

Battleground Calgary Poll

Conducted for CBC Calgary Fielded March 23 to April 6, 2023



The Poll

Alberta is on the verge of a provincial election. All indicators point to a tight race, and Calgary will be a critical battleground. CBC News commissioned a poll of Calgarians in order to provide a deep dive into the minds of voters, across all four city quadrants. This research brief summarizes storied published by CBC Calgary based on this poll, and the feedback received.

The random survey of 1,000 of Calgarians was conducted using a hybrid method between March 23 and April 6 by Edmonton-based Trend Research under the direction of Janet Brown Opinion Research. Survey respondents were contacted by telephone from randomly generated lists of phone numbers containing 50 per cent landlines and 50 per cent cellphones. Numbers were called up to five times, at five different times of day before being considered 'unreachable'. Respondents were given the option of answering the survey when contacted, receiving a callback at a more convenient time, or receiving a link and answering the survey online. The sample is representative of region, age and gender. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. For subsets, the margin of error is larger.

Janet Brown has been examining and tracking public opinion in Alberta for more than 30 years. Together with Trend Research, Janet Brown conducted the only poll during the 2019 Alberta provincial election with results that were within the margin of error for all political parties at both a provincial and regional level.



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Alberta NDP could make huge gains in Calgary and win popular vote, new poll suggests – but still lose election











Opposition could win popular vote and most Calgary seats, but still lose election



Joel Dryden, Jason Markusoff · CBC News · Posted: Apr 11, 2023 6:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: April 14



Alberta NDP Leader Rachel Notley and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, pictured in file photos. A new poll commissioned by CBC News suggests Calgary remains hotly contested and will have significant implications on final seat counts in the upcoming election. (Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)





EDITOR'S NOTE: CBC News commissioned this public opinion research in late March, roughly two months before Albertans vote in the next election on May 29.

As with all polls, this one is a snapshot in time.

This analysis is one in a series of articles to come out of this research.

The Alberta NDP is ahead of the United Conservative Party in Calgary, the battleground city where Rachel Notley's party will likely need a landslide to overtake Danielle Smith's government, according to a new 1,000-person poll of Calgarians.

Given that both parties and almost all observers have declared that how blue or orange Alberta's largest city is will determine the election's winner, CBC News commissioned this special poll only of Calgarians by Janet Brown Opinion Research. It allows us to delve into the minds of Calgary voters in a depth no province-wide poll can, and assess the main parties' strengths and weaknesses in Calgary's different quadrants.

New Democrats are comfortably ahead by double-digit margins in both northeast Calgary and the northwest, while they have a slight edge in southwest Calgary and trail the UCP in the southeast.

City-wide, the NDP has support of 47 per cent of decided and leaning voters to UCP's 42 per cent. Notley is ahead, but it's a fragile lead, Janet Brown says.

• What questions do you have about the upcoming Alberta election? Send an email to ask@cbc.ca

"If I were the NDP, I wouldn't be comfortable with this advantage," the veteran pollster said.

The survey was conducted between March 23 and April 6, ahead of the May 29 provincial election.

Hello, Calgary

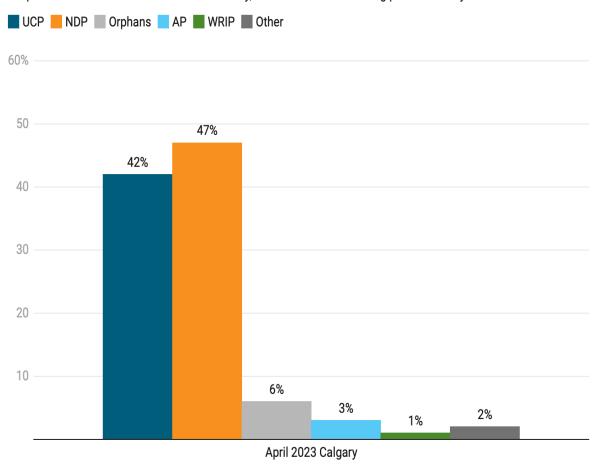
Calgary is the grand electoral prize of Alberta politics not only because it has 26 of Alberta's 87 seats, but also because its urban voters have become most likely to change their minds from election to election.

In 2015, the NDP won 15 of the city's seats, and became government. In 2019, the Jason Kenney-led UCP won 23 of Calgary's ridings and their own province-wide majority.

In that election, 55 per cent of Calgary voters chose United Conservatives and 32 per cent went NDP. Election results that mirror these new poll findings would constitute a massive swing in Notley's favour.

Election Voting Intention April 2023

If a provincial election were held in Alberta today, which one of the following parties would you vote for?



Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research for CBC News • Created with Datawrapper

However, with a five-point advantage for the NDP, the opposition party's lead barely sits outside the margin of error.

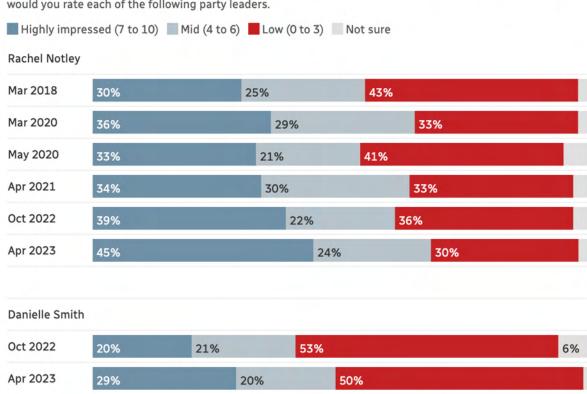
"That lead could evaporate very quickly if the UCP has a more effective get-out-the-vote strategy than the NDP has," Brown said.

Low approval ratings continue to dog Premier Danielle Smith, who replaced Kenney as UCP leader in October. Asked how impressed they were with Smith on a 0-10 scale, half of respondents gave her a low score of three or less, while 29 per cent said they were highly impressed with her and scored her at seven or higher. Another 20 per cent gave her a neutral rating.

That is nearly the mirror opposite of Calgarians' impressions of Notley, who's front and centre in NDP campaign ads and pamphlets. Thirty per cent said they were unimpressed, 45 per cent highly impressed and 24 per cent in the middle.



On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you are not at all impressed and 10 means you are very impressed, how would you rate each of the following party leaders.



Created with Datawrapper

Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research • CBC News

Notley of the north

The next premier will have to effectively strategize how to stack up wins in Calgary's various quadrants.

UCP support is strongest in Calgary's southeast, where the party leads the NDP 52 per cent to 40.

The NDP is performing best in the northeast, leading 48 to 33. It's ahead 52 to 38 in the northwest, while its 45-to-43 edge in southwest Calgary puts the parties in a virtual tie.

LISTEN | Pollster Janet Brown explains the science behind the poll:



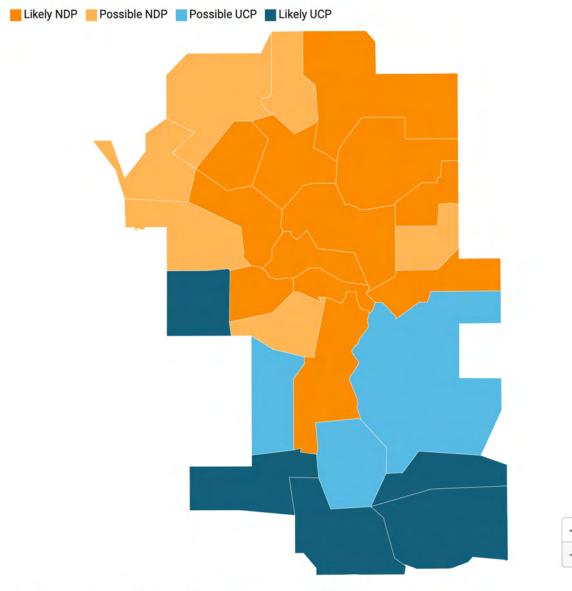
These numbers would translate into 18 Calgary seats won by Notley's party and eight for Smith's, according to Brown's estimates.

"That means the NDP looks like they're in position to win the majority of seats in Calgary, but I'm not sure that 18 seats is enough to win province-wide."

Even if you combine 18 Calgary seats and a sweep of the 20 ridings in Edmonton — Notley's hometown stronghold — that still wouldn't be enough to give the NDP a 44-seat majority and victory. The opposition party would also have to make gains in Alberta's smaller communities or rural ridings, where the United Conservatives are strongest.

Seat Projections

These seat projections are derived from a model developed by pollster Janet Brown for Calgary's 26 provincial ridings. The model uses current polling data to estimate changes in individual ridings since the 2019 provincial election.



Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Other smaller parties continue to barely register. The Alberta Party is hanging on to three per cent while one per cent each said they would support the Wildrose Independence Party, Alberta Liberals and Alberta Greens.

Six per cent of respondents are considered "orphaned voters," those polled who don't like any of the options.

"Those voters have already rejected the two major parties. So I don't think there's much chance that those parties can convert those voters into supporters at this point," Brown said.

Who's blue, who's orange

The NDP are particularly strong among Calgary women, leading the UCP by 51 per cent to 41, while the parties are virtually even with men. NDP retains its traditional strength among young voters, but is also leading the UCP by 10 percentage points among senior citizens, the poll suggests.

The UCP enjoys a healthy lead with Calgarians with no post-secondary education or some, while respondents with university degrees clearly prefer the New Democrats.

While some city quadrants appear to clearly prefer one party over the other — and the NDP is better in the inner city, the UCP in the suburbs — there would be more subtle distinctions if you drilled down further, said Jack Lucas, an associate professor of political science at the University of Calgary.

"When you zoom in on the city of Calgary itself, there are districts within the city that are particularly ideologically diverse and competitive," he said. "When you zoom in within those districts, you even see particular neighbourhoods or communities that are especially competitive.

"So it's a battleground, no matter what scale you're thinking about."

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Calgary

Health care, an NDP-friendly issue, now top concern for Calgarians: poll











But inflation and economy — better issues for UCP — right behind



Joel Dryden · CBC News · Posted: Apr 12, 2023 6:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: April 12





A new poll commissioned by CBC News suggests Calgarians are split on what their key ballot-box issues are. Those who value social issues like health care tend to support the opposition NDP while those who are focused on economic issues tend to support the governing United Conservative Party. (CBC News, Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)

617 comments (=)



EDITOR'S NOTE: CBC News commissioned this public opinion research in late March, roughly two months before Albertans vote in the next election on May 29.

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This analysis is one in a series of articles to come out of this research.

Nearly half of all Calgarians say health care is one of the top issues they're facing right now — and most people trust the NDP to be better managers of the system, a new poll suggests.

However, economic issues follow closely behind as top concerns, and that's area in which the governing United Conservative Party is perceived to have the edge.

A poll of 1,000 people in Calgary — the battleground city where both main parties will focus their election campaigns — suggests a close tie between what issues they value and what party they choose.

Pollster Janet Brown, however, says what's making this election interesting is the group of voters in the middle, concerned about both social and economic issues.

"This election is probably going to come down to those people," Brown said.

Given how pivotal the election's results in Alberta's largest city will be in determining the winner, CBC News commissioned Janet Brown Opinion Research to conduct this special poll of Calgarians only.

Jobs, economy, pipelines ... health-care?

During the 2019 campaign, the UCP leader at the time, Jason Kenney, spoke behind a placard that laid out his party's idea of which issues mattered: jobs, economy, pipelines.

Those were the issues that dominated the minds of Albertans. In a Janet Brown poll the year before the election, 42 per cent of respondents cited the oil-and-gas economy's health as a concern, making it the voters' most pressing issue.

Kenney's campaign messaging paid off. His UCP unseated Rachel Notley's governing party and won nearly all seats in Calgary.



Then-UCP leader Jason Kenney, standing behind a podium in April 2019 and promoting what he said was an aggressive strategy to promote the province's oil-and-gas sector. Polling showed oil and economic issues were front of mind among voters four years ago, but health care has replaced them as the most common concern. (CBC)

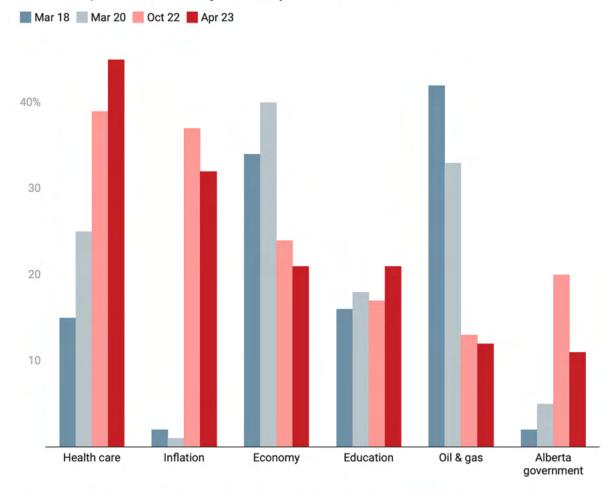
But things have changed.

"In 2019, it seemed to be strictly economic things that were on people's minds. In this election, it's a mix of both social and economic," Brown said.

The newest poll, conducted in late March and early April, asked respondents what they thought the most important issues facing Calgary are today.

Calgary's Most Important Issues

In your opinion, what is the SINGLE most important issue facing Alberta today? What other important issues are facing Alberta today?



Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research • Created with Datawrapper

Forty-five per cent of Calgarians mentioned health care, up from 39 per cent in October 2022 and 25 per cent in March 2020.

Though voters may believe the NDP are best positioned to manage that issue, the UCP has made a push to carve out their own territory on the subject. On Tuesday, Smith held a pre-campaign event to offer a "guarantee" that public health care would remain public.

The poll suggests the next most important concerns are inflation and cost of living at 32 per cent, the economy at 21 per cent, and education also at 21 per cent. The oil-and-gas industry was cited by only 12 per cent of respondents.

Inflation appears less of an anxiety than it was in October, when <u>polling found</u> it a big issue for 37 per cent of Calgarians. Canada's inflation rate <u>dropped to 5.2 per cent</u> in February from 6.9 per cent in October, and the Alberta government started <u>offering</u> affordability payments in January.

Calgarians also vary in regards to their priorities depending on where they live in the city. Though many people are concerned about health care, for example, it seems to be a bigger driver of voting behaviour in the north compared to in south Calgary, Brown said.

And the NDP enjoys a strong lead in northwest and northeast Calgary, while the UCP is strongest in the southern quadrants.

A matter of trust

Not everyone will head to the polls in late May thinking directly about their doctor or their paycheque.

The poll suggests that seven per cent of respondents consider the federal government and Justin Trudeau among the important issues facing the province today, while 11 per cent say Danielle Smith and the provincial government are among their chief ballot-box motivators.

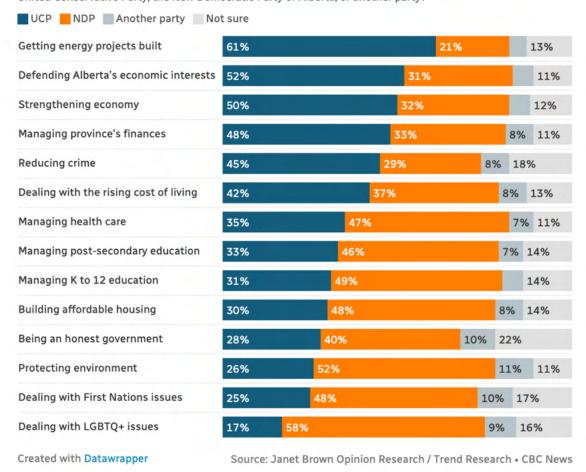
There are almost two distinct categories, Brown noted, representing almost half of the population. Half are very preoccupied with social issues, health care, education and, to a lesser extent, provincial government leadership.

"Those people, by and large, are feeling very positive about the NDP," Brown said.

Then there's another part of the population who are very preoccupied with the economy, and aren't paying much attention to leadership, who seem to be in the UCP camp.

Party Best Able to Handle Issue

Here is a list of issues. For each one, please indicate which provincial party is best able to handle this issue. The United Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party of Alberta, or another party?



The poll also asked Calgarians which party they consider best able to handle various issues. Respondents believed the UCP was best able to handle getting energy projects built, defending Alberta's economic interests and reducing crime.

The NDP, meanwhile, was believed by respondents to be best able to handle health care, managing education and being an honest government.

"The polling shows that people see the UCP as the party of the economy, but they see the NDP as the party of social programs and quality of life," Brown said.

LISTEN | The CBC's Brooks DeCillia talks to pollster Janet Brown about the science behind the poll:



Pollster Janet Brown explains the science behind polls -- why they work, how to read them critically.

Jared Wesley, a professor of political science at the University of Alberta who leads the Common Ground project, said the big question looming over the election is whether parties can prioritize the issues that voters trust them the most on when they're headed to the polls.

If the NDP can make this election one focused on health care, they may be in good shape, he said. Conversely, an election focused on the economy may favour the governing party, Wesley added.

"But, the best-laid plans sometimes go awry. And we've seen in previous campaigns where candidates' comments come back to bite them, and that derails a party's campaign to try to prioritize those issues," Wesley said.

"So I'd say of all the campaigns that we've seen in the last several decades here in Alberta, this one's going to be one to watch."

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Follow Joel on Twitter

With files from Jason Markusoff

Calgary voters look off to their right and see Danielle Smith. That's a problem for UCP











NDP vs. UCP is a classic left-right contest, but Notley seen as more centrist, poll shows



Jason Markusoff · CBC News · Posted: Apr 13, 2023 2:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: April 13



A new poll suggests that Calgarians' view of UCP Leader Danielle Smith's rightward tilt may explain her low approval marks. (Jason Franson/The Canadian Press)





EDITOR'S NOTE: CBC News commissioned this public opinion research in late March, roughly two months before Albertans vote in the next election on May 29.

As with all polls, this one is a snapshot in time.

This analysis is one in a series of articles to come out of this research.

This spring's election is shaping up to be the closest contest since 2012, when Alison Redford's centre-right Progressive Conservatives pulled one out against the populist-right Wildrose Party. Or the 1993 race, when Ralph Klein's Tories promised harsh budget cuts against a Liberal group so fiscally hawkish that then-leader Laurence Decore suggested shutting abortion clinics as an austerity measure.

What we have in 2023 is a far clearer left-right tilt. The Wildrose-PC merger has made the UCP more firmly conservative than the Tories were, and the New Democrats remain a union-affiliated and unabashedly progressive party.

But the Danielle Hatfields and Rachel McCoys will have to settle their feud in a province full of mostly centrists. And the results will likely have much to do with how far voters see their would-be premiers straying from where they themselves sit ideologically.

In the new Janet Brown Opinion Research/CBC News poll, we asked 1,000 Calgarians how they viewed themselves on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right). As Brown likes to say in her presentations, Calgary is a centrist city that tilts slightly to the right — a ton of 5s, with more 6s and 7s than 3s and 4s.

Brown's poll also asked respondents how they'd plot UCP Leader Danielle Smith and NDP Leader Rachel Notley on that same spectrum.

Unsurprisingly, neither one is perceived as a centrist, though voters are more likely to put Notley there.

The new UCP leader, Calgarians believe, strays farther from the middle of the road. Smith, they say, is more of an extremist than Notley is. (When nearly one-third of Calgarians rate Smith a 10, they don't mean it in the usually flattering way.)

Perceived ideologies of Rachel Notley and Danielle Smith

Rachel Notley Danielle Smith

1

2

3

We asked 1,000 Calgarians to place the NDP and UCP leaders on a left-right ideological scale, where 0 is farthest left and 10 is farthest right, and 5 is centre.



Chart: CBC News • Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research • Created with Datawrapper

5

10

Not sure

4

Smith has given voters multiple reasons to view her as more right-wing than the politicians they're used to, starting with her Wildrose leadership a decade ago.

With her vaccine skepticism and impassioned opposition to COVID restrictions, she placed herself outside the mainstream and beyond the stance of predecessor Jason Kenney, an principled conservative by almost anybody's measure (even if the health emergency of the pandemic made him compromise often).

The revealed conversation with preacher Artur Pawlowski about his legal troubles could not have helped, given how notorious he has become for his own inflammatory remarks and actions.

Smith's first pre-campaign promise was a clear signal she's trying to shake off the sense — or at least accusations — that she's too ideologically rigid. A guarantee you won't begin charging for hospital or doctor visits is not a promise your garden-variety moderate has to make.

Brown's poll findings get even more interesting when you look at what partisan supporters think. Although it's not surprising that UCP voters and NDP voters depict the opposing leader as a radical — it's what their own factions tell them to think — the way they view their own side's leadership is revealing.

How UCP supporters view ideology

We surveyed 1,000 Calgarians on where they identify on a left-right ideological scale, where 0 is farthest left and 10 is farthest right, and 5 is centre. We also asked them to plot the main party leaders.

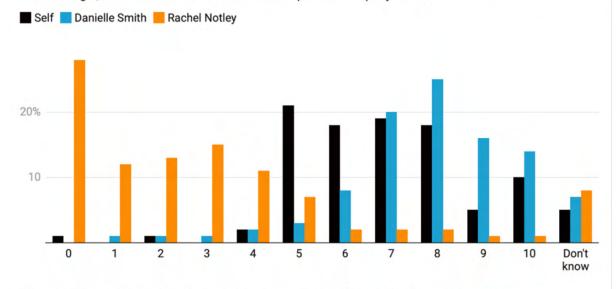


Chart: CBC News · Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research · Created with Datawrapper

United Conservative voters perceive themselves as much more moderate than Smith. Only 11 per cent think she's a 5 or 6, even though 39 per cent of them put themselves in those centre or centre-right positions — and twice as many say she's a 9 or 10 than say they're on the edge of the spectrum themselves.

Contrast that with the way probable NDP voters rank their leader and themselves.

How NDP supporters view ideology

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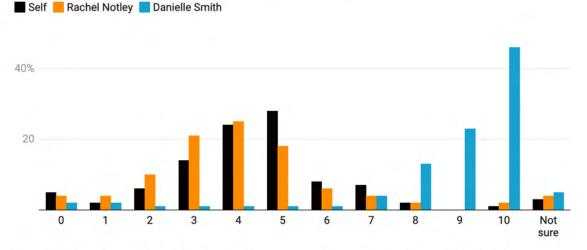


Chart: CBC News • Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research • Created with Datawrapper

The Calgarians who intend to vote for Notley's party are far more likely to put the leader closer to where they are, in the 3, 4 or 5 centre/left zone. It doesn't match up exactly with their sense of their own worldview, but elections are seldom a quest for the perfect choice; rather, the most adequate option.

This could help explain some of the poll's other findings, that the NDP is more popular in the election's most competitive city, and that Smith is much less well-liked than her chief rival.

"It's almost like leadership is an important consideration for NDP voters, but UCP voters are sort of disregarding how they feel about the leaders," Brown said in an interview.

This would actually mark the second election in a row where Notley was considered her party's best asset, and the UCP leader was less popular than their party was. Kenney didn't win the popularity contest in polls, even if his United Conservatives won the election overall.

Again this time, don't expect to see Smith's face or name often when candidate pamphlets hit Calgarians' mailboxes. And expect Notley's big smile on the orange campaign literature, along with perhaps Smith's name featured in menacing tones.

"This time around, it looks like Rachel Notley is doing more for her party than she was in 2019, and Smith is more of a liability to her party than Kenney was," Brown said.

Hardcore partisan rhetoric and rallying cries are great to motivate one's activist base. But it's conventional wisdom that politicians seek to meet voters where they are — which is why this election, especially in Calgary, will come down to motivating the centrists.

And based on what I've written thus far, guess which leader is doing better in the middle.

How they're voting: left, right and centre

We surveyed Calgarians on where they identify on a left-right ideological scale, where 0 is farthest left and 10 is farthest right, and 5 is centre. We also asked how they'll vote.

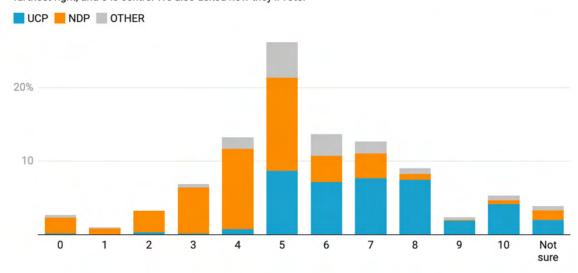


Chart: CBC News · Source: Janet Brown Opinion Research / Trend Research · Created with Datawrapper

Not only are the NDP more popular among the Calgarians who consider themselves centrist, but they're also notching votes among people on the slight centre-right as well. In fact, among all the Calgarians who say they're an ideological 4, 5 or 6- and that's more than half of Calgarians — Notley's party gets support of more than half of them, compared to one-third for Smith's.

Though in Calgary, the 7s and 8s still matter a lot, and that's where UCP can rack up its suburban scores.

Both parties want their leaders to look as mainstream, moderate and (dare I say) boring as possible. One side is clearly having an easier time at it, but what's an election if not one giant muddy ideological tug-of-war?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jason Markusoff

Producer and writer

Jason Markusoff analyzes what's happening — and what isn't happening, but probably should be — in Calgary and sometimes farther afield. He's written in Alberta for nearly two decades with Maclean's magazine, the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal. He appears regularly on Power and Politics' Power Panel and various other CBC current affairs shows. Reach him at jason.markusoff@cbc.ca

Calgary · Opinion

Decoding why Danielle Smith's UCP is down in northeast Calgary











NDP is enjoying its biggest leads in the most diverse quadrant of city, poll shows



Rishi Nagar · for CBC Opinion · Posted: Apr 15, 2023 2:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: April 15



Only one-third of poll respondents in northeast Calgary say they'll support Danielle Smith's UCP, the poorest showing for her party in any quadrant of the election's key battleground city. (Jason Franson/The Canadian Press)





EDITOR'S NOTE: This opinion column is based public survey research that CBC News commissioned in late March, roughly two months before Albertans vote in the next election on May 29.

As with all polls, this one is a snapshot in time.

This column is one in a series of articles that has come out of this research.

If winning Calgary is vital to winning the province in the upcoming election, figuring out what voters want in the city's northeast will be a key ingredient to the next premier's success.

In 2015, when Rachel Notley became premier, her NDP won all but one seat in this quadrant. In 2019, when Jason Kenney replaced her, the UCP also lost only one northeast riding.

The new poll commissioned by CBC News gives the NDP an edge of five per cent throughout Calgary. But in the northeast, it's three times higher, with the NDP ahead by 48 per cent to 33. That's the biggest lead in any quadrant. The pollster, Janet Brown, predicts the northeast will flip again, this time with all ridings going NDP orange.

To begin to understand why, you must first appreciate the northeast's complexity. It is principally comprised of young voters, new immigrants and diverse ethnic communities.

This part of the city is home to many mosques, gurdwaras, temples, churches and numerous ethno-cultural groups. This diversity is also reflected in its business mix, ranging from the airport, malls, and big box stores, to business start-ups and small businesses.

When the clouds emerged

We also need to understand what happened here in the last few years.

People are still reeling from the devastation of the June 2020 hailstorm. It cost \$1.5 billion in damages to personal properties and homes. Many of them had already had their vehicles parked and insurance coverage modified due to COVID restrictions. Their vehicles were destroyed too.

City hall offered some repair grants, but the provincial government only provided disaster relief funding to residents who experienced overland flooding, not for hail damage, insurance deductibles or uninsured losses.

Around the same time, insurance premiums for home and auto increased everywhere in Alberta, making things even worse for people in northeast Calgary.

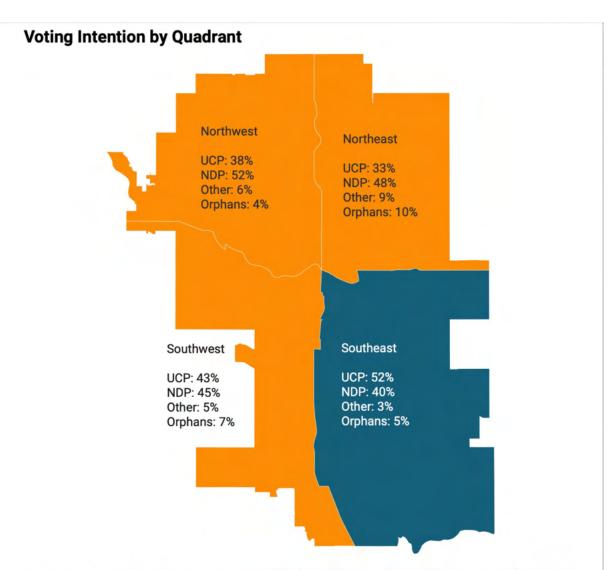
The perception still remains that the UCP looks after its friends in business more than the working public affected by the hail damage.



A hailstorm battered much of northeast Calgary in 2020, and there's lingering frustration with how the United Conservative government handled the aftermath, Rishi Nagar writes. (Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)

Also, at the early stages of the pandemic, this part of the city had disproportionately high infection rates as a significant number of residents continued to work as essential and frontline service workers. Then-premier Jason Kenney blamed the South Asian community's housing patterns for high sickness and infection rates in this quadrant.

Switching premiers could have helped the UCP, as Premier Danielle Smith may be perceived as more empathetic than Kenney. And yet, the party is well behind with only 33 per cent support, compared to 52 per cent on the other side of Memorial Drive in the southeast.



Source: Janet Brown / Trend Research • Map data: @ 2023 City of Calgary • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Northeast economy

According to <u>available information</u>, the average individual income in the northeast part of the city is lower than neighbourhoods in the other quadrants. More people here are finding it very difficult to meet their monthly expenses and keep up with the rising costs of living.

Alberta's economy may have rebounded, but people are not feeling it the way they should. Albertans may see the UCP as a better fit to manage provincial finances and the economy, but they trust the NDP more when it comes to helping families, managing health care and education, and tackling environmental concerns.

People in the northeast are educated, and put a high value on health care, kids' education and public sector jobs.

It's worth noting that for the quadrant's many new Canadians, the process for professional credentialing keeps them behind, and away from jobs in the trades and professions they're skilled in, including those in the public sector. Both the UCP and NDP share the blame for not making any significant progress on this issue.

While the UCP has managed to attract good candidates, translating the energy seen in nominations into support on election day remains a challenge. The intense nomination battles so close to an election can also create animosity among those engaged in those in-party battles.



Trade Minister Rajan Sawhney, left, decided not to run in Calgary–North East in the spring election, only to get appointed by UCP Leader Danielle Smith to run in another part of town. The move has raised suspicions among northeast Calgarians. (Jason Franson/The Canadian Press)

The governing party also faced a blow when Trade Minister Rajan Sawhney, the former UCP leadership candidate, decided not to run in Calgary–North East for "personal reasons," only to <u>get appointed</u> as the UCP nominee across town in Calgary–North West, when Environment Minister Sonya Savage stepped aside.

Many questions remain as to what happened, including whether Sawhney was pushed out by party insiders. These rifts and divisions can play out negatively for the UCP.

New Democrats' potential

The NDP has been building around their only northeast MLA, Irfan Sabir in Calgary–Bhullar–McCall, for a while now. It's worth noting that even when the NDP was washed out in this quadrant in 2019, Sabir grew his support substantially compared to his first narrow win in 2015.

And northeast Calgarians are almost twice as likely to believe Rachel Notley's NDP will run an honest government than the UCP, the data shows.

Based on my observations and the numerous conversations I have had with residents across this quadrant, I expect Calgary–North East, Calgary–Bhullar–McCall and Calgary–Falconridge to go NDP. I note that the UCP won Calgary–Falconridge only by 96 votes, which made it the closest race in the province in 2019.

AUDIO The battle for Calgary

However, Calgary–Cross may become a battleground between the UCP's Mickey Amery and the NDP's Gurinder Gill.

The ground game matters in every election, but more so in this riding. Mickey Amery was recently appointed as the Children Services minister and his father represented the area from 1993 to 2015. Gurinder Gill is well-educated and well-known in the community and has run unsuccessfully twice for the federal NDP.

On election night, no one should be surprised if the result in Calgary-Cross determines the next government.

CBC News' random survey of 1,000 of Calgarians was conducted using a hybrid method between March 23 - April 6, by Edmonton-based Trend Research under the direction of Janet Brown Opinion Research. The sample is representative of regional, age and gender factors. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. For subsets, the margin of error is larger.

The survey used a hybrid methodology that involved contacting survey respondents by telephone and giving them the option of completing the survey at that time, at another more convenient time, or receiving an email link and completing the survey online. Trend Research contacted people using a random list of numbers, consisting of half landlines and half cellphone numbers. Telephone numbers were dialed up to five times at five different times of day before another telephone number was added to the sample.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rishi Nagar

Rishi Nagar is a member of the Calgary Anti-Racism Action Committee, a senator at the University of Calgary, and the news director and host at Red FM, a South Asian, multicultural radio station. He lives in Chestermere, east of Calgary.

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Explaining Calgary's orange crush on the NDP











What (or who) is motivating voters? Our in-depth statistical analysis reveals factors



Brooks DeCillia · CBC News ·

Posted: Apr 17, 2023 7:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: 5 hours ago



In-depth statistical analysis reveals factors that influence why some Calgarians are flirting with voting for the NDP of Rachel Notley, left, while others are remaining loyal to Danielle Smith's UCP. (Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)





EDITOR'S NOTE: CBC News commissioned this public opinion research in late March, roughly two months before Albertans vote in the next election on May 29.

As with all polls, this one is a snapshot in time.

This analysis is one in a series of articles to come out of this research.

For some, a single still image captured last week distilled the essence of Danielle Smith's United Conservative Party's two big political problems with battleground Calgary voters — health care and believability.

The photo was snapped by a Canadian Press photographer at a campaign-like event where the Alberta premier made her never "pay out of pocket" promise for medical services. The photo appears to show a health-care worker using salty sign language while the UCP leader spoke.

<u>Smith's critics</u> quickly claimed the Twitter-trending picture encapsulated Smith's credibility problem on health care.

"We know that her Achilles heel is that people don't necessarily believe what [Smith] says," said Lisa Young, a University of Calgary political science professor.

The finger, or thumbs up?

Concerns about the UCP's ability to provide honest government — coupled with lingering doubts over the party's commitment to universal health care — offer the best indicators of NDP support in Calgary, according to statistical analysis of data from a recent CBC News poll.

The <u>traditional horse-race poll</u> suggests the NDP could win as many as 18 of Calgary's 26 seats. A deeper dive into the data tells us more about what's specifically influencing voter behaviour in Alberta's largest city.

Using a statistical technique called a regression analysis, CBC News's vote choice modelling helps predict what demographics (e.g., age, income, gender), political ideals, issues and leadership impressions are driving Calgarians' political decision-making.

Imagine a funnel of sorts where all the polling data flows through a computer to mathematically sort out the most meaningful data.

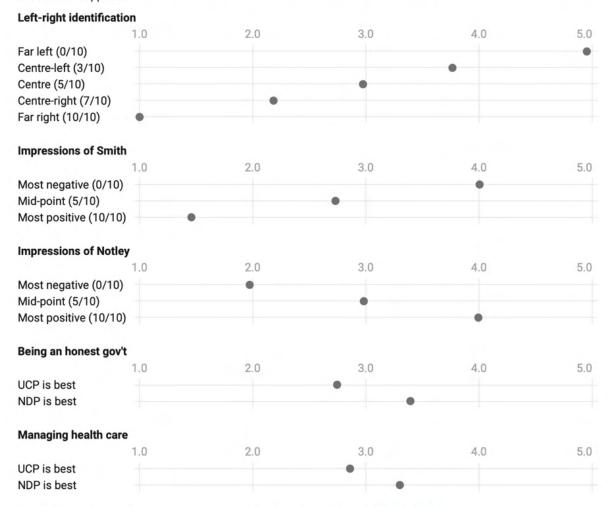
Here's what that indicates: the best predictors of why a Calgarian might lean toward an NDP vote are their ideology, what they think about health care, about honest government and how dazzled or turned off they are by the main party leaders.

What drives vote intentions in Calgary?

These graphs show results from a statistical model predicting vote intention.

We classified voters based on their responses to two questions: for which party they would vote, and how firm their vote is. Voters could be firm UCP supporters (coded as "1" in the graphs); soft UCP supporters (2); supporters of minority parties or the undecided (3); soft NDP supporters (4); or firm NDP supporters (5).

The entries in the graphs show the average prediction for a subgroup of voters (denoted by the row), holding all other variables in the model constant. For example, the predicted vote intention for someone who rates themselves at a 3/10 on the political spectrum is--on average and all else being equal--about 3.8, which would classify them as a "soft NDP supporter."



Source: Trend Research / Janet Brown Opinion Research · Created with Datawrapper

Calgarians' concern about health care <u>has risen</u> in recent months, up from 39 per cent in October 2022 and 25 per cent in March 2020.

While most people in the province's biggest city think the NDP are best positioned to run the province's health-care system, the UCP shows no signs of ceding the battle over this issue in the larger pre-election air war.

UCP's health-care hurdle

No doubt, the UCP's public health "guarantee" announcement in Sherwood Park on Tuesday was designed to beat back months of the New Democrat's pounding of Smith for her openness in 2021 to people paying for health services, including checkups with family doctors.

There's also no ambiguity about how important health care remains for Calgary voters.

Nearly half (45 per cent) of people in the city, according to the poll, picked health care as one of their top concerns. Only slightly more than one-third (35 per cent) believe the UCP will do a better job than the NDP handling a provincial health system plagued in recent years by long queues for surgeries and a shortage of doctors and nurses.



A health-care worker appears to give a digital salute as Alberta Premier Danielle Smith makes a pre-campaign promise on public health care in Sherwood Park, Alta., on April 11. (Jason Franson/The Canadian Press)

Longtime political watchers think Smith faces a real credibility challenge surrounding health care just weeks out from a provincial election.

Smith's pledge that no Albertan "will ever have to pay" for health care was clearly aimed at reassuring voters who doubt her commitment to universal health care.

"The trick here is that they have to trust her. They have to believe that when she says that something is a guarantee, that it's actually a guarantee," said Young.

Smith's attempt to shore up her flank on health wasn't helped, said Young, by the self-described "political suicide" comments of her party's Livingstone-Macleod UCP candidate.

Chelsae Petrovic <u>came under fire</u> the day before Smith's health pledge for a remark on a February podcast that people who have heart attacks "haven't taken care" of themselves — they're overweight or have diabetes — and needed to take greater personal responsibility.

LISTEN | CBC's Brooks DeCillia talks to pollster Janet Brown about the science behind the poll:



Pollster Janet Brown explains the science behind polls -- why they work, how to read them critically.

While Petrovic later conceded she could have "chosen better language," the controversy contaminated the UCP leader's attempt to unequivocally clear up her commitment to pay Albertans' hospital bills in full.

"She can say the things that voters want to hear, but they don't necessarily believe her," Young said. "I think that's going to be a real obstacle for her to overcome when we look at these Calgary voters."

Looking for honest government

Not only do Calgarians want a well run health-care system, but they also are looking for an honest government.

As the poll suggests, four in 10 Calgary voters say the NDP is best able to deliver on that measure. Only 28 per cent of Calgarians think the ruling United Conservative Party would be more honest in government.



Premier Danielle Smith recently pledged that no Albertan 'will ever have to pay' for health care. (Samuel Martin/CBC)

Last week, Alberta's ethics commissioner <u>launched an investigation</u> into whether Smith interfered with the administration of justice tied to COVID-19 prosecutions.

Two days earlier, Smith offered a <u>new explanation</u> for why she talked on the phone with a controversial Calgary street pastor about his pending criminal case for allegedly breaking pandemic public health restrictions.

Legal scholars and political scientists have been critical of the call.

Concerns about Smith's performance in dealing with such issues could affect people's impression of her.

"I think that there's potentially a spillover effect from that to these bread-and-butter campaign issues where she's trying to meet voters where they are, but they don't necessarily believe what she has to say," said Young.

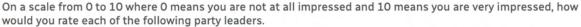
Half of Calgary voters, in fact, have a low impression of Smith.

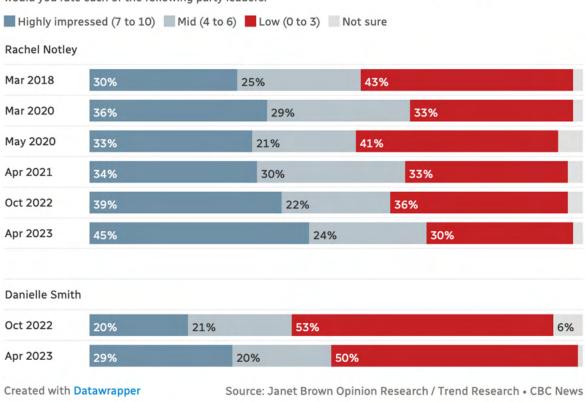
Leadership

In contrast to Smith, <u>only about one-third (30 per cent)</u> of Calgarians score NDP leader Rachel Notley low. The former, single-term premier's favourability in the province's largest city has, in fact, grown from 30 per cent when she held Alberta's top job last decade to 45 per cent in this spring's poll.

Notably, the percentage of Calgarians who are highly impressed with Smith is also up, from 20 per cent last fall to 29 per cent.

Impressions of Leaders





"It's really clear that NDP supporters have a stronger affinity with Rachel Notley than UCP supporters have with Danielle Smith," Brown said.

"Rachel Notley is a fundamental reason why people are choosing to vote for the NDP, but UCP supporters are almost ignoring the leadership issue."

Political watchers expect the NDP to make it an issue, and keep hammering away at her on trustworthiness and health care in coming weeks.



Honesty and health care are becoming two of NDP Leader Rachel Notley's strongest issues, and her party is trying to drive home the message not to trust her UCP rival on either. (Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)

"It can potentially help them to prevent Smith from making gains on an issue like health care because they can throw into question whether her commitment is real," said Young.

And the May campaign could really make a difference — in the margins, at least.

Campaigns matter (but not always)

The 2019 provincial election campaign, arguably, didn't matter. Some <u>U.S. research</u>, in fact, bleakly suggests that all the annoying campaign phone calls, door-knocking and advertising has no effect on who voters choose on election day.

Notably, a <u>CBC News poll</u> a year before the 2019 spring election that propelled Jason Kenney to the premier's chair predicted the UCP would crush Rachel Notley's NDP government. The nascent party cruised to victory on election day, capturing 55 per cent of the popular vote.

Structurally, the NDP faced tough re-election possibilities in 2019 as <u>decades of</u> political science research suggests Albertans blamed the incumbent government for the province's sluggish economy.

Calgarians believed Kenney's promise to get Alberta's economy cooking with oil and gas again, electing 23 UCP MLAs in the city.

Twenty-two points separated the UCP from the NDP on election day in 2019.

This year's race is tight. Only five points separate the UCP and NDP in Brown's poll, which she projects could give the NDP 18 of 26 city seats.

But a five-point lead makes for one tight race.

So the coming campaign is likely to see some tough battles, with the winner capturing their seat by only a few percentage points.

"There's not a lot of votes up for grabs right now," said Brown.

"But when an election's this close, you don't need too many votes. Every vote counts."

CBC News's random survey of 1,000 of Calgarians was conducted using a hybrid method between March 23 and April 6 by Edmonton-based Trend Research under the direction of Janet Brown Opinion Research. The sample is representative of regional, age and gender factors. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. For subsets, the margin of error is larger.

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Brooks DeCillia

Brooks DeCillia spent 20 years reporting and producing news at CBC. These days, he's an assistant professor with Mount Royal University's School of Communication Studies.

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Reaction to the Poll



Dr. Paul Theriault BSc, ND, VNMI @DrPaulND · Apr 11 These are some fascinating vote projections.



This is such a rare luxury in terms of media polling: n = 1000 live interviewer regional deep dive.

Kudos to CBC for going the extra mile to give their readers this type of analysis and understanding of the dynamics at play.

cBC News 📀 @CBCNews · Apr 11

Danielle Smith's United Conservative Party could lose most seats in Calgary but still win the Alberta election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by CBC News. cbc.ca/news/canada/ca...



Éric Grenier 🤣 @EricGrenierTW · Apr 11 A deep-dive Calgary poll? Yes please!





Alberta NDP leads in Calgary and 3 of 4 city quadrants: new poll | CB... Danielle Smith's UCP could lose most seats in Calgary but still win election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by ...

Alberta NDP leads in Calgary and 3 of 4 city quadrants: new poll | CB... Danielle Smith's UCP could lose most seats in Calgary but still win election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by ...

Sorting out the tensions between the two parties and their respective

Ken Boessenkool @KenBoessenkool · Apr 13 Brilliant analysis by @planetjanetyyc and @markusoff.

leaders is what will ultimately determine this election. +

ANALYSIS | Calgary voters look off to their right and see Danielle Smi... Calgarians largely see themselves in the ideological centre, and the NDP's Rachel Notley is viewed as left of centre. The UCP leader, ...



On Janet Brown



EVAN SCRIMSHAW APR 11, 2023







Today marked the closest thing to a Canadian nerd polling holiday, with CBC Calgary's release of a Calgary-only poll from the best pollster in Alberta, Janet Brown. It's a treasure drove of data, and given the fact that we can write in pen the results of all but maybe 4 non-Calgary seats, it's a much more valuable exercise than a traditional provincial poll.



Janet Brown @planetjanetyyc · Apr 12 Thanks @ryanjespersen and @JLisaYoung for the positive shout out!

Real Talk Ryan Jespersen @RealTalkRJ · Apr 12 Thursday's #RealTalkRJ:

Prof. @JLisaYoung: new polling shows Danielle Smith may not need Calgary to win the election

@LiciaCorbella: is Smith's "healthcare guarantee" enough to sway undecideds? #abpoli

#MyJasper Memories presented by @tourismjasper

ryanjespersen.com



Dr. Paul Theriault BSc, ND, VNMI @DrPaulND · Apr 11 These are some fascinating vote projections.



Alberta NDP leads in Calgary and 3 of 4 city quadrants: new poll | CB... Danielle Smith's UCP could lose most seats in Calgary but still win election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by ...

A Calgary Poll!

And some thoughts about those comments about personal responsibility



LISA YOUNG APR 11, 2023



↑ Share ...

A few weeks ago, I was pleading on Twitter for a pollster to poll only in Calgary. And it turns out (no surprise) that Janet Brown was already on it. We have Calgary numbers!







Janet Brown @planetjanetyyc ⋅ Apr 11 Replying to @sdaparatus





Corey Hogan 🤣 @coreyhogan · Apr 11

The top line in Calgary will get people talking and the quadrant breakdowns are incredibly interesting.

Plus - it's a @planetjanetyyc poll! There's nobody I trust more to do political polling in Alberta.



cbc.ca

Alberta NDP leads in Calgary and 3 of 4 city quadrants: new poll | CB...
Danielle Smith's UCP could lose most seats in Calgary but still win election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by ...



Pandemic at the Disco @RKSAlberta · Apr 11

I've had the pleasure of doing workshops with Janet, and she's one of the best in the business. Methodical, apartisan (yes, I invented a word), highly rigorous in her data collection and her analysis. There's no one in Alberta polling (or politics tbh) that I trust more. #ableg



Our latest poll for CBC Calgary. We did a deep dive into Battleground Calgary. #ableg #abpolicbc.ca/news/canada/ca...



x- Dwayne Chomyn K.C. — 🧶 @Citizen004 · Apr 11

Replying to @bellis1994 and @ryanisback2023

It's a good poll. Bank on it. @planetjanetyyc is top drawer. But also look at her caution. It all has to be weighed.

"That means the NDP looks like they're in position to win the majority of seats in Calgary, but I'm not sure that 18 seats is enough to win province-wide."

Even if you combine 18 Calgary seats and a sweep of the 20 ridings in Edmonton — Notley's hometown stronghold — that still wouldn't be enough to give the NDP a 44-seat majority and victory. The opposition party would also have to make gains in Alberta's smaller communities or rural ridings, where the United Conservatives are strongest.



Philippe J. Fournier 🤣 @338Canada · Apr 11

New Alberta poll from Janet Brown show massive swing in Calgary:

"The NDP are particularly strong among **Calgary** women, leading the UCP by 51 per cent to 41... NDP is also leading the UCP by 10 points among senior citizens."





cbc.ca

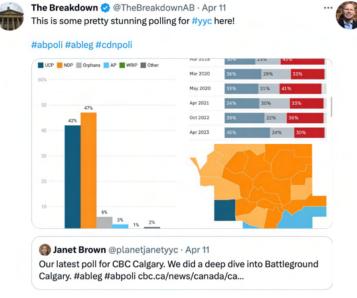
Alberta NDP leads in Calgary and 3 of 4 city quadrants: new poll | CB...
Danielle Smith's UCP could lose most seats in Calgary but still win election, according to a special Calgary-only poll commissioned by ...



Pandemic at the Disco @RKSAlberta · Apr 11

Replying to @AB_AgainstUCP @HeresyYyc and 2 others

You're 100% correct. When Janet did a workshop with us in the Alberta Party in 2019 her line was "I just want to provide good information and see politics be competitive and interesting" - and we knew she had done work along those lines with multiple parties.





Tom Parkin @TomPark1n · Apr 11



Morrey Ewing @MorreyEwing · Apr 12

Replying to @planetjanetyyc @ryanjespersen and @JLisaYoung

Great **poll**, great write-ups of the **poll** by **CBC** and Lisa, but totally misleading headline. How can a **poll** of City of **Calgary**-only (showing 8 - 18) demonstrate that DS may not need **Calgary** to win 44 seats overall.



NDP's Rachel Notley is viewed as left of centre. The UCP leader, ...

Jared Wesley @DrJaredWesley · Apr 13





Jake Blumes @JakeBlumes · Apr 13 Replying to @planetjanetyyc

Voting is good. Informed voting is better and these installments help make us more informed voters.



Calgary voters look off to their right and see Danielle Smith. That's a problem for UCP \mid CBC News



cbc.ca

ANALYSIS | Calgary voters look off to their right and see Danielle Smi... Calgarians largely see themselves in the ideological centre, and the NDP's Rachel Notley is viewed as left of centre. The UCP leader, ...

The most interesting thing in this CBC poll about the Alberta provincial

election is the CBC describing Alberta as a 'province full of mostly



Dr. MichelleTypoQueen @MichelletypoQ · Apr 13

Fake libertarians confusing centrists/centre right with centre "of the" right again.. @planetjanetyyc poll is solid.. again, Peter screaming the majority is brainwashed Imao.. get over yourself already



So, in summary... UCP voters can reasonably accurately place Rachel Notley as centre-left.

Meanwhile, NDP voters are delusional, having been lied to and misled by the NDP and media into thinking that the most socially liberal centre-right leader in Alberta's history is "far... twitter.com/DuaneBratt/sta... Show more



Éric Grenier 🔮 @EricGrenierTW · Apr 14

This was a really brilliant way to look at this. It's notable that Danielle Smith is further to the right than the UCP voter base in Calgary, but Rachel Notley seems to be perfectly aligned with her own NDP



ANALYSIS | Calgary voters look off to their right and see Danielle Smi...
Calgarians largely see themselves in the ideological centre, and the

Calgarians largely see themselves in the ideological centre, and the NDP's Rachel Notley is viewed as left of centre. The UCP leader, ...



Ziad 😷 Fazel 🥌 @ZiadFazel · Apr 15

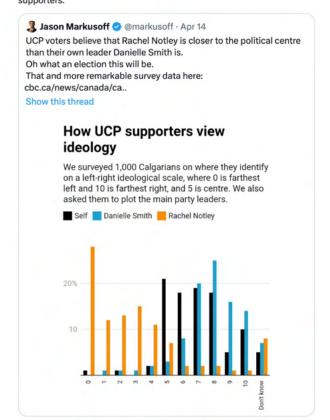
Lorrie Goldstein 🤣 @sunlorrie · Apr 13

Expert analysis @RishiKNagar UCP pushing away NE Calgary:

- lack of support for June 2020 hailstorm
- · Kenney using bad stereotypes to explain pandemic impact
- recognition of professionals trained overseas
- Rajan Sawney's "retirement" in NE; rebirth in NW
- swing ridings



On election night, no one should be surprised if the result in Calgary-Cross determines the next government...cbc.ca/news/canada/ca...

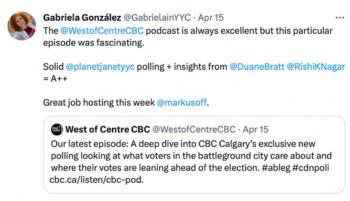




Ken Lima-Coelho @KennyVLimaC · Apr 15

I love listening to @RishiKNagar on @WestofCentreCBC. He understands his very large, vote-rich community in a deep and intimate way. Great ground-level analysis, along with strong insights from the incomparable @planetjanetyyc and @DuaneBratt. @markusoff held his own too.







Excellent read! Loving all the analysis of the recent #yyc poll from @planetjanetyyc. #ableg



On election night, no one should be surprised if the result in Calgary-Cross determines the next government...cbc.ca/news/canada/ca..







A Few Critics



B Valentine @DisperseControl · Apr 11

Replying to @planetjanetyyc and @CBCCalgary

Biased **CBC poll** of 1000 people lol. **Calgary**'s population is 1,640,000. That's 0.06% of the population. It's not enough to generate statistical confidence with a standard distribution.

Go back to school and take stats 101 you vile partisan shill.



MikeInOttawa @MikeInOttawa2 · Apr 11

Replying to @markusoff and @joeldryden

Cbc poll, so nope. Also only in Calgary, which doesn't matter



EvenMoreFedUpInCanada @FedUpInCanada · Apr 14 Boy, you HACKS sure got your marching orders. Bunch of hypocritical, biased, scumbags.



Alberta ● @AlbertaSask · Apr 14
Oh paalease Janet show some integrity..just a little!



Shawn York @YorkyNHLtips · Apr 15

Janet you're credibility is shor to hell. So you're work is no longer relable or relevant.



Ger Ham @GerHam9 · Apr 15

Why does CBC insist on not being a news outlet and only wants to be a propaganda machine for the NDP and Liberals?



Ginger 🤣 @PJ_Bateman · Apr 15 What.....an unbias pollster?...... 😂



JC Chaos @Chaos_JC_ · Apr 15

The government paid media Presstitutes and bought-off Pollster Organizations become more obvious every day.....and the people see your agenda. Here's hoping the next few administrations can look forward to the disintegration of your organizations. #abpoli #abpolitics

