



Toronto poll shows Ford's popularity slipping

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Mayor Rob Ford has seen his popularity plunge as displeasure mounts over his administration has handled the 2012 budget process. (Frank Gunn/Canadian Press)

Rob Ford has seen his approval rating drop to the lowest level in his short mayoralty as Toronto residents show displeasure over how the rookie mayor has handled the 2012 budget process.

A poll conducted by Forum Research suggests that Ford's approval rating has declined to 42 per cent. That is down from 57 per cent on June 1 and 60 per cent on Feb. 25.

Ford, who campaigned on the promise of eliminating the so-called "gravy" from the city's budget has struggled to find ways to pare down the city's massive \$770-million budget shortfall.

Since the summer, the mayor has left no stone unturned in his bid to shave down the expenses. This has included plans to cut subsidized day care, scale back on snow plow service, cut library branches, reduce service and raise fares on the Toronto Transit Commission, and axe thousands of city of Toronto jobs.

“Mayor Ford is facing a significant uphill battle to regain approval in the city of Toronto,” said Forum Research president Lorne Bozinoff.

“Rob Ford campaigned on a promise to cut the gravy, none was found and the reality of cutting services residents rely on — often on a daily basis — is setting in. This has obviously shaken public confidence in his ability to handle the job of mayor.”

Among the findings, the poll suggests 84 per cent of the residents disapprove of eliminating late night TTC buses, while 61 per cent were against selling the TTC and Toronto Parking Authority parking lots and garages.

Earlier this week, the TTC unveiled a comprehensive plan featuring job cuts, route frequencies extended, and a possible fare hike.

Cuts to library services was also a hot button issue among respondents with 79 per cent against closing public libraries and 70 per cent against reducing services and hours.

The telephone poll of 1,046 respondents was conducted on Sept. 12. Results are considered accurate within three percentage points 19 times out of 20.