Toronto in Decline?

A Report to the Fraser Institute



*Public Opinion & Customer Research*



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## **Table of Contents**

Concise Summary .....	4
Detailed Summary .....	5
1.0. Introduction.....	9
1.1. Background.....	9
1.2. Methodology .....	9
2.0. Toronto Seen as Falling Behind and Going in Wrong Direction .....	10
2.1. Strong Concern about Falling Behind, Moderate Concern about Going in Wrong Direction .....	10
2.2. Strongest Concern about Falling Behind or Going in the Wrong Direction among Older Residents; Least Concern among the Asian- Born .....	12
2.3. Why Torontonians Are Worried—Mainly Because of Inefficiency and Poor Value of the Services Provided .....	14
3.0. What Toronto Does Well—Fire, Water, and Police, Not Social Services, Roads or Efficiency.....	16
3.1. Fire and Emergency Services, Drinking Water and Police Top the List while Social Services, Road Quality and Spending Efficiency are Worst Performers.....	16
3.2. Torontonians Think of Two Basic Types of Services—Traditional Services such as Police and Fire vs. Efficiency and Tax Fairness Issues .....	19
3.3. Police Rated High among Asian-Born and Low by European-Born; Efficient Spending Rated Higher Among Asian-Born and Under 30 and Low among Canadian-Born and Over 50.....	20
4.0. Taxes and Spending.....	22
4.1. A Decidedly Inefficient City Delivers a Middling Performance at Providing Value for Taxes Paid.....	22
4.2. Torontonians Take Strong Position on Taxes .....	23
4.2. Patterns of Opinion—Age a Major Factor, Ethnicity a Mixed Factor .....	25



5.0. Near Consensus That Local Government Needs More Honesty and Integrity.....	27
6.0. Providing Social Services— Government Is Less Efficient but People Are Divided about Role of the Voluntary Sector .....	28
6.1. Canadian-Born Feel Most Strongly About Government Social Services Being Less Effective Than Voluntary Organizations .....	28
6.2. Asian-Born Slightly More Apt to Think Volunteer Sector Should Provide Larger Share of Social Services .....	29
7.0. Report Card on Mayor and Council— Bare Passing Grades.....	31
7.1. Mayor and Council Earn Bare Passing Grades.....	31
7.2. Mayor and Council Also Receive Low Scores for Helping Torontonians Think and Prepare for the Future .....	32
Appendix I Stepwise Regression Output .....	33
Appendix I-A: Spending Efficiently and Value of Services are Main Predictors of Why Toronto is Falling Behind .....	33
Appendix I-B: Value, Spending Efficiently, Safe Streets, Public Transit, Honesty and Integrity, Relocation and Equal Pay all Emerge as Predictors of Why Toronto is Going in Wrong Direction.....	34
Appendix II .....	35



## **Concise Summary**

By a wide margin, Torontonians fear that their City is falling behind other major business centres in the country. Waste and poor value for taxes paid are to blame. There are fears that business is going away.

Torontonians are highly satisfied with the quality of fire and emergency, water, and police services while highly dissatisfied with the quality of services to the poor, waste and inefficiency, and the quality of roads. Residents of Canada's largest city give failing or near failing grades to the Mayor and Council for their roles in the City's performance and for preparing the City for the future.

Torontonians want control over taxes using a referendum and want an increase in people paying for the municipal services they use.

Concerns are widespread and cross all demographic categories of age, origin, and borough. Torontonians do not have a defined view of what to do about the City's falling behind, aside from identifying the issues and assigning blame.



## **Detailed Summary**

### **Overview**

- ❑ The Fraser Institute commissioned COMPAS to survey the Toronto public's views of the performance of its local government. Interviews were completed among a representative sample of 653 Toronto residents using computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) in June, 2008.
- ❑ The study explored such topics as (a) whether the City of Toronto is going in the right or wrong direction and pulling ahead or falling behind other Canadian cities; (b) public satisfaction with various services; (c) opinions on diverse themes relating to taxes, spending, the role of the voluntary sector in social services, the level of integrity in local government, and the performance of Mayor David Miller and the City Council.

### **Strong Concern about Falling Behind, Moderate Concern about Going in Wrong Direction**

- ❑ Strong concern is expressed about the city's falling behind among Torontonians in general (table 2.1) and especially among those aged 50 and over and the Canadian-born (table 2.2A and 2.2B).
- ❑ Moderate concern is expressed about the City of Toronto heading in the wrong direction (table 2.3) with concern strongest among residents 50 and over and the Canadian-born.



### **Two Key Factors Causing Public Concern about the City Falling Behind and Heading in the Wrong Direction—Perceived Inefficient Spending and Poor Value of Taxes Paid**

- ❑ Statistical analysis (a type of causal modeling using regression) explored why Torontonians feel that the City is falling behind or heading in the wrong direction. Perceptions of inefficient spending or poor value drive fear that the City is falling behind or going in the wrong direction.
- ❑ In the case of perceptions that the City is going in the wrong direction, three supplementary factors come into play—perceptions that tax policies may be causing businesses to relocate to lower tax localities, dissatisfaction with public transportation, and dissatisfaction with garbage collection.

### **The Quality and Value of City Services—Fire at the Top, Roads at the Bottom**

- ❑ Torontonians vary enormously in their degree of satisfaction with local government services. At the top, 86% are satisfied with fire and emergency services, scoring their satisfaction as 5-7 on the 7 point satisfaction scale, while 4% are dissatisfied, scoring 1-3. At the bottom, only 27% are satisfied with road and highway quality while 53% are dissatisfied.
- ❑ The three services that elicit the most satisfaction are fire and emergency services, drinking water, and police while the three services that elicit the least satisfaction are social services to the poor, spending money efficiency, and road and highway quality (table 3.1B).

### **Taxes and Spending**

- ❑ Torontonians have staunch opinions on taxes. Advocates of an obligatory referendum outpoll opponents by almost 4:1. Those who believe that City tax policy “risks making people and businesses that pay taxes think about moving to municipalities with lower taxes” outnumber 3:1 those who do not.



- ❑ Torontonians are divided about whether they get value for the taxes they pay to local government. In keeping with their greater concern about the city's falling behind, the European-born and those 50 and over are the demographic groups that feel they are getting the least value from government spending. Among European-born, 37% of respondents feel that they are not getting value for what the City spends; the same percentage of those over 50 also feel that they are not getting value (37%), as shown in table 4.1B.
- ❑ Asian-born residents of the city are more sanguine than others about the value of local government services. But, Asian-born residents are also more concerned than others about tax policy. They are more insistent than others that tax increases should require a referendum and that current tax policies are causing business to think of relocating.
- ❑ There is an overall general consensus among Torontonians that their local government needs more honesty and integrity, as shown in table 5.1.

**Providing Social Services—Government Seen as Less Efficient but People are Divided about Role of Voluntary Sector**

- ❑ Local government is viewed as being less efficient and effective than voluntary organizations, as shown in table 6.1.
- ❑ While concerned about a perceived inefficiency in local government's provision of social services, Torontonians are divided about how much of a role should be assumed by the voluntary or non-profit sector.

**Report Card on Mayor and Council—Bare Passing Grades**

- ❑ Torontonians give Mayor David Miller and the City Council bare passing grades (52%) for their overall performance in using tax dollars, as shown in table 7.1. Asian-born residents are less critical than others of the mayor and council tax and spending habits, providing a performance score of 59%. The European-born were among the most critical, giving the mayor and council a failing performance score of 48%.



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- Mayor David Miller and the City Council also receive low scores for helping Torontonians prepare for the future, as shown in table 7.2.



## **1.0. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

The Fraser Institute commissioned COMPAS to survey the Toronto public's views on a wide range of public policy issues. The study explored such topics as (a) whether the City of Toronto is going in the right or wrong direction and pulling ahead or falling behind other Canadian cities; (b) the degree of public satisfaction with various services; (c) opinions on the value and efficiency of local Toronto services, whether tax increases require approval by the electorate at a referendum, the fairness of tax policy, and whether tax policy is prompting business to think of relocating to lower tax jurisdictions, (d) the comparative efficiency of local government and voluntary organizations in providing social services and whether the role of the voluntary sector in social services should be increased or reduced, (e) the level of integrity in local government, and (f) the performance of Mayor David Miller and City Council in providing value and in helping Torontonians think about and prepared for the future.

### **1.2. Methodology**

A total of 653 individuals participated in the survey, completed in June, 2008 by professional interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing technology. By convention, surveys of 653 respondents are deemed accurate to within approximately 3.8 percentage points 19 times out of 20.<sup>1</sup> The principal investigators on the study were Dr. Conrad Winn and Tamara Gottlieb.

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<sup>1</sup> This exceeds the standards of the Common Measurements Tool, which requires sampling error to within 10 percentage points 19 times out of 20.



## 2.0. Toronto Seen as Falling Behind and Going in Wrong Direction

### 2.1. Strong Concern about Falling Behind, Moderate Concern about Going in Wrong Direction

Torontonians are concerned that their city is falling behind other business centres like Calgary and Vancouver. They feel this way by a factor of almost 2:1 when only those with unconditional opinions are considered (40% vs. 20%), as shown in table 2.1A. If those Torontonians who suspect that the city will indeed fall behind if the quality of local government does not improve are factored in, the ratio increases to more than 3:1—67% concerned vs. 20% feeling that the city is pulling ahead.

Table 2.1A: Toronto Compared to Other Business Centres<sup>2</sup>

	%
Toronto is definitely falling behind	19
Toronto is probably falling behind	21
Toronto might fall behind if the quality of local government doesn't improve	27
Toronto is probably pulling ahead	14
Toronto is definitely pulling ahead	6
Neutral	5
UNPROMPTED Don't know	8

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<sup>2</sup> (Q2) As you know, over the years some cities become more successful than others. For example, Montreal once had the most businesses and the best jobs, but fell behind Toronto. Looking to the future and comparing Toronto to business centres like Calgary and Vancouver, which of the following opinions is closest to your own? ROTATE POLES



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The specific numbers are:

- 19% feel Toronto is definitely falling behind;
- 21% feel Toronto is probably falling behind; and
- 27% feel Toronto might fall behind if the quality of local government does not improve.

Thus, almost seven in ten (67%) Torontonians feel that Toronto is either definitely, probably or might fall behind other Canadian cities. Torontonians' concern about their city is largely homogeneous irrespective of gender or the borough<sup>3</sup> where they live.

*Table 2.1B: Is the Local Government in the City of Toronto Going in the Right or Wrong Direction?<sup>4</sup>*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Overall	3.7	7	6	20	23	14	11	17	3
Age <30	4.3	6	16	24	28	11	9	5	1
Age 30 to 50	3.7	7	5	20	22	17	10	15	4
Age 50+	3.5	7	4	19	23	11	11	22	3
Asian <sup>5</sup>	4.3	17	6	16	27	13	9	9	4
European	3.6	5	5	22	30	6	4	24	4
Canadian	3.5	4	5	21	21	17	13	16	3
Other	4.0	12	11	16	25	9	9	18	2

Torontonians are inclined to think that the City is going in the wrong direction but such concern is less one-sided (Table 2.1B) than the feeling that

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'boroughs' refers to the previous regional breakdown of the GTA: East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York.

<sup>4</sup> (Q5) Using a 7 point scale where 1 means definitely going in the wrong direction and 7, definitely in the right direction, do you think local government in the City of Toronto is going in the right or wrong direction?

<sup>5</sup> 'Asian' refers to those respondents born in Asia and the Middle East; 'European' refers to those born in Europe, Australia and the United States; 'Canadian' refers to those born in Canada; and 'Other' refers to those born in South America, Caribbean, Africa and all other regions not previously mentioned.



the city is falling behind (table 2.1A). In practice, 42% think that the City is going in the wrong direction (scores of 1-3, as in table 2.1B) while 33% see it as going in the right direction (scores of 5-7).

## **2.2. Strongest Concern about Falling Behind or Going in the Wrong Direction among Older Residents; Least Concern among the Asian-Born**

In keeping with common differences between the more sanguine young and the more skeptical old, residents aged 50 or older are more inclined than others to feel that the city is going in the wrong direction (table 2.1B) or falling behind (table 2.2A).

The Asian-born, who tend to be younger than the other demographic groups, tend also to be more sanguine than the others. They are less likely than Canadian- or European-born to feel that the City is either falling behind or going in the wrong direction. By place of birth, concern about Toronto's falling behind is broadest among the Canadian-born, most intense among the European-born, and least among the Asian-born, as shown in tables 2.2A and B. Concern about the City's going in the wrong direction is also least among the Asian-born, as shown in table 2.1B, while it is strong among the European- and Canadian-born.

*Table 2.2A: Toronto Compared to Business Centres like Calgary and Vancouver by Age*

	Overall	Less Than 30 Years Old	30 to 50 Years Old	Over 50 Years Old
Toronto is definitely falling behind	19	6	16	27
Toronto is probably falling behind	21	22	22	19
Toronto might fall behind if the quality of local government doesn't improve	27	23	29	26
Toronto is probably pulling ahead	15	28	15	10
Toronto is definitely pulling ahead	6	11	6	5
Neutral	5	5	5	5
UNPROMPTED Don't know	8	6	7	9



Specific findings:

- ❑ Among those 50 and over, 46% feel that the city is falling behind, 26% that it will fall behind without improvements in local government, and 15% pulling ahead;
- ❑ Among the Canadian-born, it is noteworthy that the proportion who have an active concern, seeing the city as definitely or probably falling behind, and who have a potential concern, seeing it as falling behind if local government is not improved, total 73% compared to 56% among the Asian-born;
- ❑ Among the European-born, intense concern is high— 26% vs. 19% among Torontonians as a whole and 13% among the Asian-born.

*Table 2.2B: Toronto Compared to Business Centres like Calgary and Vancouver by Region of Birth.*

	Overall	Canadian	European	Asian	Other
Toronto is definitely falling behind	19	18	26	13	20
Toronto is probably falling behind	22	23	19	25	13
Toronto might fall behind if the quality of local government doesn't improve	27	32	20	18	21
Toronto is probably pulling ahead	15	13	16	20	16
Toronto is definitely pulling ahead	6	4	3	10	16
Neutral	5	6	2	5	2
UNPROMPTED Don't know	8	5	14	9	13

The Asian-born are probably less concerned in part because they are a younger population—10% in the 50+ age group compared to 26% among the European-born and 57% among the Canadian-born.

The lower concern about Toronto's falling behind among the Asian-born is consistent with findings, reported immediately below, that show that the Asian-



born are more inclined than others to feel that the city is going in the right direction. Furthermore, Asian-born residents rate the performance of the mayor and council less unfavourably than do others, as will be shown towards the end of this report.

From these findings, it would be mistaken to conclude that the Asian-born are fully satisfied with city hall practices. To the contrary, findings reported later in this document show that the Asian-born are at least as concerned as others about tax policy and are more desirous than others that people should pay for the services they actually use. Some people might characterize the Asian-born Torontonians as *right-wing acquiescers* or *tax-averse centrists*-- they want lower taxes, referenda to approve any tax increase, and pay-for-what-you-use services, but are generally more pleased with local government than are other residents.

### **2.3. Why Torontonians Are Worried—Mainly Because of Inefficiency and Poor Value of the Services Provided**

Our statistical analysis undertook a kind of causal modeling through stepwise regression to identify the factors that drive why many Torontonians fear that their City is falling behind. The results reveal that Torontonians are inclined to fear that the City is falling behind if they are dissatisfied with how efficiently the City is spending money<sup>6</sup> and if they are dissatisfied with the value of services provided by the local government.<sup>7</sup>

These same two drivers emerge from the application of stepwise regression to identify the drivers of the belief that the City is going in the wrong direction. The stepwise regression reveals three supplementary drivers of such concern. Apart from seeing the City as inefficient and being dissatisfied with the value of services provided, Torontonians are inclined to fear that the City is going in the wrong direction if they also believe that current tax policies are causing people

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<sup>6</sup> Respondents were asked to score their satisfaction on a 7 point scale with the City of Toronto government in respect of “spending money efficiently.”

<sup>7</sup> “Toronto’s city government spends about \$3,700 for every person in Toronto or nearly \$15,000 per family of four to provide services and run the government. How would you score the value of the services you get for this cost using a 7-point scale where 1 means very poor value and 7, very good value?” See Appendix I-A for details of regression analysis.



and businesses to contemplate relocation to lower tax municipalities;<sup>8</sup> they are dissatisfied with public transportation; and if they are dissatisfied with garbage collection.

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<sup>8</sup> "(Q4) Through its tax policies, the City risks making people and businesses that pay taxes think about moving to municipalities with lower taxes. How much do you agree on a 7-point scale where 1 means disagree strongly and 7, agree strongly?" For regression details, see Appendix I-B.



### **3.0. What Toronto Does Well—Fire, Water, and Police, Not Social Services, Roads or Efficiency**

#### **3.1. Fire and Emergency Services, Drinking Water and Police Top the List while Social Services, Road Quality and Spending Efficiency are Worst Performers**

Fire and emergency services, drinking water, and police services emerge as top performers when Torontonians think about which services provided by the City are doing the best these days, as shown in table 3.1A. Respondents were asked to select which service the city does best, and which the city does worst. Approximately 70% of respondents select fire, water and police services as top performers. Top and bottom performing services are determined via gap scores, where the frequency of those selecting a service as being the worst is subtracted from those who selected a particular service as being the best, as shown in table 3.1A.

At the bottom end of the spectrum, social services to the poor, spending money efficiently, and road and highway quality emerge as the lowest performers in the eyes of Torontonians. Road and highway quality is the stand alone worst performer, selected by 25% of respondents.

Fire and emergency services, drinking water, and police services still remain on top when respondents were asked to rate services on a 7-point performance scale, as shown in table 3.1B.

A new service emerges among the lowest performers. Setting tax rates that are fair and reasonable joins road and highway quality and spending money efficiently as the lowest performing services. These services received mean performance scores of 3.4, 3.3 and 2.9, respectively. Social services emerges ahead of fair tax rates in the forced choice question because a larger minority are perturbed by the quality of social services rather than by the fairness of tax rates. But tax rates earn a lower scale score because concern about tax rates is more widespread than concern about poorly provided social services.



*Table 3.1A: Best and Worst Services<sup>9</sup>*

	Best	Worst	Gap Score (Best – Worst)
	%	%	%
Fire and emergency services	30	1	+29
Drinking water	19	2	+17
Police services	17	3	+14
Garbage collection	11	7	+4
Public transportation	8	12	-4
Safe streets	2	4	-2
Setting tax rates that are fair and reasonable	2	10	-8
Social services to the poor	3	16	-13
Spending money efficiently	1	17	-16
Road and highway quality	3	25	-22
Don't know	5	3	2

In follow-up questions, respondents were asked why they selected a particular service as being the best. Approximately 76% of respondents reportedly choose a service as best because the City is doing either an excellent or a good job given a tight budget, as shown in table 3.1C. Twenty percent of Torontonians choose a service as best because they feel it to be the most valuable service provide by the City.

The reason for singling out a specific service as best differs slightly among the top three services (table 3.1C). In the case of fire and emergency services and drinking water, an overwhelming majority select these two services as best because they are seen as doing the best job.

Respondents are divided with regards to why they choose police services as best; thirty-nine percent select police services because they are going an excellent job, and 41% because they are going a good job given a tight budget.

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<sup>9</sup> (Q8) The following is a list of 10 services provided by the City of Toronto government. Which one of these do you think the city government is doing best these days and which one least well or worst? RANDOMIZE



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The pattern of explanations suggests that Torontonians may be more inclined to see the police as under-funded than fire and emergency services or water.

*Table 3.1B: Scores for Services Provided by the Local Government.<sup>10</sup>*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Fire and emergency services	5.8	30	36	20	7	2	1	1	3
Drinking water	5.3	25	28	20	13	4	4	3	3
Police services	5.1	15	29	27	14	7	4	3	2
Garbage collection	4.8	11	29	24	14	9	5	7	2
Safe streets	4.3	5	19	25	20	145	9	7	1
Public transportation	4.2	6	15	26	17	13	11	9	3
Social services to the poor	3.7	3	8	20	22	16	9	13	9
Setting tax rates that are fair and reasonable	3.4	3	7	20	20	16	13	18	3
Road and highway quality	3.3	3	7	17	19	18	14	21	1
Spending money efficiently	2.9	2	4	11	19	18	16	27	3

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<sup>10</sup> (Q9) On a 7 point scale where 1 means very poor performance and 7 very good performance, what score would you give city government for each of the following?  
RANDOMIZE



*Table 3.1C: Reason Why Respondents Feel the Service Being Provided by the Local Government is the Best.<sup>11</sup>*

	All N=644	Fire and Emergency services N=187	Drinking Water N=120	Police Services N=105
Because they are doing an excellent job	45	49	48	39
Because they are doing a good job given a tight budget	31	28	23	41
Because it's the most valuable service the City provides	20	20	24	18
UNPROMPTED Don't know	4	3	5	2

### **3.2. Torontonians Think of Two Basic Types of Services—Traditional Services such as Police and Fire vs. Efficiency and Tax Fairness Issues**

Torontonians think of the services provided by their city in terms of two broad categories—police and other traditional services vs. efficiency and tax fairness issues. People who assign poor performance scores to the police tend also to give low scores to fire and emergency services, social services to the poor, public transportation, drinking water, and garbage collection. By contrast residents of the city who give low scores for the City's performance in respect of tax fairness tend also to give low scores for spending money efficiently. Intriguingly, this same subset of respondents tends also to give low performance scores for road and highway quality. It is as if roads are seen as an efficiency issue.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> (Q10) SKIP IF Q8 = 8.1 OR 8.6. ASK IF Q8 IS OTHER THAN 8.1 OR 8.6. I noticed that you mentioned INSERT SERVICE FROM Q8 is doing the best these days. Which of the following explains why you chose INSERT SERVICE as performing the best? CHOOSE ONE RANDOMIZE

<sup>12</sup> This dual mindset is inferred from the two-factor output produced by VARIMAX factor analysis, as shown in table A3.2 in Appendix II.



Attitudes towards the performance of the police are largely uniform. Scores given for police performance vary little, if at all, according to age, gender, borough of residence, or place of birth.

Assessments of the City’s performance in respect of spending efficiently also vary only slightly according to place of birth and age. Torontonians born in Asia and those under 30 years of age may be the most charitable. Thus, 49% of respondents born in Asia score the City’s spending efficiency as 3 or less on a 7 point scale compared to 62% among respondents as a whole. Meanwhile, 52% of respondents under the age of 30 score 1-3.

### **3.3. Police Rated High among Asian-Born and Low by European-Born; Efficient Spending Rated Higher Among Asian-Born and Under 30 and Low among Canadian-Born and Over 50**

Torontonians hold very positive attitudes towards the police. Approximately 70% score police services as 5 or more on a 7-point performance scale, as shown in table 3.3A. Furthermore, this positive attitude is uniform also according to place of birth.

On the other hand, respondents in the “other” category do not view police performance in such high regard. These respondents provide a mean score of 4.7, and 23% score police performance as 3 or less, compared to 14% of Torontonians as a whole.

*Table 3.3A: Scoring Performance of Police*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
All Respondents	5.1	15	28	28	14	7	4	3	2
Asian	5.1	14	31	33	10	4	3	4	1
Canadian	5.1	14	29	29	15	7	3	2	1
European	5.1	18	31	19	14	8	5	4	3
Other	4.7	14	18	26	16	14	4	5	4



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Local government is seen as spending money inefficiently. Torontonians report a mean score of 2.9, as shown in table 3.3B.

Differences do emerge according to age and place of birth. Respondents under 30 feel that money spending is being conducted more efficiently than do those 50 years and older. Those under 30 report a mean score of 3.3, compared to 2.8 by respondents 50 and older.

Like the oldest cohort, Canadian-born individuals tend to harbour skeptical views. Canadian-born residents report a mean score of 2.7. Approximately seven in ten Canadian-born residents assign efficiency scores of 3 or lower compared to 62% among respondents as a whole.

Among Asian-born respondents, the mean score is 3.2 with 49% scoring the performance as 3 or less.

*Table 3.3B: Scoring Performance with Respect to Spending Money Efficiently*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
All Respondents	2.9	2	4	11	19	18	17	27	3
Age <30	3.3	2	9	14	21	19	12	21	2
Age 30 to 50	2.9	1	3	13	18	20	15	28	1
Age 50+	2.8	3	4	9	18	15	19	29	4
Asian	3.2	1	10	13	26	18	12	19	4
European	3.0	3	3	14	14	18	15	27	5
Canadian	2.7	# <sup>13</sup>	4	10	18	19	18	30	2
Other	3.4	11	5	12	18	12	16	25	2

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<sup>13</sup> # denotes a cell that rounds to zero.



## 4.0. Taxes and Spending

### 4.1. A Decidedly Inefficient City Delivers a Middling Performance at Providing Value for Taxes Paid

Torontonians believe that their City performs worst at spending efficiently, as discussed in section 3.1. Residents who believe that the City is inefficient outpoll 3:1 those who see the City as efficient—62% score 1-3 on the 7 point efficiency scale while 17% score 5-7, as shown in table 4.1A. Among those with strong opinions on the issues, scoring 1 or 7, perceptions of inefficiency dwarf perceptions of efficiency by a factor of 13:1 (27% vs. 2%).

While opinion is overwhelmingly one-sided about whether the City is efficient, opinion is divided about whether the City provides value. For the City, the good news is that those who perceive good value outnumber moderately those who perceive poor value. Slightly more residents perceive the City as providing good value (43% score 5-7) than providing poor value (33% score 1-3).

The bad news is that among Torontonians with strong opinions, scoring 1 or 7, those who perceive poor value outnumber 2:1 those who perceive good value (9% vs. 4%).

Table 4.1A: Scoring Local Government Spending Efficiency<sup>14</sup>

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Spending money efficiently	2.9	2	4	11	19	18	17	27	3

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<sup>14</sup> (Q9) On a 7 point scale where 1 means very poor performance and 7 very good performance, what score would you give city government for...? RANDOMIZE



*Table 4.1B: Value of Services Provided by Toronto's City Government by Age Group and Region of Birth.<sup>15</sup>*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Overall	4.0	4	9	30	22	15	9	9	3
Age <30	4.4	6	12	40	19	11	5	7	2
Age 30 to 50	4.0	4	8	29	25	14	10	9	2
Age 50+	3.9	3	8	29	20	17	9	11	3
Asian	4.1	9	9	35	18	7	9	12	2
Canadian	4.0	2	10	31	24	16	9	6	3
European	3.8	7	4	30	20	16	5	16	2
Other	3.8	5	9	21	18	19	12	11	5

## 4.2. Torontonians Take Strong Position on Taxes

Given strong concern about the City's falling behind and a middling assessment of the value of City services, one might expect Torontonians to express strong views on tax policy. They do. A near two-thirds majority (67%) believes that the City should have to hold a referendum to approve any tax increase; 24% do not agree, as shown in table 4.2. Among residents with strong opinions, scoring 7 or 1, advocates of an obligatory referendum outpoll opponents by almost 4:1.

In keeping with their belief in a referendum, Torontonians fear that tax policy may be propelling businesses to contemplate moving to lower tax jurisdictions. They take this view by a factor of 3:1—63% agreeing, 22% disagreeing, as shown in table 4.2.

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<sup>15</sup> (Q3) Toronto's city government spends about \$3,700 for every person in Toronto or nearly \$15,000 per family of four to provide services and run the government. How would you score the value of the services you get for this cost using a 7 point scale where 1 means very poor value and 7, very good value?



*City of Toronto Survey on Local Government Performance,  
A COMPAS Report for Fraser Institute, June 2008*

**Table 4.2: How Much Torontonians Agree with Various Positions  
on Taxes and Spending Policies<sup>16</sup>**  
*Group Coding: Green= High Agreement, Red= Low Agreement*

		Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
The city should have to hold a public referendum to get approval from voters for any tax increases above the rate of inflation.	Overall	5.1	45	11	11	7	6	7	11	2
	Asian	5.7	55	17	9	4	8	1	8	3
	European	5.5	50	11	11	4	5	5	9	5
	Canadian	4.9	40	9	11	8	6	11	14	2
	Other	5.9	56	12	18	4	4	2	5	0
Through its tax policies, the City risks making people and businesses that pay taxes think about moving to municipalities with lower taxes.	Overall	5.0	28	20	15	12	8	8	6	4
	Asian	5.1	26	25	19	9	6	7	7	1
	Canadian	5.0	29	20	15	12	8	8	5	4
	European	4.9	31	15	10	14	10	5	9	7
	Other	4.9	28	19	14	11	7	5	11	5
An increasing number of services should be paid for by the people who actually use them.	Overall	4.5	23	15	15	13	9	10	13	3
	Asian	4.8	24	18	17	12	7	7	11	5
	European	4.5	28	13	13	10	7	9	16	5
	Canadian	4.3	21	14	15	14	10	12	13	1
	Other	4.9	30	16	18	11	9	5	11	2
Toronto city council requires all city sub-contractors to pay workers a wage meant to equal union pay, for example about \$43 an hour in the construction trades or \$35 for labourers in road construction including benefits.	Overall	4.3	18	16	15	13	10	9	15	4
	Asian	4.5	20	9	19	14	11	10	11	7
	European	4.3	20	18	12	13	9	5	19	4
	Canadian	4.2	16	16	15	14	11	10	15	3
	Other	4.8	18	26	16	9	9	4	11	7

<sup>16</sup> (Q3) On a 7 point agreement scale where 1 means disagree strongly and 7 agree strongly, please tell me how much you agree with the following opinions. RANDOMIZE



In keeping with their concern about tax burden and inefficiency, a majority subscribes to the view that “an increasing number of services should be paid for by the people who actually use them”—53% vs. 32% disagreeing.

Respondents were asked about the controversial undertaking of the City to assure union-level wages to contractor employees. Opinion is divided with a large plurality (49%) favouring the policy and a minority (34%) opposed to it.

## **4.2. Patterns of Opinion—Age a Major Factor, Ethnicity a Mixed Factor**

On the matter of the City’s efficiency, so few residents see the City as efficient that no demographic patterns emerge to distinguish one side from the other. The young and the old, the foreign-born and the domestic-born, and virtually every group agrees that the City is inefficient.

Residents are not one-sided on the issue of value for taxes paid. As a result, some demographic patterns emerge. The most clear-cut such pattern is a pattern of moderately more jaundiced attitudes among residents 50 years of age and older. More likely to vote than other cohorts, this cohort is also more skeptical than others—37% perceiving the City as providing poor value (scoring 1-3) vs. 23% with that opinion among residents under the age of 30, as shown in table 4.1B.

Among demographic groups, the Asian-born stand out. They are paradoxically less critical than others of the City’s performance but also more concerned than others about tax policy and more receptive to change. Younger than other demographic groups, the Asian-born are less likely than others to perceive Toronto as falling behind, as discussed in section 2.2. They are most likely to see the City as providing good value, as shown in table 4.1B.

The Asian-born are nonetheless the most prone to favour change and the most prone to concern about reverberations from tax policy. More than others, they are convinced that the City must approve all tax increases at a referendum—81% take this view compared to 67% among Torontonians as a whole and 60% among the Canadian-born. They are at least as convinced as others that tax burden is propelling people and businesses to think of relocating—70% vs. 63% among respondents as a whole. The Asian-born are also at least as convinced as others that “an increasing number of services



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should be paid for by the people who actually use them”—59% vs. 53% among respondents as a whole.



## 5.0. Near Consensus That Local Government Needs More Honesty and Integrity

Torontonians feel that more honesty and integrity is needed in local government, reporting a mean agreement score of 5.7 (table 5.1). Intriguingly, the European-born and the Asian-born emerge as the respondents in most agreement with a need for more honesty and integrity in local government.

*Table 5.1: Agreement With Current City Government Needing More Honesty and Integrity.<sup>17</sup>  
Green= Most in Agreement, Red= Least in Agreement*

		Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
The city needs more honesty and integrity in its spending practices	Overall	5.7	51	13	14	8	5	5	3	2
	European	6.1	63	11	14	3	4	0	3	3
	Asian	6.0	54	15	14	9	2	4	1	1
	Canadian	5.6	47	14	14	9	5	7	3	2
	Other	5.6	47	12	14	12	4	4	5	2

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<sup>17</sup> (Q4) On a 7 point agreement scale where 1 means disagree strongly and 7 agree strongly, please tell me how much you agree with the following opinions. RANDOMIZE



## **6.0. Providing Social Services— Government Is Less Efficient but People Are Divided about Role of the Voluntary Sector**

### **6.1. Canadian-Born Feel Most Strongly About Government Social Services Being Less Effective Than Voluntary Organizations**

Torontonians as a whole are more apt to feel that, compared to voluntary organizations, government social services are either a lot less or less effective (table 6.1). They feel this way by a factor of approximately 2:1.

*Table 6.1: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Government Social Services Compared to Voluntary Organizations by Region of Origin.<sup>18</sup>*

	Overall	Canadian	Asian	European	Other
A lot less effective and a lot less efficient than voluntary organizations	14	14	8	19	14
Less effective and less efficient	35	37	39	25	30
UNPROMPTED the same	11	12	12	12	5
More effective and more efficient	19	16	25	22	27
A lot more effective and efficient than voluntary organizations like the Salvation Army, the Victorian Order of Nurses, or organizations affiliated with the United Way	4	3	4	3	11
UNPROMPTED Don't know	17	18	12	20	13

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<sup>18</sup> (Q6) Comparing the quality of social services in light of the amount of money they have, would you say that city government social services departments are...



Canadian-born respondents have a tendency to describe government services as being less effective more frequently than Asian- and European-born respondents. Over 50% of those Canadian-born feel government social services are either a lot less or less effective than voluntary organizations.

## **6.2. Asian-Born Slightly More Apt to Think Volunteer Sector Should Provide Larger Share of Social Services**

Torontonians appear divided about the role of the volunteer sector. Overall, 33% of respondents feel voluntary organizations should provide a smaller share, while 29% feel they should provide a larger share compared to local government, as shown in table 6.2.

Asian-born respondents are slightly less divided and feel the volunteer sector should be providing more; fifty-three percent feel that volunteer organizations should provide either a larger or much larger share of social services compared to 36% of Torontonians as a whole.

*Table 6.2: Amount of Social Services Voluntary Organizations Should Provide Compared to Local Government by Region of Origin.<sup>19</sup>*

	Overall	Canadian	Asian	European	Other
A much smaller share of social services	7	5	7	10	9
A smaller share of social services a much smaller share of social services	33	37	27	31	25
UNPROMPTED No change	12	14	4	11	14
A larger share of social services	29	27	45	22	32
A much larger share of social services	7	5	8	9	9
UNPROMPTED Don't know	13	12	10	18	12

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<sup>19</sup> (Q7) Compared to local government, do you think that voluntary organizations should provide...



Canadian- and European-born respondents are divided in a similar pattern— 30% feel a larger or much larger share should be provided, while approximately 40% feel that a smaller or much smaller share of social services should be provided.



## 7.0. Report Card on Mayor and Council— Bare Passing Grades

### 7.1. Mayor and Council Earn Bare Passing Grades

Mayor David Miller and the City Council receive bare passing scores for their overall performance in using tax dollars, as shown in table 7.1. The Mayor and Council receive a score of 52% from Torontonians as a whole.

*Table 7.1: Overall Performance of the Mayor and City Council in  
Using Tax Dollars.<sup>20</sup>*

	Mean	DNK
Overall	52	4
Asian	59	6
Canadian	51	3
European	48	4
Other	54	7

Asian-born respondents are less harsh than others, assigning a less mediocre score of 59%. The lowest scores are provided by the European-born respondents, who assign a failing grade (48%).

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<sup>20</sup> (Q11) All things considered, how would you score Mayor David Miller and City Council for their performance using tax dollars? Please provide a score on a 100 point school report card type scale.



## **7.2. Mayor and Council Also Receive Low Scores for Helping Torontonians Think and Prepare for the Future**

In the eyes of Torontonians, Mayor David Miller and the City Council are also doing a sub-standard job in preparing for the future. Both receive overall performance scores of 51%, as shown in table 7.2. Once again, Asian-born residents are more generous spirited than those born in Canada or Europe, who assign failing grades of 49% and 46%, respectively.

*Table 7.2: Overall Performance of the Mayor and City Council in Thinking and Preparing for the Future.<sup>21</sup>*

	Mean	DNK
Overall	51	7
Asian	61	9
Canadian	49	5
European	46	8
Other	54	12

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<sup>21</sup> (Q12) How would you score the Mayor and City Council their leadership in helping people to think about and prepare for the future? OPTIONAL PROMPT Please provide a score on a 100 point school report card type scale.



## Appendix I Stepwise Regression Output

### Appendix I-A: Spending Efficiently and Value of Services are Main Predictors of Why Toronto is Falling Behind

The following sections, I-A and I-B, are provided as a causal model (stepwise regression). The causal model is used to determine which specific services are predictors of why Toronto is falling behind (table I-A) and going in the wrong direction (table I-B).

Spending money efficiently and the value Torontonians receive from government spending emerged as the two main predictors of why Toronto is falling behind other Canadian cities, as shown in table I-A. Spending efficiently was the main predictor, and was also given the worst mean performance score by respondents, 2.9 (see section 4.1).

Value of services emerging as a predictor of why Toronto is falling behind is not surprising since respondents provided an average mean score of 4.0 (see section 4.1).

Table I-A: Predictors of Why Toronto is Falling Behind

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	B	$\beta$
Constant	1.489	---
Q9A – Spending Efficiently	0.196	0.271
Q3 – Value of Services	0.149	0.196



### **Appendix I-B: Value, Spending Efficiently, Safe Streets, Public Transit, Honesty and Integrity, Relocation and Equal Pay all Emerge as Predictors of Why Toronto is Going in Wrong Direction**

Value of Services and spending efficiently are also predictors of why Toronto is going in the wrong direction, as shown in table I-B. In this case, however, value of services is the main predictor. Having received middle-of-the-pack scores from Torontonians, safe streets and public transportation also emerge as predictors (see section 4.1).

Although not as large a contributor than others, current tax policies making people and businesses relocate to other municipalities and government needing more honesty and integrity are also predictors of why Toronto is going in the wrong direction. Not surprisingly, these two government policies were of utmost concern among Torontonians, as shown in sections 4.2 and 5.0, respectively.

*Table I-B: Predictors of Why Toronto is Going in the Wrong Direction*

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	B	$\beta$
Constant	1.419	---
Q3 – Value of Services	0.342	0.291
Q9A – Spending Efficiently	0.278	0.255
Q9A – Public Transportation	0.107	0.103
Q9A – Safe Streets	0.094	0.085
Q4A – Worker Pay Equal to Union Pay	0.078	0.088
Q4A – Relocation	-0.089	-0.090
Q4A – Honesty and Integrity	-0.107	-0.102



## Appendix II

Table A4.2: Rotated Component Matrix for Services Provided by  
the Local Government.

	Component	
	Traditional Services	Spending Efficiently
Police services	0.791	0.027
Fire and emergency services	0.771	-0.004
Social services to the poor	0.558	0.227
Public transportation	0.530	0.255
Drinking water	0.488	0.215
Garbage collection	0.411	0.355
Safe streets	0.408	0.442
Road and highway quality	0.155	0.602
Setting tax rates that are fair and reasonable	0.106	0.745
Spending money efficiently	0.103	0.807

