

Investing in Recreation:

User fee and cost recovery policy



C 1

Communication

CW(WS) – June 18, 2025

Item No. 2





Agenda

- ▶ **Objectives & Methodology**
- ▶ **Current User Fee Policy & Performance**
- ▶ **Municipal Benchmarking**
- ▶ **Stakeholder Consultation**
- ▶ **Guiding Principles**
- ▶ **Options**
- ▶ **Recommendations**

Study Purpose and objectives



Vaughan Sports Leagues (2025), ages 7-9

Study methodology

Partnered
with experts

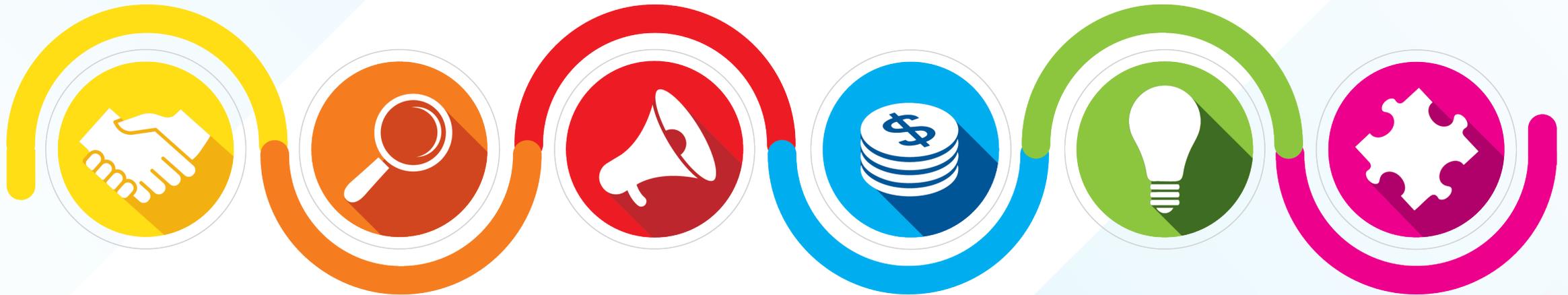
Research

Stakeholder
consultation

Costing
breakdown

Strategic
options

Final
framework



Current user fee policy

Subsidies & Support

Discounted fees and financial aid for priority groups.



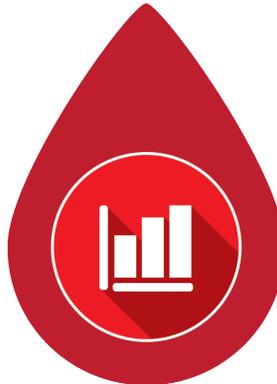
Resident Priority

Non-residents pay a surcharge to protect Vaughan access



Data-Driven Adjustments

Fees adjusted based on inflation, market trends, and participation.



CURRENT USER FEE POLICY

Target: 95% Cost Recovery

Fees aim to recover 95% of direct recreation operating costs.



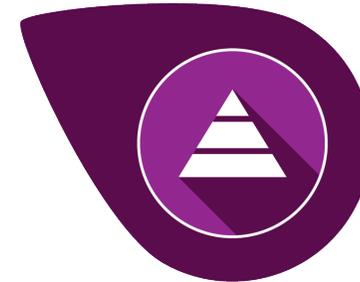
Stable Fee Adjustments

Changes capped at $\pm 5\%$ annually or 10% over three years.

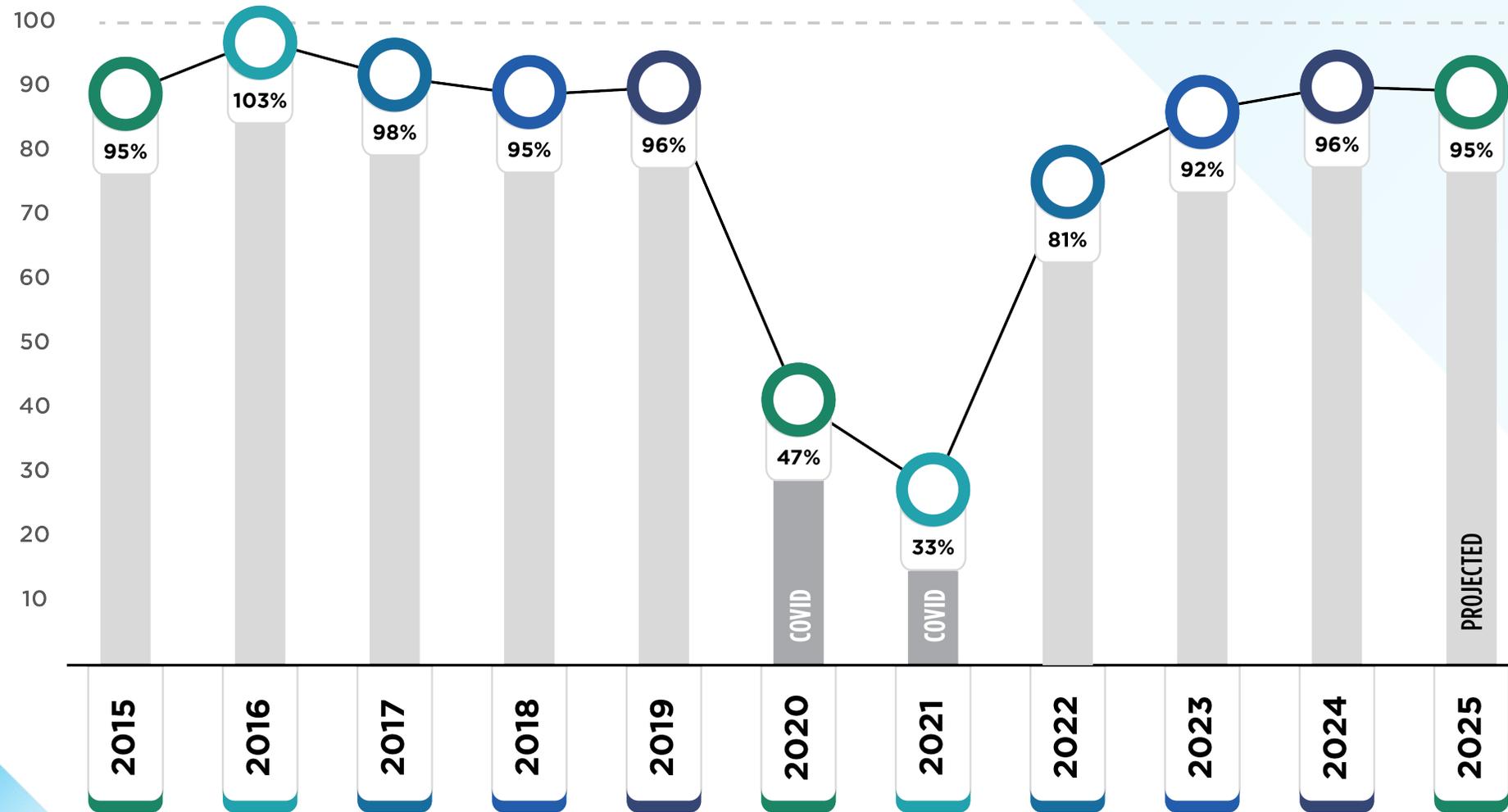


Tiered Fee Categories

Programs classified as basic, value-added, or premium.

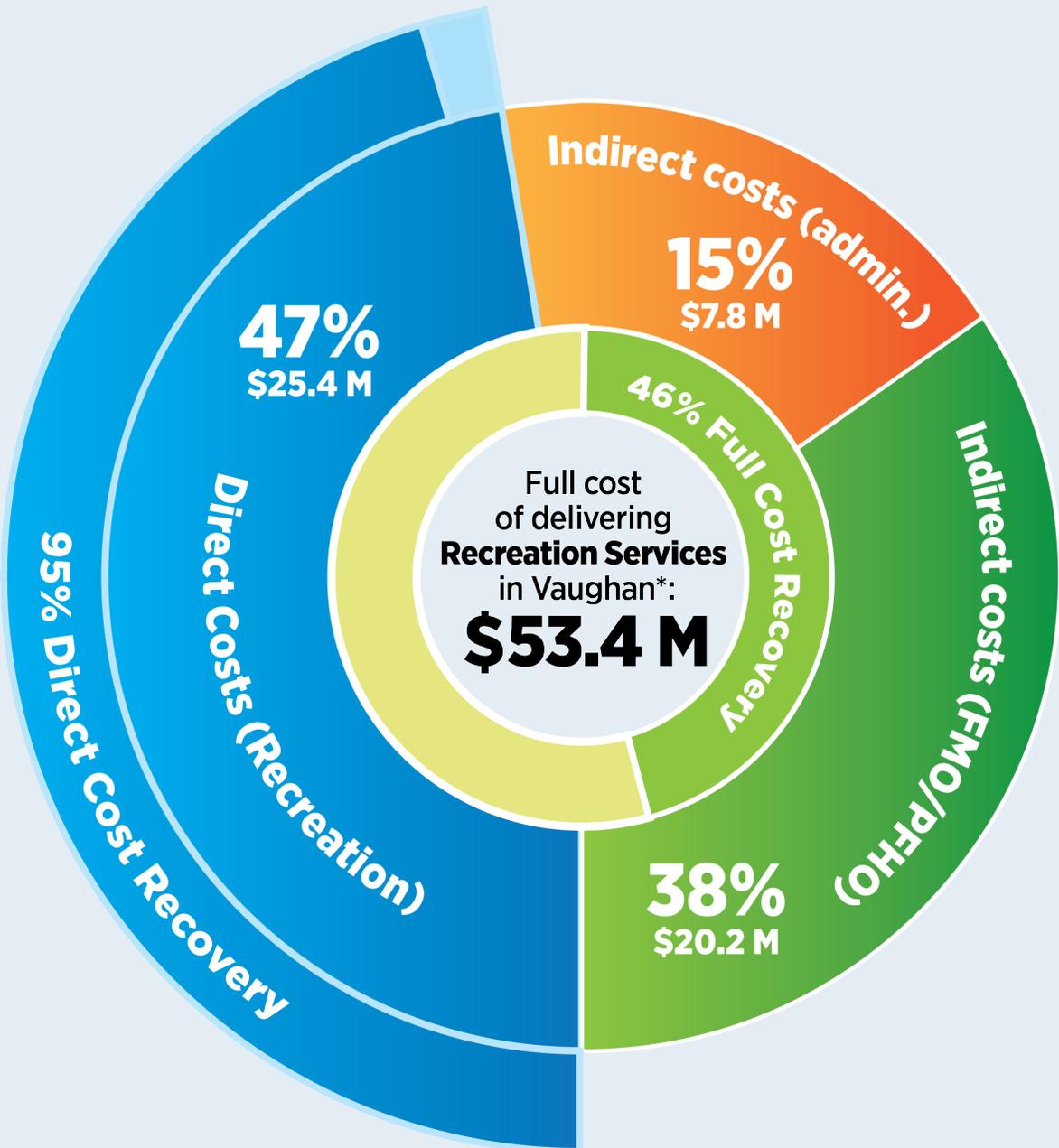


Direct cost recovery performance

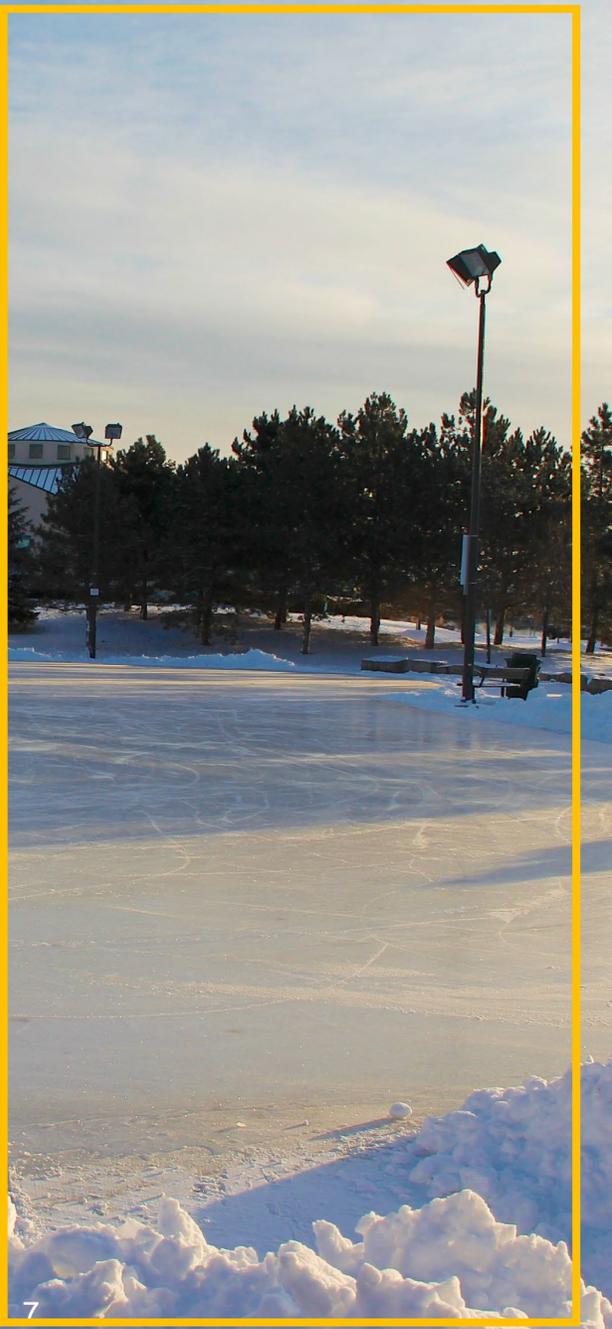


Despite the gradual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, positive trends are aligning direct cost recovery with the policy's 95% target.

Full cost analysis: Peeling back the layers



*Source: 2024 Operating Actuals



Municipal benchmarking

5

municipalities

Brampton
Mississauga
Markham
Oakville
Richmond Hill

SIMILAR

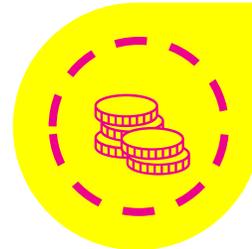
demographic and
socio-economic profiles

3.8%

**Vaughan
income inequality**

versus

6% among
comparator
municipalities



323,000+

Vaughan population
(2021)

\$107,000

Vaughan
median income

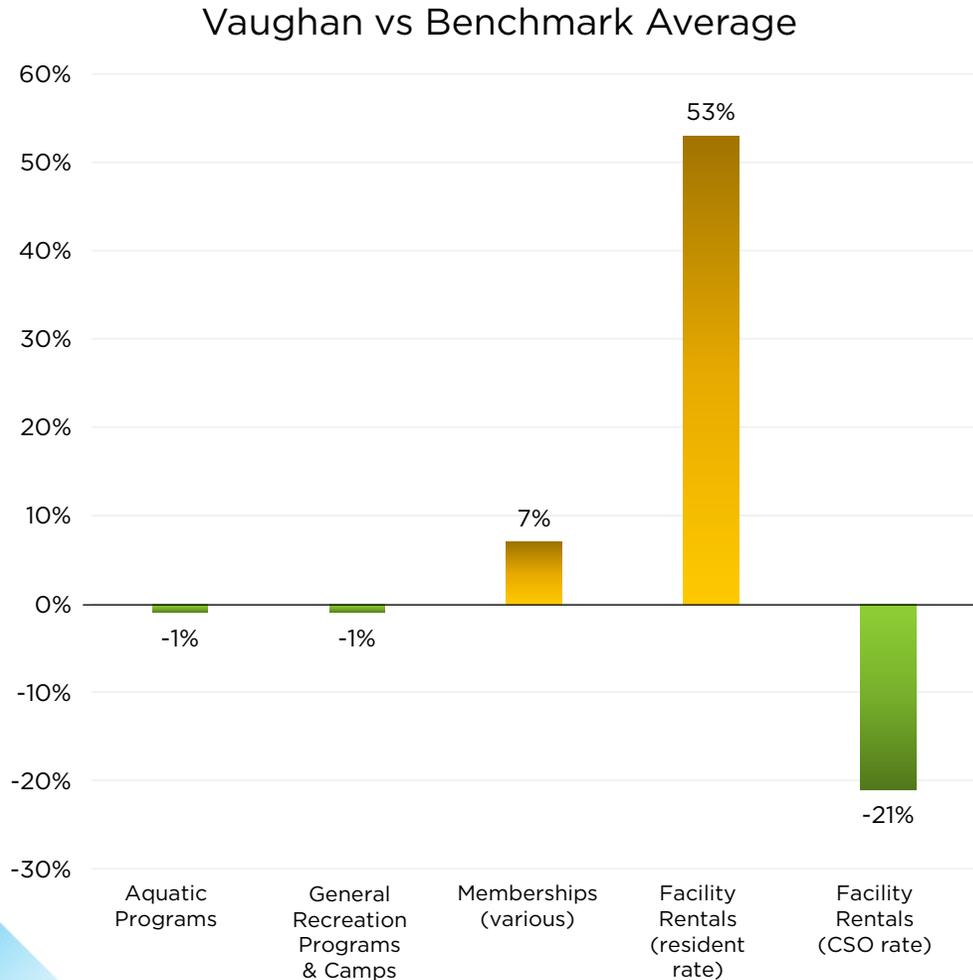
Vaughan has the **highest direct cost recovery rates of comparable municipalities, based on 2023 Municipal Financial Information Returns**

33%

versus

28%

Benchmarking fees



Although fees are generally priced above the benchmark average, **there are notable exceptions** where they are significantly lower.



Vaughan older adults at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre



Young Vaughan Rangers at the Rogers Hometown Hockey event

Public and stakeholder consultation: overview



3

well-attended open houses with older adult clubs, user groups and the general public



50+

staff interviews + Mayor and Members of Council



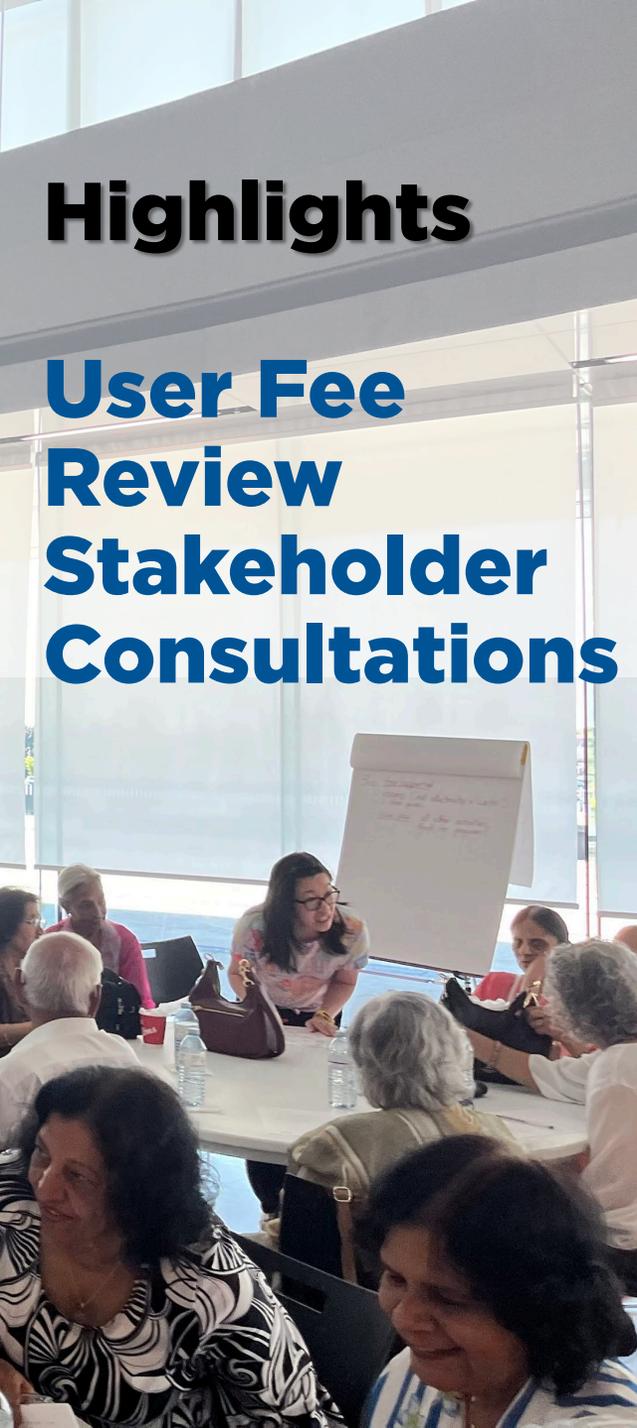
2,746

record # of online survey responses received from public and user groups



Highlights

User Fee Review Stakeholder Consultations



78%
fees offer good value for money



53%
fees are similar or higher than in other municipalities



! **top priorities**
affordability, access and quality



maintain or reduce fees even if it means cuts to services

44%

vs.



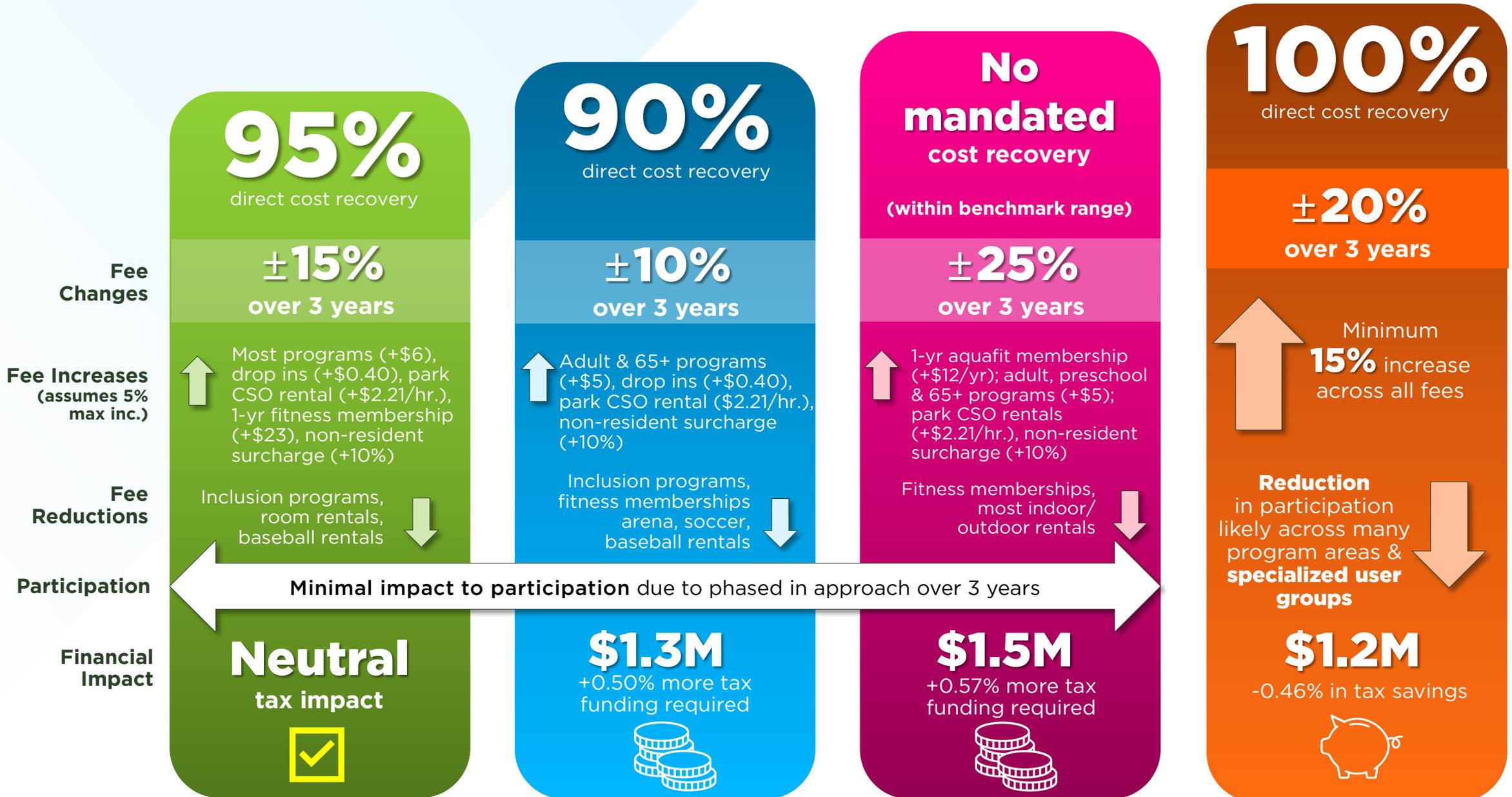
increase fees to expand or maintain service levels

56%

Guiding principles



Options for consideration



Option 1 preferred



- ✓ Fall 2025 Implementation
- ✓ Aligns best with guiding principles
- ✓ No additional impact to taxation
- ✓ Offers flexibility
- ✓ Promotes participation
- ✓ Supports accessibility and affordability
- ✓ Align with municipal benchmarks
- ✓ Respond to change



Policy recommendations

- ▶ Follow guiding principles
- ▶ Increase non-resident surcharge from 10 % to 20%
- ▶ Provide subsidized fees to encourage participation among key user groups, including older adults and community service organizations
- ▶ Monitor the effects of fees and discounts on participation



Summer Adventure camp at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre

Strategic oversight model

- ✓ Departmental authority to administer fees
- ✓ Limit fee adjustments
- ✓ Promote financial assistance
- ✓ Seek alternative funding & implement cost saving
- ✓ Ensure open public communication on fees
- ✓ Review annual fee adjustments with Finance
- ✓ Conduct comprehensive fee reviews every five years



Looking ahead



Inclusion Summer Camp at Maple Community Centre

- ▶ **Comprehensive:** City's review is thorough, in-depth and covers all pertinent aspects of the Policy
- ▶ **Progressive:** Current User Fee Policy is a benchmark for other municipalities
- ▶ **Potential alignment:** Some fee rates warrant adjustment to reflect fees charged elsewhere
- ▶ **Sustainable:** 95% cost recovery policy remains appropriate for Vaughan residents, balancing cost recovery, accessibility and affordability



Thank You

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