

CUPE 1883 HYBRID WORK

Supporting a Sustainable and Equitable Hybrid
Work Model at the Region of Waterloo



PRESENTED BY
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Introduction

Who we are: CUPE Local 1883, representing over 900 Region of Waterloo inside workers.

Purpose of presentation:

- Outline how thoughtful, consistent hybrid policies support the Region's strategic goals.
- Share member feedback on research on hybrid work.

Why now:

- Region announced a shift to three in-office days per week for management and management support staff starting December 2025.
- We conducted a survey to understand how a similar change would affect our members.



Background and Context

- Hybrid work has been in place since the pandemic and has proven successful across departments.
- Current hybrid norm among CUPE 1883 members: about two days per week in-office.
- Region-wide goals service excellence, sustainability, and employee well-being align with maintaining flexibility in hybrid work.



Benchmarking Hybrid Work Trends

- Hybrid work continues to be a **dominant and stable feature** of Canada's labour market.
- **28% of new job postings** in Canada are for hybrid roles (Q2 2025).
- **Toronto:** 31.7% of job applications target hybrid positions driven by long commute times and high office costs.
- **Montreal:** 31.1% of job seekers prefer hybrid work; major employers like Bell Canada maintain hybrid policies.
- **Calgary:** 29% of new jobs are hybrid; Enbridge and TC Energy continue flexible work models.
- **Ottawa–Gatineau:** 35% of employees work remotely or hybrid, reflecting strong public-sector adaptation.



Financial Implications

- The Region's 2023–2027 Strategic Plan (“**Growing with Care**”) emphasizes *working smarter and saving money*.
- Since 2019, the Region has achieved **\$40.5 million in operating budget savings** through efficiency initiatives.
- Downsizing office space by **41,774 square feet**, saves **\$1.2 million annually** in tax dollars.
- Defers about **\$100+ million tax dollars** in costs over 20 years and aligns with our climate goals to be more energy efficient and reduce our carbon footprint
- Hybrid work has been a key driver of these savings by:
 - Reducing facility maintenance, utilities, and emissions.
 - Lowering commuting-related costs and environmental impact.
 - Supporting employee retention, reducing turnover and training expenses.
 - Increasing mandatory in-office days risks reversing these gains, leading to higher facility and operational costs.



Region of Waterloo Climate Action Plan and Hybrid Work

Reduces Transportation Emissions

- 40 km average commute avoided on hybrid days
- Fewer car trips = lower CO₂ emissions

Optimizes Building Energy Use

- Fewer people onsite reduces heating, cooling, and electricity
- Supports facility energy efficiency goals

Supports Sustainable Operations

- Efficient space use prevents costly expansion
- Savings can be redirected to climate initiatives

Builds Resilience

- Hybrid model strengthens continuity during disruptions
- Lowers environmental impact while maintaining service quality

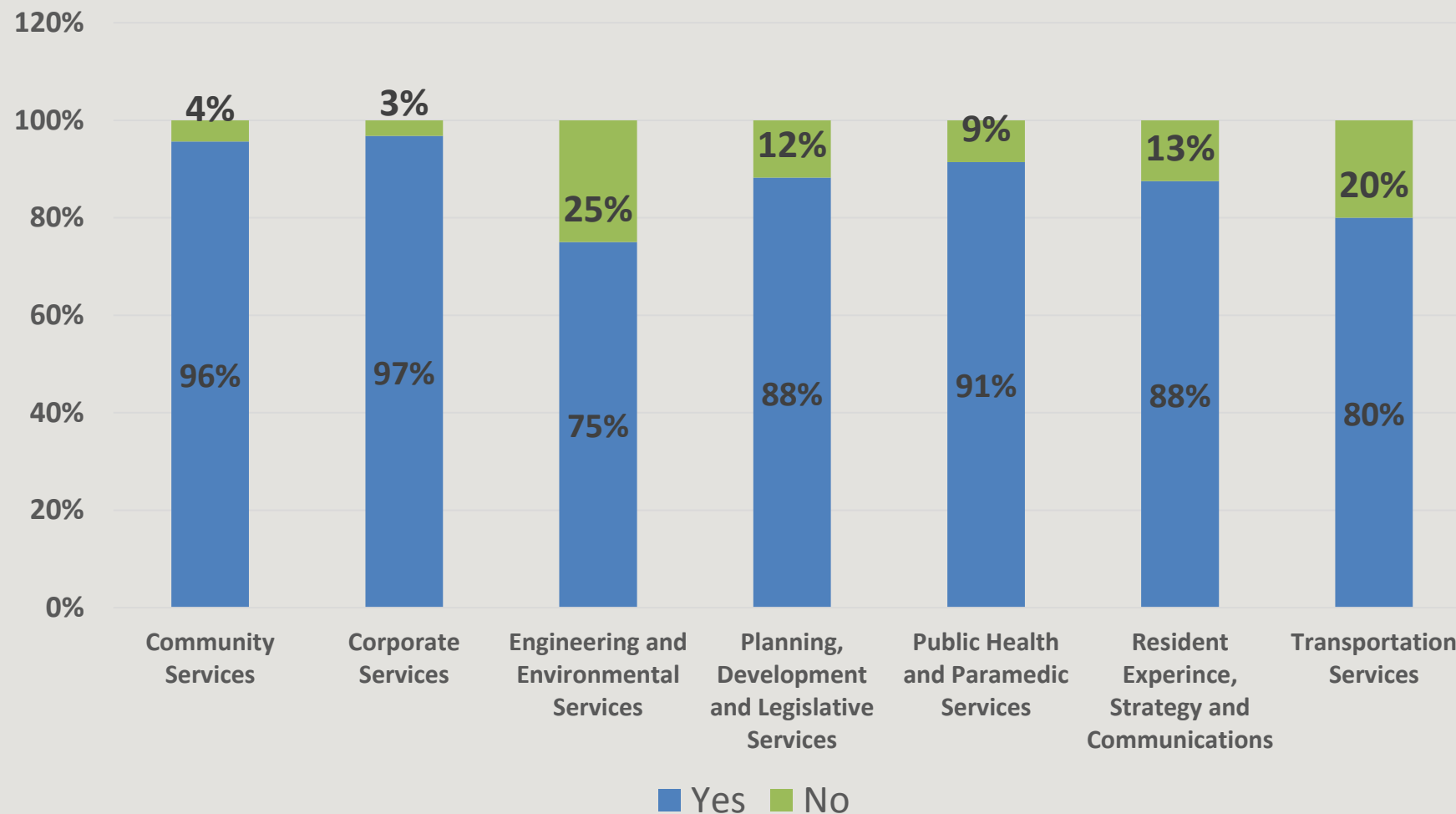


Member Survey Overview

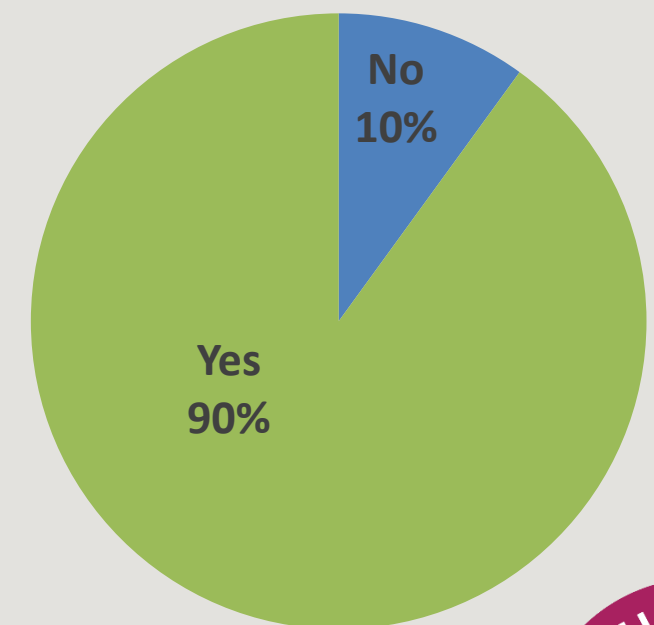
Purpose: Assess the impact of increasing in-office days.

- 439 responses across all departments.
- 42% from Community Services, ensuring broad representation.
- 90% (394 members) currently in hybrid arrangements.
- Average: 2 in-office days per week.

HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENTS BY DEPARTMENT



MEMBERS WITH HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENTS

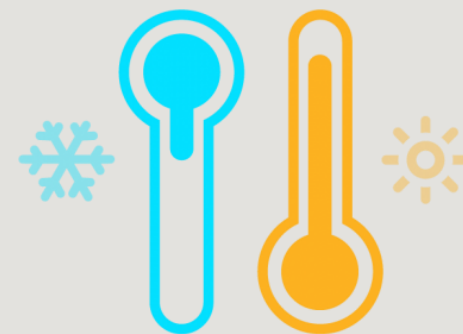


Key Findings: Productivity

52% of respondents (175 members) said productivity would decrease with more in-office days.

Top reasons:

- Fewer distractions at home (noise, temperature, interruptions).
- Confidentiality concerns in open offices.
- 40% lack assigned desks/workstations.
- Proximity to home allows for better time management.
- Many have completed major projects entirely remotely.



Key Findings: Health, Safety, and Equity

Members noted concerns about:

- Office space ergonomics and air quality.
- Spread of seasonal illness and limited private meeting areas.
- Uneven application of hybrid policies across departments leading to inequity.

Hybrid flexibility supports inclusion and accessibility for employees with health, caregiving, or transportation challenges.



Key Findings: Work-Life Balance and Commute Impacts

Workday & Commute Impacts

- 49% (164 members) say more in-office days would extend their workday into unpaid time.
- Increased fuel, parking, and vehicle wear.
- Less time for family, community, and wellness.

Environmental Impacts

- 900 members commuting 40 km/day = 36,000 km/day of travel more than 2,100 tonnes of extra emissions.
- Increased commuting contradicts the Region's commitments to reduce emissions and operate more efficiently.



Organizational Benefits of Hybrid Work

Maintaining flexibility supports:

- Employee retention and recruitment.
- High-quality service delivery.
- Organizational resilience and business continuity.
- Environmental sustainability through reduced commuting emissions.
- Leadership alignment with modern, inclusive workplace standards.
- Cost savings to the taxpayer.



Recommendations



1. That Regional Council endorse maintaining hybrid flexibility for all applicable region employees.
2. That staff and union representatives be involved in any hybrid policy revisions.
3. That decisions be guided by evidence, including this survey data.



Thank You!

