



November 17, 2023

Region of Waterloo Council  
150 Frederick Street  
Kitchener, ON  
N2G 4J3

**Re: WRPS 2024 Approved Operating and Capital Estimates**

Dear Chair Redman and Members of Region of Waterloo Council,

On behalf of the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board, it is my pleasure to provide you with the approved Operating and Capital estimates that form our 2024 Budget. The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) is committed to building a better, safer, and more equitable Waterloo Region for all citizens while upholding our legislative responsibilities under the Police Services Act. We understand that this vision can only be achieved through meaningful and respectful collaboration with all community partners. We continue to provide timely information and opportunity for engagement to members of Regional Council throughout the year on WRPS' priorities, needs, successes, and innovations.

With the full support of the Police Services Board, WRPS is now undertaking a multi-year strategy to respond to the Region's current policing complexities. The 2024 approved budget estimates respond to public safety pressures while making a significant investment in front-line officer staffing and crime suppression. Specifically, it includes the addition of 18 new officers for priority areas that require expansion based on growing community demand. Through these investments, our goal is to ensure that we meet community expectations for service delivery for all residents of Waterloo Region.

I look forward to presenting the approved Operating and Capital estimates on November 22, 2023.

We appreciate your commitment to public safety and community wellbeing in the Region of Waterloo and look forward to continuing to work together.

Please reach me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Crowell', written in a cursive style.

Mark Crowell  
Chief of Police



Waterloo Regional  
Police Service

**2024**

# **APPROVED OPERATING & CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

Supplemental  
Information Package



People Helping People

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# Executive Summary

The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) is proud to be a key partner with the urban and rural communities that make up the Region of Waterloo. The safety and wellbeing of the public and WRPS members is our main priority and this is accomplished in collaboration with all regional service providers and community partners. With the 11<sup>th</sup> largest census metropolitan area in Canada, the Region of Waterloo is a vibrant and growing mix of urban and rural communities. WRPS has continually risen to the challenges presented and has gained a reputation for being efficient, effective, and committed to continuous improvement.

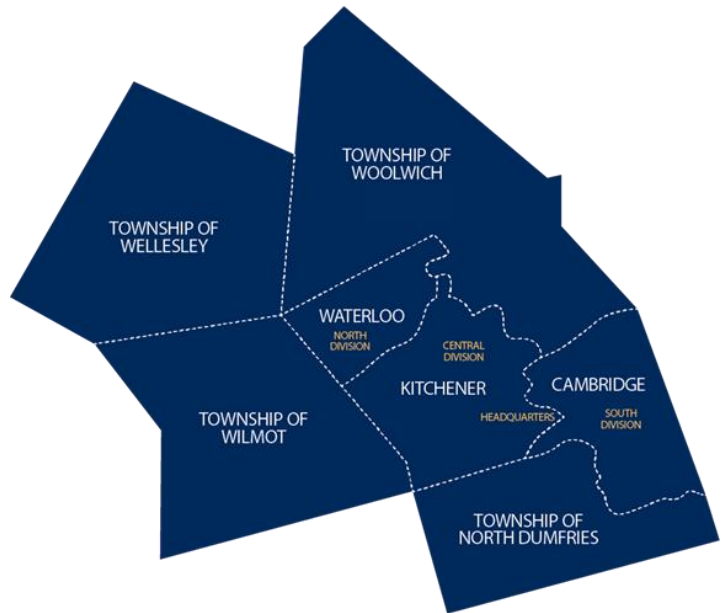
With continued population growth and the increased complexity of crime, WRPS is being challenged to meet the demands from our community, including residents, students, and visitors. With the full support and direction of the Police Services Board, WRPS is undertaking a multi-year strategy to respond to the Region’s current and future policing complexities. This multi-year planning, modernization, and recruitment strategy aims to properly respond to the public safety realities in Waterloo Region.

The 2024 WRPS Budget estimate is the critical next step of this strategy. This budget responds to public safety pressures while making a significant investment in front-line officer staffing and crime suppression. These include new officers in front-line patrol, training, investigative services, and youth engagement. With our commitment to public safety, these frontline investments are necessary now to ensure the WRPS is able to keep pace with population pressures and the increasing rate of crime across the Region.



# Growing Demands for Service

Waterloo Region is a vibrant and diverse community that is experiencing significant growth. As of the 2021 Census, the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is the fastest growing CMA in Canada and the fastest growing CMA in Ontario since 2012. As Waterloo Region continues to grow, so too do the demands for policing services.



## Population Growth

As of year-end 2022, the population estimate for Waterloo Region was 647,540. This takes into consideration the Census population (611,483), the estimated year-end population, the Census undercount, and full-time post-secondary students. While annual growth varies from year to year, the overall population has been steadily increasing. Over the past 15 years, the regional population has been increasing on average 1.4% per year. While the population has steadily increased, the level of WRPS sworn members have remained stagnant and have decreased in relation to the population.

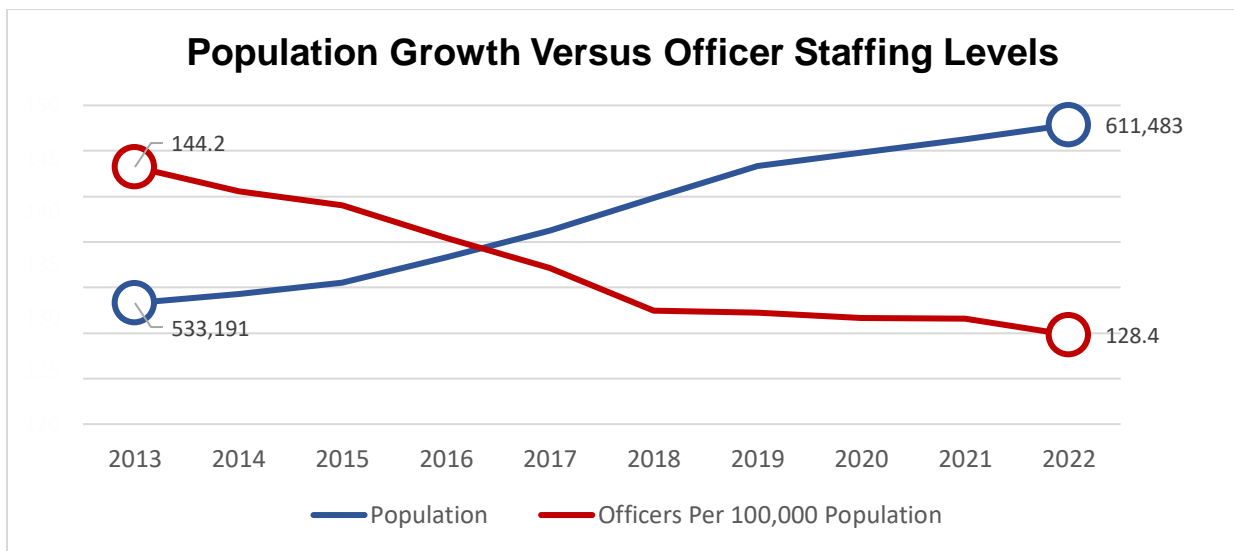


Figure 1: Officers Per 100,000 Population and Population of Waterloo Region, 2012-2021. Source: WRPS.

## Calls for Service

Citizen-generated calls for service include both criminal and non-criminal incidents for which the public requests the assistance of the police. As the population grows in Waterloo Region, the number of citizen-generated calls for service also grows. Citizen-generated calls for service make up, on average, approximately 36% of all calls for service. The number of citizen-generated calls for service remained relatively stable between 2022 and 2023 YTD. The increasing number of total occurrences over time reflect not only a growing demand on patrol officers, but also on investigators and communications call centre professionals.

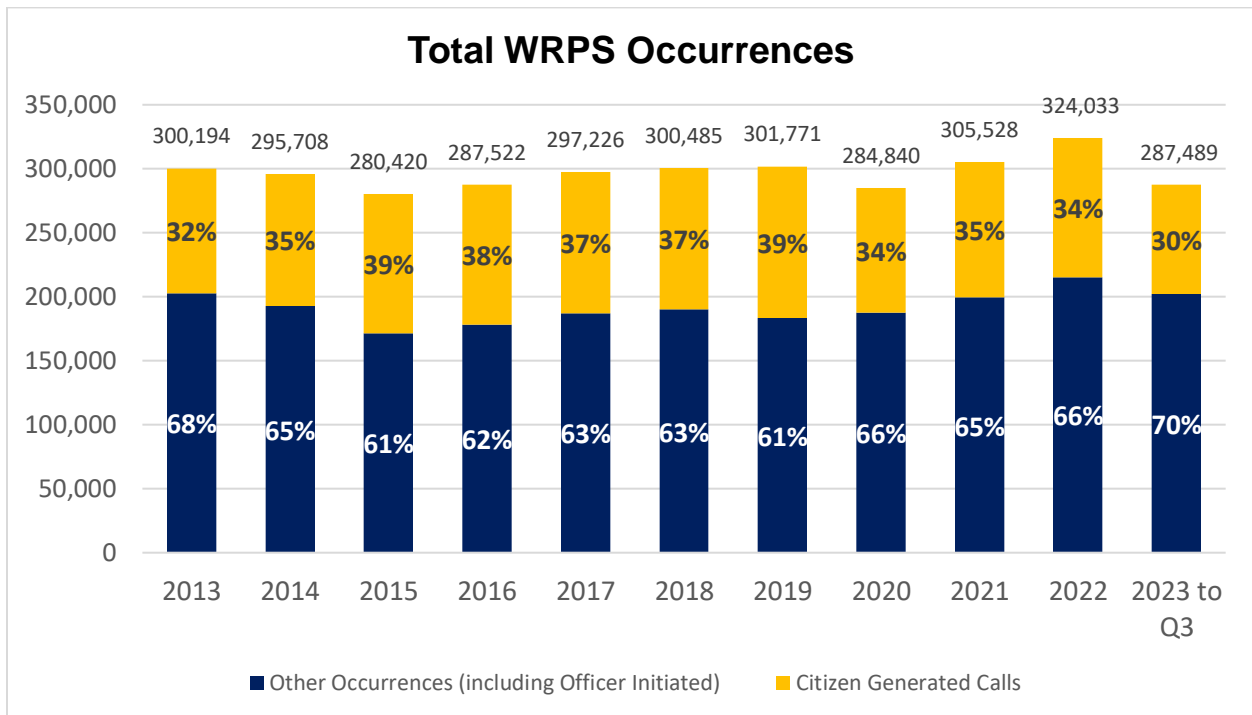
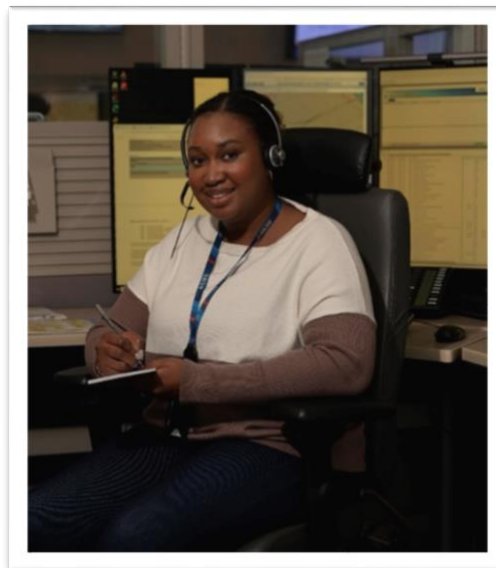


Figure 2: Total WRPS Occurrences (Including Officer Initiated) and Citizen Generated Calls between 2013 and 2023 Q3. Source: WRPS

### Did You Know?

Between 2022 and 2023 YTD, total calls for service increased by 19%



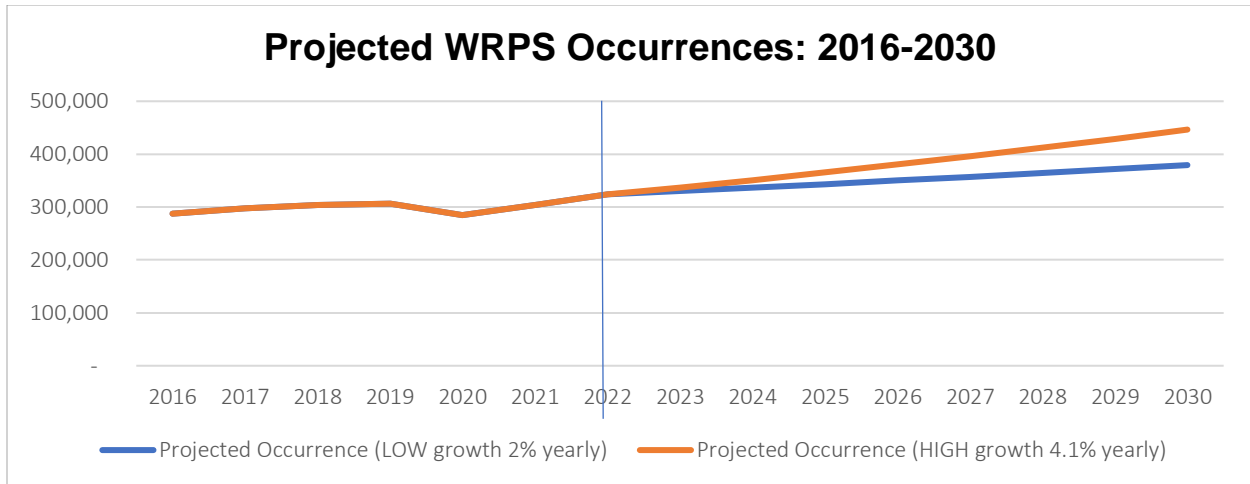
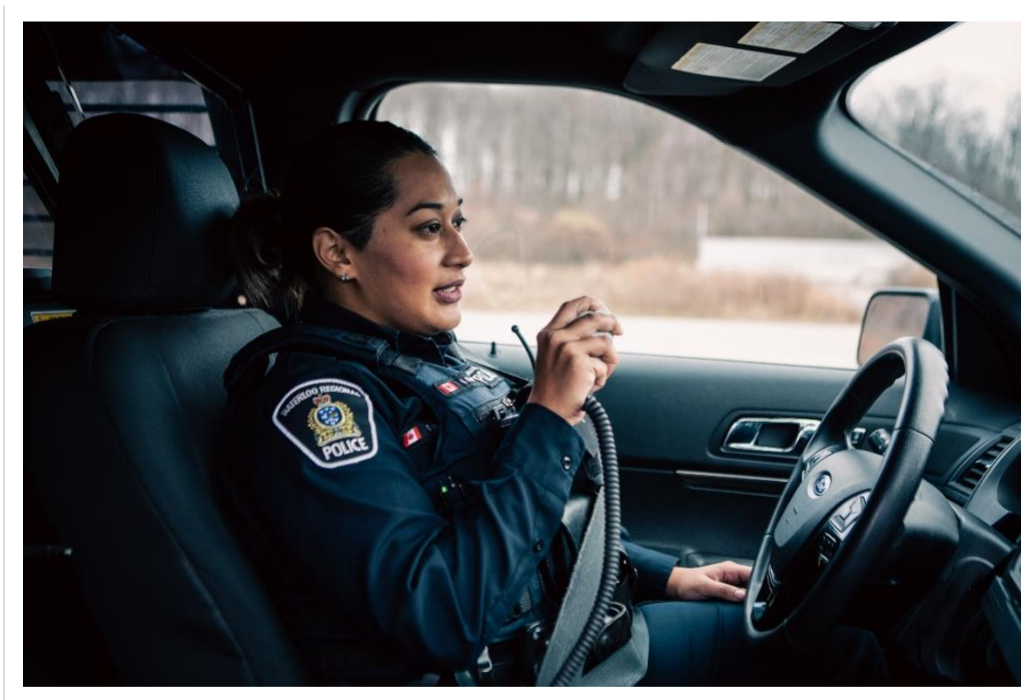


Figure 3: Projected WRPS Occurrences, 2016 to 2030. Source WRPS.

## Arrests and Charges

Arrests and charges laid are a way to measure changes in crime and demand on police services. The number and type of charges will vary over time as a result of changes to legislation. Over the past 10 years, WRPS has laid an average of 56,868 charges per year (Figure 4). On average, *Highway Traffic Act* charges are most frequently laid (51% of total charges), followed by *Criminal Code* charges (5% of total charges). Over the last decade, WRPS made an average of 14,328 arrests per year.



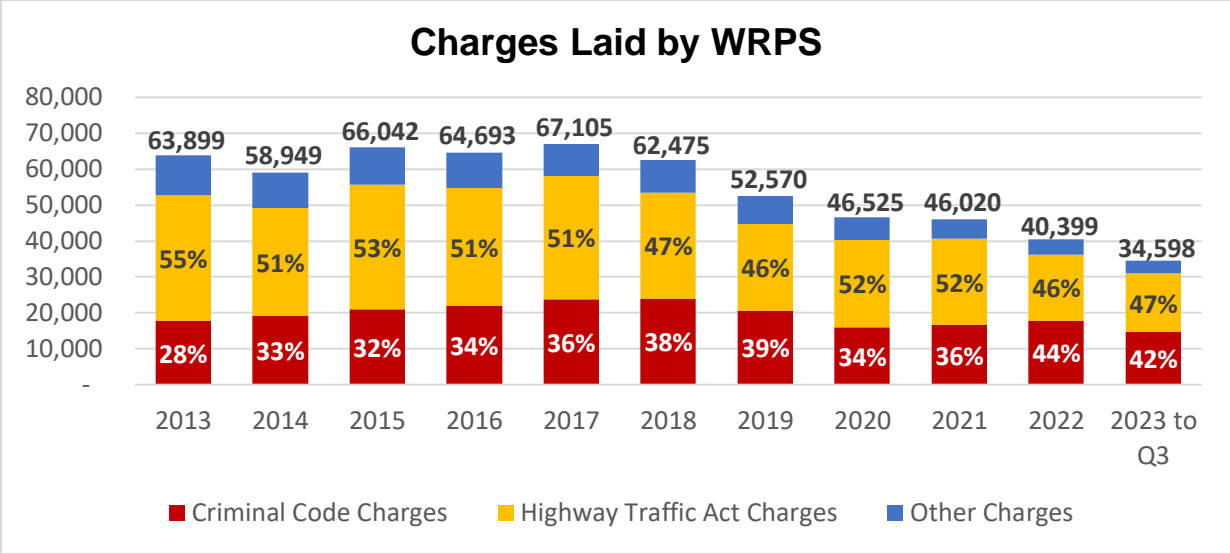


Figure 4: Number of Charges Laid by WRPS, 2013-2023 Q3. Source: WRPS.

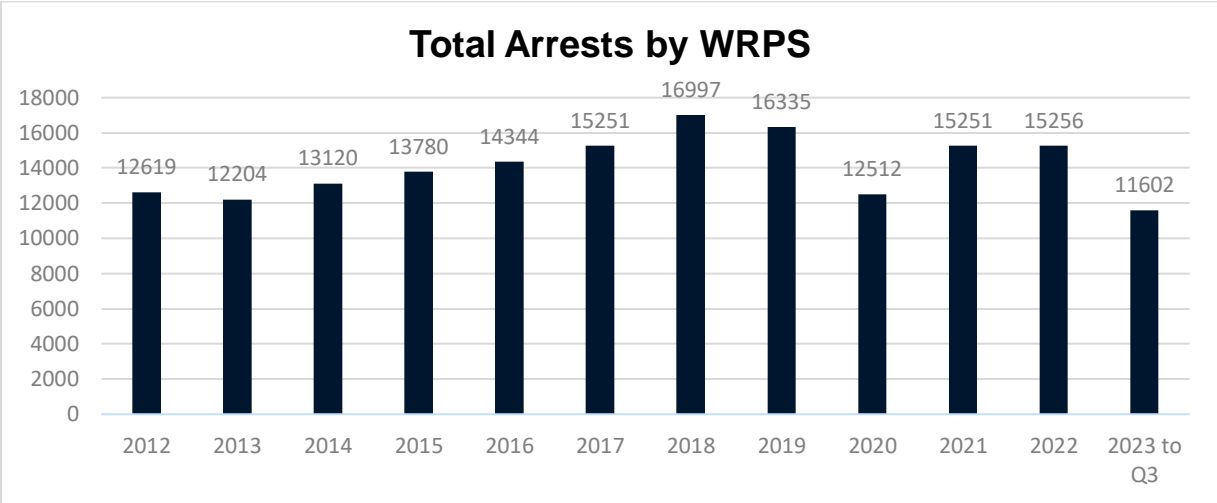


Figure 5: Number of Arrests made by WRPS by year, 2012-2023 Q3. Source: WRPS.





## Crime Severity Index and Violent Crime

The WRPS is committed to maintaining public safety within Waterloo Region and our members are dedicated to working 24/7/365 to investigate, solve, and prevent crime in the community. Violent crime is rising in our community, which has a significant impact on public safety and the wellness of everyone in Waterloo Region. While WRPS' Crime Suppression Strategy is proving effective at reducing violent crimes in the Region, these incidents continue to occur above the provincial and national averages.

Crime Type	2023 Figures (YTD)	Compared to 2022
Shootings	11	31% decrease
Weapon Violations	655	3% decrease
Homicides	5	8 TOTAL
Robberies (Pharmacy)	10	0% change
Robberies (Person on Person)	100	27% decrease
Total Robberies	183	11% decrease

Figure 6: 2023 Year to Date Overview of Violent Crimes

Each year, Statistics Canada collects standardized crime data from every police service across Canada using the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. One way that crime is measured is by using the Crime Severity Index (CSI). This index measures both the volume and severity of police-reported crime in Canada and has a base index value of 100 for 2006. Over the last decade, the Total CSI in Waterloo Region has been increasing (Figure 6). Between 2021 and 2022, the Total CSI increased by 3% in Waterloo Region, and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest among the Big 12 Ontario Services. The Violent CSI in Waterloo Region increased by 16% and had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest violent crime rate of the Big 12 Ontario Services.

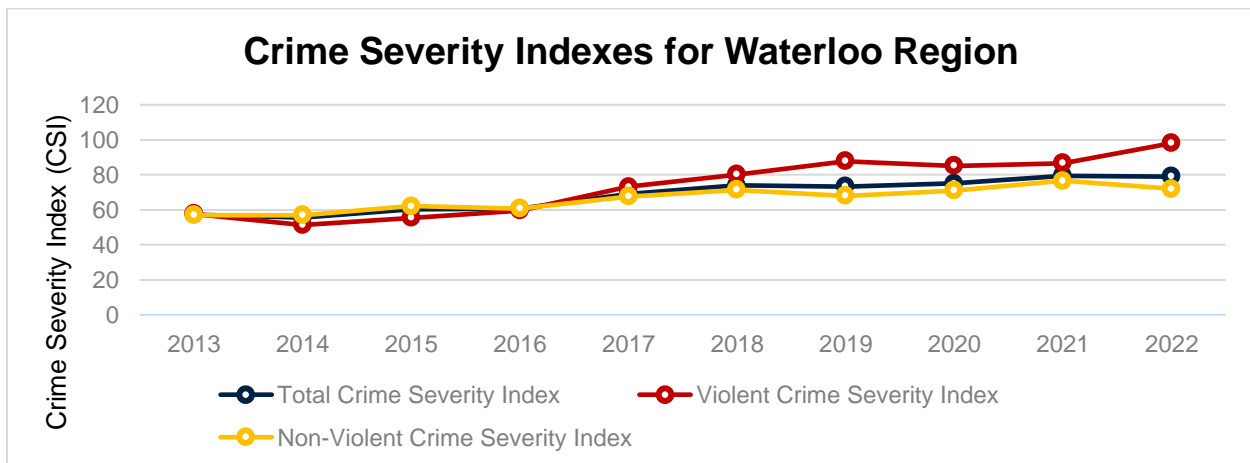


Figure 7: Total, Violent, and Non-Violent Crime Severity Indices for Waterloo Region, 2012-2021 2013-2022. Source: Statistics Canada Table 35-10-0188-01

## Changing Complexity of Crime

In addition to our Region dealing with unprecedented growth, there is also a change in the complexity of crime. Incidents of cyber-crime, gang violence, automobile theft, human trafficking, and mental health crises are becoming increasingly prevalent. Given the complex nature of such crimes, these incidents often require significant resources to properly investigate and, in some cases, span cross-jurisdictional boundaries.

Crime Type	2023 Figures (YTD)	Compared to 2022
Hate Crimes	173	21% increase
Child Pornography	285	65% increase
Human Trafficking	20	11% increase
Extortion	265	3% increase

Figure 8: A sample of complex criminal incidents in Waterloo Region

## Traffic Safety

Road safety remains a top priority across our community and the WRPS' Traffic Services Unit focuses on proactive measures to reduce the impact of the Fatal Four offences: impaired driving, speeding/aggressive driving, seatbelt use, and distracted driving. So far in 2023, WRPS laid approximately 7,000 charges in relation to the Fatal Four. The majority (81%) of Fatal Four charges laid were related to speeding/aggressive driving.

Out of the eight traffic fatalities in Waterloo Region in 2023, the majority were linked to the Fatal Four offences. Speeding and other forms of aggressive driving continue to be the most dangerous driving activities on Waterloo Region roads.

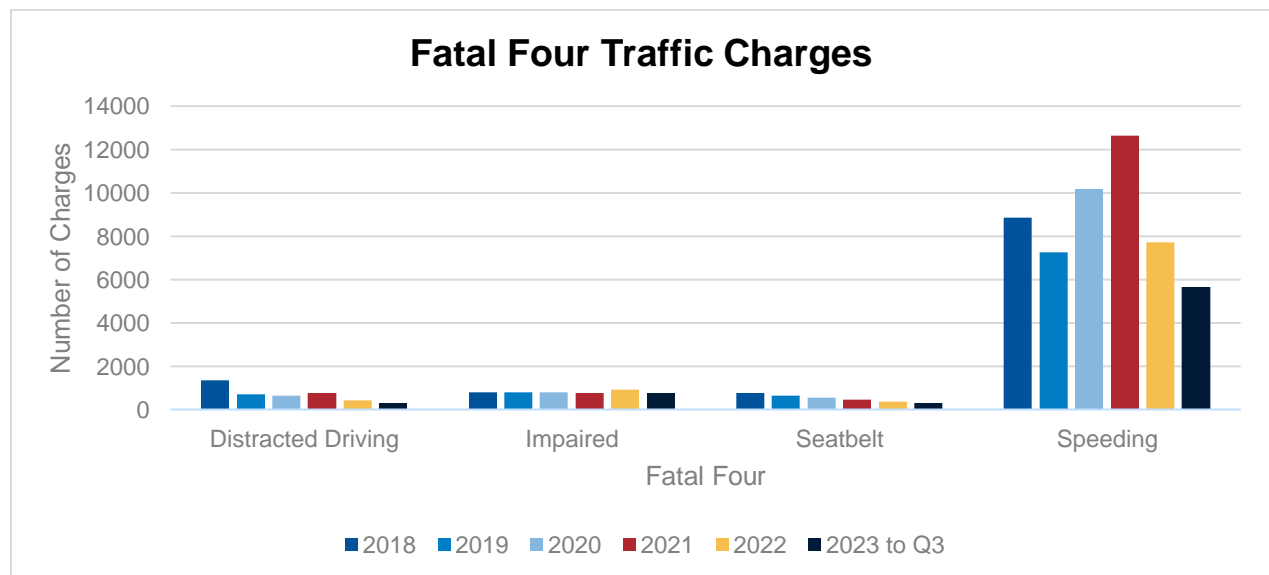


Figure 9: Count of fatal four charges between 2017 to 2023 Q3. Source: WRPS.

# Our People

## Staffing Levels

Over time, the rate of officers per 100,000 population has not kept pace with Regional population growth. WRPS has regularly reported staffing levels that fall below national and provincial averages. In 2022, WRPS had 128.4 sworn officers per 100,000 population, which is below the national and provincial rates of 181 and 174, respectively. WRPS staffing levels continue to fall below the average of the Big 12 Ontario Services and in order to meet this average for the actual number of officers, WRPS would need to hire an additional 93 sworn officers.

## Overtime

Full-time employees are scheduled to work 2,080 hours over the course of a year. While some amount of overtime is to be expected to respond to emergent situations or short periods of heightened work load, overtime hours used to cover standard operations can lead to decreased member wellbeing and burnout. This is not a sustainable practice. In 2020, initiatives such as implementing a new shift schedule and launching a Regional Scheduling Team contributed to a 48% reduction in overtime, returning totals to below the 12-year median even with pandemic response pressures in effect across 2020-2021. However, these gains have since been lost, with increasing use of overtime labour (Figure 9). In 2023, overtime hours increased 25% as compared to 2022. WRPS is on pace to have the highest use of overtime ever, having already eclipsed 2022 total levels by the end of October 2023. Regular frontline staffing continues to be the most cited cause of overtime demands. Monthly overtime variations often occur in response to community events requiring significant resources, such as St. Patrick’s Day in March and Homecoming in September. Additionally, the Public Safety Team is seeing a five-year increased trend in the deployment response for local demonstrations and protests.

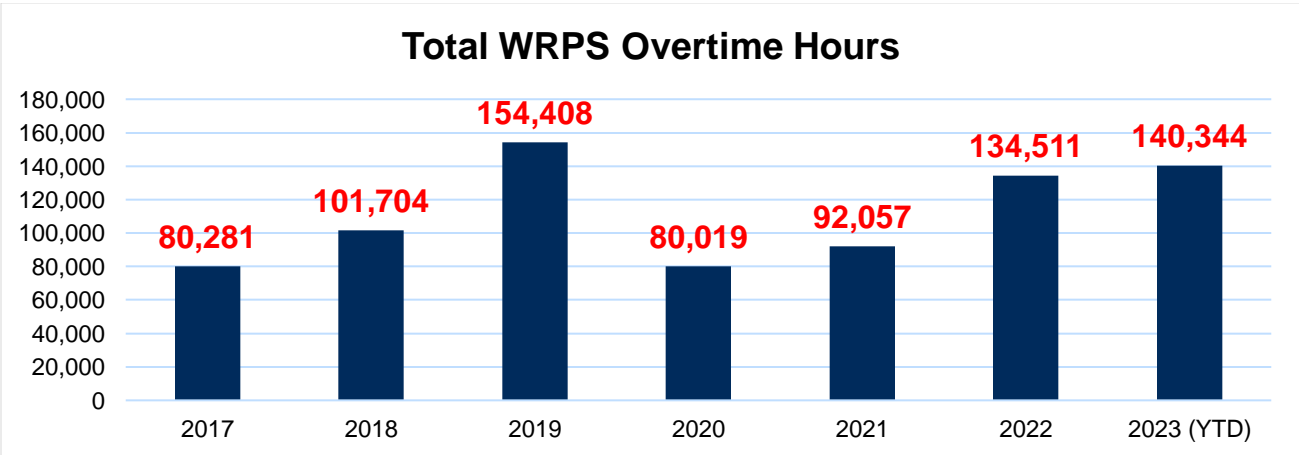


Figure 10: Total Overtime Hours, Annual, 2017-2023 to Q3. Source: WRPS

## Uniform and Civilian Recruitment

Attracting candidates to WRPS, consistently hiring to meet identified needs, and having members present and supporting their wellness at work are all important people-centered investments. Steady, consistent hiring practices offer improved opportunities for the organization to keep pace with workload demand, retirements and resignations, approved new complement, and to manage the capacity to train and onboard new members. Recruit intake will occur at four intervals starting in 2024. During the 2023 budget process, the Board endorsed a multi-year sworn officer expansion strategy to ensure that WRPS has the required staff to provide services to the community. The plan includes increases to sworn officer strength of 55 positions as follows: 19 officers in 2023, 18 officers in 2024 and 18 officers in 2025.

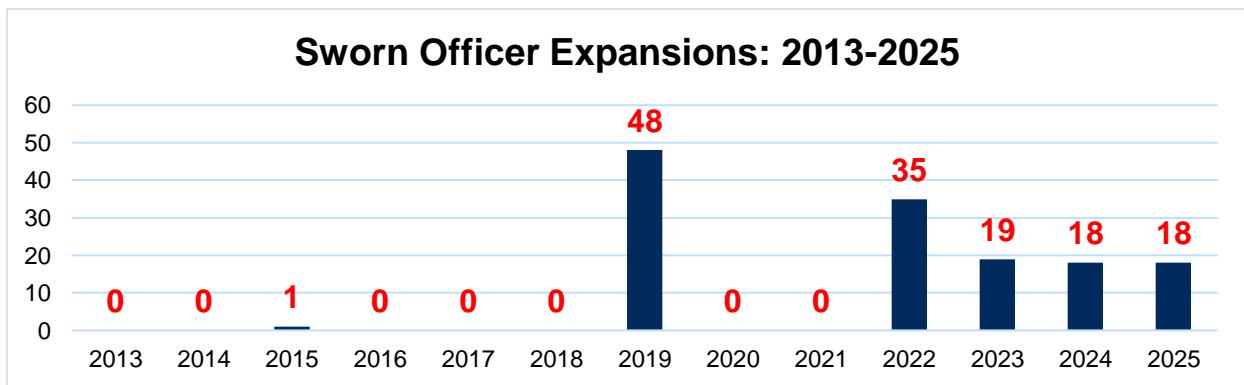
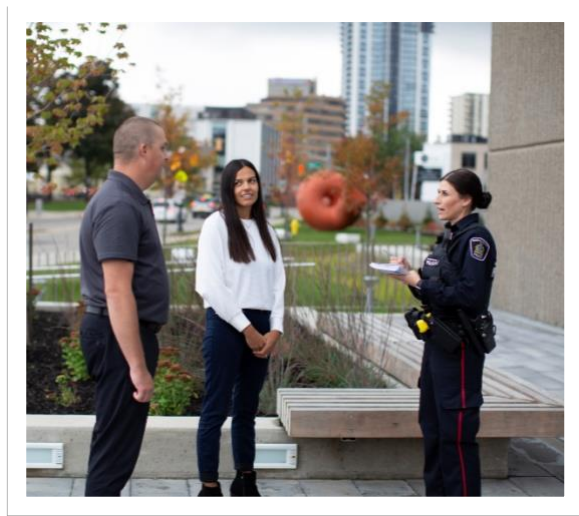


Figure 11: Sworn Officer Expansion, Annual, 2013-2025. Source: WRPS.



# Community Partnerships

## Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan

WRPS is committed to action and investment in the Regional Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWP) through collaborative governance, engaging upstream resources, creating community safety partnerships, and reporting on performance measures for identified priorities. Our goal is to prevent individuals or groups from the ongoing cycle of incident and emergency response and guide them to resources based in risk intervention, prevention, and social development while contributing to the creation of protective factors at each level of the framework.

### Responding to Hate Crimes

Through outreach and training, WRPS' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) unit leads the Service in creating equitable outcomes for our members and the community we serve. The EDI unit holds established trusted relationships and partnerships with community leaders and

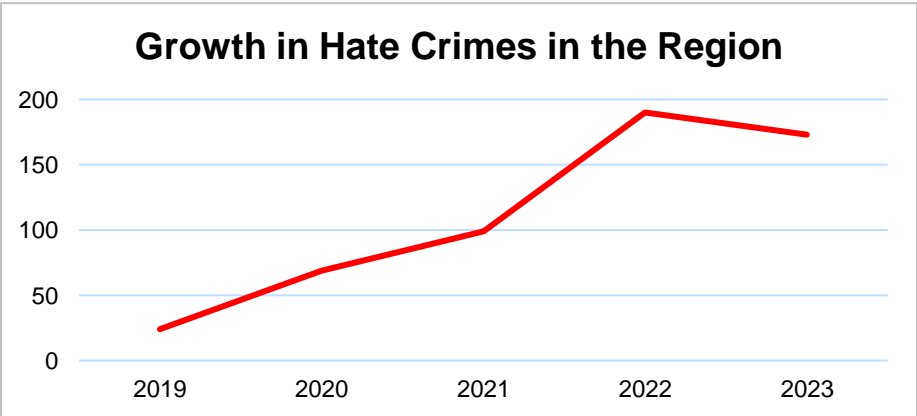


Figure 12: Growth in Hate Crimes in the Region, 2019-2023. Source: WRPS.

diverse community organizations. Whenever hate is involved in a call for service, officers inform the EDI unit, who provide support to the victim(s). In 2022, there were 187 total police reported incidents in relation to hate-motivated crime. Comparatively, between January 1 and September 30, 2023, there were 170 incidents. Recently, during times of global tension, the EDI Unit has served as a primary liaison with community groups in navigating public safety concerns across the Region.

### Upcoming WRPS Youth Engagement Strategy

In alignment with the CSWP, the WRPS Youth Engagement Strategy will focus our efforts across the community, seeking to activate existing resources while creating new and youth informed methods of positive engagement with WRPS and community members. The strategy will take into consideration the need to prevent impacts of adverse childhood experiences and will create pathways for youth justice diversion while focusing on collaborative efforts and resources into youth development programming, community vitality, and civic engagement. The

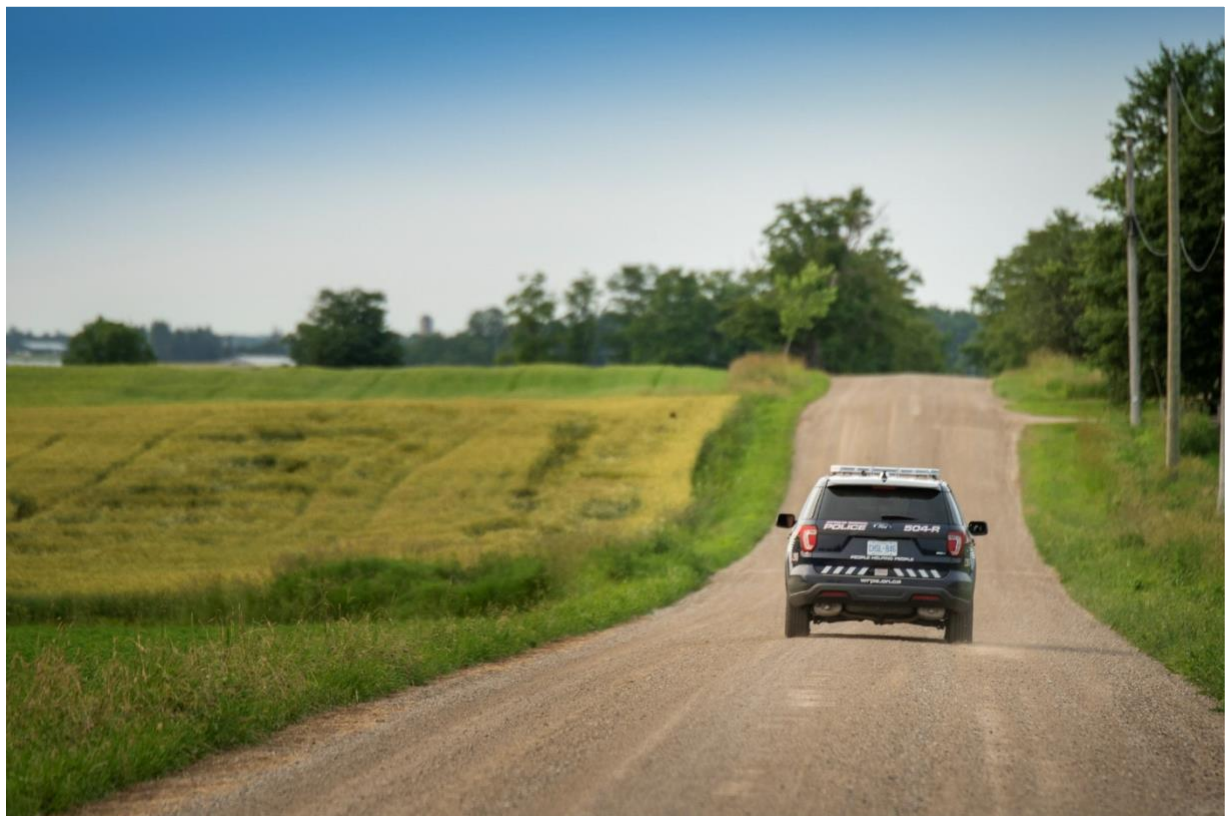
strategy will be informed using recent youth feedback to identify potential solutions and evaluate initiatives aimed at reducing youth violence in Waterloo Region.

## **Community Integration and Involvement**

As a matter of practice and policy, WRPS has always supported and worked cooperatively with a number of upstream service providers and agencies in the Region. WRPS recognizes and continues to advocate for upstream funding and a community approach to managing and resolving complex situations involving homelessness, addiction, and domestic violence, among other factors.

## **Rural Community Engagement**

Recently, WRPS launched a Rural Township Policing Strategy with the goal to increase rural responsiveness while embracing collaborative partnerships and community engagement with the Townships that strengthen public safety and community well-being. A key element of this Strategy was the creation of the Staff Sergeant position in Community Engagement and Wellbeing to serve as a liaison to the Townships. This Staff Sergeant will work to improve communication with key stakeholders in rural communities.



# Budget Overview

## 2024 Approved Operating and Capital Estimates

The 2024 approved Budget Operating and Capital estimates make critical investments in public safety across Waterloo Region. This includes the addition of 18 uniform officers for high demand policing areas, including frontline and victim-focused areas. With our deep commitment to public safety, these frontline investments are necessary now to ensure WRPS is able to keep pace with population pressures and the increasing rate of crime across the Region.

Primary Areas of Investment for Budget 2024	
<b>Frontline Patrol Services</b>	Investment in frontline patrol services is required to meet population growth, increased calls for service demand, and increase presence in both urban and rural communities.
<b>Investigative Services</b>	Investment in Investigative Services to focus on intimate partner violence response to preventive measures, increasing the capacity to investigate fraud and major cases.
<b>Training</b>	Additional training resources are required to support the new Ontario Police College basic constable training program, enhanced reintegration efforts of members as a part of a new wellness strategy, revised provincial use of force model and the new Community Safety and Policing Act requirements.
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	WRPS will be refocusing efforts to engage with youth in our community and to provide more consistent and efficient service to our school community and partner agencies.

The 2024 approved Operating Budget estimates is \$228,428K, which is an increase over 2023 of \$14,368K or 6.71% and results in a tax impact of 4.62% on the police portion of the property tax bill, with assessment growth estimated at 2%. The average regional taxes for a typical residence for the police portion is approximately \$780, which amounts to an increase of \$34. The police portion of the property tax bill represented approximately 31% of the total tax bill for Regional services in 2023 (decreasing annually since 2021).

Description	Amount
Operating Budget (\$K)	\$228,428
Increase %	6.71%
Increase (\$K)	\$14,368
Tax Impact on Police Portion of Property Tax Bill	4.62%

Figure 13: Summary of 2024 Approved Budget Operating Estimates. Source: WRPS.

The main drivers behind the 6.71% year over year increase in the Operating Budget includes contractual (staffing) impacts of 2.29%, benefit cost increases of 2.12%, 18 officer expansion of 1.98% (including a civilian support component), reserve funding improvements of 0.44%, frontline technology investments of 0.14%, and other reductions totaling (0.25%).

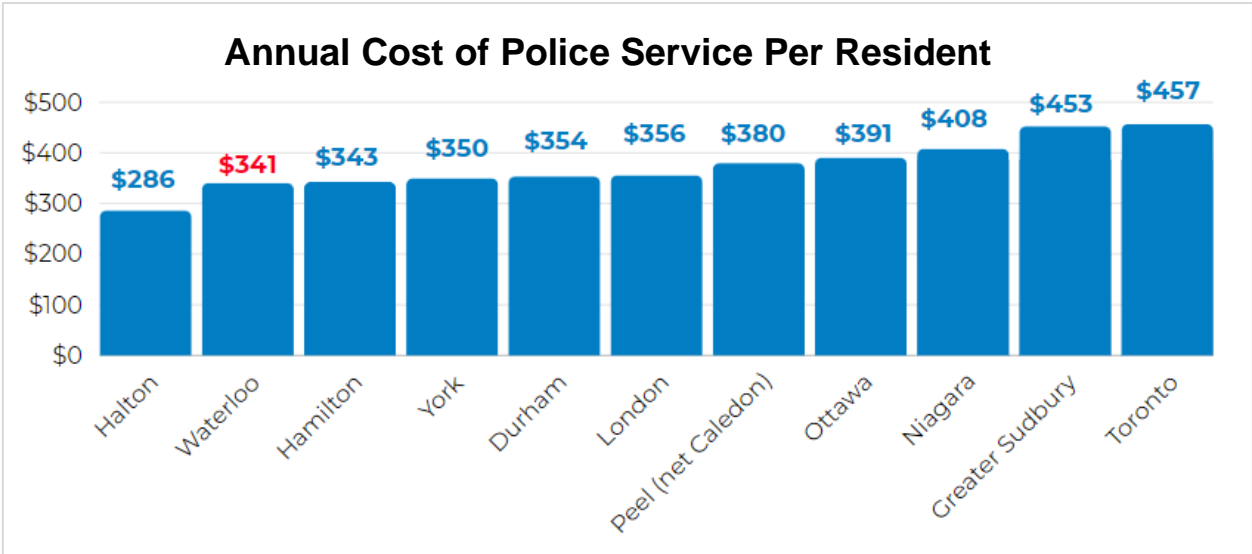


Figure 14: Annual Cost of Police Service Per Resident. Source: Big 12 Ontario Police Services.

## Reserve and Reserve Funds

WRPS makes concerted efforts to manage all finances with the utmost accountability, acting in full transparency to our Police Services Board and the community, and in accordance with the Board’s Reserve and Reserve Fund Management Policy. The strategic use of reserve and reserve funds are a critical tool to preserve and help strengthen the WRPS, and thereby the Region of Waterloo’s long-term financial position. Following the Region of Waterloo’s capital financing guidelines, WRPS adheres to the building of operating budget and reserve capacity to fund capital lifecycle and facilities renewal programs, and to focus debt on significant new infrastructure, which includes growth and expansions. The primary objectives of WRPS reserve and reserve funds adhere to statutory requirements, promotion of financial stability and flexibility, provision for major capital expenditures, and reduction in the need for tax-levy funded debentures. WRPS manages its surplus with transparency and is consistently in line with the Region’s overall surplus percentage.

Fiscal Year	WRPS Surplus as % of Overall Budget	Region of Waterloo Surplus as % of Overall Budget
2018	1.1%	1.5%
2019	(0.6%)	0.7%
2020	1.8%	1.1%
2021	1.2%	2.3%
2022	0.1	1.3%

Figure 15: WRPS and Region of Waterloo Surplus Percentage Compared to Overall Budget. Source: WRPS.



# Conclusion

A team of dedicated WRPS officers, civilians, and partners are vital to strengthening public safety and community wellbeing in the face of ever-changing needs. This requires continued sound investment into prevention, enforcement, technology, and into our members who dedicate their careers to serving the community.

As a result of the strength of our community partnerships and complimented by the innovation of our organization and the resiliency of our members, WRPS has continually risen to meet demands brought on by changes and increases in population, call volume, violent crime, and socio-economic pressures. Unfortunately, the increased demands on policing services is part of a long-term trend that includes not only an increase in the number of events necessitating the expert response of police officers, but also an increase in the complexity of the response that is required.

The 2024 approved Budget Operating and Capital estimates are the result of considerable discussion, research, and refinement on behalf of our entire membership. It highlights the need for an investment in public safety within our community as a result of increased violent crime and calls for service, as well as continued demands from the community for enhanced service and delivery. We cannot compromise the safety of those who live in this ever-growing community but, instead, must prepare and invest to ensure a safe and prosperous future.

The Vision of our Service is that “every person in Waterloo Region is safe and feels safe.” To achieve this, we recognize the need to also commit to system-wide community solutions to address the root causes of crime and victimization. Behind every crime statistic is a victim who has suffered real life consequences. We must continue to work in collaboration to find the best solutions possible to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of all residents we serve.



This Budget Information Package is prepared  
in support of our:

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## MISSION

To deliver effective police services while embracing  
collaborative partnerships and community engagement  
that strengthen safety and community well-being.

## VISION

Every person in Waterloo Region is safe  
and feels safe.

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[www.wrps.on.ca](http://www.wrps.on.ca)

