

March 2022

NO HONEYMOON FOR CALGARY'S NEW MAYOR

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No Honeymoon for Calgary's New Mayor

Mayor Jyoti Gondek is off to a bumpy start as far as most Calgarians are concerned, with approval for the new mayor below four-in-ten according to a recent ThinkHQ Public Affairs survey. At present, approval for Gondek's performance rests at 38% compared to 53% saying they disapprove of her performance as mayor to-date (indeed, more voters strongly disapprove of Gondek – 39% - than offer any measure of support). Almost one-in-ten (9%) voters are still unsure about how they rate the new mayor.

Gondek's rating are unusually low for a new mayor this early in their first term. By comparison, Naheed Nenshi finished his first year in office with approval in the mid-eighties, while Dave Bronconnier's first few months in office yielded approval in the mid-seventies.

Meanwhile the performance of individual councillors, most of whom are new to Council, is generally well received with 45% of those interviewed saying they approve of how their Councillor is performing, compared to 31% who disapprove and 24% who are unsure.

No Honeymoon for Calgary's New Mayor ... continued

Overall, Council receives a positive nod from only 37% of Calgarians, while 48% disapprove and 15% are unsure at this point.

- Men tend to offer a more negative appraisals of the mayor than women (59% disapprove vs. 47%). Gondek's ratings are considerably higher among those living in inner-city communities and slightly higher in the northeast, while those living in southern communities are somewhat more negative
- A slight plurality of younger voters (under 35) say they approve of Gondek (45% vs. 42% disapprove), but disapproval for the mayor climbs sharply with age (62% disapproval among those aged 55+)
- Disapproval for "my councillor" is somewhat higher in the upper income brackets and the inner-city communities
- Ratings of Council overall are relatively consistent across demographic breaks, though disapproval is modestly lower among younger voters and those living in the northeast (particularly in comparison to southeast residents where disapproval is highest)

Commentary

ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. President Marc Henry notes the following on these survey results:

“Five months into her first term and it’s clear that Mayor Gondek is having a rough ride. A Calgary mayor below 40% approval? That’s happened only once in the past two decades, and it’s particularly unusual this early on.

Normally, every politician gets a ‘honeymoon’. It’s a span at the beginning of a new leader’s term where they get strong approval ratings. Calgary’s last two mayors had them, and Kenney, Notley and even Redford had one. Generally, the public want a new leader to be successful, they are the ‘new shiny object’ and haven’t really had enough time to do unpopular things; so, they get strong ratings early on. Mayor Gondek’s ratings are definitely an anomaly.

The first five months of Gondek’s administration have been eventful, but perhaps not in the way a new mayor would want. The arena deal fell apart with the Flames, protests in the beltline, a ~4% tax increase when it was supposed to be zero, etc. There are certainly circumstances outside of the mayor’s control, but others are entirely of her own making.

Commentary ... continued

It's also unusual for councillors to have better approval ratings than the mayor, particularly with a Council where two-thirds are newcomers. This could be a challenge for Gondek going forward.

The mayor is one vote of fifteen on Council; much of the 'authority' they have over their colleagues is more informal than formal in nature. Typically, the mayor is far better known and liked than individual councillors and that standing really does re-enforce the 'first among equals' relationship. Councillors, unless they truly feel strongly about an issue, are more likely to 'go along' with a popular mayor – give them a vote or at the very least not debate against them. Its not so much fear as it is deference.

People often talk about the first 100 days in office as being important for politicians. It is, at least from a public opinion perspective. After an election with a new leader, voter attention tends to remain reasonably high for a few months – they want to see what the new leader is like as the leader as opposed to as a candidate. For many voters, that 100-day impression gets set and they really don't pay as much attention to politics until the next election campaign starts to loom.

Commentary ... continued

That's a challenge for Mayor Gondek. Her ratings from voters today are not positive. She's got ~1300 days to change that, but the initial impressions set in the first 100 days will be a headwind she has to overcome to do it. Not an easy task.”

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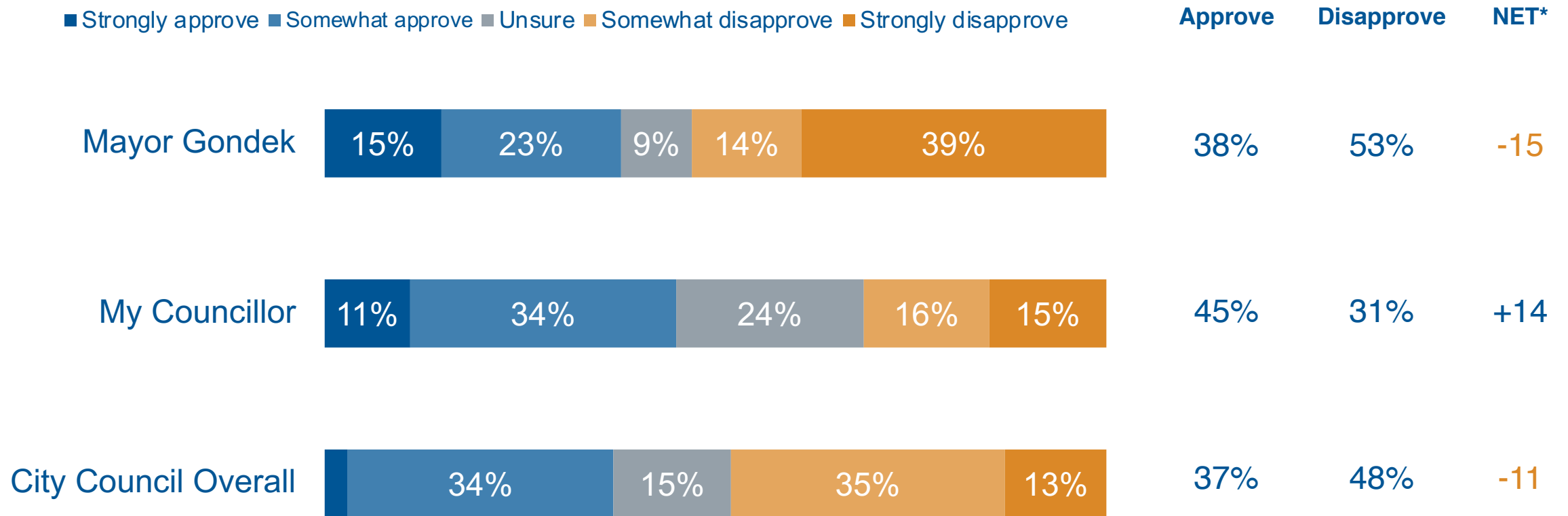
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Calgarians Rate New City Council



The current Mayor & City Council were elected in Oct 2021. How would you personally rate their performance since then?

■ Strongly approve ■ Somewhat approve ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat disapprove ■ Strongly disapprove



Base: All respondents - Calgary Proper (n=1,101) | *NET: Approve minus disapprove

Calgarians Rate New City Council

By Gender, Age and Household Income



Would you say you approve or disapprove of the performance of the current Calgary City Council when it comes to ... ?

		TOTAL	Gender		Age (yrs)			Household Income		
Base Size:			(n=1,101)	Male (n=541)	Female (n=543)	<35 (n=349)	35-54 (n=432)	55+ (n=319)	<\$75K (n=288)	\$75-124K (n=275)
Mayor Gondek	Approve	38%	32%	43%	45%	37%	31%	43%	36%	38%
	Disapprove	53%	59%	47%	42%	54%	62%	44%	53%	58%
	Unsure	9%	8%	11%	13%	9%	7%	13%	11%	4%
My Councillor	Approve	45%	44%	45%	42%	46%	44%	46%	46%	46%
	Disapprove	31%	33%	29%	29%	33%	31%	25%	28%	37%
	Unsure	24%	23%	26%	28%	21%	25%	30%	26%	17%
Council Overall	Approve	37%	34%	39%	40%	34%	36%	35%	35%	40%
	Disapprove	48%	53%	42%	41%	52%	48%	44%	49%	50%
	Unsure	15%	14%	19%	19%	14%	16%	20%	16%	10%

Base: All respondents - Calgary Proper



Significantly higher



Significantly lower

Calgarians Rate New City Council

By Calgary City Quadrant and Community Type



Would you say you approve or disapprove of the performance of the current Calgary City Council when it comes to ... ?

		City Quadrant					Community Type		
		TOTAL	NW	SW	SE	NE	New	Estab.	Inner
Base Size:		(n=1,101)	(n=309)	(n=308)	(n=280)	(n=204)	(n=393)	(n=464)	(n=227)
Mayor Gondek	Approve	38%	39%	36%	34%	43%	35%	34%	52%
	Disapprove	53%	49%	57%	58%	46%	56%	57%	42%
	Unsure	10%	11%	7%	9%	11%	10%	10%	6%
My Councillor	Approve	45%	48%	44%	42%	43%	47%	42%	46%
	Disapprove	31%	27%	33%	33%	32%	27%	33%	37%
	Unsure	24%	26%	22%	25%	24%	26%	24%	17%
Council Overall	Approve	37%	37%	38%	32%	36%	33%	36%	44%
	Disapprove	48%	46%	48%	52%	44%	50%	48%	45%
	Unsure	15%	17%	14%	16%	19%	17%	16%	11%

Base: All respondents - Calgary Proper



Significantly higher

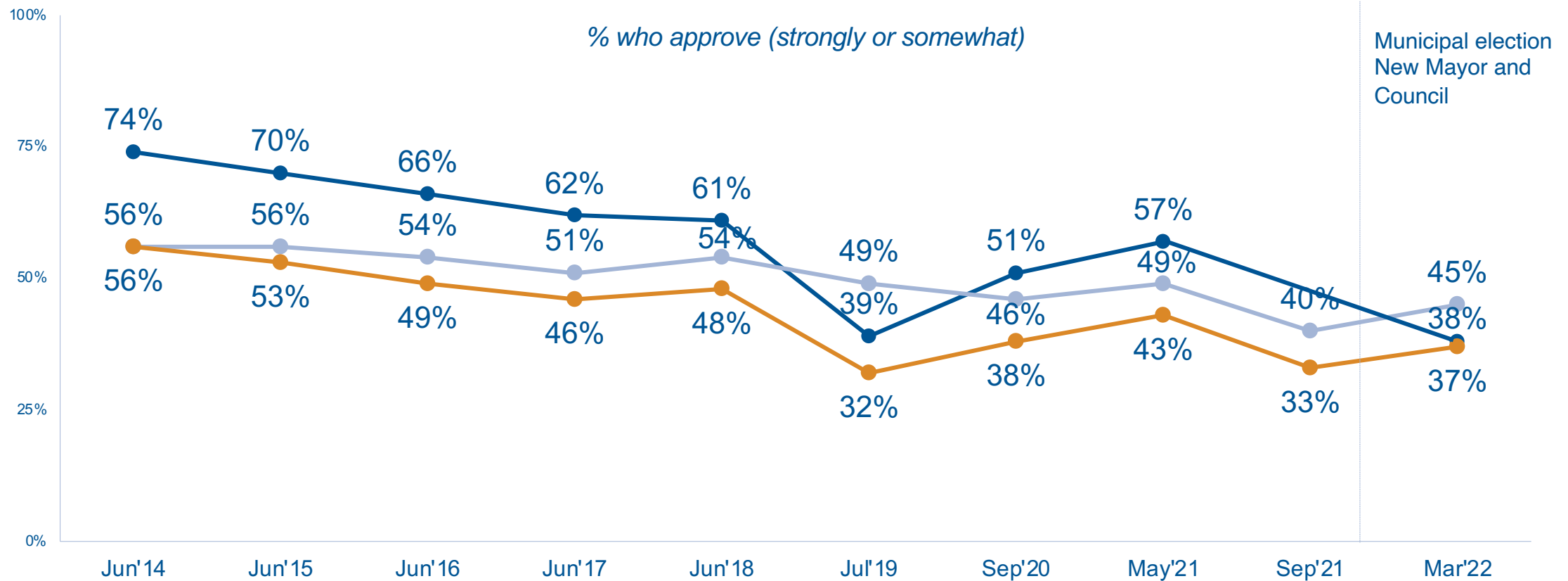


Significantly lower

Calgarians Rate City Council Tracking

The current Mayor & City Council were elected in (date). How would you personally rate their performance since then?

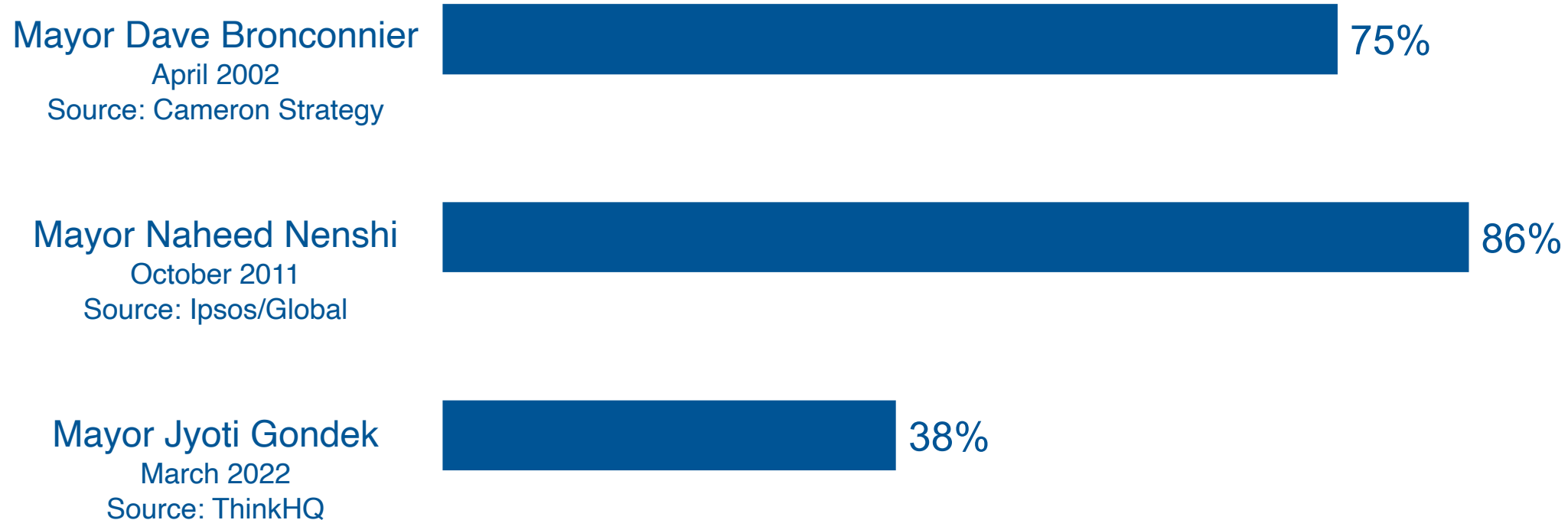
● Mayor* ● Your local councillor ● City Council overall



Base: All respondents - Calgary Proper | *Note: Jun'14 to May'21 - Mayor Nenshi ratings; Mar'22 - Mayor Gondek Rating

Comparing Political “Honeymoons” for Recent Calgary Mayors

Approval Rating During First Year in Office % Calgarians Approve



Base: All respondents

Research methodology

Approach

- Online survey of Adult Calgarians
- Region: Calgary proper
- **Field dates:** March 14 - 21, 2022
- **Sample size:** 2022 n=1,101
- **Panel source:** Angus Reid Forum
- Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of Calgary population according to Stats Canada
- A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from the Angus Reid Forum panel. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is **+/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20**
- Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes

Regional sample sizes: 2022	Total interviews		Margin of error*
	Unweighted	Weighted	
Calgary total	n=1,101	n=1,101	+/- 2.9
Northwest	n=320	n=309	+/- 5.5
Southwest	n=342	n=308	+/- 5.3
Southeast	n=260	n=280	+/- 6.1
Northeast	n=179	n=204	+/- 7.3
New/suburb	n=387	n=393	+/- 5.0
Established community	n=461	n=494	+/- 4.6
Inner city	n=240	n=227	+/- 6.3

*Note: Percentage points. The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size



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