

PEOPLE ARE THINKING **Evi Mustel**

(Mostly) happy birthdays to us



A special time of celebration is upon us with Canada Day and British Columbia's 150th anniversary of the founding of the Crown Colony in 1858. As we remember how it all began it is important to look at where we are today as Vancouverites – the good, bad and ugly.

For the most part, Vancouver residents are quite content with the lives they are living. Vancouver is consistently ranked one of the top 10 cities in the world for livability (survey by Economist Intelligence Unit) and the high quality of life according to the latest Mercer Human Resource survey (Vancouver ranked fourth on the list). Mustel Group's own polling supports this with 86 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents reporting to be satisfied with the quality of life in their community.

Recent research initiated by the Vancouver Board of Trade to develop a "vision" for the city discovered that Vancouver is seen as a "dynamic city with cultural, recreational and scenic diversity that inspires people both energetically and creatively." We value our

abundant opportunities for outdoor and leisure activities, and our ability to engage in a healthy lifestyle. The research also found that we feel privileged to be so close to nature, care deeply for the environment and feel stimulated both physically and creatively by the majesty of our surroundings and our cultural mosaic. For many, quality of life comes before financial gain.

Unfortunately, all is not rosy. Over time, a few areas of concern have developed threatening our serene existence. Polling shows the key issues to be:

Traffic congestion: We see Vancouver growing rapidly but the infrastructure not keeping up. Frustration is at an all-time high with congestion and usually is cited in polls as one of the key issues of concern. Eight in 10 Metro Vancouver residents report that congestion has increased over the past year, according to a Global/News 1130 survey.

Crime: Confirming what residents already know, Statistics Canada data places the City of Vancouver and many of its suburbs in the top-five worst communities

Overall how satisfied are you with the quality of life in your local community? (Asked among Metro Vancouver residents.)

Very satisfied	44%
Somewhat satisfied	42%
Neither	3%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6%
Very dissatisfied	4%

(Source: Mustel Group)

for several different types of crimes. In a recent City of Vancouver survey, 36 per cent of residents cite crime as one of the key issues facing the city. Even the Mercer survey that placed Vancouver at the top for livability ranks Vancouver number 22 for personal safety.

Affordable housing: The soaring cost of housing is forcing young people (and old!) to move from the region, with concerns that the 2010 Olympics will force prices even higher.

Social problems: There is shame with the fact that we have so many homeless and drug addicts. We feel we are not taking care of the less fortunate.

Pace of development: Most accept that our population will and needs to grow, but we are concerned about loss of green space and the impact on our environment and natural habitat.

A few years ago the media labeled Vancouver the "No-Fun City" after the cancellation of several community events. When Mustel Group was commissioned to conduct polling on the topic, surprisingly we found that the majority of residents rejected the label asserting that even without organized events, the city is rich with opportunities for activities. Vancouver is certainly not perfect with its bad and ugly parts; nevertheless, we are proud to be such a vibrant city and part of such a great province. Here's to another 150 years! **VLM**

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