

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



Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023  
Closed Session: 6:00 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](mailto:regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca)

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	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Call to Order</b>	
<b>2. Land Acknowledgement</b>	
<b>3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”</b>	
<b>4. Delegations</b>	
<b>4.1 Barbara Hankins, Chair, KWS Players' Association, and Rebecca Diderrich, Player's Committee member</b>	<b>5</b>
Re: the Future of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony	
<b>*4.2 Victoria Baby, CEO, Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth</b>	<b>23</b>
Re: Request for Regional financial support for a capital build at the Humane Society	
<b>4.3 Hardy and Renate Willms, Kitchener</b>	
Re: Property tax increases are too high	
<b>*4.4 Harald Drewitz, Chairperson, Kitchener Tax Watch Group</b>	<b>30</b>
Re: Taxpayer's Affordability	
<b>4.5 Kathy Ekert, Kitchener</b>	
Re: budget more rent to stop eviction	
<b>4.6 Melissa Bowman, Kitchener</b>	
Re: 2024 Budget	
<b>4.7 David Alton, Lived Expertise Coordinator, Social Development Centre Waterloo Region</b>	
Re: Plan to End Chronic Homelessness/Fee for Service	
<b>4.8 Sara Escobar, Homelessness and Housed Justice Worker, and Jason Spencer, Program Director, Community Justice Initiatives</b>	
Re: Homelessness	
<b>4.9 Kevin Boutilier, Erbs Road Shelter</b>	
Re: Living Unsheltered/ Erbs Road/ Housing	

- 4.10 **Tim O'Brien, Erbs Road Shelter**  
Re: Living Unsheltered/ Erbs Road/ Housing
- 4.11 **Jane Willoughby, Kitchener**  
Re: Emergency shelter at Edith MacIntosh Child Care center
- 4.12 **Mark Egers, President, Waterloo Regional Police Association**  
Re: The Association's perspective on the upcoming Regional budget.
- 4.13 **Gina Georgiou, Kitchener**  
Re: Budget Funding for Chronic Homelessness
- 4.14 **Nicholas Aboagye, Kitchener**  
Re: Increased transit funding for better ion service and public transit
- \*4.15 **Howard Dyck, Citizens Supporting the KW Symphony**  
Re: The implications for Waterloo Region following the recent demise of the KW Symphony. Requesting that Waterloo Regional Council keep the current allocation of funds designated for the KWS for that purpose and not to put them into the general fund.
- \*4.16 **Nicholas Olsen, Waterloo**  
Re: increased transit funding for better ion service
- \*4.17 **Damian Mikhail, Waterloo**  
Re: in favour of the amendment to the transit budget which would maintain 15 minute headways during off peak hours [petition](#)
- \*4.18 **Craig Sloss, Waterloo**  
Re: 2024 Budget priority feedback
- \*4.19 **Kimberly Barber, Kitchener**  
Re: speaking in support of the KWS
- \*4.20 **Shiva Subramanian and Ashwin Annamalai , Waterloo**  
Re: Reduction of Ion service
- \*4.21 **Isabella Stefanescu, Waterloo**  
Re: Supporting a Renewed Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra
- \*4.22 **Joanne Bender, Piano Teacher, KW Symphony Players Association**  
with her students Anar and Thomas Moosa re: KW Symphony and its value especially for children
- \*4.23 **Julian Ichim, Kitchener**  
Re: Homelessness and police funding
- \*4.24 **Michelle Angkasa, Waterloo**  
Re: Proposed changes to ION schedule
- \*4.25 **Nigel Gordijk, Waterloo**  
Re: Transit service levels
- \*4.26 **Sam Goncalves-Horton, Waterloo**  
Re: proposed ION service changes and other issues with the current

transportation budget

- \*4.27 Remington Zhi, Waterloo**  
Re: off-peak ION service
- \*4.28 Jack Dunne-Mucklow, Waterloo**  
Re: Transit and ION
- \*4.29 Rodney Chan, Waterloo**  
Re: ION Amendment and Bus Lanes
- \*4.30 Marinus de Groot, Kitchener**  
Re: Keeping support for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in the 2024-2025 budget in order to leave the door open to all possibilities
- \*4.31 Brian Doucet, Kitchener**  
re: Proposed LRT service changes
- \*4.32 Jonathan Lin, Waterloo**  
Re: ION service cuts to every 30 min during early morning and evening periods and in support of Councillor James' amendment to ION service to have 10 minute peak headways and 15 minute shoulder headways all year.
- \*4.33 Lori Mark, Kitchener**  
Re: Homelessness  
  
I would like to ensure that a couple of items are accounted for in the Homeless Budget such as additional Mental Health and Addiction support.
- \*4.34 David Scott, Cambridge**  
Re: The future of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony

**5. Call for Delegations**

**6. Communications**

- 6.1 Nathan Whalen, re: Expense Reduction Levers for Budget 2024** 43
- \*6.2 Zack Red, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 59
- \*6.3 Stephanie Levac, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 60
- \*6.4 Vincent Strickland, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 61
- \*6.5 Greg Thornton, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 62
- \*6.6 Evan Mitchell, re: KW Symphony** 66
- \*6.7 Sacha Geer, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 68
- \*6.8 El Gillies, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 69
- \*6.9 Moni Sadri, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 70
- \*6.10 Kez Vicario-Robinson, re: Police Budget Surpluses** 71
- \*6.11 Ian Whitman, re: KW Symphony** 72

7. Adjourn

**Recommended Motion:**

That the meeting adjourn at x:xx x.m.













# BAROQUE AND BEYOND

*A Musicians' Fundraiser*



*Featuring*

BETHANY HORST, SOPRANO

IAN WHITMAN, BASS

ANDREI FEHER, CONDUCTOR

THE KW WOODWIND QUINTET

and more...

**Sunday November 12th**

**at 7:00 pm**



St. Jacob's Mennonite Church

1310 King St N, St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0



Live!@WestPlains



West Plains  
United Church  
Burlington

# Save the K-W Symphony

November 4  
2:30 & online

All Donations will go in aid of  
the musicians and their goal of  
rebuilding the K-W Symphony

[www.savethekws.ca](http://www.savethekws.ca)

Benefit Concert of Chamber Music by the world-class musicians of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony



[westplains.ca/events](http://westplains.ca/events)

[westplainsconcerts@gmail.com](mailto:westplainsconcerts@gmail.com)

905 320 4989

# MUSIC AT ST. JOHN'S ELORA

## FALL 2023 CONCERT SERIES

FEATURING "MUSICIANS OF THE KW SYMPHONY."

Saturday, October 21, 2:30pm

### KESTREL STRING QUARTET

Music of Mozart, Dvorak, and Piazzolla

Friday, November 10, 7:30pm

### FRANÇAIS, DOHNÁNYI, ENESCU

Works for string trio

Saturday, November 18, 2:30pm

### SCHUBERT'S TROUT QUINTET

Ian Whitman and Friends

Friday, December 1, 7:30pm

### DUO THALIA

Works by Glière, Cassadó, Jessie Montgomery, and more

Saturday, December 6, 2:30pm

### A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES

Lori Gemmell, harp and Tom Allen, narrator  
with Larry Larson and Katherine Robertson













































# Better Together: An Investment in Our Communities





# Your Humane Society: Supporting people & pets in our communities

HSKWSP operates as one of the largest humane societies in Ontario. We help the thousands of animals that come through our doors each year, as well as provide 40+ programs and services to communities throughout the Region of Waterloo.

- We are a core member of the Region's Circle of Care, providing animal welfare support to Regional Public Health, Regional Police, and Regional Community Services
- Our animal services team serves 6 of the 7 Region of Waterloo municipalities for by-law, animal control and sheltering
- Our well-established school education programs see tens of thousands of kids annually throughout the Region of Waterloo
- We currently support over 1500 Region families through our Pet Pantry food bank program
- We also support hundreds of people and pets annually through our veterinary outreach program, which supports owners experiencing homelessness or who are vulnerably housed

BUILDING A CAMPUS

# A new Community Outreach Centre

HSKWSP





# Centre and Campus impact

Our five pillars to address increasing Regional demand include:



**MOBILE UNIT +  
VETERINARY  
OUTREACH**



**PET  
PANTRY**



**ANIMAL  
HOSPITAL**



**EDUCATION &  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS**



**PHYSICAL  
CAPACITY &  
ANIMAL  
SERVICES**

“ **Their impact is immeasurable. Hosting low-barrier clinics and reaching out to the community through their veterinary team, their services are highly valued.**

They provide peace of mind by ensuring pets' health, regardless of the circumstances. From routine care to addressing emergencies, the outreach veterinary team tirelessly builds trusted relationships with marginalized individuals.

Their invaluable work is so deeply appreciated.”

**Sade Bezjak Crossan,**  
Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator, Sanguen Health Centre





“ I really appreciate all the time you have put into making sure our fur babies stay healthy.

Having a pet is the best thing and has kept me with good company as a recovering addict. So I just wanted to say I really appreciate everything! It is an amazing opportunity to have.”

Anonymous Client, from oneROOF Youth Services





# Thank you

**Victoria Baby,**

CEO

519-745-5615 ext 230

[Victoria.Baby@kwsphumane.ca](mailto:Victoria.Baby@kwsphumane.ca)





WATERLOO REGION COUNCIL PRESENTATION FOR 2024 BUDGET  
NOVEMBER 29, 2023 AFFORDABILITY FINAL

This past October 4, I read an article in the WR Record titled “Another challenging budget, says Waterloo’s chief Financial officer with a projected tax hike of 7.65 for 2024. The only good item I read in this article was a quote from WR’s Chair, Karen Redman, “At the end of the day, there’s only one taxpayer and we all recognize that”. (Pause) After a decade of tax increases higher than the rate of inflation, I thought this year me might, just might see an increase no higher than the rate of inflation. (Pause) Unfortunately this is not the case!

One key word that has continually come up over the last few years is “Affordability!” We are now reaching a critical point of unsustainability. Since 2020 the Consumer Price Index or inflation, here in Ontario has gone up approximately 14-16% over the past 3 years. More alarming, is the cost of food/groceries which have gone up even more to approximately 25-27% during this time.

In addition to this rise in inflation, the Bank of Canada key interest rate was as low as 0.5% in January and February 2022 eventually rising to 5.0% on June 12, 2023, a 10 fold increase! This is an increase the population has not seen since prior to the great recession of 2008. For the last 15 years, a younger generation has not seen interest rates this high and I’m sure, never thought they would ever see such a rapid change in interest rate increases in their lifetime.

I trust some of you remember the 1980’s, the inflation rate, high interest rate and further, the high unemployment rate. It was President Reagan that came up with the term, “misery index” which is the addition of the inflation rate and the unemployment rate.

It was these two factors that was considered to be detrimental to one’s economic well-being. Their combined value is useful as an indicator of overall economic health. Recently, I just coined a new index – the “squeeze index”, (Pause) this is the combined value of the inflation rate and the Bank of Canada key interest rate! (Pause)

Current economic conditions affect the generations differently. While an increase in interest rate is more welcome for the “senior” generation (should they have

investments or are homeowners), this does not offset the increase in food prices and other increases which are daily expenses.

On the other hand, the younger generation has a “double whammy” challenge. They are starting their lives and families after high school, college or university. Most wage and salary increases are only a percent of the CPI. Another major cost is “shelter costs”. We all know, rents are increasing at an alarming rate and hundreds of billions of dollars of home mortgages, for those that have been able to get into the housing market, have been coming due over the past year and will continue to come due in the next few years, increasing their existing interest rate payments, by at least 4 plus % of the difference between the Bank of Canada rate for the previous several years versus current (0.5% up to 5.0%), further adding to the affordability crisis.

Waterloo Region Food Banks are experiencing unrepresented use including more families. Very alarming, now even what I call “working poor” are going to the Food Bank. Families are having to make difficult choices – do we buy food or heat our home? Many restaurants are seeing less customers. Family savings are being depleted due to increased costs! Students are having challenges finding affordable housing. On the corporate side - credit card interest rates are increasing which people are using to finance their daily expenses, and so are bank loan losses.

This leads to a difficult conclusion. The population is quickly reaching a point which, with potential tax increases coming in higher than CPI or inflation, the ability to absorb these increases will no longer be sustainable. People are “squeezed” beyond their ability to manage these increased costs even after having made these difficult choices. This Council is NOT making it easier. For the last 10 years, (Pause) your budget increase have been considerably higher than the rate of inflation!

*I can not overstate that “Taxpayer’s Affordability” concerns MUST be at the top of your and your staff’s minds in approaching finalizing the 2024 Budget and into the 2025 Budget process. The goal is to analyze and implement adjustments to personnel resources and processes (Pause) utilizing improved methodology and technology, (Pause) to further increase efficiency and reduce or eliminate areas that are costly under current practices. Other jurisdictions should be investigated for models to assist in this exercise.*



Harald Drewitz CPA, CMA

Chairperson,

Kitchener Tax Watch Group

Together with:

Property Taxpayers Alliance Inc.

WATERLOO REGION COUNCIL PRESENTATION FOR 2024 BUDGET

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX			21-Nov-23			
MONTH/YEAR	CANADA		ONTARIO		NOVA SCOTIA	
	MONTH	AVERAGE	MONTH	AVERAGE	MONTH	AVERAGE
	%	%	%	%	%	%
2023						
JAN	5.90	5.90	5.60	5.60	6.90	6.90
FEB	5.20	5.55	5.10	5.35	6.50	6.70
MAR	4.30	5.13	4.30	5.00	4.60	6.00
APR	4.40	4.95	4.20	4.80	4.50	5.63
MAY	3.40	4.64	3.10	4.46	2.00	4.90
JUNE	2.80	4.33	2.60	4.15	1.90	4.40
JULY	3.30	4.19	3.20	4.01	3.40	4.26
AUGUST	4.00	4.16	3.80	4.00	4.70	4.31
SEPTEMBER	3.80	4.12	3.60	3.94	4.80	4.37
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>4.25</b>
<b>YEAR 2023</b>		<b>4.02%</b>		<b>3.88%</b>		<b>4.25%</b>
2022						
JAN	5.10	5.10	5.70	5.70	4.90	4.90
FEB	5.70	5.40	6.10	5.90	5.70	5.30
MAR	6.70	5.83	7.00	6.27	6.80	5.80
APR	6.80	6.08	6.90	6.43	7.10	6.13
MAY	7.70	6.40	7.80	6.70	8.80	6.66
JUNE	8.10	6.68	7.90	6.90	9.30	7.10
JULY	7.60	6.81	7.60	7.00	8.70	7.33
AUGUST	7.00	6.84	6.90	6.99	7.80	7.39
SEPTEMBER	6.90	6.84	6.70	6.96	7.30	7.38
OCTOBER	6.90	6.85	6.50	6.91	7.70	7.41
NOVEMBER	6.80	6.85	6.40	6.86	8.60	7.52
DECEMBER	6.30	6.80	6.00	6.79	7.60	7.53
<b>YEAR 2022</b>		<b>6.80%</b>		<b>6.79%</b>		<b>7.53%</b>
<b>YEAR 2021</b>		<b>3.40%</b>		<b>3.47%</b>		<b>4.07%</b>
<b>YEAR 2020</b>		<b>0.73%</b>		<b>0.64%</b>		<b>0.32%</b>
<b>YEAR 2019</b>		<b>1.92%</b>		<b>1.84%</b>		<b>1.48%</b>
<b>YEAR 2018</b>		<b>2.29%</b>		<b>2.35%</b>		<b>2.23%</b>
<b>YEAR 2017</b>		<b>1.60%</b>		<b>1.68%</b>		<b>1.17%</b>
<b>YEAR 2016</b>		<b>1.44%</b>		<b>1.79%</b>		<b>1.21%</b>
<b>YEAR 2015</b>		<b>1.13%</b>		<b>1.23%</b>		
<b>YEAR 2014</b>		<b>1.91%</b>		<b>2.29%</b>		
<b>YEAR 2013</b>		<b>0.94%</b>		<b>1.05%</b>		
<b>YEAR 2012</b>		<b>1.50%</b>				
<b>YEAR 2011</b>		<b>2.80%</b>				



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Feedback on Region of Waterloo 2024 Budget

# OVERFUNDING WRPS VS. OTHER PRIORITIES

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NOVEMBER 29, 2023

**Craig Sloss**

REGION OF WATERLOO, ON

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**\$9.3M**

**Cumulative overfunding of Waterloo Regional Police Services over 2019-2021**

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# OVERFUNDING HAS CONTINUED

	Actual Q1-Q3 2023	Budget Q1-Q3 2023	Amount of overfunding
Expenditures	\$172.8M	\$177.4M	\$5.6M
Non-tax revenue	\$19M	\$16.5M	\$2.5M
Net levy	\$152.8M	\$160.8M	<b>\$8.1M</b>

Source: Waterloo Regional Police Services Board Agenda, November 15, 2023. Page 169



# OVERFUNDING WILL CONTINUE

	2023	2024				
	Approved Budget	Base Budget Adj	Expansion Requests	Proposed Budget	\$ Change	% Change
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
Salaries & Wages	146,691,910	4,050,328	3,006,120	153,748,358	7,056,448	4.81%
Benefits	46,511,886	4,533,101	951,623	51,996,610	5,484,724	11.79%
<b>Total Staffing Costs</b>	<b>193,203,796</b>	<b>8,583,429</b>	<b>3,957,743</b>	<b>205,744,968</b>	<b>12,541,172</b>	<b>6.49%</b>



2024 budget is based on 2023 budget,  
not actual expenditures

Source: Waterloo Regional Police Services Board Agenda, November 15, 2023. Page 180

# WHY ARE WRPS STAFFING NEEDS OVERESTIMATED?

- Increase in occurrences cited as evidence to support WRPS budget
- What are the "Other" Occurrences?

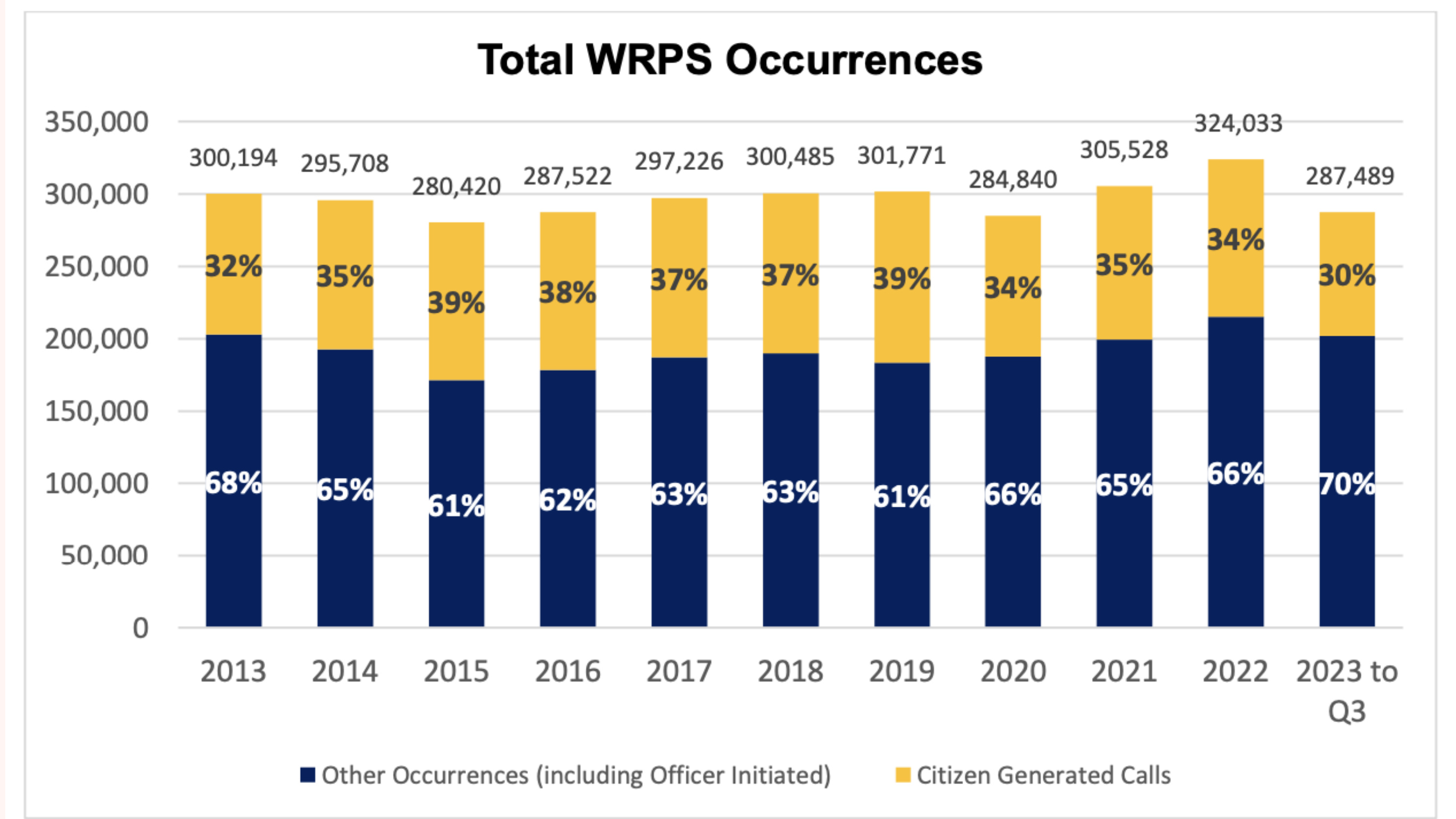


Figure 2: Total WRPS Occurrences (Including Officer Initiated) and Citizen Generated Calls between 2013 and 2023 Q3. Source: WRPS

Source: Strategic Planning and Budget Committee Agenda, November 22, 2023. Page 34.

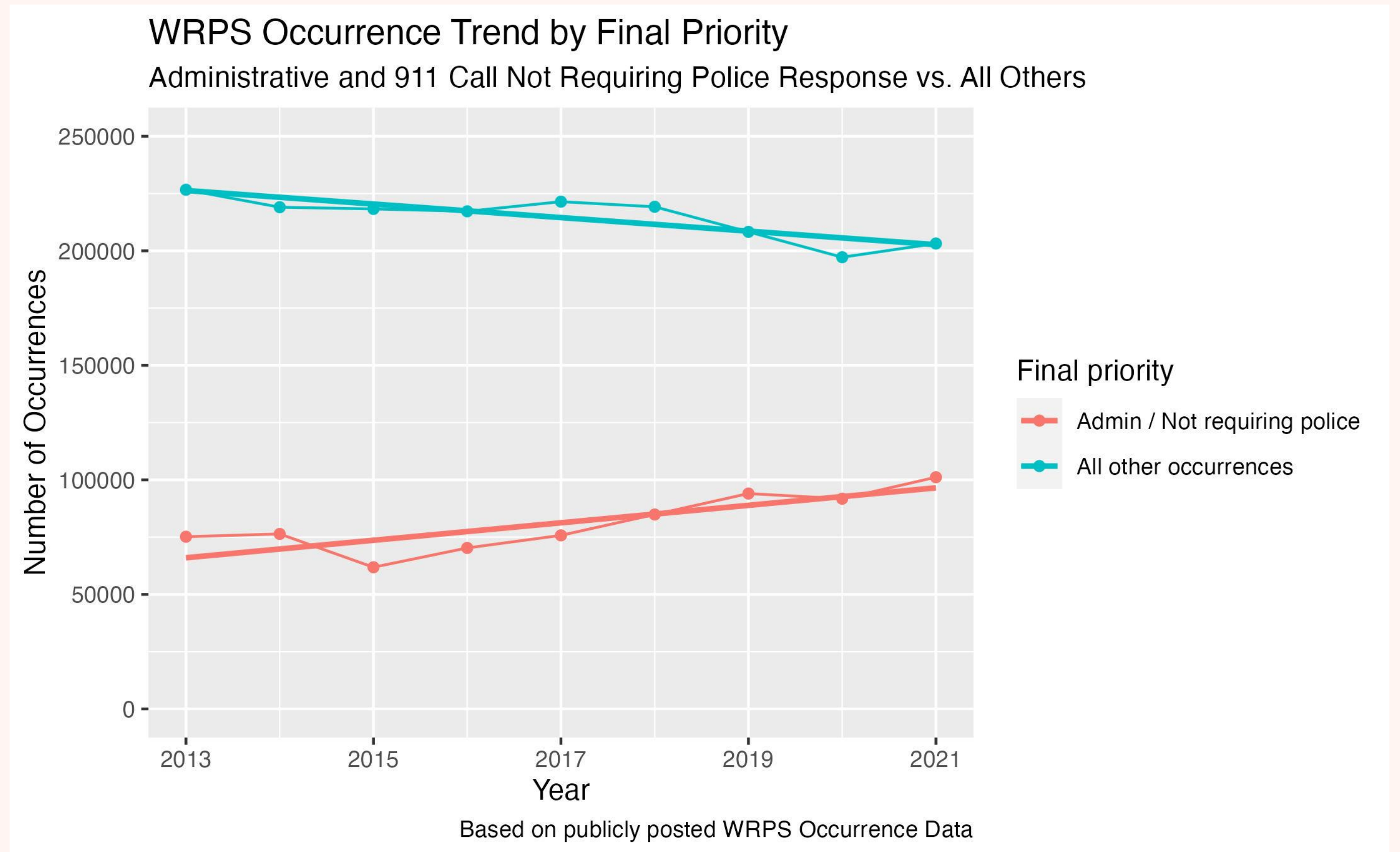
# WHAT'S DRIVING INCREASES IN OCCURRENCES?

**-1.4%**

Average annual change, all others

**+4.8%**

Average annual change, "Administrative (Communications Alert); 9-1-1 call not requiring police response"

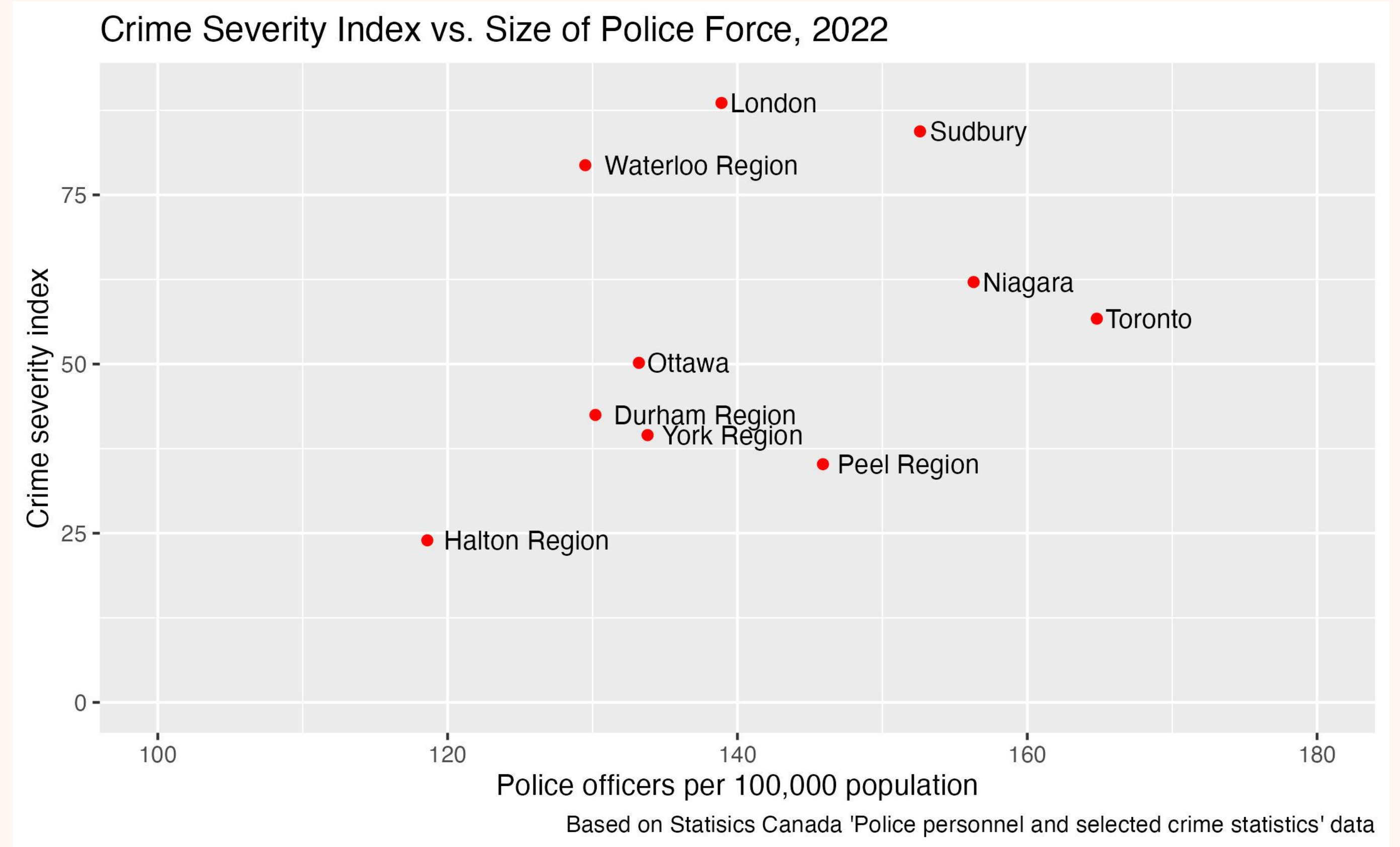


Data obtained from <https://www.wrps.on.ca/en/about-us/reports-publications-and-surveys.aspx>



# DO INCREASED POLICE BUDGETS REDUCE CRIME?

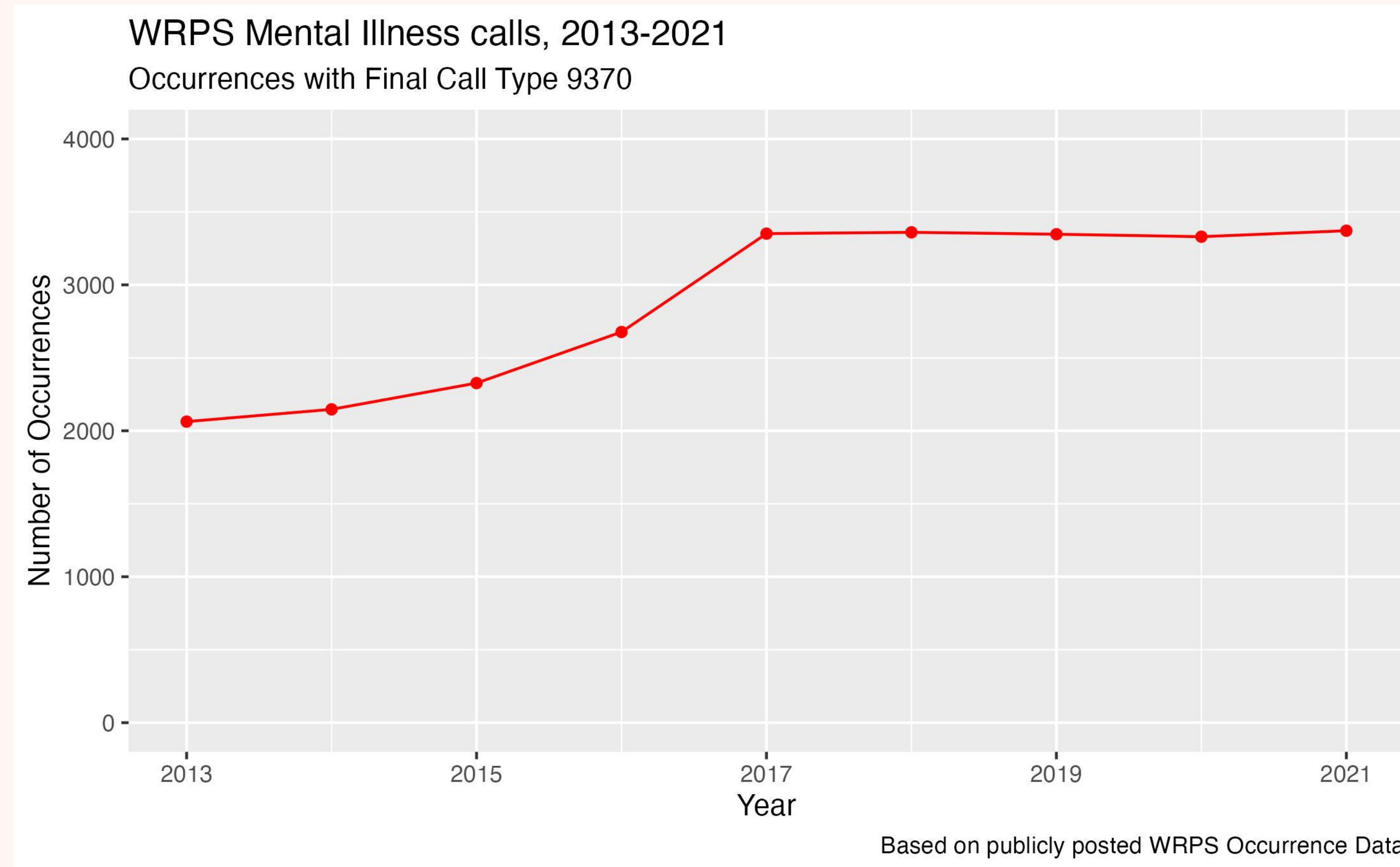
- **CSI = measure of frequency and severity of reported crime**
- **No evidence that cities with larger police forces have lower CSI**



Data obtained from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510007701>

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# INVEST IN PREVENTION, NOT POLICING



Data obtained from <https://www.wrps.on.ca/en/about-us/reports-publications-and-surveys.aspx>

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Council should request detailed information on the "Other" occurrences used to justify the WRPS budget request**
- **Council should reject the WRPS budget request until it has been revised to avoid overfunding the police**
- **Council should use the savings to invest in crime prevention and prevent service reductions at other Regional services**



# Expense Reduction Levers for Budget 2024

Solving for Affordability & Higher Funding Priorities

Nathan Whalen | November 1, 2023 | Strategic Planning & Budget Input Committee

# Tough Choices Ahead: Reduce Operating Expenses to Invest in Our Police Service & Solve Our Housing Crisis

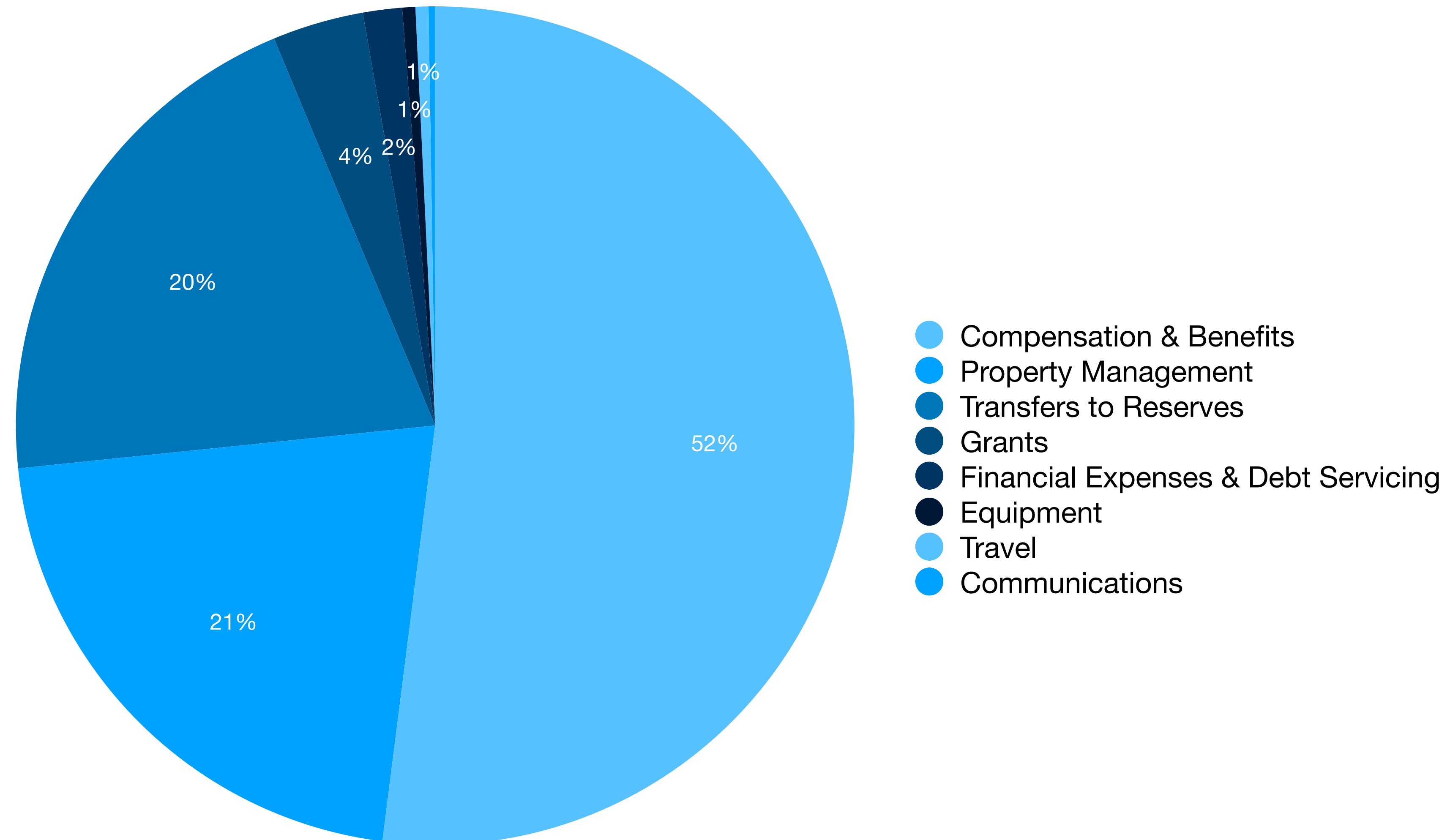
**\$36.7 Million**

**2024 Projected Property Tax Levy Increase**



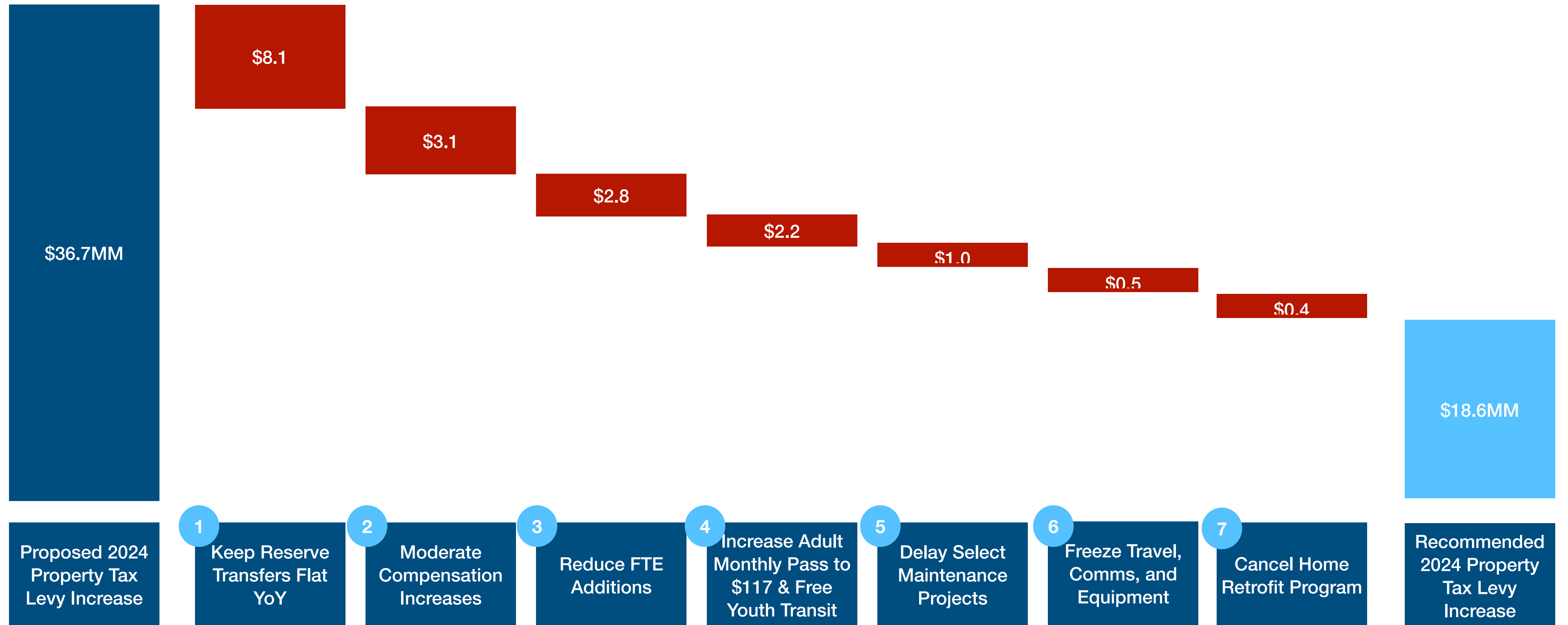
# Just Three Line Items Account for 93% of Expenditure Increases

## We Need to Find Savings to Balance Affordability & Investing in Growth.



# Seven Choices Can Cut the Increase in Half

## Opportunity Exists to Reduce 2024 Spending by \$18 Million.



1

# Transfers to Reserves

Opportunity Size: \$8.1 Million

	2023	2024	YoY Change
<b>Transfers to Reserves</b>	\$146.8	\$154.9	\$8.1
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	\$1,296.4	\$1,338.0	\$41.60
<b>% of Total</b>	11.32%	11.57%	0.25%

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to modify the 2024 Budget line item 'Transfers to Reserves' to \$146.8 Million instead of \$154.9 Million.**



# Align Compensation Increases with Inflation

## Opportunity Size: \$3.1 Million

### Highlights

- Studies show that public employees earn more than private employees performing the same role
- We need to ensure fair wage and benefit increases, while balancing taxpayer needs and financial constraints
- Reducing absolute Compensation & Benefits by \$3.1 Million (\$5.9 Million incl. Lever #3), still results in wages increasing at the rate of inflation

	2023	2024	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Current Proposal</b>	\$375.4	\$396.1	\$20.7	5.5%
<b>Recommended Proposal</b>	\$375.4	\$390.2	\$14.8	3.9%
<b>Recommended vs. Current</b>	-	\$5.9	(\$5.9)	(28.5%)

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council prior to November 29, 2023 with a revised proposal on 2024 Compensation & Benefits increases for Region of Waterloo employees.**

# Reduce Select Discretionary FTE Additions

## Opportunity Size: \$2.8 Million

178.6 New FTE proposed for 2024 (\$6.7 Million in 2024 service enhancements); opportunity exists to moderate FTE additions by 36 FTE.

	Current FTE Increase	Recommended FTE Increase	Change	2024 \$ Impact	2025 \$ Impact
GRT Operators (Conestoga U-Pass)	20.0	0	(20)	\$1.182MM	\$3.476MM
GRT, LRT, and Mobility Plus Service Expansion	12	12	-	-	-
ASE (Cross-Department Support)	33.4	28.4	(5)	\$0.6MM	\$0.7MM
PSV Master Plan Implementation (Reduce Non-Citizen Facing)	54.6	49.6	(5)	\$0.6MM	\$0.6MM
Facilities Maintenance Workers for Existing ROW Housing	6	2	(4)	\$0.2MM	\$0.25MM
Facilities Management - Data Insights Analyst	1	0	(1)	\$0.1MM	\$0.1MM
Asset Management Planner and Analyst	2	1	(1)	\$0.1MM	\$0.1MM
Other FTE Additions	49.6	49.6	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>178.6</b>	<b>142.6</b>	<b>(36.0)</b>	<b>\$2.8MM</b>	<b>\$5.3MM</b>

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council prior to November 29, 2023 with a list of 2024 discretionary FTE increases that may be paused or reconsidered, including associated potential impacts.**

# Increase Adult Monthly Pass from \$96 to \$117

**Opportunity Size: \$5.7 Million; ~\$2.2 Million After Free Youth Transit**

**Previously Presented  
October 25, 2023**

**Assumptions**

- Based on a \$21 Adult Monthly Pass increase and ATP subsidy remaining at 50%
- Youth Ages 5 - 17 account for approximately 13.89% of Ontario Resident Population (Statistics Canada, 2021)
- Monthly subscriber growth rates (by quarter), based on average of Quarterly MoM Growth Rate Actuals for 2022 and 2021

MoM Growth Rates	Adult Pass	ATP
Q1	3.3%	(0.8%)
Q2	1.8%	5.6%
Q3	6.6%	11.1%
Q4	3.3%	6.2%

<i>Estimated Revenue from Increasing Pass to \$117/Month</i>	Q1'24	Q2'24	Q3'24	Q4'24	Total
<b>Adult Monthly Pass Incremental Revenue</b>	\$1.0MM	\$1.1MM	\$1.3MM	\$1.4MM	<b>\$4.8MM</b>
<b>Affordable Transit Program Incremental Revenue</b>	\$0.2MM	\$0.2MM	\$0.2MM	\$0.3MM	<b>\$0.9MM</b>
<b>Total Estimated Revenue - Increasing Adult Monthly Pass from \$96 to \$117</b>	<b>\$1.2MM</b>	<b>\$1.3MM</b>	<b>\$1.5MM</b>	<b>\$1.7MM</b>	<b>\$5.7MM</b>
<b><i>Making Transit Free for Youth 5 to &lt;18</i></b>					
<b>Adult Monthly Pass Revenue Cannibalization (13.89%)</b>	(\$0.6MM)	(\$0.7MM)	(\$0.8MM)	(\$0.9MM)	<b>(\$2.9MM)</b>
<b>Affordable Transit Program Revenue Cannibalization (13.89%)</b>	(\$0.1MM)	(\$0.1MM)	(\$0.1MM)	(\$0.2MM)	<b>(\$0.5MM)</b>
<b>Total Incremental Revenue After Making Youth Free</b>	<b>\$0.5MM</b>	<b>\$0.5MM</b>	<b>\$0.6MM</b>	<b>\$0.7MM</b>	<b>\$2.2MM</b>

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to increase 2024 Adult Monthly Pass fares for Grand River Transit to \$117.00 and provide free Transit for Youth under 18, effective January 1, 2024.**



5

# Delay \$1 Million in Maintenance & Facility Maintenance Projects

## Opportunity Size: \$1 Million

	2023	2024	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>General &amp; Facility Maintenance</b>	\$21.0	\$23.5	\$2.5	11.9%
<b>Facility Occupancy Charges</b>	\$17.0	\$19.8	\$2.8	16.5%
<b>Utilities</b>	\$30.0	\$31.7	\$1.7	5.7%
<b>Insurance</b>	\$4.1	\$4.5	\$0.4	9.8%
<b>Property Tax</b>	\$16.3	\$17.4	\$1.1	6.7%
<b>Total 'Property Management'</b>	<b>\$88.4</b>	<b>\$96.9</b>	<b>\$8.5</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council prior to November 29, 2023 with list of the top five Maintenance & Facility Maintenance Projects that can be paused, along with a high-level impact assessment, and potential 2024 savings.**

# Freeze Spending on Travel, Communications, and Equipment

**Opportunity Size: \$0.5 Million**

	2023	2024	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Travel</b>	\$1.2	\$1.4	\$0.2	16.7%
<b>Communications</b>	\$5.5	\$5.6	\$0.1	1.8%
<b>Equipment</b>	\$4.9	\$5.1	\$0.2	4.1%
<b>Total Travel, Communications, and Equipment</b>	\$11.6	\$12.1	<b>\$0.5</b>	4.3%

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to modify the cumulative 2024 Budget line items of Travel, Communications, and Equipment to remain flat year-over-year.**

# Cancel the Home Energy Retrofit Pilot Program

Opportunity to Save \$0.4 Million as There is a Nearly Identical Federal Program

Previously Presented  
October 25, 2023

	Proposed Home Energy Retrofit Pilot Program	Existing Canada Greener Homes Grant Program
<b>Eligibility / Focus</b>	Low-rise Single Family Homes	All Home Types
<b>Grant Portion</b>	N/A	Up to \$5,600 in Grants
<b>Loan Portion</b>	Low Interest (% and Limit TBC)	Up to \$40,000 Interest-free
<b>Loan Repayment Period</b>	?	10 Year Amortization
<b>Loan Benefits</b>	Repaid on Utility Bill	Separate loan payment
<b>Energuides Pre-Retrofit Evaluation</b>	Unclear; Energy Coach Provided	Yes + In-Person Energy Saving Advice & Coaching
<b>Energuides Post-Retrofit Evaluation</b>	Unclear; Energy Coach Provided	Yes + In-Person Energy Saving Advice & Coaching

**Potential Motion Language: THAT Council direct staff to pause the Home Energy Retrofit Pilot Program and spending be removed from the 2024 Budget.**



**Fund the Police.  
Fund Solutions for Homelessness & Housing.  
Focus on Affordability.  
Reduce the Operating Budget.**

**Thank you.**

# Appendices

# Questions to Support Better Budget Decisions

## Five Pieces of Information to Ask of Staff

1. Provide 'Projected Actuals' for all budget lines with a +/- \$100,000 vs. 2023 Approved Budget (so you can see if they really need all the allocated dollars).
2. If Ontario and Federal Grant Revenue is decreasing by \$5.962 Million in 2024, what were those grants for, and how is the Region aligning resources, commitments, and staffing to reduce expenses in-line with the grant reduction.
3. What are the top five projects that could be paused without significant legal or financial implications, and what would be the high-level impact and 2024 budget impact for each?
4. 23 FTE (temporary) continue to be on the Public Health & Emergency Services FTE roster for 2024; what are the responsibilities of these individuals?
5. Can the Region provide a more detailed analysis of projected ridership increase and the 20 FTE GRT resource needs at a route-level, in order to support the Conestoga College U-Pass Program?

**Note:** Page 149 of the Preliminary Budget Book notes that 30,000 Conestoga College students would be auto-enrolled, while Conestoga College's website says its enrolment is 26,000+ inclusive of Guelph, Brantford, Stratford, Ingersol, and Milton campuses. Further, up to 5,184 Conestoga College students were enrolled in the College Pass Program in 2022, which would be cannibalized revenue.

# Additional Future-Oriented Cost Saving Strategies

## Initiating These Now Will Help Us in 2025

1. Launch a Third-Party Organizational Review of Regional Government to Identify Efficiency & Redundancy Opportunities.
2. Begin Exploring Reorganization of the Library System to Consolidate Administration Across All Upper and Lower-Tier Municipalities, while Expanding Access to More Library Resources Across the Region.



**From:** [Zackari Red](#)  
**To:** [Zackari Red](#)  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 25, 2023 11:39:05 PM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Good evening,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

There are numerous opportunities for Council to use these surpluses to improve quality of life in the Region by increasing housing, mental health supports, access to harm reduction services, public health and preventative healthcare strategies, gender-based and sexual assault support services, transit, and food subsidies. Because services are more cost-effective than the police, this is the only fiscally responsible approach.

On November 7, Regional Council defeated Councillor Huinink's motion to refund half of future police budget surpluses to fund community services. Without a mechanism to reclaim future police budget surpluses, Council's only way to prevent overfunding the police is to avoid surpluses by proactively reducing the size of future police budgets. I call on you to reduce the size of the 2024 police budget to retroactively recoup the past \$9.3M in overfunding, and to prevent further overfunding in 2024, and to redirect those funds toward preventive services.

Sincerely,

Zack Red

**From:** [Stephanie Levac](#)  
**To:** [Regional Clerk](#); [Karen Redman](#); [Doug Craig](#); [Rob Deutschmann](#); [Jim Erb](#); [Sue Foxton](#); [Michael Harris](#); [Chantal Huinink](#); [Colleen James](#); [Jan Liggett](#); [Dorothy McCabe](#); [Joe Nowak](#); [Natasha Salonen](#); [Sandy Shantz](#); [Berry Vrbanovic](#); [Kari Williams](#); [Pam Wolf](#)  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 26, 2023 8:01:08 AM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\*** This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.

Good morning,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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Sincerely,

Stephanie Levac, BSW BA  
Cambridge resident

**From:** [Vincent Strickland](#)  
**To:** [Vincent Strickland](#)  
**Subject:** Our community is in crisis, what are you doing about it?  
**Date:** November 26, 2023 7:42:51 AM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Hello,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. As a life-long resident of Kitchener-Waterloo I am appalled at the overfunding of police and the underfunding of social services. We, you as our elected voice, have to do better for the residents of our beloved community. Police and criminalization of poverty is not the answer!

Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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There are many wonderful nonprofit organizations in KW that are doing real work to care for and support those in our community in crisis. I donate to these organizations every year (ACCKWA, Food Bank Cambridge, Food Bank WR, Grand River Hospital, United Way, Working Center) and I want my tax dollars to go to them, as well as so many others providing front line service to those struggling with housing, mental health, addiction, cost of living, partner violence, etc. The police services do nothing to prevent or alleviate the crises our community is facing, they merely serve as an intervention when it's too late, when violence and crime are the end of a line, to criminalize and traumatize already vulnerable members of our community. **STOP OVERFUNDING THE POLICE AND GIVE THAT MONEY TO EFFECT ACTUAL CHANGE!**

Sincerely,  
Vincent Strickland  
Waterloo

**From:** [Greg Thornton](#)  
**To:** [Greg Thornton](#)  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 25, 2023 7:06:28 PM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Good evening,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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Sincerely,

Greg Thornton  
Kitchener



**From:** [Greg Thornton](#)  
**To:** [Regional Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 27, 2023 11:38:38 AM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

I would like the comments attached to the November 29th Strategic Planning and Budget Public Input Meeting addendum agenda as part of the public record. I have been a delegate regarding Waterloo Regional Police Service's operating budget. In addition, I'd like to point out WRPS lost a fleeing murder suspect, (the officer had a head on collision with a passing pick-up truck) then offered a \$50,000 reward for any information two years later...

Panic shots that were initially attempted murder charges which are now grounds for Sergeant Dorling to sue the SIU for 2.5 million dollars... I'm sure the On Duty Difference Maker Award the Police Services Board hooked him up with will help with the lawsuit against the oversight body (which only pursues 3% of complaints against officers).

The coroner's inquest into the death of Beau Baker ruled his death a suicide (despite the previous coroner ruling it a homicide. The coroner won't even respond to questions about providing a copy of the decision from the review of the initial determination not to hold an inquest. [220 recommendations were made in 2014 after a coroners inquest into 3 fatal matters involving police response to mental health. This was the coroner who died suddenly, delaying Beau's inquest](#) [OHRC praises jury recommendations in Jardine-Douglas, Klibingaitis and Eligon inquest, calls for action | Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)

At least the officer who emptied their magazine in response to Beau's call to police while in mental health crisis was denied the request to testify anonymously (while training other officers in use of force and completing his Diversity Inclusion courses)

The Crown Attorney argues that it's not in the public's interest to pursue perjury charges against police officers. I could only assume this is because WRPS expenditures are affected by litigation... My cases were unsuccessful, but more has been spent silencing a former officer/whistleblower, Kelly Donovan.

Trudeau made a total salary of \$365,200, combining the MP and base PM salaries. Chief Larkin's salary was \$330,811.23.

Waterloo Regional Police Service got a 7.49 per cent increase over the \$169 million operating budget given in 2019.. almost 50 per cent more than the budget increase from 2018 to 2019, and more than double the average increase from 2014 to 2018. Waterloo region council just approved the police service's \$195.8M budget (10million more than last year). \$48.9 million was allocated towards converting the old court house to the new cop shop BUT THEY STILL CAN'T ANSWER CALLS TO FRONT DESK. There is no reason to increase the WRPS budget to \$228 million. Construction is over.

On Mon, Nov 27, 2023, 10:15 AM Regional Clerk, <[RegionalClerk@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:RegionalClerk@regionofwaterloo.ca)> wrote:

Good morning Greg,

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments! Would you like these comments to be

attached to the Nov. 29 Strategic Planning and Budget Public Input Meeting addendum agenda as part of the public record? This would include both your name and comments as part of the public record.

Alternatively, if you only wish for members of Council to see your comments, we can forward your comments directly to Councillors.

Please let me know how you would like us to proceed. Thanks!

**Lindsay Mewhiney** (she/her)

Legislative Services Assistant

Region of Waterloo

150 Frederick Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor | Kitchener, ON | N2G 4J3

Email: [lmewhiney@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:lmewhiney@regionofwaterloo.ca)

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**From:** Greg Thornton <[gregthornton.personal@gmail.com](mailto:gregthornton.personal@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** November 25, 2023 7:06 PM

**To:** Greg Thornton <[gregthornton.personal@gmail.com](mailto:gregthornton.personal@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses

**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Good evening,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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services, public health and preventative healthcare strategies, gender-based and sexual assault support services, transit, and food subsidies. Because services are more cost-effective than the police, this is the only fiscally responsible approach.

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Sincerely,

Greg Thornton

55-35 Linden Ave.

Kitchener On,  
N2G4T6

Evan Mitchell  
21 Sherbourne St. North  
Toronto, ON, M4W 2T3  
416-200-2776  
[evan@evanmitchell.ca](mailto:evan@evanmitchell.ca)

26 November 2023

To the Region of Waterloo Council,

My name is Evan Mitchell and I am the former Assistant Conductor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra.

When I was nine years old, I attended my very first symphony concert at Centre in the Square. This was an educational engagement program with the KW Symphony. It served as an introduction to the orchestra for young people, and culminated in a performance of Peter and the Wolf, a classic children's symphonic tale.

This had a formative experience on my life which initially manifested itself as simply a great love for the orchestra, and for the endless wondrous music it performs, live in concert, week after week. As I learned more, and grew as a person, an orchestral career came to be my goal. Imagine my pride as I became this fine orchestra's Assistant Conductor, enjoying the privilege of introducing literally thousands of children to shared live experiences of truly great art.

I was, in fact, scheduled to perform several concerts with the KWS this season, our first rehearsal mere hours before the initial notice to musicians of suspension of operations in September. My most sincere hope is that my shock and despair matches your own, at this tragic turn of events.

Currently I serve as Music Director of the Kingston Symphony, a position I won while I was still the KWS' Assistant Conductor. My time in this position has come to reinforce my certainty that a robust arts scene is one of the true hallmarks of a city considered to be a magnificent place in which to live and thrive.

Orchestras are overwhelmingly named after the cities in which they serve. Live orchestral performance is a civic duty for the citizens it represents. Nowhere was this truer than with the KWS. Whether it be to nurture the growth of young, inquisitive minds, to entertain after a weary work week, or to lift up and nourish the souls of people looking to be inspired, to be captivated... this orchestra served the region with distinction for decades, and touched the lives of hundreds of thousands.

It is my experience that having an orchestra of the calibre and resplendence of artistry as the KWS is not only exceedingly rare and precious, but virtually irreplaceable once it's gone.

Right now, this very moment, represents arguably the most critical moment for the possibility of this organization's future. I cannot stress enough the importance of your support, financial and otherwise, for the Players Association of the KWS, who are working tirelessly to find a



path forward to continuing the great legacy of the orchestra. In partnership with the AFM union, they are exceedingly confident that they will soon have an organization in place for this very purpose. It is imperative that you continue to fund this association as it represents the future of orchestral music in the region.

The announcement of the insolvency of the KWS was one of the great civic losses of Kitchener-Waterloo's history. It is a staggering defeat for quality of life, and for cultural service for KW's citizens. As council, you have the power at this critical moment to claw back this loss, to rescue the orchestra from the absolute brink. I urge you in the strongest terms to voice your full-throated support, and commit to continuing funding for the KWSPA in order to begin the process of resurrection, and save the largest arts organization in the region.

It goes without saying that these are challenging times. Hope, fulfilment, and wonder are in unbearably short supply. Ironically, these are the currencies an orchestra deals with in its daily stock and trade. I am begging you to not let the book close on the KWS. You can help turn this situation around, and help restore the quality of life of all the region's citizens. The power is yours.

With humility, and no small measure of hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Evan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Mitchell".

Evan Mitchell  
Former Assistant Conductor, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony

**From:** [sacha\\_geer](#)  
**To:** [sacha\\_geer](#)  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 26, 2023 11:32:01 AM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Good morning,

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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Sincerely,

Sacha Geer

**From:** [El Gillies](#)  
**To:** [El Gillies](#)  
**Cc:** [reallocatewr@gmail.com](mailto:reallocatewr@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 27, 2023 4:18:30 PM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Hi there,

I am writing in regards to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as part of the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting.

Specifically, I am deeply concerned that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. The lack of social services support is seen most in our community members that are struggling with homelessness, such as the encampment on Victoria and Weber.

By overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

There are numerous opportunities for Council to use these surpluses to improve quality of life in the Region by increasing housing, mental health supports, access to harm reduction services, public health and preventative healthcare strategies, gender-based and sexual assault support services, transit, and food subsidies. Because services are more cost-effective than the police, this is the only fiscally responsible approach.

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I feel as though I keep reading about how everyone is trying so hard and is so frustrated with the encampments and how to "deal with them". Here is a golden opportunity for you to actually help mitigate the contributing factors to homelessness and addiction, and break the cycle.

Sincerely,

El Gillies  
(they/he)  
Waterloo

**From:** [Moni Sadri](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 26, 2023 12:24:16 PM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\*** This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.

Good afternoon,

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Sincerely,

Moni Sadri



**From:** [Kez Vicario-Robinson](#)  
**To:** [Kez Vicario-Robinson](#)  
**Subject:** Refund the Community – No more Police Budget surpluses  
**Date:** November 26, 2023 12:00:05 AM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\* This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.**

Hello there!

I am a 26 year old nonbinary person who's lived in Kitchener my whole life, and I have worked with and accessed countless services in the region.

This is something to seriously consider. I put my trust in you that you will read every word of this (despite receiving more than just my email with this exact text).

I am writing you to provide feedback to the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, as a contribution to the feedback that the committee is considering at its November 29 public input meeting. Specifically, I would like to express my concern over the fact that Waterloo Regional Police Services has had surpluses totalling \$9.3M in just three years, while community organizations are starved of funding. By consistently overfunding the police, Regional Council has missed opportunities to use that funding to provide more people in our region with access to life-affirming supports and services, while also reducing the number of calls for service to police.

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Sincerely,

-Kez Vicario-Robinson (they/them)

**From:** [noreply](#) on behalf of [Ian Whitman](#)  
**To:** [Regional Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** KW Symphony Outreach  
**Date:** November 27, 2023 9:40:30 PM

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**\*\*EXTERNAL ALERT\*\*** This email originated from outside the Region of Waterloo.

Thousands of Waterloo Region residents (and many from beyond) have attended KWS concerts and know first hand (and "first ear"!) the incredible and diverse programming that is brought to the stage of Centre in the Square and other venues each season. With this in mind, I hope Council will remember just how far into our community our music reached. Each year, KWS Outreach events took place in school libraries, retirement homes, community centres, and parks. Like my musician colleagues, I'm passionate and committed to making our home richer by sharing music with neighbours in as many ways as possible. Countless studies show the benefits of live classical music and I would like to share two anecdotes from May 2023 which will help to highlight the importance. The KWS sent two musicians to visit a class whose bus had not shown up to bring them to hear the full orchestra the week before. The small class of children with special needs were able to enjoy and respond to the music in their own ways all in the comfort of their own safe and supportive classroom. Another concert was held at the Grand Valley Institution for Women. At our concert, inmates were invited to move and dance along to the music, which included selections by Taylor Swift, among others. Neither of these groups could attend our concerts at the Centre but their reaction to our music was moving, to say the least.

Finally, it's important to remember the hundreds of amateur artists of all ages that are invited to perform on the Centre in the Square stage every season. The ever-popular Yuletide Spectacular will be silent this year and therefore, hundreds of young dancers, choristers, and the like have been robbed of the chance to perform on the stage of our world-class concert hall alongside a professional orchestra.

Without support for a full-time orchestra by the local governments, the chance for our our neighbours, friends, and family to have experiences like those above will be no longer possible.

Ian Whitman  
Principal Bass, (former) KW Symphony  
Conductor, KW Youth Orchestra

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Origin: <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/communicate-with-council.aspx>  
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Chair Redman and members of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Council,

I wish I could bring this delegation to you in person, but unfortunately that was not possible this time.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the motion to remove the reduction to 30-minute frequency in the evenings from the proposed budget. This decision reflects a commendable commitment to maintaining the high standards of public transportation that our community deserves.

However, I wrote to you today to discuss a matter of great importance regarding the proposed reduction. While I understand that the staff made this recommendation to adhere to the currently negotiated contract and to keep LRT service hours within the agreed-upon maximum, I believe that decision was misguided. It is essential to recognize that the reduction, although well-intentioned, neglected to understand the importance of evening service and compromises the practicality and usefulness of a community infrastructure integral to the Region's vision of a green and sustainable future.

In moving forward, I urge the Council not to shy away from the possibility of renegotiating the current contract for more service hours when ridership demonstrates the need. As the old saying goes, being penny wise but pound foolish does not serve the long-term interests of our community. The baseline service plans of the original contract with the service provider indicated regular increases in service every few years, implying a commitment to regular renegotiation as ridership increased.

I acknowledge the positive step taken in proposing to extend 10-minute daytime frequencies into the summer. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this should not be an excuse to refrain from increasing peak service when necessary due to a desire to maintain the current contract. While keeping 15-minute frequencies in the evening is valuable, our commitment to providing the best possible service to the community should override any reluctance to renegotiate the terms of the existing agreement.

In conclusion, let us reflect on the Regional messaging that proudly declares ION LRT as a great success, with ridership thriving at all times of day and every day of the week. It is time for our actions to align with these words. The community deserves the service levels that reflect the success of the ION LRT and contribute to the Region's continued growth and sustainability.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that, together, we can ensure the continued success of our public transportation system and fulfill our commitment to the well-being of the residents of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

Sincerely,

Cory Albrecht

Kitchener, November 28, 2023