
BC residents value greenspace and sustainability, are wary about density, new REFBC poll finds

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FEBRUARY 18, 2016, VANCOUVER, B.C. – A survey on attitudes toward the built environment released today by the Real Estate Foundation of BC finds that B.C. residents value greenspace and support sustainable development, but are sensitive to language and building height.

The poll shows that four in five B.C. residents say that the quality of life in their neighbourhood is ‘good’ or ‘excellent.’ When asked what community features they were most satisfied with, residents cite distance to shopping (74 per cent satisfied), natural and green space (68 per cent) and walking/cycling (67 per cent.) Additionally, green space and nature are the most frequently cited (54 per cent) features residents *don’t* want changed in their communities.

Overall, BC residents are in favour of sustainable design, yet sensitive to building format and language, especially around density. For example, 61 per cent of respondents say B.C. needs more ‘smart growth’ but only 20 per cent say B.C. needs more ‘compact communities’ and 13 per cent support more ‘high-density communities.’ While nearly half of those surveyed say that ‘all’ or ‘most’ new development in their communities should be single, detached homes, 81 per cent would support *at least some* compact, high-density development, as long as it is low rise.

“It’s clear that BC residents need a more complete, inclusive conversation with planners and developers about density,” said Real Estate Foundation CEO Jack Wong. “With a million people expected to move into the Greater Vancouver Region in the next 40 years, we’ll need to come up with a new, shared vision of what an ideal community looks like.”

Among the other survey highlights:

- 56 per cent of respondents are concerned about ‘affordable housing’ – when asked about ‘cost of housing,’ concern jumps to 75 per cent.
- People are very supportive of more energy efficiency (73 per cent) and green buildings (68 per cent), but terms like carbon neutral (52 per cent) and regenerative design (35 per cent) get less uptake.
- There is strong support for more public transit (66 per cent) and sustainable transportation (66 per cent), but people also want more roads, bridges and parking (44 per cent).

The survey was commissioned by REFBC as part of its research on sustainable built environments in British Columbia. Vancouver-based McAllister Opinion Research conducted the poll online in July 2015. The survey is accurate to within +/- 2.4 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Survey: Public Views on Sustainability and the Built Environment:

Highlights of findings and full report are available at: www.refbc.com/projects/2015/built-environment-bc

About the Real Estate Foundation of BC:

The Real Estate Foundation of BC is a philanthropic organization that helps advance sustainable land use in British Columbia. It provides grants to non-profit organizations working to improve B.C. communities and natural environments through responsible and informed land use, conservation and real estate practices. Its funding programs support research, education, and law and policy reform. Since 1988, the Foundation has approved more than \$70 million in grants. The Foundation also conducts research and special projects to support collaboration and knowledge-sharing around land use. Learn more at www.refbc.com.

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