



Ford's approval rating slipping

Charlene Close – September 14th, 2011



The popularity of Toronto's mayor is plunging.

With the threat of millions of dollars in service cuts looming large, a new poll finds many Torontonians are losing faith in Mayor Rob Ford.

The survey was done Monday after the city manager unveiled his list of budget cuts.

Forty-two per cent like the job the mayor is doing, but it's a steep drop from the 57 per cent in June and 60 in February.

Speaking to reporters outside his office at City Hall Wednesday, Ford said the only poll that matters is on election day and the will of the people was made clear on that day.

"We're finding efficiencies and that's exactly what we're going to be doing and moving forward, the people I talk to tell me to stay the course," Ford said.

He said without cost-cutting, Torontonians would be hit with a 35 per cent tax hike, but instead he's sticking with his two or 2.5 per cent projection.

"I'll guarantee I'm not going to increase taxes more than 2.5 per cent and that's the worst case scenario," Ford said.

Meanwhile, Forum Research president Lorne Bozinoff said Ford's gravy train campaign has dried up. "His narrative was there are efficiencies," Bozinoff explained. "And (he said) he was going to reduce

spending, but not reduce services. But all these cutbacks really look like service cutbacks, they don't really look like efficiencies."

Bozinoff said Ford is going to have a tough time pushing service cuts through.

"Local councillors are going to have to vote in favour of closing or selling the zoo, which will not be popular with the constituents," Bozinoff said.

Ford also insists he remains committed to scrapping the land-transfer tax even though it's a big money-maker for the city. Last year, it brought it about \$275-million.

About 50 per cent of the respondents from Etobicoke-York and Scarborough still think Ford is doing a good job, down from about 60 per cent.

Ford has the least support downtown and in the east end, at only 30 per cent. He's also lost a big chunk of North York, going down from almost 70 per cent to 43.