

Transit tops list of gripes in Ottawa

Firefighters get best marks in poll

By Zev Singer, Ottawa Citizen December 6, 2011

Ottawa residents are grouchier than average Canadians when it comes to public transit.

Of the country's 30 largest cities, which were polled by Forum Research Inc. last month, Ottawa finished dead last in their satisfaction with public transit. Only 13 per cent of Ottawans reported themselves very satisfied with that service, with another 31 per cent somewhat satisfied.

Nationally, 25 per cent were very satisfied and 40 per cent were somewhat satisfied.

In Gatineau, 21 per cent were very satisfied with transit service, and 40 per cent were somewhat so.

On the issue of "property tax and municipal service fee satisfaction," just seven per cent of Ottawa residents were very satisfied, with 31 per cent somewhat satisfied - not that people beyond Ottawa love their taxes so much, either, with the national numbers at nine per cent for very satisfied and 31 per cent somewhat satisfied.

Among the group of the 10 biggest cities in the country, where Ottawa fits as fourth largest, the average city had 10 per cent very satisfied and the same 31 per cent somewhat satisfied. In Gatineau (the 17th-largest municipality in Canada), six per cent were very satisfied and 30 per cent somewhat.

On road maintenance and repair, just 12 per cent of Ottawans were very satisfied, with 35 per cent somewhat satisfied. The national numbers were 16 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively.

In Gatineau, the numbers in that category were seven per cent and 23 per cent.

Despite green-bin grumbling, Ottawans' satisfaction levels for garbage collection and waste disposal were pretty close to the national average, with 43 per cent very satisfied and 36 per cent somewhat satisfied. The national numbers were 46 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. In Gatineau, the numbers were 47 and 33.

On the issue of policing, Ottawa was, again, close to average, with 36 per cent very satisfied and 41 per cent somewhat so. The national averages were 39 and 38 respectively, with Gatineau at 33 and 43.

Only 22 per cent of Ottawa residents were very satisfied with snow plowing, but 44 per cent were somewhat satisfied. The national numbers were 23 and 40, with Gatineau at 21 and 44.

In overall satisfaction with municipal services, 21 per cent of Ottawans were very satisfied and 48 per cent were somewhat satisfied. National averages were 25 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively. Gatineau had the same 48 in the "somewhat satisfied" group, but only 15 per cent were very satisfied.

The biggest beef in Gatineau, not surprisingly, was in the category of "ambulance and emergency medical services," an area of long-standing challenge in the city. Only 34 per cent were very satisfied and 41 per cent somewhat so, compared to figures of 52 and 38 in Ottawa and 52 and 36 nationally.

Everywhere, people love their firefighters. In Ottawa, 68 per cent were very satisfied with fire services, with another 26 per cent somewhat. Nationally, it was 67 and 28, and in Gatineau those numbers were 67 and 29.

The poll was conducted 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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