

Canadians fume over roads, snow clearing National poll; We're happiest over ambulance, library and fire services

By AMY CHUNG, Postmedia News December 6, 2011

Snowplowing, road maintenance and policing are among municipal services that leave Canadians less than satisfied, according to results of a national study.

Forum Research Inc., polled Canada's 30 largest cities and found that only 25 per cent of Canadians were content with their city services.

Fire services (67 per cent), public libraries (55 per cent), and ambulance and emergency services (52 per cent) ranked the highest levels of resident satisfaction.

However, only 39 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with police services.

Lorne Bozinoff, president of Forum Research, said the low police rankings could have been influenced by recent events such as the Occupy protests and Vancouver riots and how protesters were treated by police.

"With only a quarter of Canadians happy with their municipal services ... municipal officials are facing an uphill battle," said Bozinoff, who adds he hopes the survey will create a benchmark for municipalities to improve city services.

Public transportation (25 per cent satisfied), snow removal (23 per cent) and road maintenance and repair (16 per cent) ranked at the bottom of the satisfaction list.

The survey showed that residents of Quebec City were the most satisfied overall at 51 per cent. Bozinoff said high mayoralty rankings correlated with high resident satisfaction with services.

Forty-six per cent of those polled were satisfied with waste disposal. However, in Toronto, where there were recent garbage strikes, only 36 per cent of residents were satisfied with garbage collection.

One in three said they were very satisfied with their local zoos and one in 10 said they were satisfied with property tax and municipal service fees.

Bozinoff said his team hypothesized that a bigger city meant more problems, but the data didn't bear that out - there were "seldom differences" in satisfaction between big and small municipalities.

The poll was done by telephone between Nov. 18 and 30, surveying 12,388 randomly selected residents 18 years of age and over. The margin of error was 0.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

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