

Hosting the podium again: Canadians on two teams over carrying torch for future Olympic bids

Four-in-ten say hosting Olympics in this country has been a worthwhile investment in the past

August 19, 2016 – As the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio De Janeiro draw to a close and the Paralympics get set to begin, a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds fewer than half of Canadians are interested in going for gold in the competition that is winning another Olympic host bid.

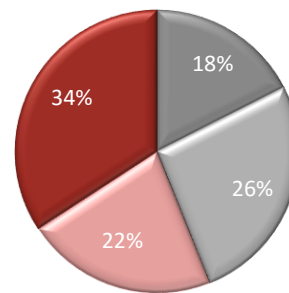
Most say they'd rather not see their nearest big city bid swifter, higher and faster for a summer or winter games, but Alberta residents buck this trend. Fully two-thirds in Wild Rose Country harbour winning memories of Calgary 1988, and more than half would like to see the Olympics return to their province in the future.

And while British Columbians – looking back at Vancouver 2010 – are also inclined to remember their games as worthwhile, Quebecers hold considerably less positive memories of Canada's only summer games: Montreal 1976.

Key Findings:

- One-in-five (18%) Canadians actively tuned into the Rio games, following the events and coverage closely. Another four-in-ten (43%) say they paid attention from time to time. On both counts, this is higher than the number [who said they planned to follow](#) before the games started
- Roughly half of all Canadians say the Olympics are a worthwhile investment for the host country, with slightly more than half (52%) saying this about the winter games, and slightly less than half saying this about the summer games (49%), reflecting Canadian preferences for winter sports
- Some 44 per cent of all Canadians would like to see the major city closest to them bid to host a future edition of the Olympics, but this total rises to 55 per cent in Alberta

I would like to see my city, or the major city closest to me, bid for a future Olympic games:



■ Strongly Agree ■ Moderately Agree
■ Moderately Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 26 – 29, 2016, among a representative randomized sample of 1,516 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#).

An additional survey question was run from August 17 – 18, 2016, among a representative randomized sample of 1,510.

For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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Rio 2016: Did Canadians tune in?

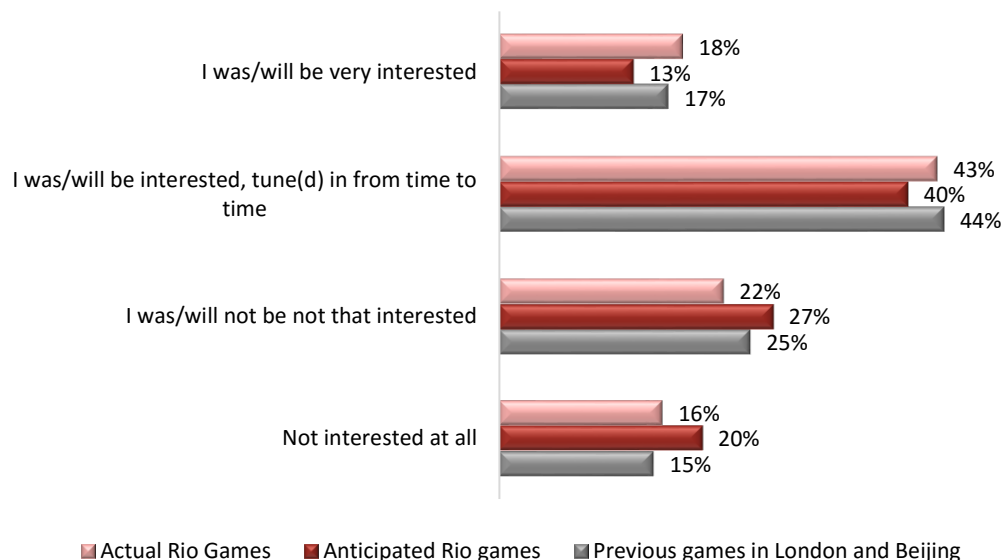
A number of [high profile controversies](#) leading into the Summer Olympic Games in Rio – from the Zika virus, to concerns about open-water event water quality, to political discord in Brazil – led to a less-than-enthusiastic viewing forecast from Canadians at the start of the games. Just over one-in-ten Canadians (13%) told ARI that they would be [following the Olympics closely](#).

It turns out, however, that they were more captivated by Rio than initially anticipated.

Whether it was Canada's reintroduction to the Penny (16-year-old Toronto native Penny Oleksiak won four medals in swimming, including a gold in 100-meter freestyle), the heights reached by Derek Drouin (who won gold in the men's high jump), the budding bromance between world sprinting champion Usain Bolt of Jamaica and Canada's own fast-man, Andre De Grasse, or indeed, any number of the games' [memorable moments](#), one-in-five (18%) Canadians report that they have been very interested and following closely throughout the last two weeks.

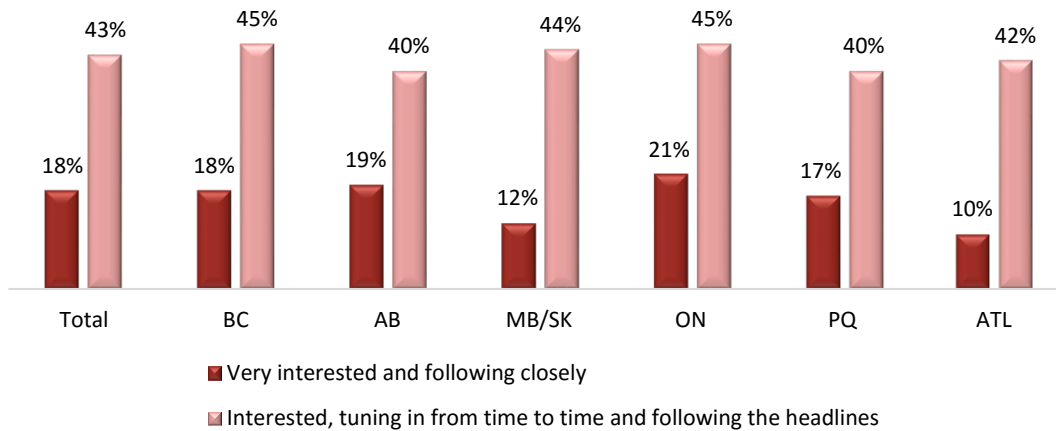
The number of people who say they tuned in "from time-to-time" and followed the headlines has also risen slightly, moving up to 43 per cent, on par with previous summer games in London and Beijing:

How closely did you follow previous games vs how interested are you in upcoming games



Notably, reported regional interest is highest in Ontario. Looking at the performances from Rio, this should come as no surprise; Oleksiak, Drouin and De Grasse, as well as Canadian flag-bearer and trampoline gold-medalist Rosie MacLennan, all hail from Canada's most populous province.

Thinking about the Summer Olympic Games in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, which wrap up at the end of this week, how would you describe your level of interest in the games? Would you say you have been:



Is hosting the Olympics worthwhile?

From a purely economic perspective, [research suggests](#) the costs of putting on a modern Olympic games “have far outstripped the benefits.”

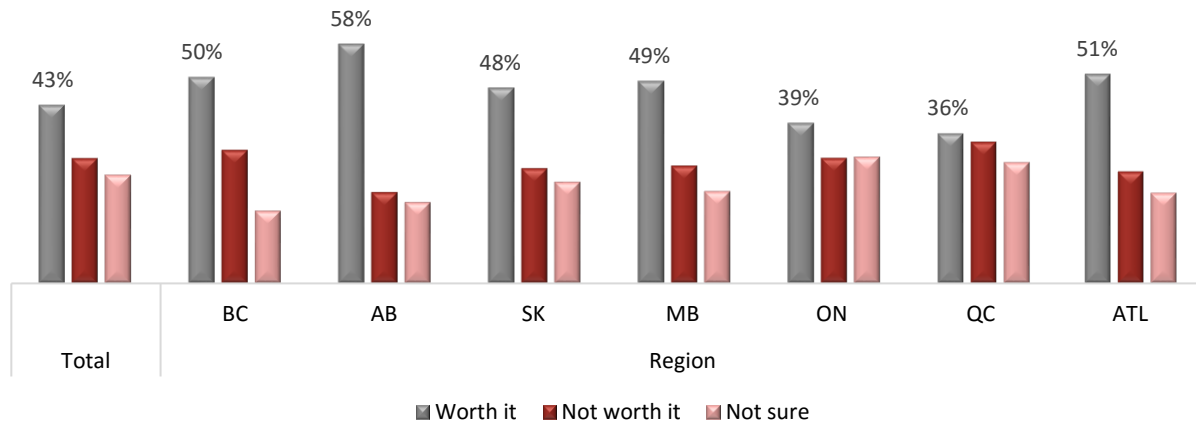
Public opinion on the value of the games is a little more nuanced. Past Angus Reid surveys [have found](#) most British Columbians think Vancouver 2010 was ultimately “worth it,” as did public opinion polling in London [after the 2012 games](#). Even Russians, who recently witnessed their country stage the most expensive Olympics in history, were [mostly favourable](#) in their assessment of Sochi 2014 nearly two years after the closing ceremonies.

At the same time, negative public opinion has [derailed Olympic bids](#) in Boston, Oslo, Stockholm, and Krakow, Poland, in recent years; and one poll [conducted ahead of the Rio games](#) showed some two-thirds of Brazilians saying they expected more harm than good to come from the event.

Asked in this ARI poll to weigh in on whether the Olympics have been worthwhile the three times Canada has hosted, Canadians are divided. More say the experience was worth it (43%) than say it was not (30%), but fully one-in-four (26%) are uncertain.

Canadians outside of Ontario and Quebec tend to have more favourable views of Canada’s past Olympic experiences. This includes nearly six-in-ten Alberta residents (58%).

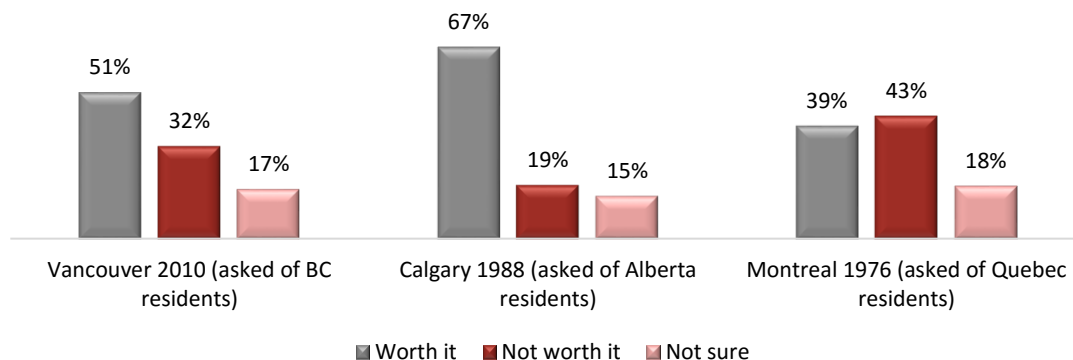
Canada has hosted the Olympic Games three times. Looking back, do you think that hosting those Olympics was ultimately worth it, or not?



Alberta residents are even more positive when thinking about the 1988 winter games in Calgary, specifically.

Asked whether that event was ultimately worth it, or not, fully two-thirds of Alberta residents (67%) say the games were “worth it,” and fewer than one-in-five (19%) say they weren’t. This view is more positive than that of British Columbians looking at Vancouver 2010, and significantly more positive than that of Quebecers looking at the 1976 games in Montreal, as seen in the following graph:

Looking back, and based on what you know or may have heard, do you think hosting those Olympics was ultimately worth it or not?

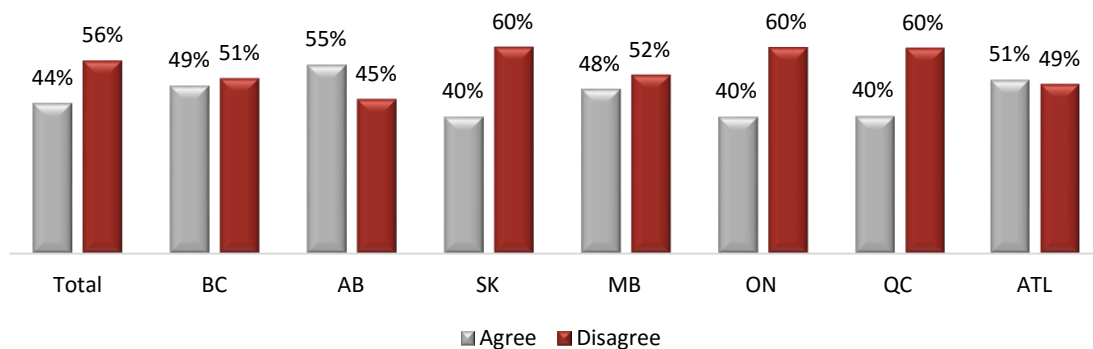


Alberta is decidedly an outlier in its views on the value of hosting the Olympics. Most people in Wild Rose Country (55%) agree with the statement “I would like to see my city, or the major one closest to me, bid for a future Olympic games.”

A [recent poll](#) by ThinkHQ and Metro News found nearly identical levels of support for a Calgary 2026 bid – 54 per cent of Albertans approve of the idea of the Winter Olympics returning to the city.

Overall, some 44 per cent of Canadians would like to see the Olympic torch passed to a city near them. The rest (56%), would not.

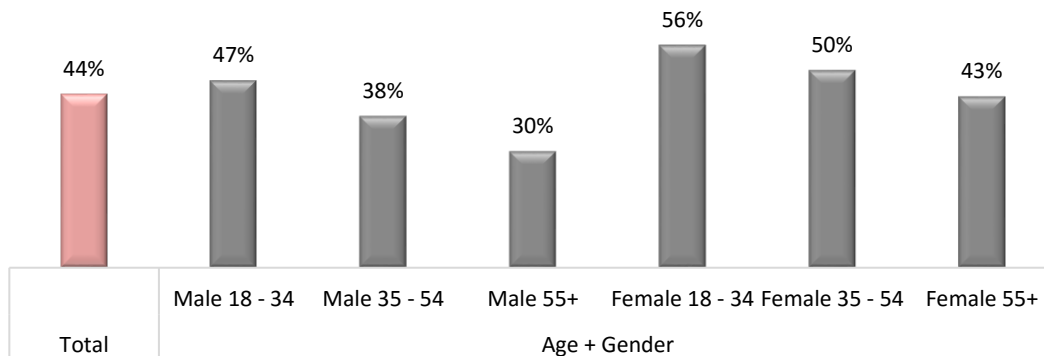
I would like to see my city, or the major city closest to me, bid for a future Olympic games



Younger respondents and women are more likely to say they would like to see the closest major city make a bid, a pattern that can be seen clearly when these two variables are combined:

I would like to see my city, or the major city closest to me, bid for a future Olympic games

Percentage who agree shown

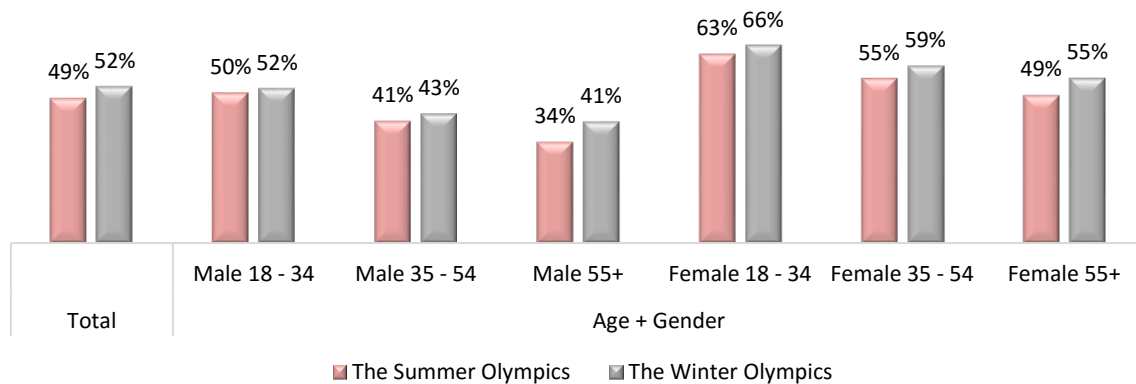


Overall, Canadians are split on the question of whether the games are a worthwhile investment for the host country, though they're slightly more favourable toward the winter games.

A narrow majority (52%) say the winter Olympics are worthwhile for the country that hosts, while for the summer Olympics, the opposite is true: slightly more than half (51%) say the summer games are *not* worthwhile.

Again, younger people and women tend to have more favourable views of the Olympics – both summer and winter – with young women especially inclined to say each one is a worthwhile investment:

Percentage saying each is "a worthwhile investment for the host country"



The slightly more favourable view of the winter Olympics across all age and gender groups is not particularly surprising. As reported in [ARI's pre-Rio poll](#), Canadians are more likely to get excited about the cold-weather edition of the quadrennial competition:

Which of the Olympic games would you say you look forward to more:



The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and

impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, see comprehensive tables:

[For the July 26 – 29 survey](#)

[For the August 17 – 18 survey](#)