

**Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Strategic Planning and Budget Committee
Agenda**



Date: Wednesday, November 30, 2022
Closed Session: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Council Chambers

Should you require an alternative format please contact the Regional Clerk at Tel.: 519-575-4400,
TTY: 519-575-4605, or regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
2. Land Acknowledgement	
3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”	
4. Presentations	
4.1 Plan and Budget 2023: Building World Class	2
5. Reports	
5.1 COR-CFN-22-029, 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable	72
Recommended Motion:	
That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo take the following action with respect to the 2023 Plan and Budget as set out in report COR-CFN-22-029 dated November 30, 2022:	
a. Approve the revised 2023 Plan and Budget review timetable as set out in Appendix A; and	
b. Forward a copy of Report COR-CFN-22-029 to the Waterloo Region Police Services Board and to the Area Municipalities in Waterloo Region.	
5.2 CAO-SPL-22-008, 2023 Plan and Budget Community Engagement Update	75
For Information	
6. Communications	
7. Other Business	
8. Adjourn	
Recommended Motion:	
That the meeting adjourn at x:xx x.m.	



Our Budget in 2023

Building World Class

Introduction and agenda

1. Welcome and introduction
2. 2023 Plan and Budget process
3. What we are hearing from community
4. Draft Plan outline
5. Overview of 2023 budget

Introduction - Council's role

- Calibrate strategic and annual business plan objectives
- Establish service levels for the coming year
- Approve financial and staff resources to deliver services
- Establish the property tax levy for the year
- Set user rates, fees and charges

2023 Plan and Budget Process

Strategic Plan

Long term goals (outcomes) and objectives

4 year horizon (overlaps with Council terms)



Annual Business Plan (Plan and Budget)

Shorter term goals (outcomes), initiatives and service levels

12-18 month horizon

REGION OF WATERLOO Strategic Focus 2019-2023

Our vision (What we aspire to)
Waterloo region: an inclusive, thriving and sustainable region of connected rural and urban communities with global reach, fostering opportunities for current and future generations.

Our mission
We serve with caring and responsible public service.

We engage by listening and responding to community needs.

We inspire by conducting ourselves with openness to enhance public trust and confidence.

Our values (How we work)
Service: Satisfy and build confidence
Integrity: Build trust
Respect: Value and recognize
Innovation: Make ideas happen
Collaboration: Involve and engage others

To view the detailed 2019-2022 Strategic Plan or request alternate formats, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca

Thriving economy

1. Create an enterprise business-supportive community to help attract, retain and grow employers, talent and investments in Waterloo Region.
2. Ensure an adequate and strategic supply of employment lands in the Region.
3. Support the arts, culture and heritage sectors to enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to Waterloo Region.
4. Grow passenger air service and aviation-related activities at the Region of Waterloo International Airport.

Sustainable transportation

1. Enhance the transit system to be more vibrant and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public.
2. Improve and/or create bike routes and rail transportation services to and from Waterloo Region.
3. Increase participation in active forms of transportation (biking and walking).
4. Improve road safety for all users - drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, horses and e-bikes.

Environment and climate action

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Improve resilience to climate change and/or severe weather.
3. Direct more waste away from the landfill, improve recycling and better manage organic waste.
4. Protect our water resources (drinking water and wastewater treatment).
5. Promote the efficient use of urban land, protect and enhance agricultural and natural areas.

Healthy, safe and inclusive communities

1. Improve child and youth well-being in Waterloo Region.
2. Make affordable housing more available to individuals and families.
3. Promote and enhance equity in policies, planning, services, and decision-making in order to positively impact community well-being.
4. Prevent and reduce problematic substance use and its consequences.
5. Enhance community safety and well-being in Waterloo Region.

Responsive and engaging public service

1. Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Region of Waterloo initiatives.
2. Provide excellent citizen-centred services that enhance service satisfaction.
3. Attract, support and retain skilled, engaged and diverse employees.
4. Ensure the Region provides value for money and long-term financial sustainability.

Our people

1. Let the Regional Values of Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation and Service guide our behaviour.
2. Foster opportunities for employees to be engaged, motivated and valued for their work.
3. Provide opportunities for learning and development that support all employees' abilities to build and grow their career at the Region.
4. Create an environment that supports and promotes an inclusive and diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve.
5. Build a healthy and safe work environment that supports individual wellness and creates the capacity for all employees to be and do their best.

Performance tracking, reporting & improvement

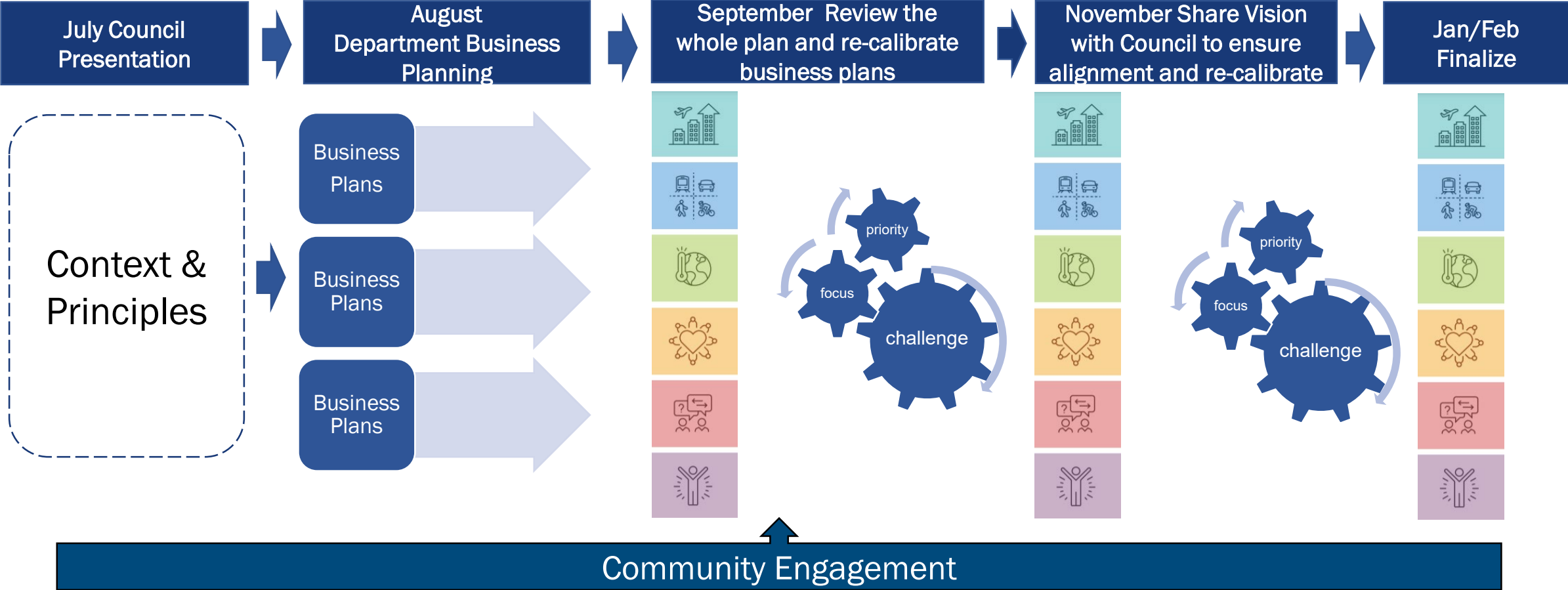
BUILDING more EQUITABLE FUTURES

2022 ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN summary

Annual Plan and Budget



Process and Timeline



Guiding Principles

- Strategic Plan guides everything we do
- Invest in critical elements of organizational success
 - Employee wellbeing (not burning staff out)
 - Innovations that lead to greater efficiency (AI, Tech to support service)
 - Organizational development to support staff change
 - Building capacity to maintain competitiveness
- Reviewing service levels to reflect changing needs and adjust service levels to accommodate fiscal pressures
- Reviewing provincial and federal responsibilities currently funded in whole or in part by the property tax levy
- Ensure adequate asset renewal funding to promote long term financial sustainability
- Avoid approaches that make future budgets more difficult

2023 Plan and Budget: Engagement Update



A Clear Vision

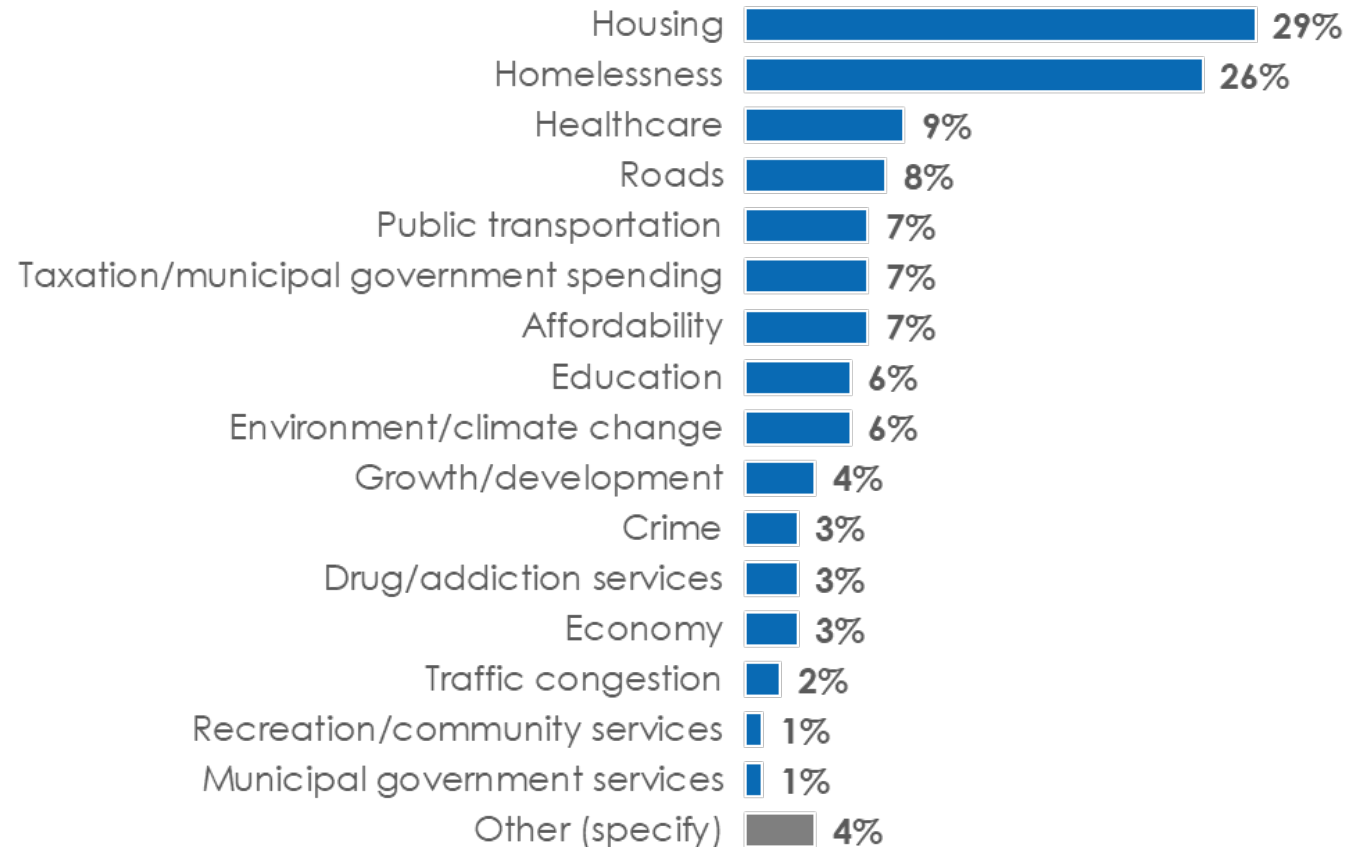


Community Engagement Approach

- Community engagement is critical to ensure the Region's annual plan and budget reflect changing community need and aspiration.
- This year's approach includes a community wide, statistically robust telephone survey. An Engage WR page offers a community wide online survey, and the public can submit a question or request a community conversation. Finally, there will be council public input sessions.
- Engagement will also build on relationships and data that is gathered ongoing through a number ways such as an ongoing focus on:
 - Building relationships and trust with Indigenous and equity seeking groups through the Region's Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team.
 - Ensuring the voice of youth are centered in conversation.
 - Enabling immigrants and newcomers to reach their full potential.
 - Utilizing feedback gained through other community consultations surrounding the Regional Official Plan, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Digital Transformation Strategy and other plans.

Resident Survey - Telephone

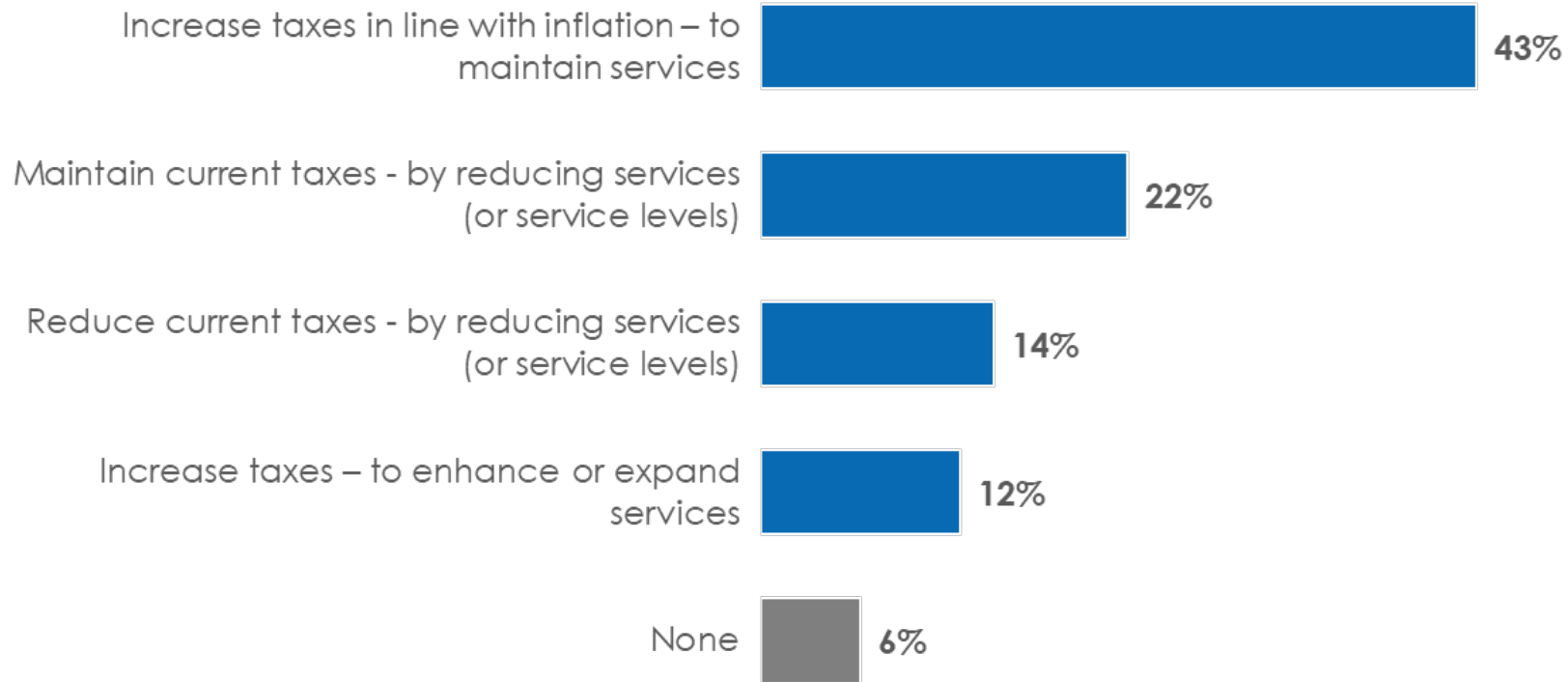
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN COMMUNITY



- Over the month of October, 1,000 households were reached.
- Statistically robust, randomized approach.

Resident Survey - Telephone

PREFERRED PATHS REGARDING TAXATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY LEVELS



VALUE FOR TAX DOLLARS

81% felt they received fairly good or very good value for their tax dollars.

Resident Survey - Online

- Online survey through EngageWR opened mid-November to public and closes end of year.
- Promoted through web/ social media, networks, e-newsletters.
- As of November 23rd, there are 783 responses.
- To date, responses are consistent with the telephone survey.

Creating a Community Where Everyone Has the Opportunity to Thrive

Office of Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We are shifting how the Region listens and responds to community concerns and systemic issues

Work is in part based on specific community Calls to Action



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action



Council-approved Anti-Racism Working Group Recommendations



Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan

Relationship and Building Trust to Create a Stronger Community

Changing the way we work with community

- Building strong relationships
- Elevating community voices
 - Upstream Fund
 - Equity Community Capacity Building Fund
- Collaboration
 - Reconciliation Action Partnership

Immigration is Changing Waterloo Region

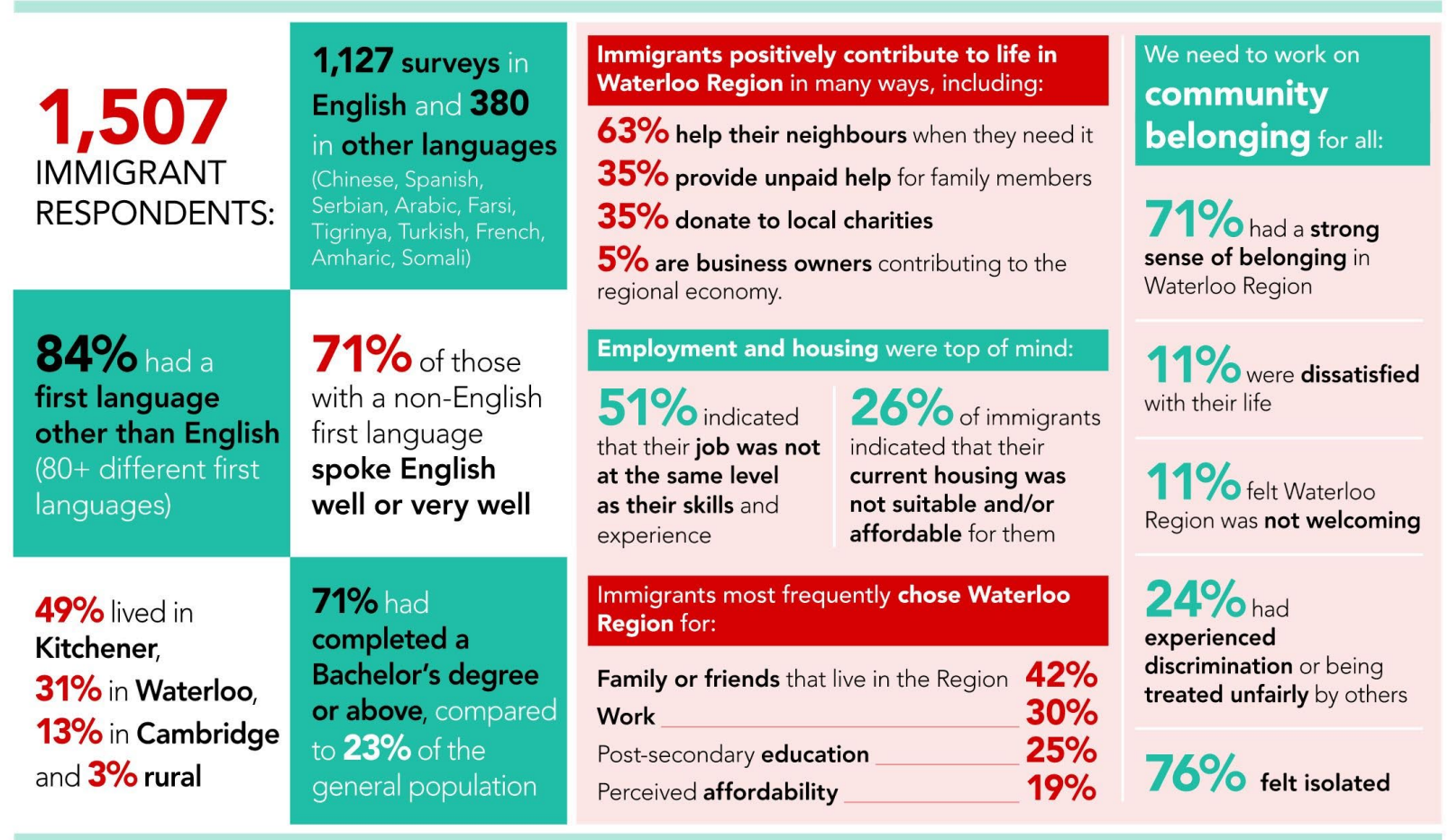
- Steady immigration growth in Canada & Waterloo Region for 10 years
- **Census 2021**
- Now rank 6 / 41 large urban communities for highest proportion of immigrants
- Now 147,190 immigrants (25.4%) in the regional population
- 27,840 recent immigrants (nearly double Census 2016); 62.5% from Asia
- Recent immigrants were 53.5% overall population growth
- A refugee community: Higher proportion than most of Canada
- 22,270 temporary residents (real number much higher)

Immigration Partnership and Immigrant Engagement

- Since 2009, engaged immigrants and those helping create conditions for them to reach their full potential through the Immigration Partnership to develop strategies to build community through immigration
- Direct immigrant involvement and leadership in the Immigration Partnership (55% of partners and staff are immigrants)
- Biannual survey of over 1500 immigrants; annual survey of partners
- Significant engagement of immigrants, employers and others in community events

What are immigrants telling us: By the numbers

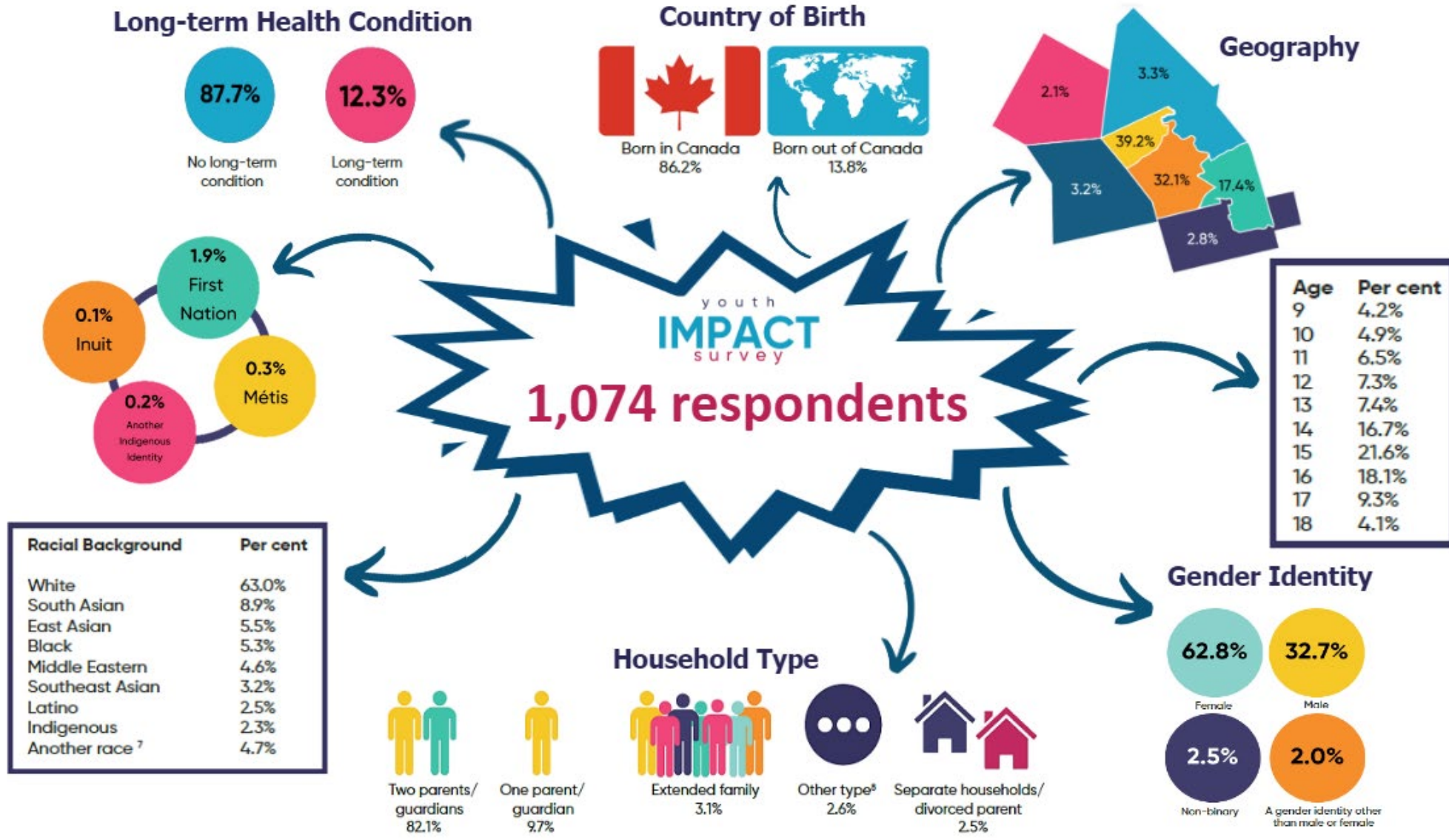
This infographic outlines findings from the 2021 Immigrant Survey, which gathered input from 1507 immigrant respondents living in Waterloo Region, during the third wave of pandemic.



Building Community Through Immigration



Youth Impact Survey



What does the data say?

- 64% of respondents said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their community.
- 41.5% said they had experienced discrimination in the past year.
- 26.3% described their mental health as very good or excellent.
- 55.3% felt like they were a valued member of the community.



Data in Action



- 63 actions for meaningful change
- Actions organized by domain (e.g., Belonging)
- Info provided on youth can do to take action, as well as what partners can do

Outline of the draft 2023 Plan

Thriving Economy



Strategic Objectives

- Create a competitive business-supportive community that attracts, retains and grows employers, talent, and investments in the Waterloo Region
- Ensure an adequate and strategic supply of employment lands in the Region
- Supporting the arts, culture and heritage sectors to enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to the Region
- Grow passenger air service and aviation related activities at the Region of Waterloo International Airport

Key Considerations

- Post-pandemic economy: under pressure, evolving rapidly and has impacted us locally
- Working collaboratively with partners, business, academia and other levels of government
- Structural shifts in economy – risks and opportunities
- Waterloo Region enjoys significant assets to leverage moving forward

Strategic Initiatives

- Regional economic development strategy update
- Develop a new land portfolio and site readiness process to expedite lands ready for affordable housing plan.
- Complete planning for shovel-ready lands: mega site project, aerospace project, eastside lands, IO lands
- International Airport Master Plan and sustainable strategy
- Regional Official Plan Review - Stage 2



Environment and Climate Change



Strategic Objectives

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve resiliency to climate change and severe weather
- Direct more waste away from landfill, improve recycling and better manage organic waste
- Protect our water resources (drinking water and wastewater treatment)
- Promote the efficient use of urban land, and protect and enhance agricultural and natural areas



Key Considerations

- Climate crisis is accelerating
- Reaching local greenhouse gas emissions will take far more radical and focused action
- Pace of growth will impact infrastructure needs
- Need to leverage new technology in our systems: water system, methane capture, electrified mass transit and micro-mobility
- Whole community approach is needed
- Learning from Indigenous history to help manage and preserve natural resources

Strategic Initiatives

- Water supply strategy
- Robust IT systems for Water and Wastewater, including modernizing the SCADA system
- Blue box transition
- Develop carbon budget and corporate climate action plan
- Electric bus pilot
- Climate Adaptation Master Plan
- Implement TransformWR, a ten year plan to transition the Region from fossil fuels to clean energy



Healthy, Safe & Inclusive Communities



Strategic Objectives

- Improve child and youth wellbeing
- Make affordable housing more available to individuals and families
- Promote and enhance equity in policies, planning, services and decision-making in order to positively impact community wellbeing
- Prevent and reduce problematic substance abuse and its consequences
- Enhance Community safety and wellbeing in Waterloo Region



Key Considerations

- Affordability and cost of living: life is hard for residents right now and they need support
- Housing and homelessness crisis and the need for innovative solutions
- Continuing secondary impacts of the pandemic and need to catch up in key areas
- Community growth and resiliency of larger health service system
- Shifting mandate of municipalities and their partners
- Need to continue investments in upstream approaches and invest today for tomorrow

Strategic Initiatives

- Advance Truth and Reconciliation
- Growth strategy for early years and childcare system: Canada-wide Early Learning Plan
- Building Better Futures and Ending Homelessness Plan
- Expansion of Paramedic Services to match present and upcoming growth
- Address Public Health service gaps resulting from the pandemic, such as childhood immunizations
- Enhance equity across all Regional services through investment, adapting program models and new offerings
- Implementing the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Ongoing advances through the Road Safety Plan and Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE)





Sustainable Transportation

Strategic Objectives

- Enhance the transit system to increase ridership and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public.
- Improve and better integrate roads and rail transportation services to and from Waterloo Region
- Increase participation in active forms of transportation (cycling and walking)
- Improve road safety for all users – drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, horse and buggies



Key Considerations

- 15-minute neighbourhoods and aligning transit with housing development
- GRT not fully restored from pre-pandemic levels
- Fare revenue near pre-pandemic levels - \$40m/yr.
- Cost effective asset management strategies e.g. maintaining road asset conditions
- Investment in active transportation



Strategic Initiatives

- GRT Recovery and Business Plan
- Enhance active transportation facilities
- King Victoria Transit Hub project delivery and funding strategy
- New integrated mobility plan
- Light rail to Cambridge: Stage 2 ION, closing out the planning phase and focusing on funding strategy





Responsive and Engaging



Strategic Objectives

- Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Region of Waterloo Initiatives
- Provide excellent citizen centered services that enhance service satisfaction
- Attract, support and retain skilled, engaged and diverse employees
- Ensure the Region provides value for money and long term financial sustainability

Key Considerations

- Digital technology offers new solutions for better resident experiences
- Cyber Security ever more important for municipalities
- Changing employee expectations for hybrid – impacts our need for physical space
- Cost of providing service escalating – need innovative, efficient approaches to service delivery
- Imperative to engage residents in new and equitable ways



Strategic Initiatives

- New Corporate Strategic Plan
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Implement the Corporate Accommodation Master Plan
- Data Security Measures and Policies
- Implement a Corporate Fraud Risk Management framework
- Co-design Region's Corporate Engagement Framework
- Modernization of Region's information management systems in alignment with Digital Transformation Strategy



Our People

Strategic Objectives

- Let the Regional values of Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation and Service guide our behavior
- Foster opportunities for employees to be engaged, recognized and valued for their work
- Provide opportunities for learning and development that support all employees abilities to build and grow their career at the Region
- Create an environment that supports and promotes an inclusive and diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve
- Build a healthy and safe work environment that supports individual wellness and creates capacity for all employees to be and do their best



Key Considerations

- Creating a world class employee experience for a multi-generational workforce
- Sector wide talent shortage that is impacting all areas
- Attract, support and retain skilled, engaged and diverse employees in a competitive and fiscally strained environment
- Investing in employee wellbeing to counter burn out
- DEIB is imperative to organizational success, innovation and diverse representation
- Innovative technology solutions to enable efficient ways of working and to enhance the employee experience



Strategic Initiatives

- Building a workplace of the future that ensures employees can be and do their best
- Continued investment to build a modern, inclusive, diverse and respectful workplace
- Creating comprehensive and competitive attraction and retention strategies
- Building a safe, healthy workplace environment where employees are well and thriving
- Innovation in digital solutions to improve the employee experience

Overview of 2023 Budget

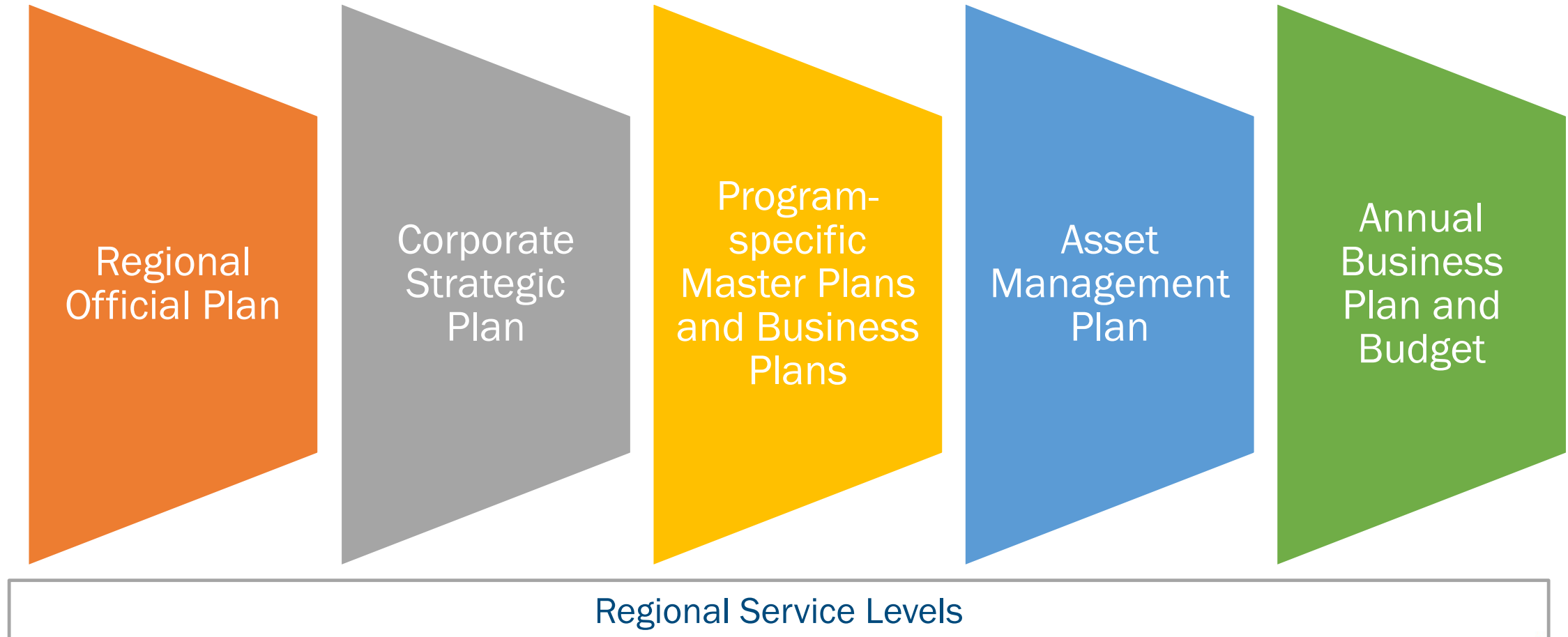
2023 Preliminary Budget Objectives

To introduce Council to the Region's 2023 Plan and Budget

To explain why this is a very different kind of budget

To provide an overview of the budget review process which we will follow in January and February

Plan and Budget Development



2023 Budget Context

Economic Indicators

- Population growth and demographics
- Employment growth
- Low unemployment rate
- Inflation and fuel prices
- Significant capital cost escalation and rising interest rates
- Supply chain challenges
- Ongoing impact of COVID-19

Provincial government funding and policy

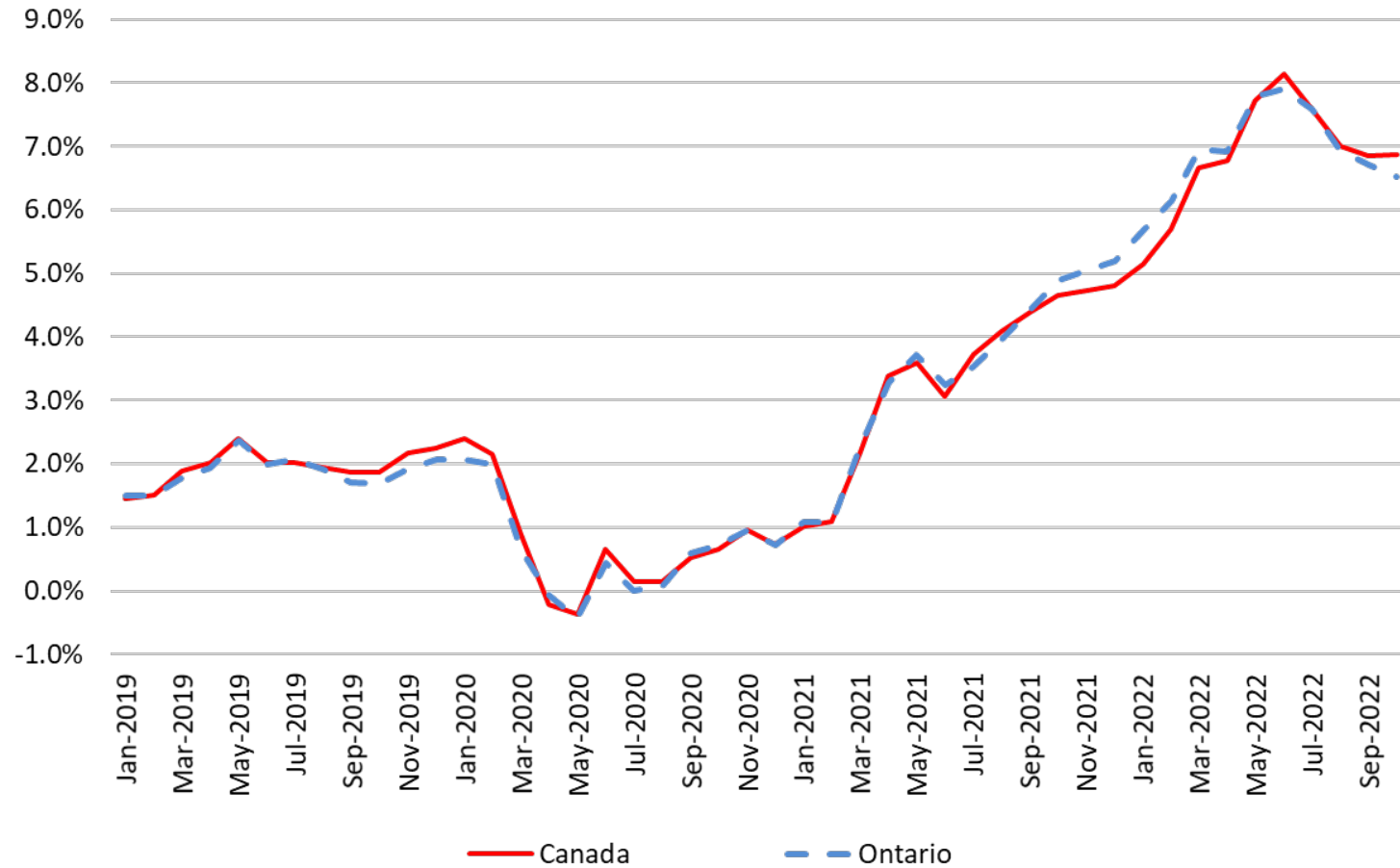
- Provincial election in June: larger PC majority
- Improved provincial fiscal position
- Expiring Social Service Relief (SSRF) funding
- Bill 23 impacts

Regional Service Considerations

- Rural/urban mix
- Wide range of community expectations
- Environment and climate change
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Indigenous reconciliation

Inflation

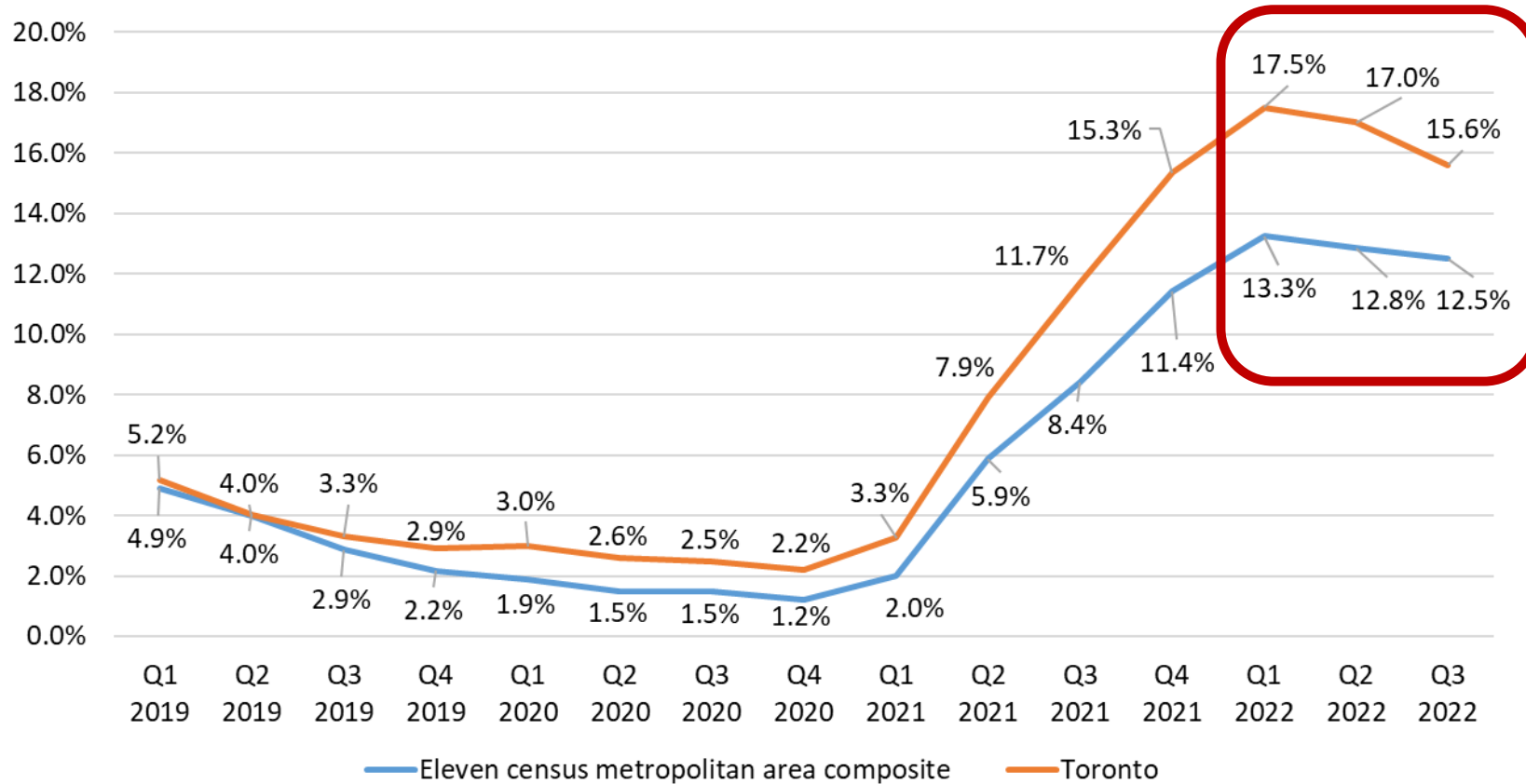
Consumer Price Index (2019 to YTD 2022)



October CPI: Canada 6.9%, Ontario 6.5%

Capital cost escalation

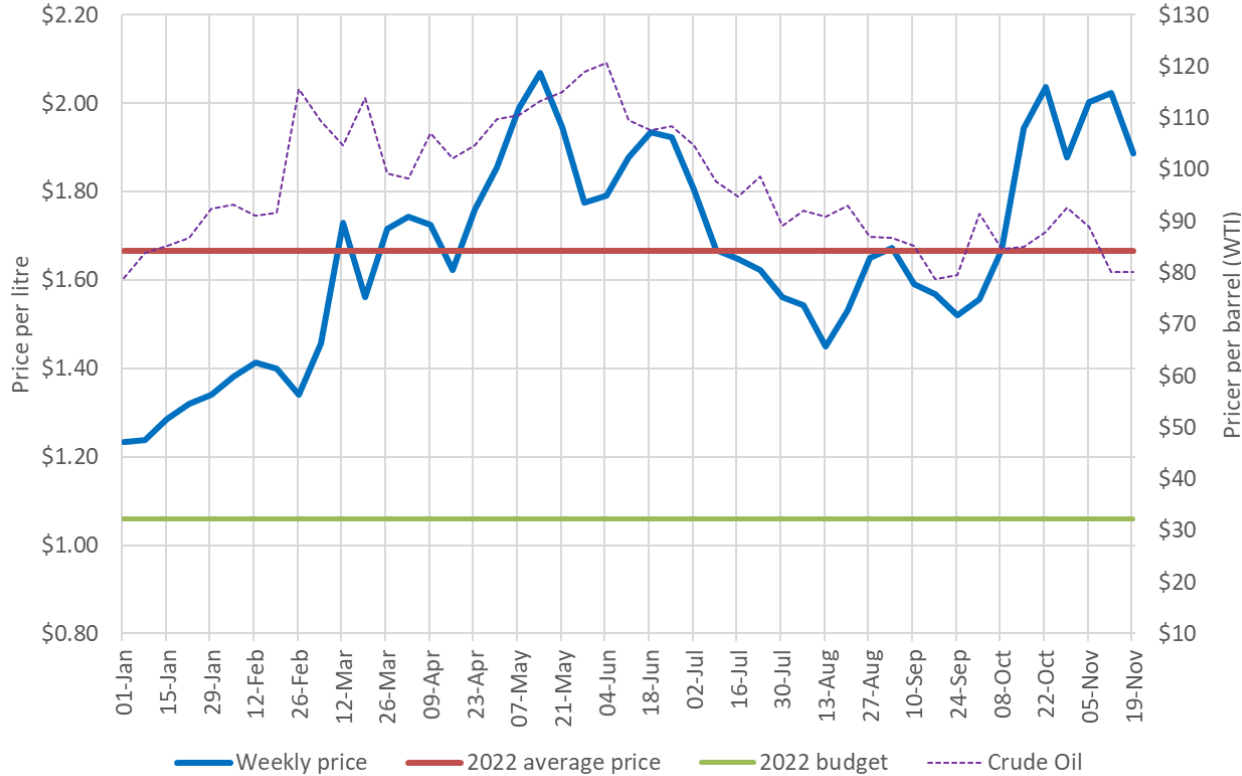
Building construction price index
 Non-residential buildings
 (percentage change to same quarter in previous year)



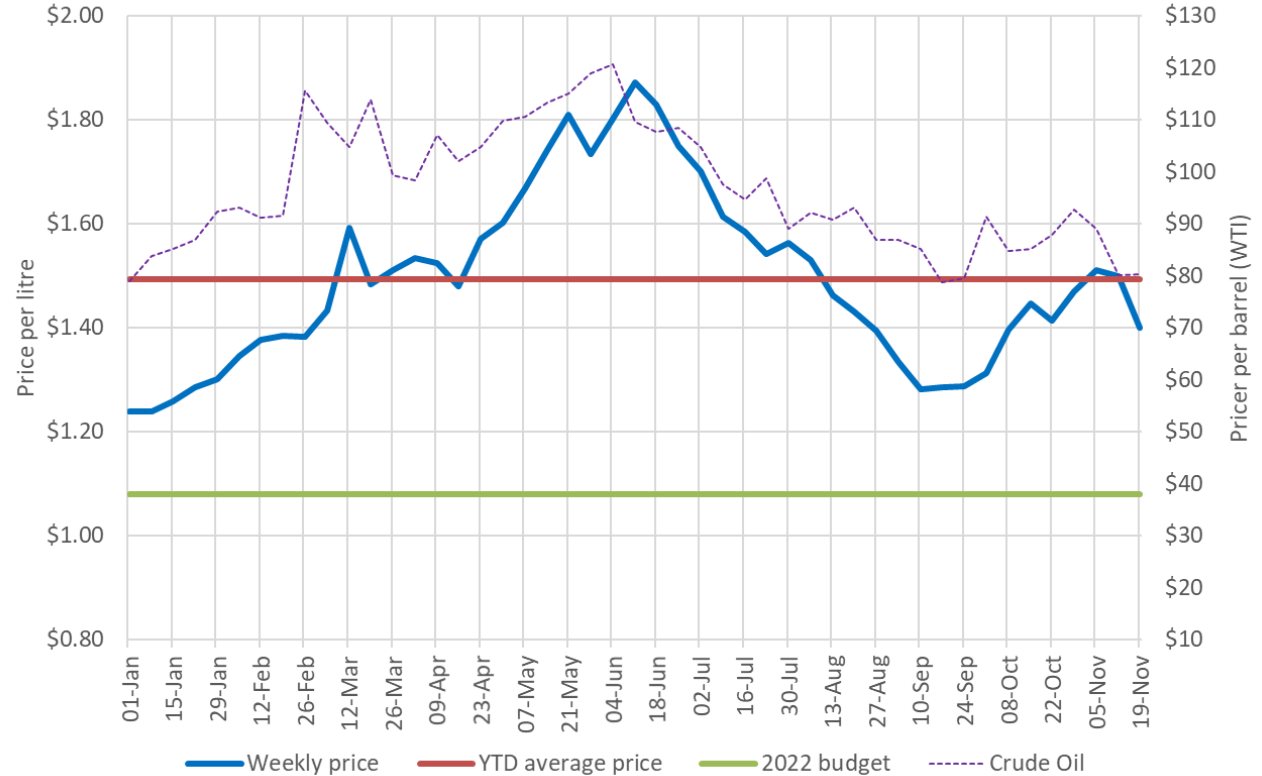
Construction Price Index: 15.6% (Toronto, Q3 2022 over Q3 2021)

Fuel Prices

Diesel 2022 YTD



Gasoline 2022 YTD



	Diesel	Gasoline
Current Price	\$1.89/L	\$1.40/L
2022 Average Price	\$1.66/L	\$1.49/L
2022 Budget	\$1.06/L	\$1.08/L

Government of Canada 10 Year Bond Yield

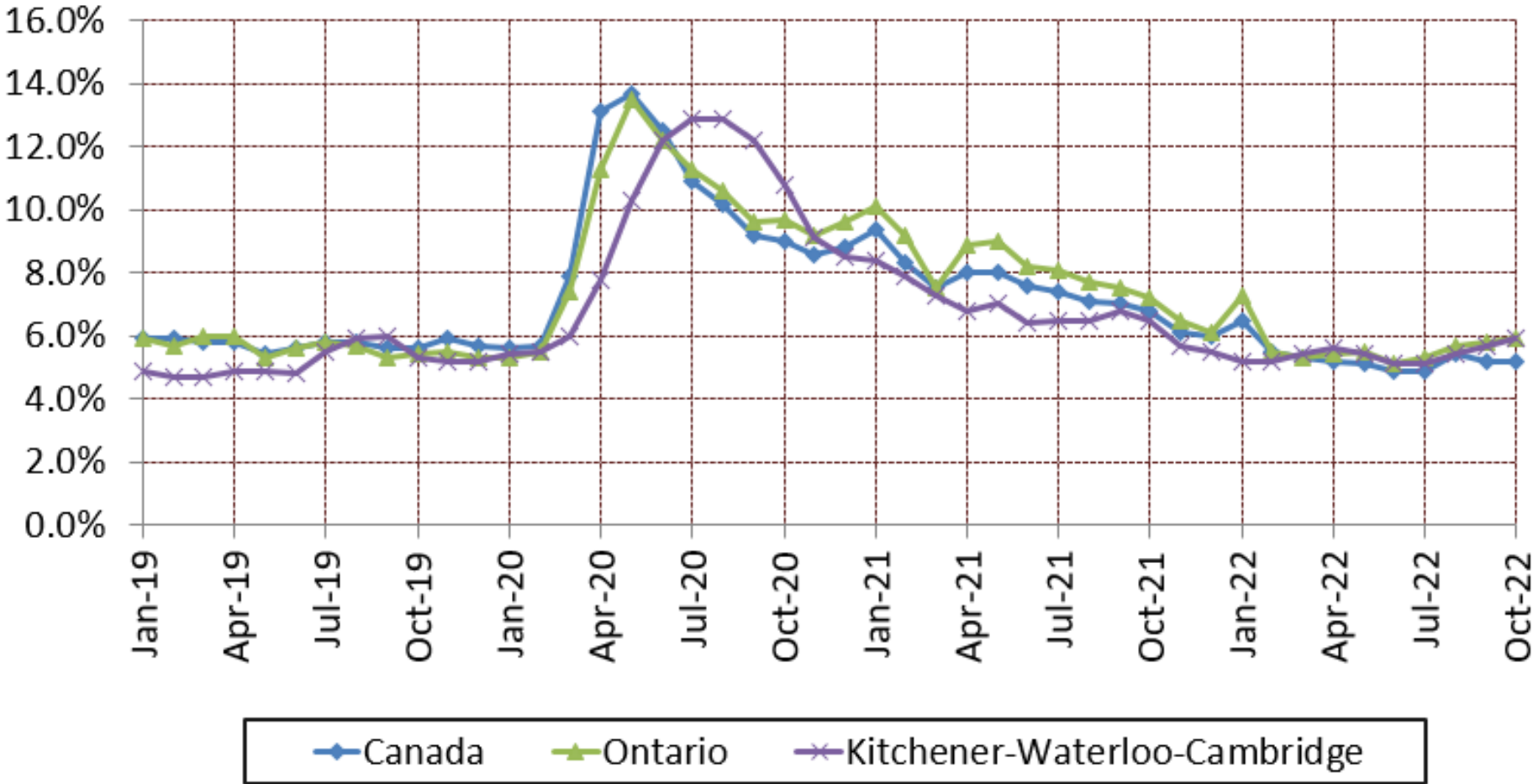


Current Yield = 3.1%
as of November 21

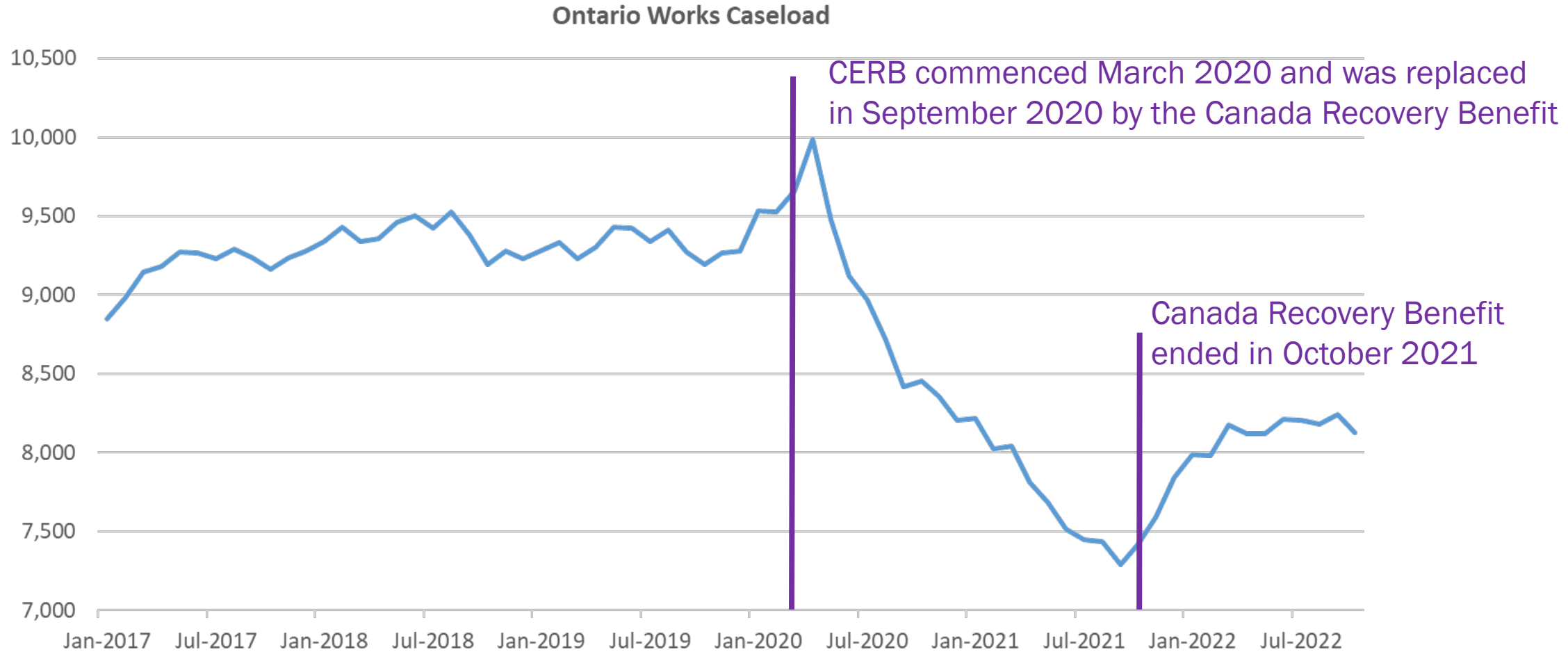
Government of Canada bond yields, upon which the Region's cost of borrowing is predicated, reached their highest level in over 10 years in 2022.



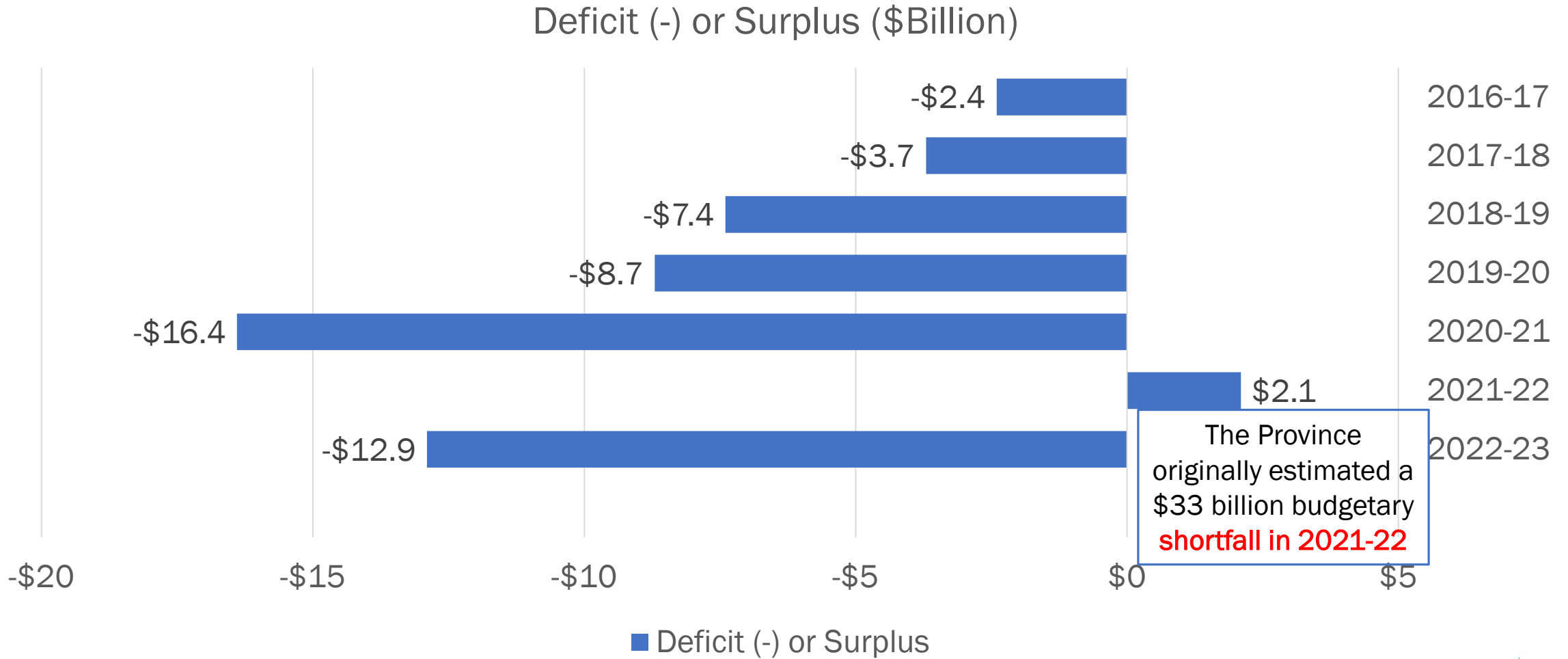
Monthly Unemployment Rate



Ontario Works – 2017-2022 Monthly Caseload



Ontario Government: deficits → surplus → deficit

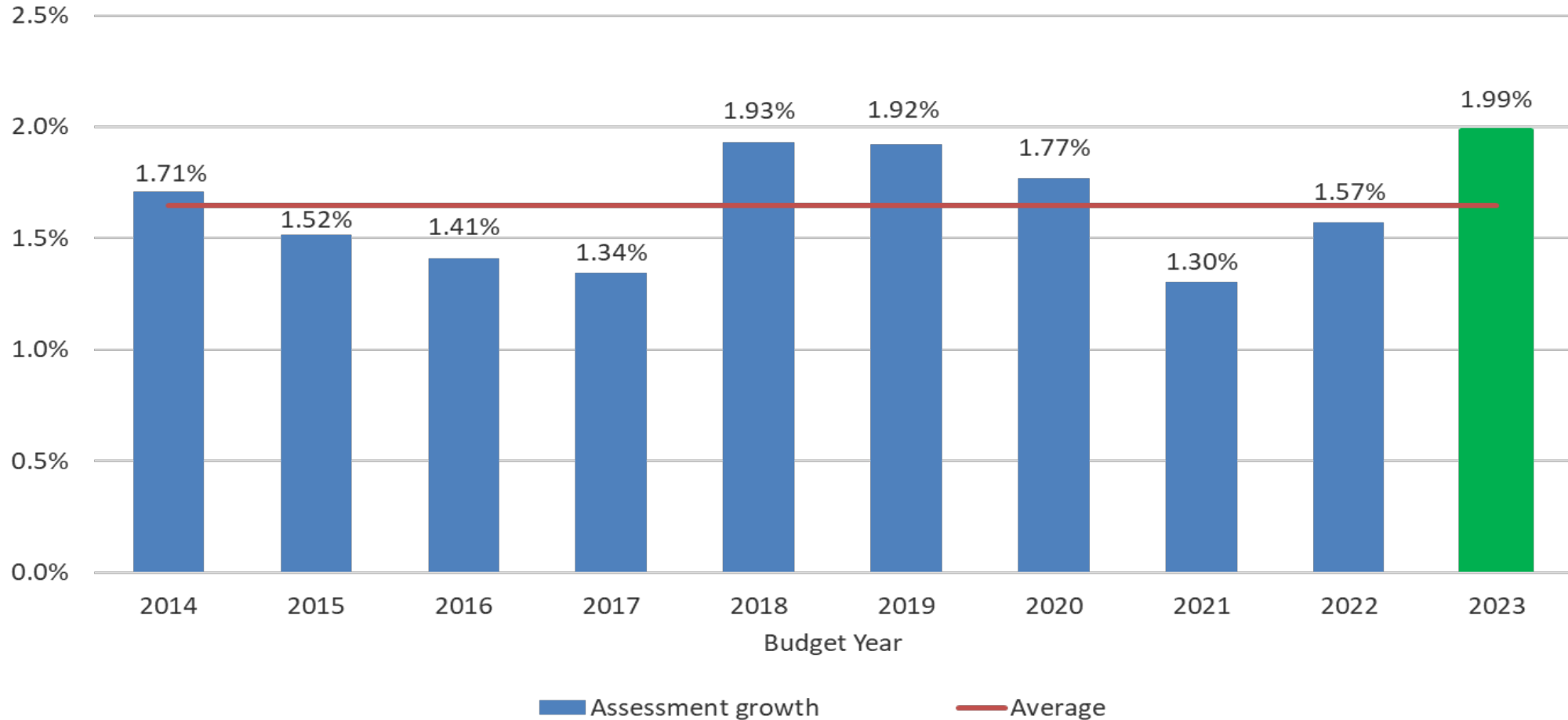


Regional Development Charge Revenue (\$M)

	2019	2020	2021	2021 YTD (Sept)	2022 YTD (Sept)
RDC Collections	\$78.5	\$74.4	\$70.4	\$53.1	\$78.6
Regionally Funded RDC Exemptions, Discounts, Grants	10.5	11.2	16.0,	9.8	10.8
Total RDC Revenue*	\$ 89.0	\$85.6	\$86.4	\$62.9	\$89.4

* Does not include deferred RDC collections receivable for qualifying rental/institutional development which totalled \$26.8 million at December 31, 2021.

Regional Assessment Growth



2023 Budget – Key messages



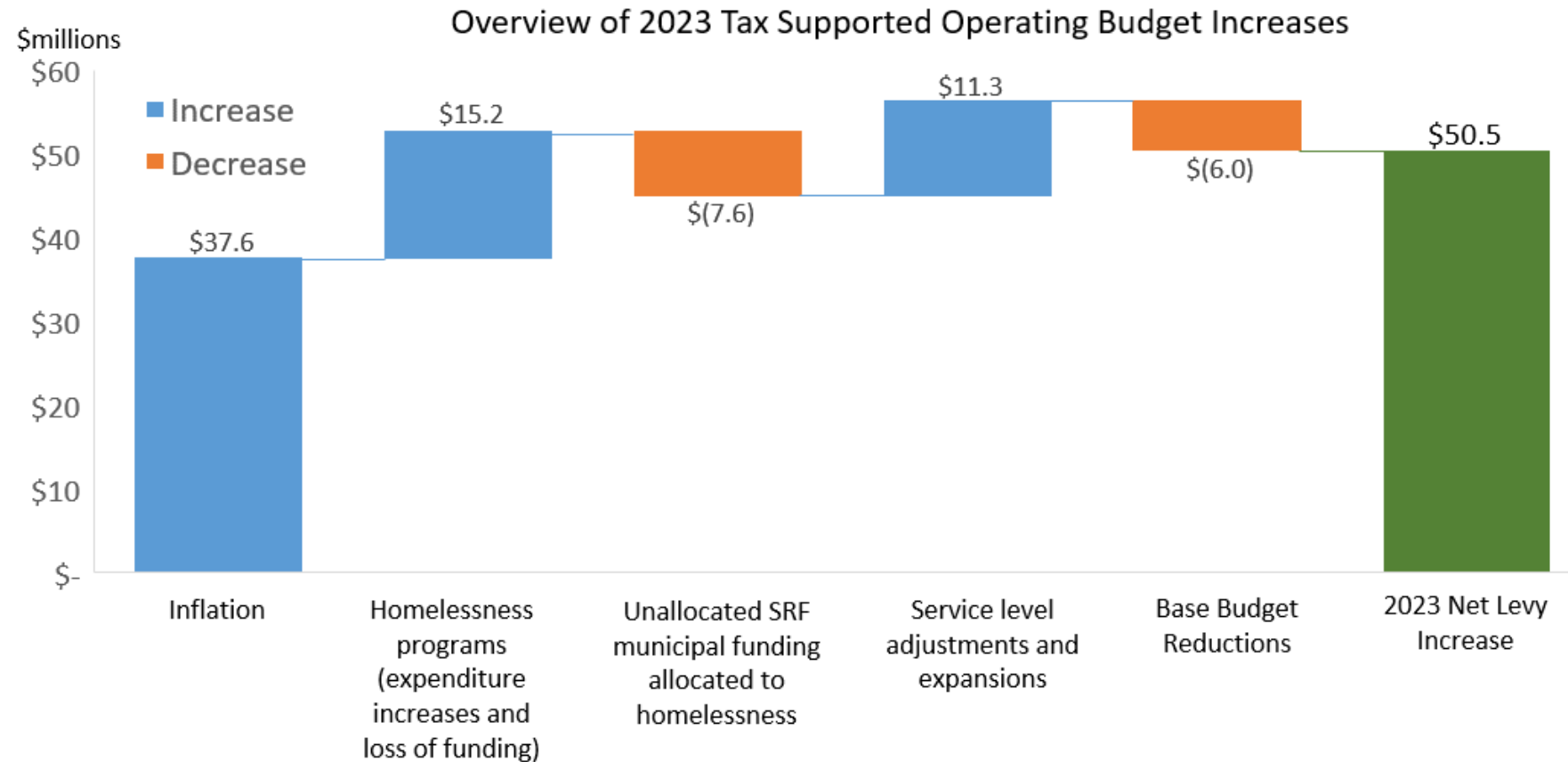
This is a very different kind of budget

Economic conditions are placing massive pressure on regional service costs

The gap between public expectations and the Region's capacity to fund the expected government services has reached critical levels

Preliminary 2023 tax-supported operating position

- So far staff have found \$6.0M in savings or the equivalent of an 1.4% levy reduction
- To continue service delivery, manage inflation, manage growth in demand, manage provincial funding reductions, would require **an additional \$147/average household annually**



Inflation and cost escalation

Inflation

- Inflation is impacting 2022 costs and the 2023 budget in a manner not seen for decades
- Service contracts, collective agreements, materials and supplies, and the capital program are all impacted

Capital program implications

- Projects are costing more, and
- More capital projects are being added to the capital program, in some cases to achieve climate action goals, and
- And the cost of borrowing for these projects is at its highest point in over 12 years

Inflation and cost escalation

Item	Inflation/cost escalation increase
Chemicals for water treatment	11%-98%
Traffic cable wire	36%
Centre line painting contract	18%
Janitorial supplies	7%-59%
Replacement vehicles, including ambulances & equipment	9%-33%

Three categories of Service Expansion



Annualization of Service Enhancements in the 2022 Budget

Service Enhancements Approved by Council Subsequent to 2022 Budget Approval

New service expansion in the 2023 budget

Service Expansion in the 2022 budget

Annualization of Service Enhancements in the 2022 Budget

- Airport facility and service expansion
- New paramedic service resources added on July 1
- New GRT Bus Maintenance and Storage Facility on Northfield Drive
- Climate Action investments

Service Expansion post 2022 budget

Service Enhancements Approved by Council Subsequent to 2022 Budget Approval

- Three 12-hour ambulances and staff effective Oct. 1, 2022 and eight 12-hour ambulances in Jul. 2023 (prev. May 2023) and Jan. 2024 (prev. Oct. 2023)
- GRT service hour reinstatement in fall 2022 and further service restoration as of January and April 2023
- Interim housing strategies

Homelessness programs and funding

Province downloaded social housing to municipalities in 2000, but retained funding responsibility for homelessness

The Region has historically supplemented provincial funding with a small amount of tax levy funding (pre-2022 budgets were in the \$2.3-\$2.5M range)

2022 levy funding increased to \$5.6M

COVID changed the operating model for shelters

Municipalities are poorly equipped to fund the cost of homelessness programs – unlike the federal and provincial governments

Efficiencies and Reductions

Efficiencies and cost savings:

Utilities & Energy Saving Retrofits	Reviewing and adjusting staffing levels and overtime requirements	Training, conferences, meetings, mileage and travel	New user fees & revenue streams	Office supplies and minor maintenance	Consulting fees and purchased goods & services	Service level adjustments
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Operating Budget Reductions (\$millions)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Operating budget savings	\$3.4	\$2.1	\$2.2	\$3.3	\$15.4	\$11.4	\$37.8

Preliminary Impact on Average Household

Average Annual Regional Taxes (excludes Police) for Typical Residence (\$354,500 CVA*)

2022		\$1,496
2023		\$1,643
\$ change for year		\$147
\$ change for year	inflation	\$109
	service expansion	\$55
	everything else	(\$17)
% change in property taxes	inflation	7.3%
	service expansion	3.7%
	everything else	(1.2%)
Total % Change in property taxes for Regional services excluding Police		9.8%

*2023 property assessments are still at a January 1, 2016 valuation date



Revised 2023 Plan & Budget Timetable

Meeting	Revised Date	Time
Regional Plan, Operating Budget and Capital Program Overview	Nov. 30, 2022	1:00pm-5:00pm
Regional Plan, Operating Budget and Capital Program Overview #2	Dec. 14, 2022	2:00pm-5:00pm
Police Services Board Budget Approval	Jan. 18, 2023	-
Regional Operating Budget and Capital Program: Detailed Budget Review #1	Jan. 18, 2023	1:00pm-5:00pm
Public Input #1 (evening)	Jan. 18, 2023	6:30pm-9:30pm
Police Services Budget Presentation to Plan and Budget Committee	Feb. 1, 2023	1:00pm-3:00pm
Regional Operating Budget and Capital Program: Detailed Budget Review #2 GRCA presentation	Feb. 8, 2023	1:00pm-5:00pm
Public Input #2 (evening)	Feb. 8, 2023	6:30pm-9:30pm
Final Budget Day: - Approval of 2023 Operating Budget and Capital Program - Approval of user fees and charges and user rates	Feb. 22, 2023	3:00pm-6:00pm



Region of Waterloo

Corporate Services

Corporate Finance

To: Strategic Planning and Budget Committee

Meeting Date: November 30, 2022

Report Title: 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo take the following action with respect to the 2023 Plan and Budget as set out in report COR-CFN-22-029 dated November 30, 2022:

- a) Approve the revised 2023 Plan and Budget review timetable as set out in Appendix A; and
- b) Forward a copy of Report COR-CFN-22-029 to the Waterloo Region Police Services Board and to the Area Municipalities in Waterloo Region.

2. Purpose / Issue:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a revised 2023 Plan and Budget Review Timetable.

3. Strategic Plan:

The annual budget aligns resources to the organization's strategic vision and numerous initiatives set out in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

4. Report Highlights:

- In June 2022 Council approved a 2023 Plan and Budget review timetable that included approval of water and wastewater user rates in December 2022 and 2023 Plan and Budget approval on February 8, 2023.
- Staff recommend adjusting the dates of review meetings to allow the new Council sufficient time to review and consider plan and budget options.
- The revised timetable designates February 22, 2023 as the 2023 Plan and Budget approval day (Appendix A).

5. Background:

In June 2022 Regional Council approved a budget review timetable set out in CAO-SPL-22-04/COR-CFN-22-18. That timetable included approval of water and wastewater user rates in December 2022 and 2023 Plan and Budget approval on February 8, 2023.

Given the challenges presented by the 2023 Plan and Budget and to allow the new Council sufficient time to review and consider plan and budget options, staff recommend adjusting the dates of review meetings. The revised timetable designates February 22, 2023 as 2023 Plan and Budget approval day, which would encompass all operating and capital budgets as well as user rates, fees and charges. The proposed timetable is provided in Appendix A for Committee's consideration.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Area Municipality Communication:

Staff will provide copies of this report to the seven area municipalities and to the Waterloo Regional Police Service upon Council approval.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Subject to Council approval, staff will communicate revisions to the Timetable through various media channels including the Region's website, the 2023 Plan and Budget EngageWR webpage, and through public notices of future meetings.

7. Financial Implications:

Nil.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Staff will prepare and present the 2023 Plan and Budget based on the revised timeline as approved through this report.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Revised 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable

Prepared By: Cheryl Braan, Director Corporate Finance

Jenny Smith, Director, Corporate Strategy & Performance

Approved By: Craig Dyer, Commissioner, Corporate Services/Chief Financial Officer

Connie MacDonald, Chief Communications & Strategy Officer

Appendix A: Revised 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable

Meeting / Item	Revised Date & Time
Regional Plan, Operating Budget and Capital Program Overview	Nov. 30, 2022 1:00pm-5:00pm
Regional Plan, Operating Budget and Capital Program Overview #2	Dec. 14, 2022 2:00pm-5:00pm
Police Services Board Budget Approval	Jan. 18, 2023
Regional Operating Budget and Capital Program: Detailed Budget Review #1 (incl. distribution of budget book)	Jan. 18, 2023 1:00pm-5:00pm
Public Input #1 (evening)	Jan. 18, 2023 6:30pm-9:30pm
Police Services Budget Presentation to Plan and Budget Committee	Feb. 1, 2023 1:00pm-3:00pm
Regional Operating Budget and Capital Program: Detailed Budget Review #2 GRCA presentation	Feb. 8, 2023 1:00pm-5:00pm
Public Input #2 (evening)	Feb. 8, 2023 6:30pm-9:30pm
Final Budget Day: - Approval of 2023 Operating Budget and Capital Program - Approval of user fees and charges and user rates	Feb. 22, 2023 3:00pm-6:00pm

Region of Waterloo

Chief Administrative Officer

Strategic Planning and Strategic Initiatives

To: Strategic Planning and Budget Committee

Meeting Date: November 30, 2022

Report Title: 2023 Plan and Budget Community Engagement Update

1. Recommendation

For Information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To provide information to Committee regarding the community engagement and communications approach to support the 2023 Annual Plan and Budget process. To provide early findings from the engagement process that have informed the draft Plan and Budget for 2023.

3. Strategic Plan:

The 2023 Plan and Budget Community Engagement and Communications strategy will support the Strategic Plan, specifically in the Responsive and Engaging Public Service focus areas, 5.1. Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Region of Waterloo Initiatives and 5.1. Provide excellent citizen centred service that enhance service satisfaction.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Region is guided by the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Each year the organization undergoes a comprehensive planning and budget process to calibrate its strategic initiatives, work plans and resources to priority areas. Community engagement is critical to ensure the Region's annual plan and budget reflect changing community need and aspirations.
- The community engagement and communications approach for 2023 builds on last year's plan [COR-CFN-21-34/CAO-SPL-21-01]. The approach last year increased overall reach and sought to increase engagement with community members facing the most barriers to participation.

- The public are being engaged in a number of ways throughout the 2023 Plan and Budget process. A statistically robust Service Experience and Priorities survey has been conducted and analysis is underway. An [online engagement page](#) has been created on the Region's EngageWR site where community can learn more about forthcoming Plan and Budget public meetings, complete a online survey (open until end of 2022), submit a question or request a community conversation where staff will meet with community member groups.
- During October, a Service Experience and Priorities telephone survey reached 1,000 households based on a statistically robust randomized methodology. This survey was designed to inform a number of initiatives in the Region including the Plan and Budget process. We will receive the final report by early December, but early results are included in Appendix A. Top issues in the community identified were housing and homelessness, healthcare and transportation (including roads and transit). 81% felt they received good or very good value for their tax dollars. 43% said the Region should increase taxes in line with inflation to maintain existing services. 22% maintain current taxes by reducing services, 14% said reduce taxes by reducing services and 12% said increase taxes to enhance or expand services.
- An online survey will be open to the community until the end of the year. As of November 24, 2022, there are 790 respondents. As this is a general survey open to all residents, the results are not statistically representative of the community, but provide an extra layer of community perspectives. A full report of findings will be presented in the new year, but early results show similar response patterns between the telephone and online survey.
- While the methods described here will reach a broad range of residents, engagement for the 2023 Plan and Budget builds on relationships and data that is gathered ongoing through a number ways.
 - The newly formed Reconciliation, Equity and Diversity team at the Region has been undertaking individual and community conversations to establish trust, build relationships and identify community led solutions through initiatives such as the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the Upstream Fund and actions toward Truth and Reconciliation.
 - The bi-annual [Waterloo Region Immigrant Survey](#) is an important way to capture the experiences of immigrants, refugees, claimants, international students, temporary workers and their families of living in Waterloo Region. In 2021 over 1500 respondents participated in the survey which identified that half of immigrants are quite satisfied their overall wellbeing and over three quarters had a positive experience settling and integrating in Waterloo Region. The report identifies the most common challenges immigrants faced and the solutions they determined would help them most. It was identified that the

experience of immigration was not equal for all and that some individuals faced more difficulties.

- The [2021 Youth Impact Survey](#) reached 1,074 diverse youth from the ages of nine to eighteen from across the Region to assess their overall sense of wellbeing. Given the impacts of the pandemic on youth, the results of this survey were more critical than ever. For example, 64% of respondents said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their community which is 20 percentage points lower than pre-pandemic levels. The data briefs and snapshot reports provide a clear picture of child and youth wellbeing in our community.
- There are a number of recent strategies and plans that will form a foundation for the development of the Strategic Plan including the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the Regional Official Plan, and the Digital Transformation Strategy. Actions from the Strategic Plan will also feed into these ongoing plans and strategies as well as the Region's Annual Business Plan.

5. Background:

Municipalities across the province are facing significant budget challenges. The Region's 2023 budget must balance expanding important services for our growing community, and rising costs caused by inflation. It is critical that Council is informed by the full range of community voices as they deliberate on the 2023 Plan and Budget. A fulsome communications and engagement plan has been developed which includes:

- A statistically robust Service Experience and Priorities telephone survey that has reached 1,000 households across the Region.
- An [online page](#) that has been created on the Region's EngageWR site where the public can learn more about public meetings, complete an online survey, submit a question or request a community conversation.

These engagement opportunities are being advertised through a comprehensive communications plan through:

- Region of Waterloo website communications
- News releases and media engagement
- Social media messaging
- YouTube video that highlights the story of the Plan and Budget
- Emails to stakeholders
- Email to over 9,000 registered users of Engage Region of Waterloo

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Area Municipality Communication:

The Community Engagement Plan ensures that meaningful community engagement

and communications to areas municipalities will occur throughout the process.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

The 2023 Plan and Budget Community Engagement and Communications strategy will provide meaningful opportunities for residents, businesses and partners to inform priorities for focus and improvement. The plan will build on the improved overall engagement that was accomplished last year. Specific steps were taken using an equity lens to enhance communications and engagement with community members facing the most barriers to participation. This year's engagement will continue building on those efforts. Engagement will also incorporate input received through other planning such as the Regional Official Plan, Economic Development, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan and others.

7. Financial Implications:

The service experience survey is being funded through the provincial Audit and Accountability Fund as a foundational element to support the development of the Region's Digital Service Strategy. Other engagement costs are included in approved 2022 departmental budgets.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Engagement opportunities will be available to residents into 2023 until the Plan and Budget is approved. Once the budget 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable is finalized, the public input dates will be advertised to the public through the website, social media, EngageWR page, e-newsletters, newspaper ads and networks.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Region of Waterloo Resident Survey (Initial Findings)

Prepared By: Deb Bergey, Manager Community Engagement

Reviewed By: Jenny Smith, Director Corporate Strategy and Performance

TJ Flynn, Director, Communications and Engagement

Cheryl Braan, Director, Corporate Finance

Approved By: Connie MacDonald, Chief Communications and Strategy Officer

Craig Dyer, Commissioner Corporate Services

REGION OF WATERLOO RESIDENT SURVEY

DRAFT Interim Report

November 18, 2022

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Region of Waterloo



BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY



Background

The objectives of this research are to gain a detailed understanding of local residents' awareness, attitudes, and opinions towards the Region of Waterloo's services, specifically in cities of Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.

Specifically, the research investigated:

- The most pressing issues facing Region of Waterloo residents, as well as evaluating their quality of life in the region.
- Awareness and knowledge of services offered by the Region of Waterloo, as well as satisfaction with such services among those who accessed them.
- Preferred methods and frequency of communications from the Region of Waterloo to its residents, including impressions of the Waterloo Region website.
- The value-add of the Region of Waterloo's programs and services they offer for residents' tax dollars.



Methodology



METHODOLOGY

- A 20-minute telephone survey (landlines and cell phones) was conducted among residents of the Region of Waterloo, including the cities of Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.
- The surveys were conducted between October 7 and November 1, 2022. In total, n=1000 surveys were completed, including n=430 in Kitchener, n=250 in Cambridge, n=200 in Waterloo and n=120 in the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.
- The overall margin of error for a sample of n=1000 interviews is +/- 3.5%, 19 times out of 20.



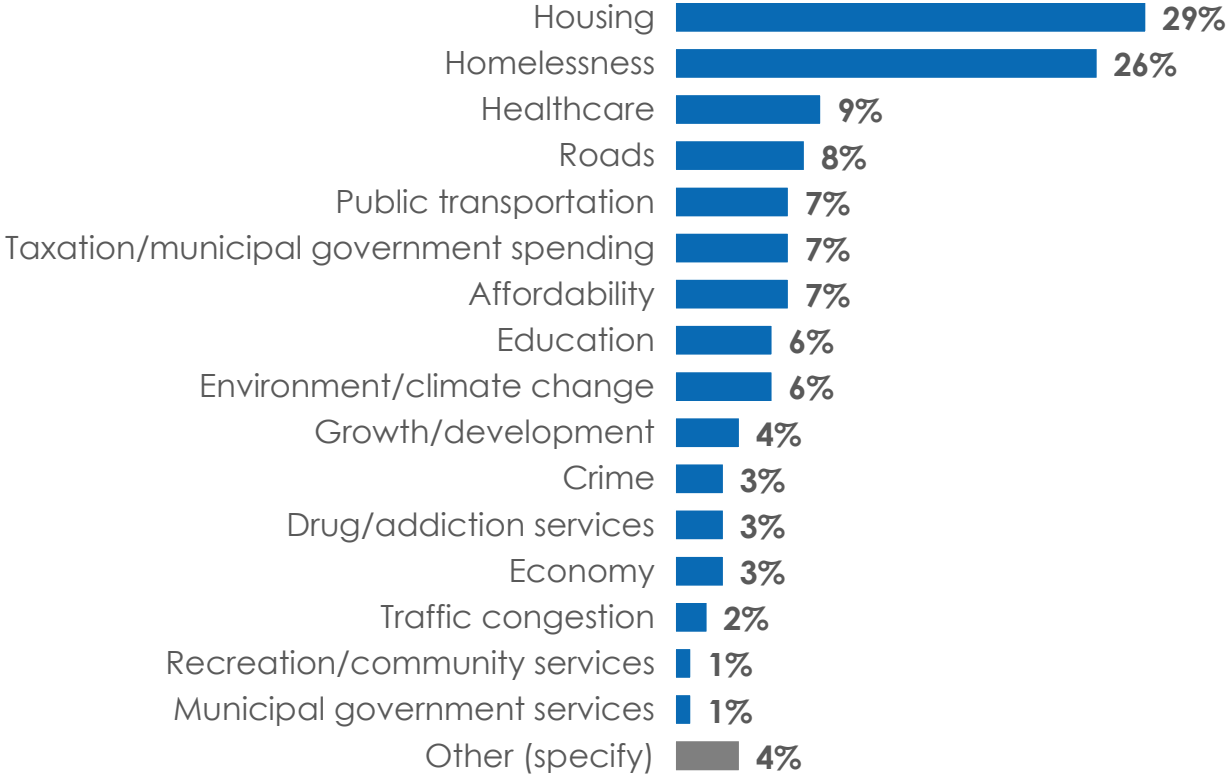
INITIAL FINDINGS



Top Issues Facing Waterloo Region

Nearly the same proportions of residents in the Waterloo Region say that housing (29%) and homelessness (26%) are the most important issues facing the community and should receive the greatest attention from local leaders.

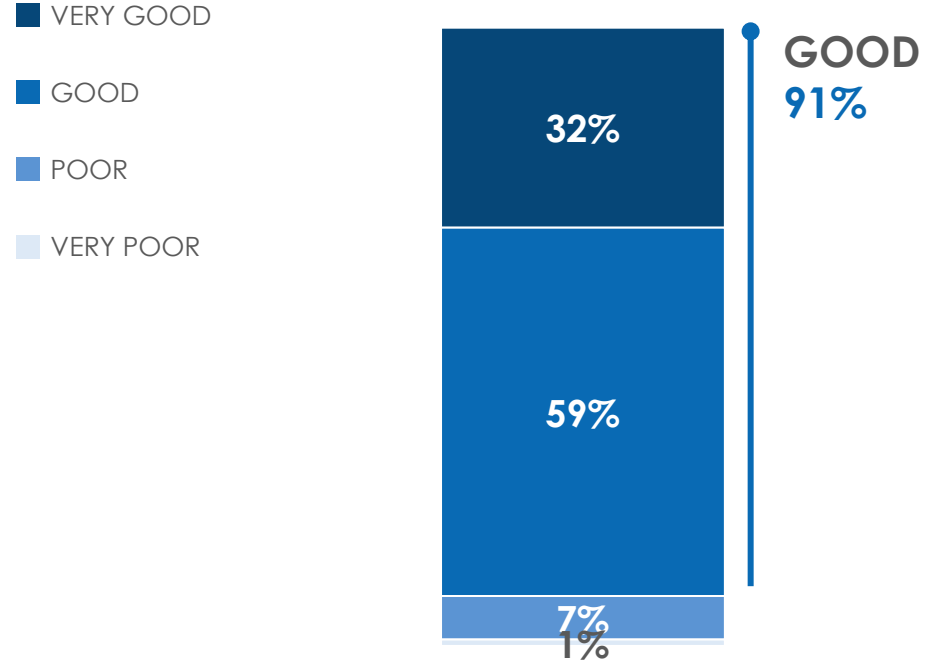
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN COMMUNITY



Quality of Life in Waterloo Region

A strong majority (91%) of Waterloo Region residents say that their quality of life is *very good/good*, with only 8% saying it is *poor/very poor*.

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE



BUDGET AND TAXATION QUESTIONS



Value for Tax Dollars

A strong majority (81%) say they get good value for the tax dollars they pay regarding all the programs and services they receive from the Region of Waterloo. This proportion is driven largely by those who say they get *fairly good value* (65%).

VALUE FOR TAX DOLLARS

■ VERY GOOD VALUE
 ■ FAIRLY GOOD VALUE
 ■ FAIRLY POOR VALUE
 ■ VERY POOR VALUE

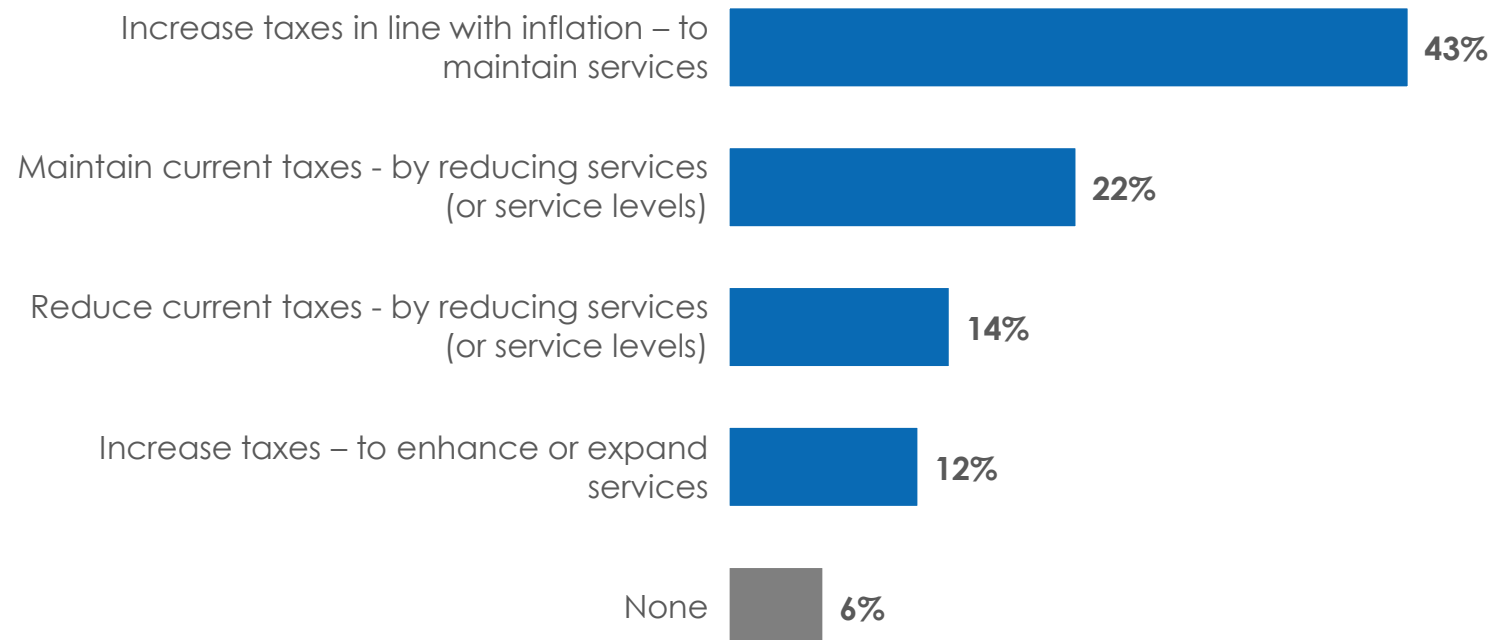


Preferred Paths Regarding Taxes and Services Offered

Four in ten (43%) residents of Waterloo Region say they prefer the Region to increase taxes in line with inflation in order to maintain the services offered; 22% say they should maintain their current taxes by reducing the services.

Nearly the same proportions say they should reduce current taxes by reducing services (14%) or increase taxes to enhance or expand services (12%).

PREFERRED PATHS REGARDING TAXATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY LEVELS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS



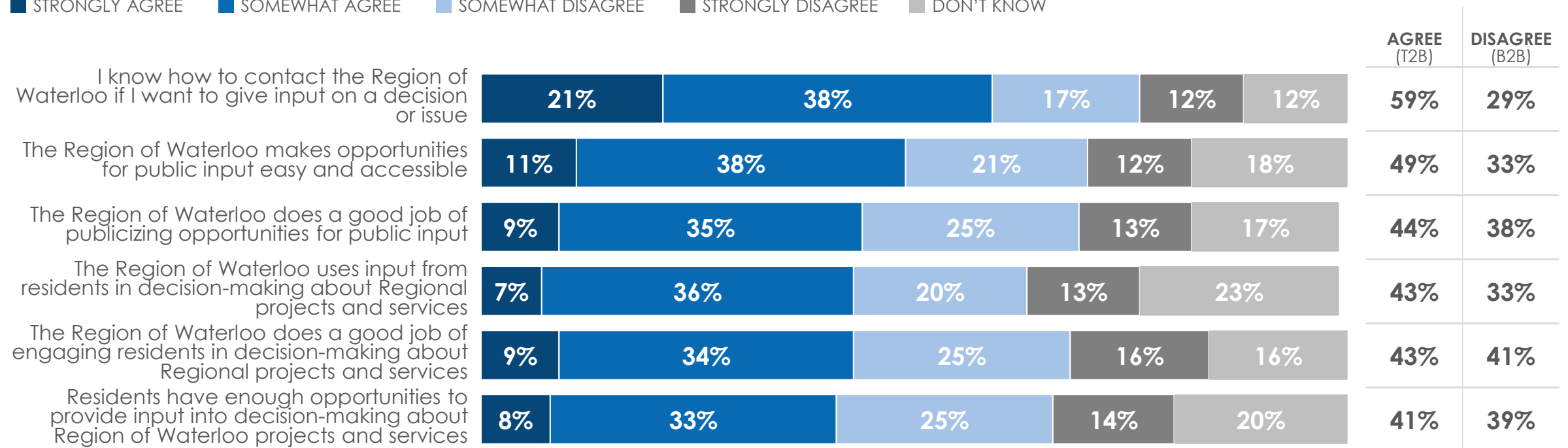
CITY HALL

Impressions of Region of Waterloo Consultation Activities

- Most (59%) residents of the Waterloo Region know how to contact the Region of Waterloo if they wanted to give input on a decision or issue, although a notable proportion (29%) say they do not. Half (49%) go on to say the Region of Waterloo makes opportunities for public input easy and accessible.
- To a lesser extent, 41% say residents have enough opportunities to provide input into decision-making about Region of Waterloo projects and services, with nearly the same proportion (39%) say they do not; similar measures are highlighted regarding proper engagement with residents in the decision-making process, as well as publicizing opportunities about public input.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

■ STRONGLY AGREE
 ■ SOMEWHAT AGREE
 ■ SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
 ■ STRONGLY DISAGREE
 ■ DON'T KNOW



Base: All respondents (n=1000)

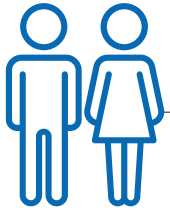
Q23. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. How about...? If you don't know please say so.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics



GENDER

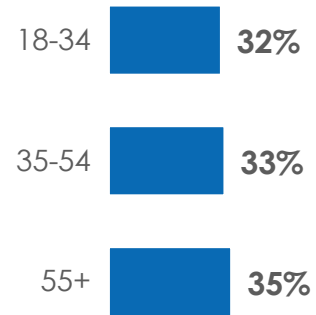


49%
Male

51%
Female



AGE



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