

BC Spotlight: Eby's housing salvo met with enthusiasm, but NDP remains heavily criticized on affordability, health care

BC NDP holds comfortable 15-point lead over the party almost formerly known as the BC Liberals

December 12, 2022 – Less than a month into his term as premier, David Eby has the opportunity for a fresh start with a [new-look cabinet](#) and a relatively favourable electorate, but faces immense challenges heading into 2023.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds British Columbians critical of the government on the most important issues facing the province.

B.C. residents rank cost of living and inflation, health care, and housing affordability as their top issues, and at least seven-in-ten say the BC NDP is doing a poor job handling each. The government performs most favourably on issues that are much lower in the public hierarchy of priorities, including COVID-19 management and the relationship between the provincial and federal governments.

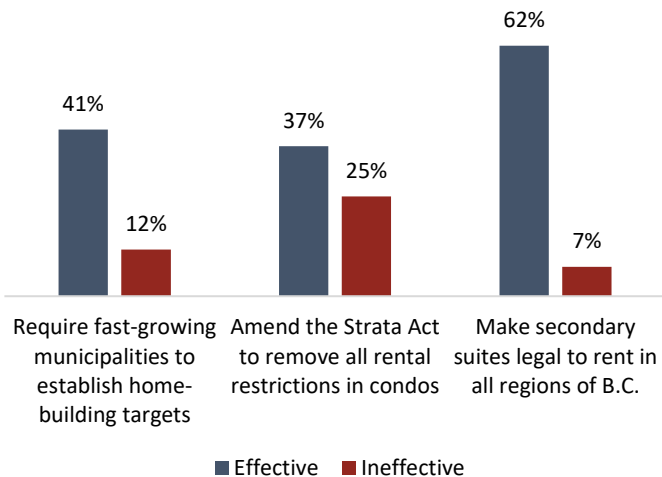
In his first days as premier, Eby announced a 100-day plan to address housing affordability with three new policy changes (and one notable absence). British Columbians are largely optimistic about the impact of legalizing secondary suites, removing rental restrictions on condos and apartments, and pushing fast-growing municipalities to create building targets. In each case, residents are much more inclined to say each policy will be effective than ineffective at addressing housing supply and affordability. Many say the same of a proposed tax on home flipping, which was announced as a part of Eby's plans in September but not ultimately included in the Bill which was passed in late November.

As this fledgling iteration of the BCNDP government heads into a new year, it does so with a comfortable advantage in vote intention. Nearly half (47%) say they would vote for the incumbent government if an election were held, compared to one-in-three (32%) who would support the newly named BC United Party (formerly the BC Liberals, official name change to take place in 2023).

More Key Findings:

- Eby's 46 per cent approval stands in contrast to BC United leader Kevin Falcon's favourability rating of 22 per cent. Both are unknown to approximately three-in-ten residents.

In your opinion, do you think the following will be effective or ineffective at improving housing affordability?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Nov. 28 – Dec. 3, 2022, among a representative randomized sample of 658 B.C. adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 4 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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- More than half (54%) of Metro Vancouver residents say they would vote for the BCNDP if an election were held. This is also where Eby receives his highest levels of approval at 57 per cent.
- The transition from BC Liberals to BC United appears unlikely to entice voters to consider the party if they had not already done so. Four per cent of past BCNDP voters and zero past Green Party voters say they will be more likely to consider the party in the next election with this change in place.

About ARI

*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 foundation 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.*

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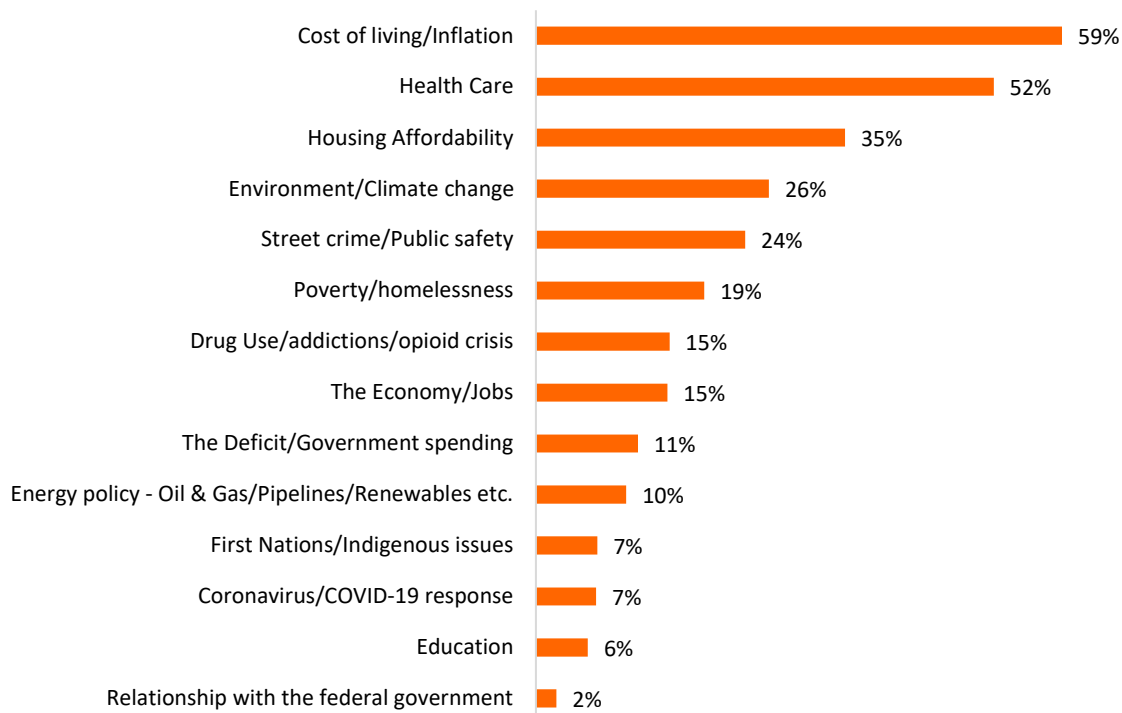
Top issues for a new year and a new leader

Former Attorney General and housing minister David Eby introduced his [new cabinet](#) last week after being sworn in as premier on November 17. Eby was quick to name housing, health care, and public safety as his top priorities for the first phase of his term, which aligns relatively closely with those priorities identified by British Columbians. Eby also announced two new [cost-of-living credits](#) for residents and businesses. That issue, alongside health care, continue to stand out amongst others at top priorities for the province:

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**Most important issues facing B.C.:
Choose up to three, n=658**



Eby takes over a government that score well on the macro but suffers on the micro. As will be seen in subsequent sections, his own popularity and that of his government are likely sources of comfort, but performance of that same government on specific issues is poor. On each of the top three priorities at least seven-in-ten British Columbians are critical of government performance:

Do you think the current government of British Columbia is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas? (Top three issues for residents are highlighted)		
	Good/ Very good job	Poor/ Very poor job
Coronavirus/COVID-19 response	68%	27%
Relationship with the federal government	51%	25%
The Economy/Jobs	47%	42%
Education	46%	38%
First Nations/Indigenous issues	45%	39%
The Deficit/Government spending	39%	42%
Environment/Climate change	38%	47%
Energy policy - Oil & Gas/Pipelines/Renewables etc.	28%	55%
Health Care	25%	70%

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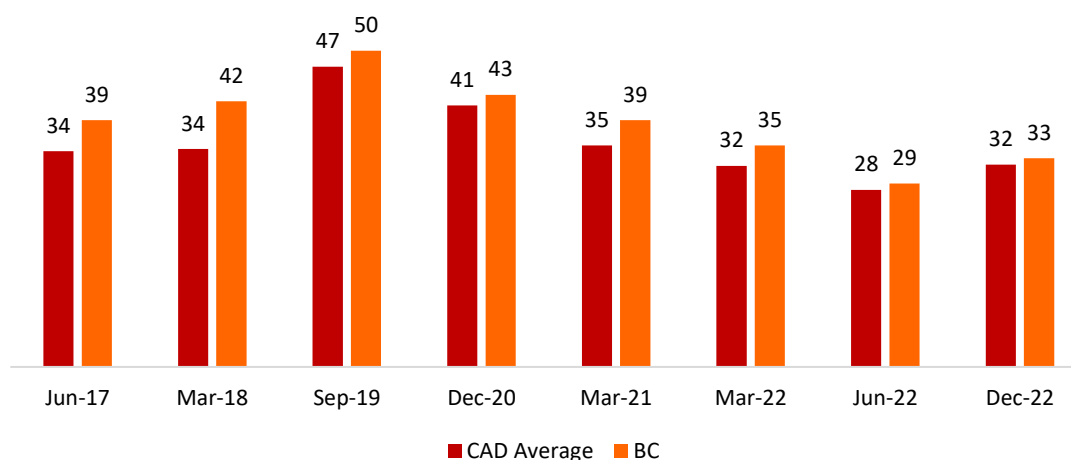
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Street crime/Public safety	22%	71%
Cost of living/Inflation	15%	77%
Drug Use/addictions/opioid crisis	14%	78%
Housing Affordability	12%	81%
Poverty/homelessness	11%	84%

Overall, these scores represent a slight improvement on the overall Government Performance Index compared to earlier in the year. This score denotes average performance across all issues. The B.C. government's 33 is near-identical to the national average received by all provinces canvassed:

Government Performance Index
(Average number of respondents saying provincial government has done a "good job" across all issues)



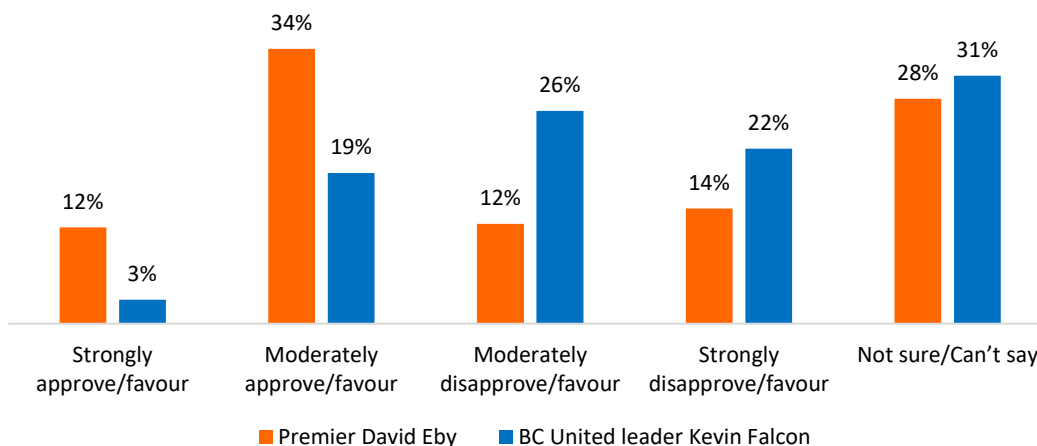
Leaders now set for next election

2022 saw the coronation of two new party leaders in B.C. as Kevin Falcon won the leadership of the BC Liberals in February, and David Eby took over for John Horgan as NDP leader and premier last month. Both leaders remain an unknown quantity to three-in-ten residents, but Eby has a clear advantage among the seven-in-ten who know enough to appraise either.

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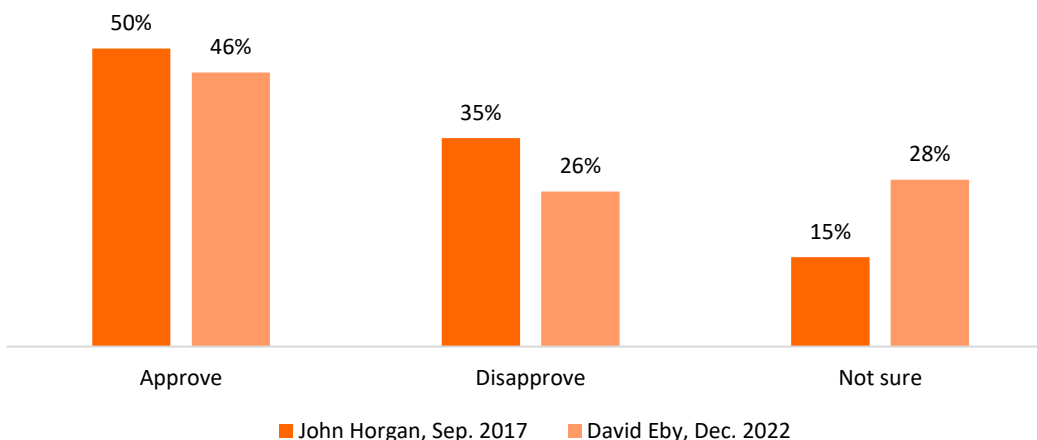
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Approval of Premier David Eby and Favourability of opposition leader Kevin Falcon



Eby undoubtedly has a tough act to follow. John Horgan left on a high note (at least with the public) and remained popular during the bulk of his term. At first measure, Eby's public opinion profile appears comparable to his predecessor, though with a much larger unknown factor, having not run through an election campaign yet:

Premier Approval at first measure

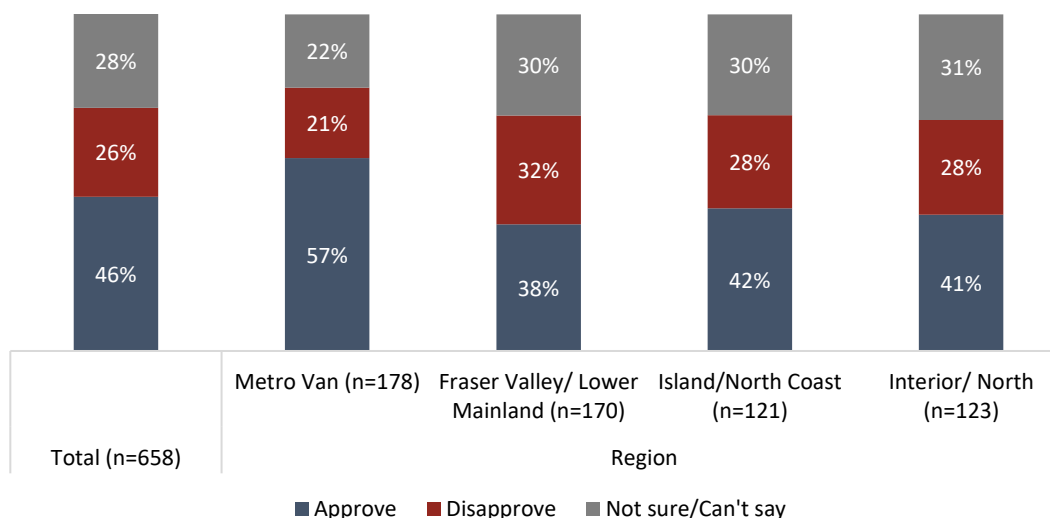


Eby has served as an MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey for nearly a decade, and as such, is better known in Metro Vancouver than elsewhere in the province. That said, he garners more approval than disapproval in every region of the province at this point:

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Approval of Premier David Eby



Housing policies and their potential impact

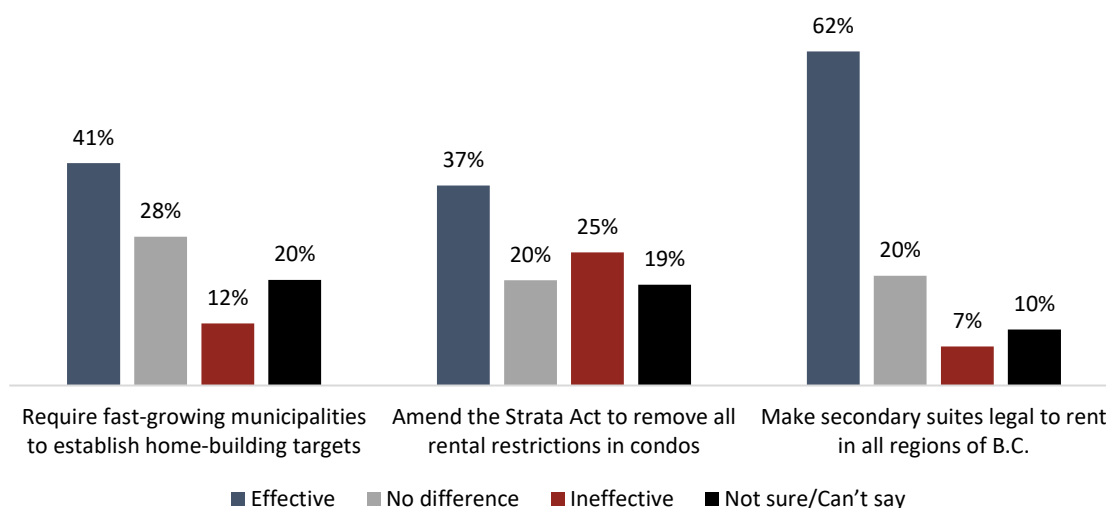
Among the first orders of business for the new government is tackling the housing affordability crisis. Sales and prices in the province have dropped slightly in year-over-year comparisons, but the average home price and high rental rates still have many in B.C. struggling. The BCNDP quickly enacted the Housing Supply Act which, among other changes, will require fast-growing municipalities to set housing development targets, amend the Strata Act to remove rental and age-related restrictions from apartments and condominiums, and legalize secondary suites across the province.

Asked how they feel about these changes, British Columbians are largely optimistic. Three-in-five (62%) say that opening up secondary suites is an effective way to improve housing affordability. Residents are more reserved about the effectiveness of these other two measures, but 'effective' is the top choice in response to each:

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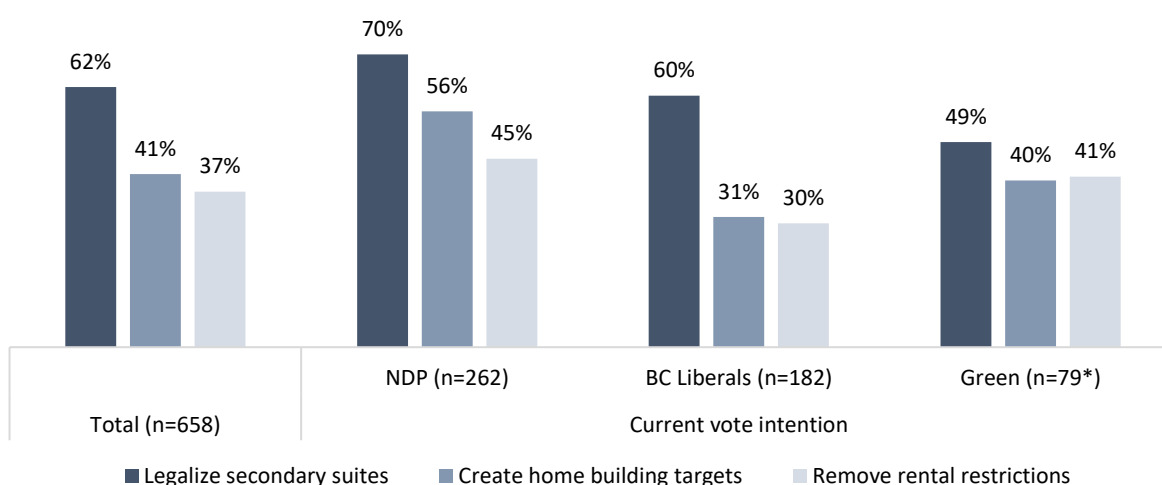
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In your opinion, do you think the following will be effective or ineffective at improving housing affordability?



Majority enthusiasm is shown among both potential BCNDP and BC Liberal voters for the concept of legalizing secondary suites across the province, while non-incumbent supporters are more hesitant about the effectiveness of creating home building targets for municipalities:

In your opinion, do you think the following will be effective or ineffective at improving housing affordability? (Percentage saying Effective shown)



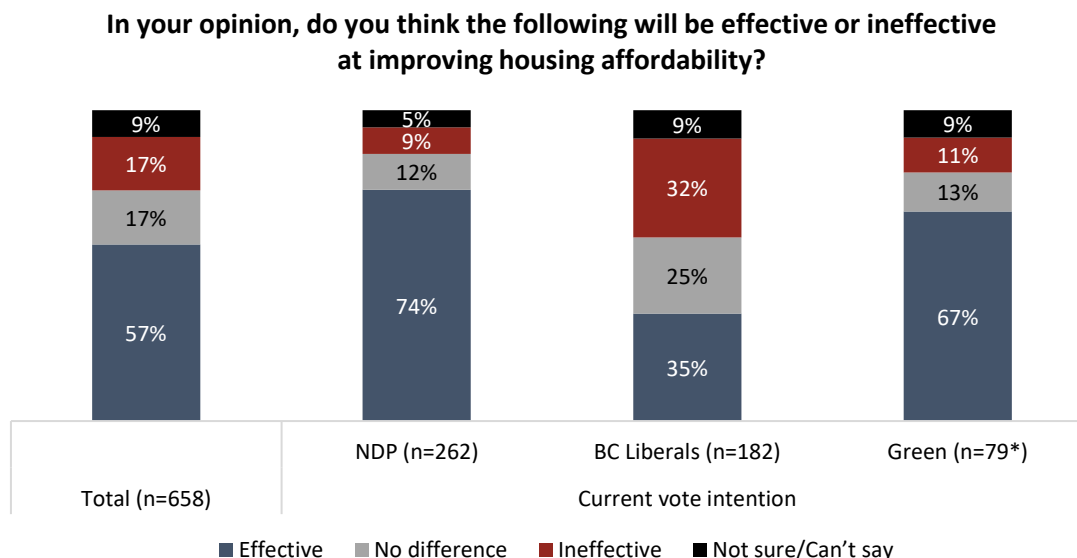
*small sample size, interpret with caution

One policy that a majority of residents would evidently like to see is an additional tax on house flipping. This was included in Eby's September announcement regarding changes to improve housing affordability

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but was not apparent in legislation passed in November. Those who would support the BC Liberals are deeply divided about this idea, while Green and NDP voters overwhelmingly favour it:



*small sample size, interpret with caution

BCNDP leads in vote intention

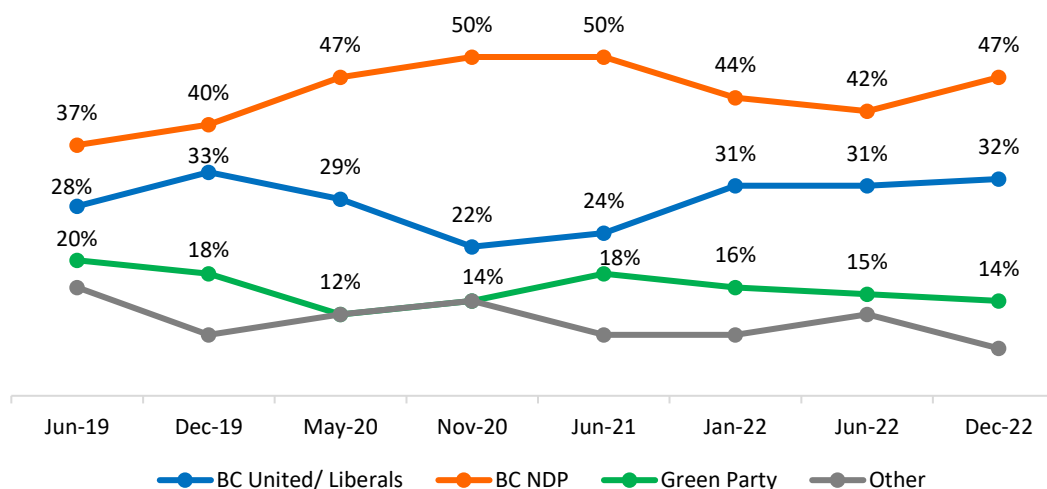
The political environment for the BCNDP appears to this point to be minimally affected by ongoing concerns about housing, affordability, and health care. While residents are clearly critical of the government on these issues, they still prefer the BCNDP to steward the province for the coming years.

Asked how they would vote if an election were held, nearly half (47%) say that they would vote for the BCNDP representative in their electoral district. One-in-three would support the BC Liberals (32%), while 14 per cent would vote for the BC Green Party:

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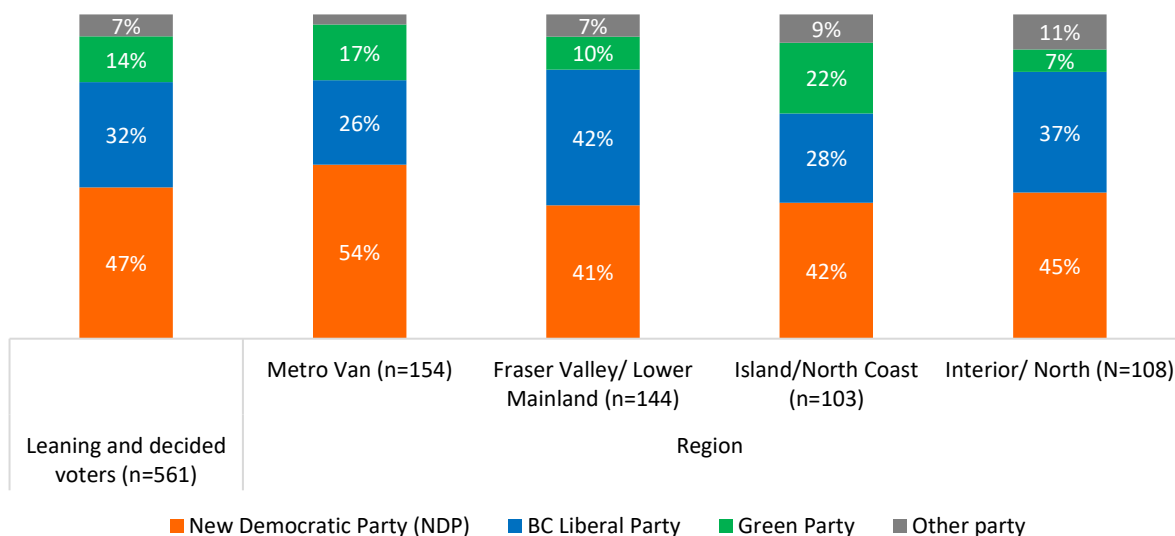
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Vote Intent - British Columbia (Decided and leaning voters)



Regionally, the BCNDP is strongest in Metro Vancouver, but similarly comfortable in the Island-North Coast region. The BC Liberals are competitive in other regions, but hold no distinct advantage in any part of the province currently:

Vote intention, leaning and decided voters (n=561)

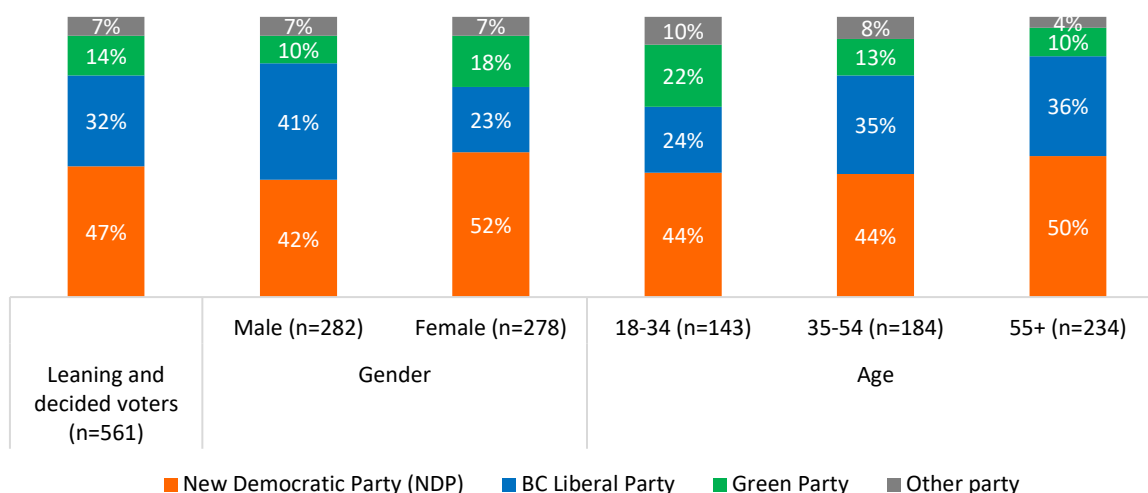


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The current government holds an immense advantage among women in the province, while the opposition is tied among men. British Columbians across all age groups support the BCNDP over other options by at least 14 points:

**Vote intention, leaning and decided voters
(n=561)**



New name, little difference

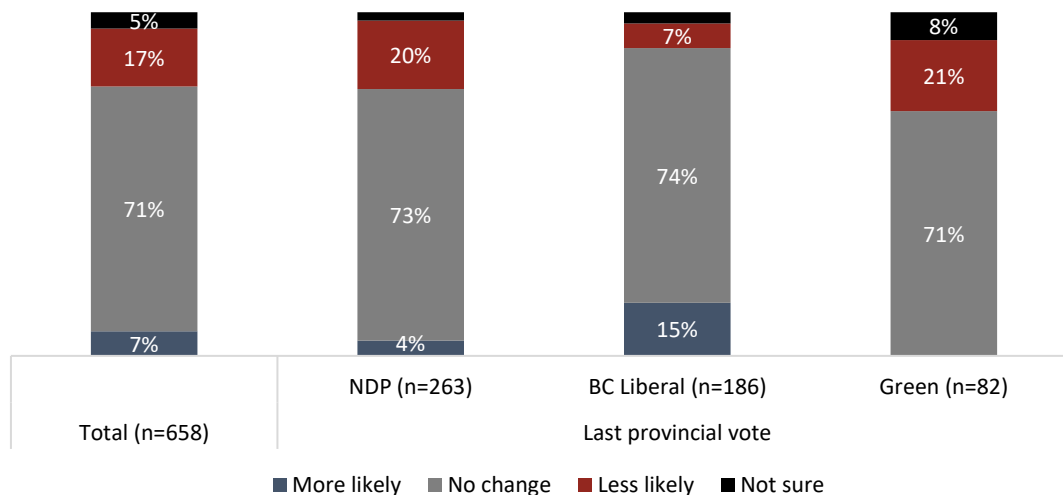
It has been theorized by some that the BC Liberals name change may move voters one way or the other come the next election. The name has long confused many who follow politics more superficially, often mistaken for the federal brand rather than its more accurate centre-right position on the political spectrum.

Asked if this new name will affect how they see the party and their likelihood to adjust their vote, British Columbians are largely unmoved. Those most likely to say they'll support BC United are those who have traditionally voted for the party under a different name, while those who did not support the party in the last election say they won't in the next:

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Will a name change from the B.C. Liberal Party to B.C. United make you more or less likely to vote for that party?



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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