



News Release

Local infrastructure top-of-mind, poll shows

April 22, 2014 – Local infrastructure is the most critical top-of-mind issue for almost one third of Manitobans, according to a recent poll by Probe Research. The poll “Everything is Local” was commissioned jointly by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), the City of Winnipeg, and the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) to gauge public opinion of local governments and the challenges facing municipalities.

The 31% of those surveyed placing infrastructure over other hot-button issues like crime, jobs/economy, taxation or health care send a clear message, according to Chris Lorenc, MHCA President. *“This research demonstrates strong public support for messages championed by the MHCA, including ensuring such programs are permanent, focused on economic growth, embrace innovation and partnership with the private sector, transparently dedicate revenues streams and assure periodic reviews to adjust going forward,”* he said.

Respondents were also asked to provide a list of areas they feel require additional municipal spending. More than one half of Manitobans (56%) believe that local governments should spend more money addressing core infrastructure like streets, roads, bridges and water and wastewater projects.

According to Mayor Sam Katz, this is no surprise. *“Public infrastructure is fundamental to our prosperity and our quality of life,”* he said. *“Winnipeggers clearly see the need, as do their elected officials, for a stable, ongoing source of funding to allow municipalities to set priorities, plan ahead, and reduce costs by acting strategically.”*

The AMM has long called for a share of the PST to provide the funds to do just that. While other surveys have shown the PST increase of 2013 was unpopular among Manitobans, this poll showed overwhelming support for having revenues from the increase put in the hands of municipalities. Of those surveyed, 69 per cent expressed the view that the money raised from the PST increase should flow directly to municipalities, as opposed to 23% who feel the provincial government should determine how the money is spent.

AMM President Doug Dobrowolski believes this is because municipalities are the order of government closest to the people. *“Municipal elected officials are the people we see everyday – they are our co-workers, neighbors, and friends,”* he explained. *“It only makes sense that Manitobans have a high level of trust in their local governments to make the infrastructure spending decisions that will directly affect their communities.”*

Everything is Local: A Probe Research Analysis of Municipal Issues in Manitoba can be viewed on the [AMM website](#) at <http://tiny.cc/av2pex>.

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