

Federal Election 2021 Survey – September ‘21

Introduction

In collaboration with Mustel Group and the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC), a coalition of CEOs of nine of Canada's largest urban Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, **the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade** conducted a federal election survey of its members to create a clear picture of what its members want to see from Canada's next government. The federal election survey includes the public and business community views on key election issues.

A total of 267 GVBOT members and 500 Metro Vancouver adults, 18 years of age or over, completed the survey from August 20-29, 2021 (margin of error +/-5.8% and +/-4.4% respectively at the 95% level of confidence).

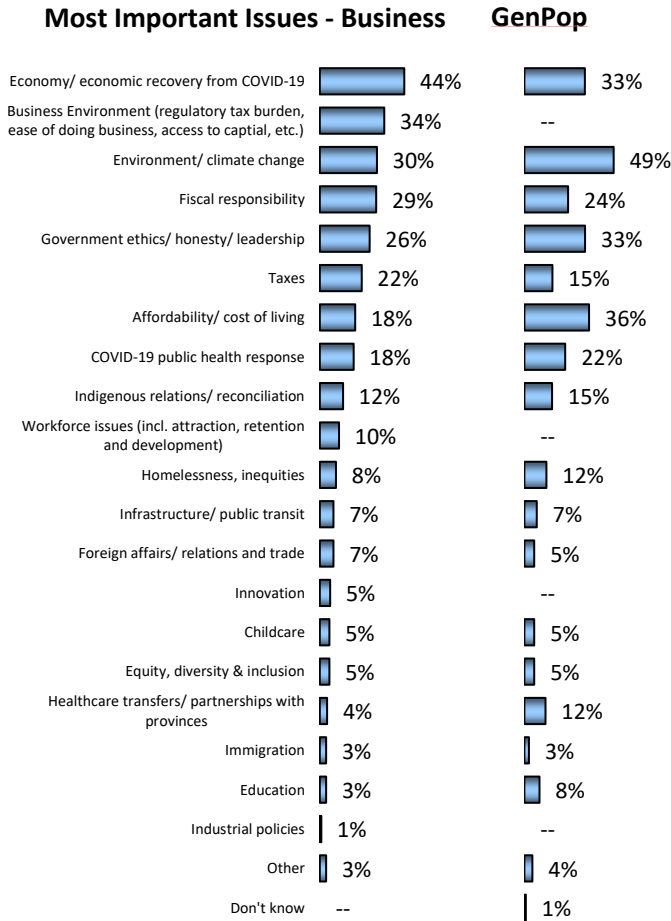
Most Important Issue

Top Five Issues Influencing Vote

	Businesses	General Population
1	Economy/Economic recovery from COVID-19	Environment/Climate change
2	Business environment (regulatory, tax burden, ease of doing business, access to capital, etc.)	Affordability/Cost of living
3	Environment/Climate change	Government ethics/honesty/leadership
4	Fiscal responsibility	Economy/Economic recovery from COVID-19
5	Government ethics/honesty/leadership	Fiscal responsibility

- The economy/economic recovery is the key issue for businesses that will influence how they will vote in the federal election.** Secondary issues of importance include the business environment (regulatory, taxes, etc.), environment/climate change, fiscal responsibility, and government leadership. Tertiary issues include taxes, affordability or cost of living, COVID-19 public health response, Indigenous relations, and workforce issues.

- **Among the public, environment and climate change is the top issue** (as we saw in the last federal election). Secondary issues are affordability/cost of living, government ethics/honesty/leadership, and economy/economic recovery. Tertiary issues include fiscal responsibility, and COVID-19 public health response



Covid-19 Response

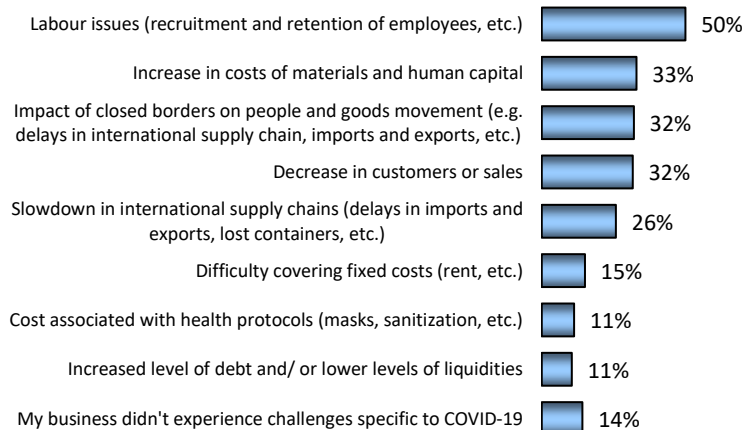
- **There is widespread support for a vaccine passport with 86% of businesses and 82% of the public in support.** Younger residents (those under 45 years of age) are slightly more opposed but still the majority, 73% of this age group, are in support.
- Both businesses and the public see as the primary benefits of a system of certifying COVID safety are the avoidance of further lockdowns, ensuring the safety and health of workers, and providing consumer confidence in participating in activities.

Primary Benefits System Certifying COVID-19 Safety

	Business	General Population
Avoiding widespread lockdowns/stay at home orders	68%	67%
Ensure the safety and health of workers in the workplace	65%	65%
Giving consumers confidence to participate in economic activities (e.g. Dine indoors, attend concerts, etc.)	64%	59%
Resuming international travel	46%	30%

- **The main challenge currently facing businesses because of COVID-19 is recruitment and retention of employees** and other issues related to labour, reported by half of all businesses. Other key challenges include increase in cost of material and human capital, impact of closed borders on people and goods movement, decrease in sales, and slowdown in international supply chains.

Key Business Challenges from COVID

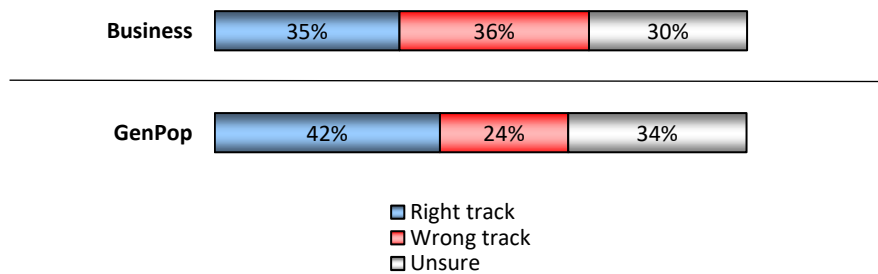


- **One-in-three businesses (34%) are concerned about federal government assistance programs coming to an end.** An identical proportion of Metro Vancouver residents are also concerned, with women expressing a higher level of concern than men (39% versus 29% of men concerned).

Economy

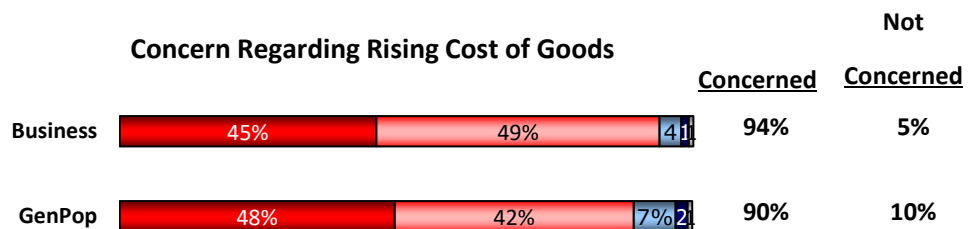
- **Views are divided among businesses whether the Canadian economic recovery is on the right or wrong track.** The public is slightly more optimistic.

Canadian Economic Recovery Right/Wrong Track

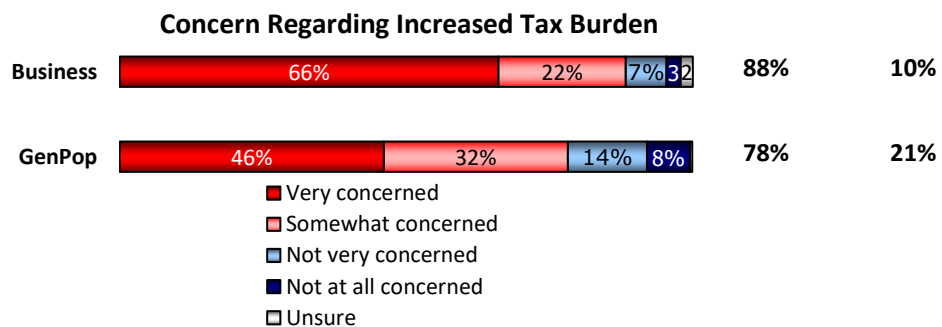


- Sizeable proportions of both businesses (46%) and the public (38%) are also concerned about the additional debt they took on in response to the pandemic.
- But they are **most concerned about the rising cost of goods** and an **increase in tax burden** considering the increased federal debt.

Concern Regarding Rising Cost of Goods

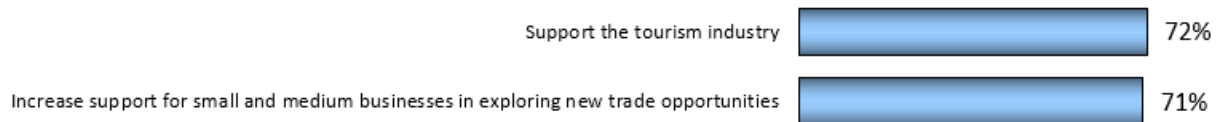


Concern Regarding Increased Tax Burden



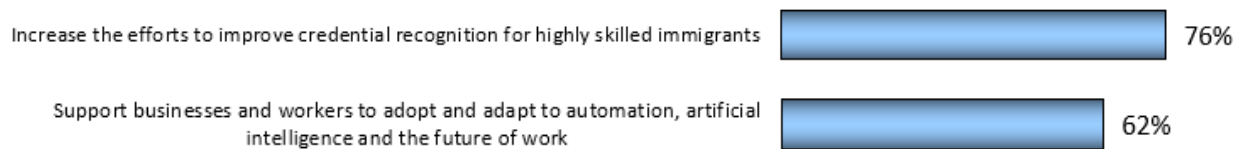


- While most feel their standard of living will be the same over the next five years (and for some improve), **32% of businesses and 33% of the public believe their standard of living will worsen.**
- In terms of supporting the economy moving forward, the majority of businesses would like to see the next federal government **support the tourism industry (72%)** and **increase support for small and medium businesses in exploring new trade opportunities (71%).**

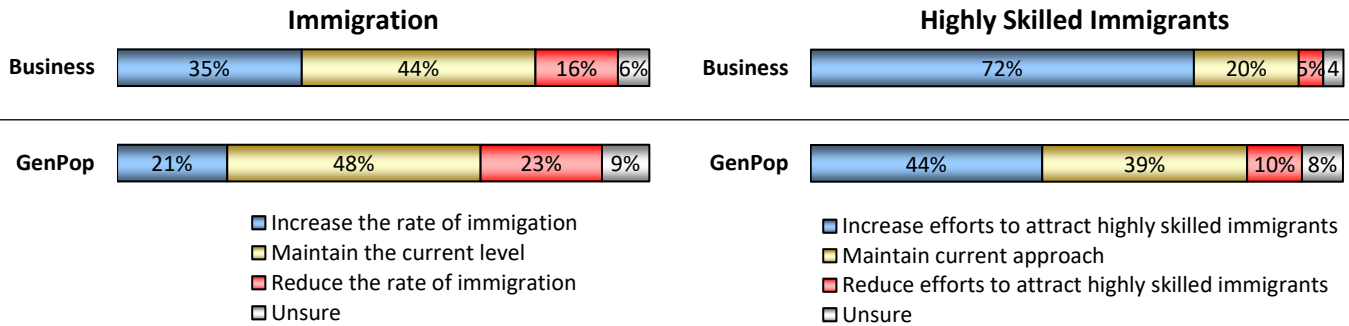


Workforce and Immigration

- With respect to the workforce, **76% of businesses would like to see the next federal government increase efforts to improve credential recognition for highly skilled immigrants** while more than 6-in-10 would like to see the next federal government **support businesses and workers to adopt and adapt to automation, artificial intelligence and the future of work (62%).**

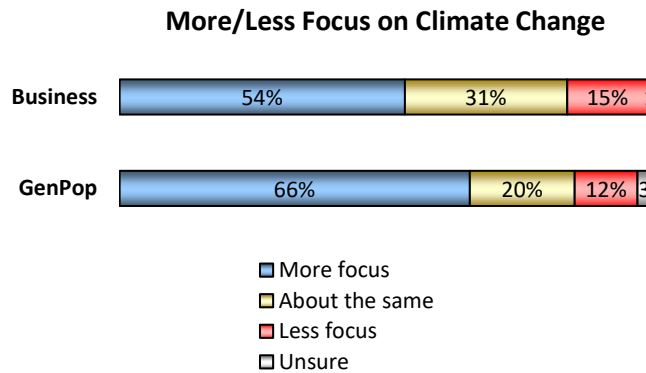


- There is some support for increasing immigration levels, but the largest segment would like to see the **current level maintained**, with small groups (more so the public) wanting to see decreased levels.
- However, with respect to **highly skilled immigrants**, the majority of businesses, 72%, and 44% of the public would like to see *increased* efforts to attract.



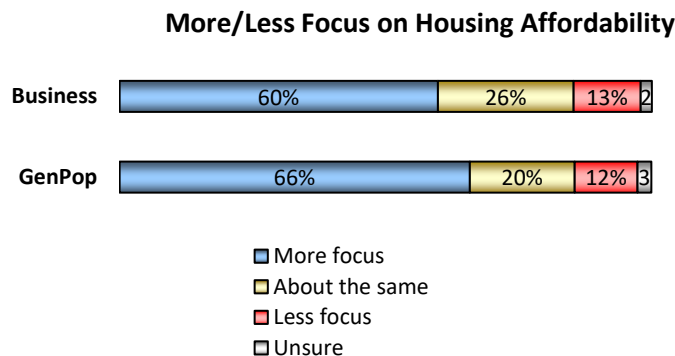
Environment

- Just over half of businesses (54%) and two-thirds of the public (66%) would like to see **more focus on climate change**. There is also considerable support for more focus on local low carbon innovation (47% businesses, 55% public), and local clean technologies to address climate change (55% businesses, 55% public).



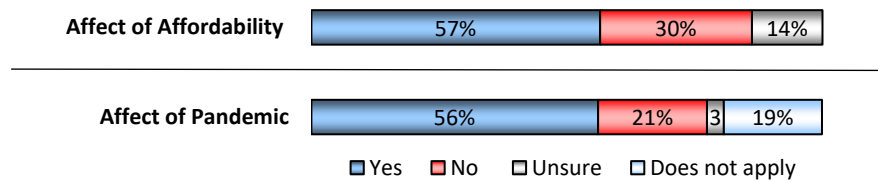
Housing Affordability

- With respect to housing affordability, 60% of businesses and 66% of the public wish to see **more focus**. Younger residents are particularly supportive (73%).



- 57% of businesses report that their business's **ability to recruit and retain employees has been affected by affordability issues**, similar to the level reported before the last federal election (60%).
- A similar proportion have experienced difficulties recruiting/hiring since the onset of the pandemic.

Affect on Ability to Recruit/ Retain Employees



- And in fact, **22% of Metro Vancouver adults have recently moved or are considering leaving/moving** due to the cost of housing. This level is highest among those under 45 years of age (33%) and renters (50%).

Indigenous Reconciliation

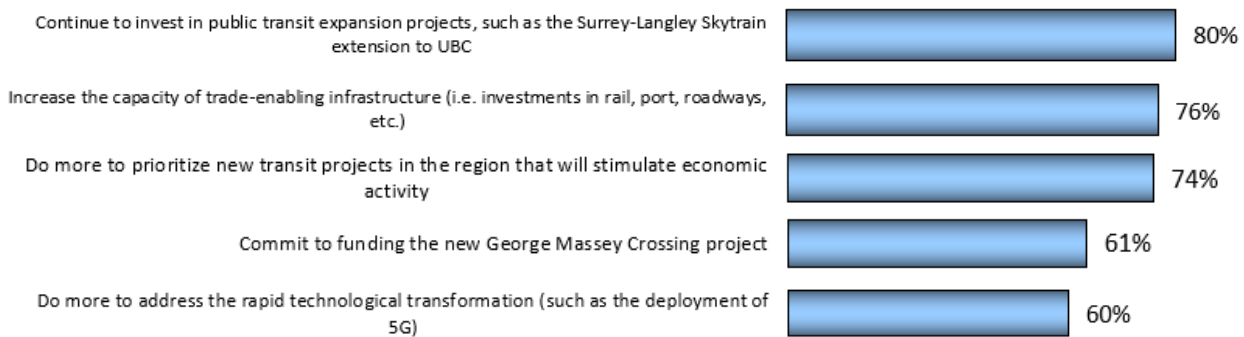
- **There is broad support (over four-in-ten) for more focus and action on Indigenous reconciliation by the next federal government.** Women and those under 65 years of age are particularly supportive.

Business Environment

- **Four-in-ten businesses (41%) believe changes to Canada's regulatory environment over the past two years has negatively impacted their ability to attract investment or do business.** Only 4% report an improvement in the regulatory environment.

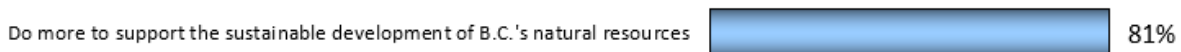
Infrastructure

- **Businesses would like to see the next federal government** investment in public transit expansion (80%), such as the Surrey-Langley skytrain and skytrain to UBC, prioritize new transit projects that will stimulate economic activity (74%), increase capacity for trade enabling infrastructure (76%), commit to funding the new George Massey Crossing project (60%), and do more to address the rapid technological transformation – such as the deployment of 5G (60%).



Natural Resource Development

- There is strong agreement among the business community (81%) that **the next federal government should support the sustainable development of B.C.'s natural resources.**



Other Priorities

- About two thirds of businesses would like to see the next federal government **do more to address aging demographics (65%)** and about half **would like to see more done on the changing geopolitical challenges (49%).**

