

URBAN FUTURES SURVEY 2012 RESULTS

40 YEARS OF CHANGING ATTITUDES IN METRO VANCOUVER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2013 – Vancouver, BC – Politicians, planners and policy makers can now be informed by forty years of comparative data on the changing attitudes of residents in the Metro Vancouver region thanks to the release today of the results of the 2012 Greater Vancouver Urban Futures Opinion survey. The Technical Report results can be accessed [here](#).

This is the third in a series of geographically-specific research studies that measure the importance of a number of issues to residents across the Lower Mainland. Previous surveys conducted in 1973 and 1990 helped inform the creation of the *Livable Region Plan* and the *Choosing our Future* program. The 2012 survey updates and enhances the information available about public attitudes and experiences of the population over three points in time.

“I am not aware of any other urban region that has an extensive body of comparable information such as this available to assist the decision-making process.” says Ken Cameron, former Manager of Policy and Planning for the GVRD (Metro). Cameron was involved in the 1990 survey as well as the 2012 version. “The Vancouver region’s success in becoming one of the most livable regions in the world has been accomplished through concerted efforts of regional and local governments over many years, decades, in fact,” he said. “It is invaluable to have comparable data spanning nearly 40 years that can tell us what has changed – and not changed – in public opinion as the region has grown. The earlier surveys had an important impact on transportation and environmental policies, and the 2012 survey will undoubtedly provide a rich resource of information to planners and policy makers looking to the future”.

A unique aspect of the Technical Report is the comparison it provides with the results of earlier surveys. For example, provision of health care ranked 3rd in 1990 and 9th in 1973, while air pollution from industry was the top concern in both previous surveys. This reflects the concerted action by government to improve air quality in the intervening years. Similarly, while preserving the natural environment was the most important priority for action in the earlier surveys, by 2012 it had dropped to 4th place, a result which may be attributable to efforts by government to improve water quality through upgraded waste water treatment, to give priority to solid waste reduction and recycling and to protect the region’s working landscape through the creation of the Green Zone.

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“My entire life of experience in politics and community engagement has taught me that government works best when it responds to issues that are important to people,” said Mike Harcourt, former Mayor of Vancouver, former Premier of British Columbia and Chair of PlaceSpeak. “The 2012 Urban Futures Survey is a goldmine of information to help policy makers develop deep knowledge of the things that are important to residents of Metro Vancouver and to prepare appropriate responses.”

The two previous surveys were conducted by UBC professor, Dr. Walter G. Hardwick, through face-to-face and telephone interviews. This latest survey, led by Dr. Hardwick’s daughter, was conducted online using PlaceSpeak. “PlaceSpeak was developed as a means to conduct location-specific research on the internet”, observed founder, Colleen Hardwick. “It would have been prohibitively expensive and time consuming to conduct 1,500 interviews using the methods we employed in 1972 and 1990 so we needed to build a tool that would enable verifiable online place-based feedback”.

The survey results will be released in dynamic [geoweb form](#) according to the following schedule:

#	Date	Section
1	April 23, 2013	Demographic / Household Information
2	April 30, 2013	Employment
3	May 7, 2013	Statements
4	May 14, 2013	Housing
5	May 21, 2013	Recreation / Leisure
6	May 28, 2013	Transportation
7	June 4, 2013	Statements II
8	June 11, 2013	Regional Context
9	June 18, 2013	Issues and Problems

The survey was made possible with a grant from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, the City of Surrey, the City of North Vancouver, Translink, and Vancity Credit Union and conducted under the aegis of Lambda Alpha International, Vancouver Chapter.

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About PlaceSpeak: PlaceSpeak is a location-based service that authenticates online public consultation. PlaceSpeak provides verifiable GIS feedback data in order to inform evidence-based decision-making and public policy development. Learn more at www.placespeak.com

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