

### Housing Affordability in Ontario: Perceptions, Impacts, And Solutions (Wave 4)

Conducted for the Ontario Real Estate Association November 2023

#### Methodology

- Sample size: 2,000 Ontario residents, aged 18 and over.
- Survey field dates: November 15 to 19, 2023.
- The data was weighted by age, gender, education and region.
- Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



#### **Executive summary**

The Ontario Government faces a critical juncture, with rising concerns among Ontarians about the cost of living and housing affordability. These issues consistently rank on top of the priorities list. Household finances are stretched and optimism about buying a home steadily declines. Ontarians believe buying a home has gotten more difficult over the last year and will continue to get more difficult in the coming years.

This is the first survey (since June 2021) we have conducted for OREA in which a majority of Ontarians report "making housing more affordable" as a top priority (51%, +16 since 2021). Since June 2021, those who feel housing affordability should be a top or very high priority has increased from 61% to 76% (+15%).

Compounding and interconnected with housing affordability, Ontarians are grappling with the high cost of living; 52% indicate they can cover expenses but struggle to save, while 17% can't cover normal expenses without resorting to debt or significant spending cuts. Everyday essentials like food, utilities, and mortgage or rent payments were listed among the top additional financial stressors.

55% believe that decisions made by the Ontario government have increased the difficulty of purchasing a home. Despite the desire for the government to prioritize housing affordability (76%, +8 since Wave 3), only 28% (down 2% since Wave 3) perceive them to be doing so. 80% believe the Ontario government has the power to improve housing affordability, but there's skepticism about Doug Ford and the PC party's commitment to doing so, with only 14% believing they care a lot a lot about this issue. Disapproval of the current government's efforts regarding housing affordability stands at 53%, indicating a need for more effective and visible solutions.

Addressing the housing crisis is a political necessity for Premier Doug Ford and the PC party in Ontario. It is a crucial step towards regaining public trust and improving overall approval ratings – particularly as the PC party is still believed to be the leaders most suitable for addressing housing affordability but only slightly so as they are followed closely by the NDP.

Overall, given that majority of Ontarians want housing affordability to be a top priority for the government, there exists a clear mandate for action on this to improve the quality of life of Ontarians.

## ONTARIO THE CONTEXT



#### **Key findings**

**Top priorities for Ontarians and consistent concerns:** Rising cost of living (84%, +3 since Wave 3) and housing affordability (76%, +8) both rank among the top three priorities for the government to focus on. 48% (+7) also consider encouraging the construction of more homes in the province as a top or very high priority. Rising cost of living and housing affordability have been consistently top concerns for Ontarians since tracking began.

When asked to choose three focus areas for the government, rising cost of living (61% a top priority) and making housing more affordable (51% a top priority) continue to rank top three, alongside improving healthcare.

- The rising cost of living is particularly worrisome for aspiring homeowners (69%) and current renters (66%).
- Housing affordability is a significant concern for ages 18 to 29, with 88% saying it is a top (59%) or very high (29%) priority.
- Residents in southwestern Ontario are slightly more concerned with housing affordability and supply than the rest of the province: 56% say making housing more affordable is a top priority (+5 vs Ontario), and 51% say encouraging more home construction is a top or very high priority (+3 vs Ontario).

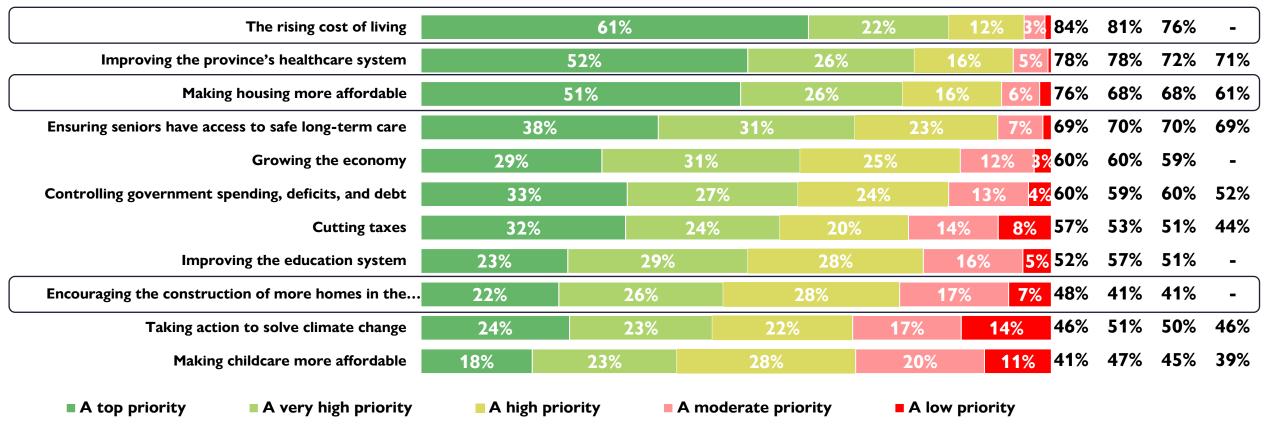
Political landscape: Voting considerations across most parties are split (some would consider, some would not), but if an election were held today, Doug Ford's PC party leads with 40%, followed by Marit Stiles' NDP at 26%. Overall impressions of Premier Doug Ford are dropping (net score (pos-neg) -21), while impressions of Liberal Leader Bonnie Crombie\* (+8) and NDP Leader Marit Stiles (+6) are net positive. More people currently disapprove (49%) of the overall job the Ontario Government, led by Premier Doug Ford, is doing than approve (29%) and 76% agree it is time for a change in government, but opinions differ on a good alternative.



## Rising cost of living and housing affordability rank among the top three priorities for the government to focus on

% Top/Very high priority

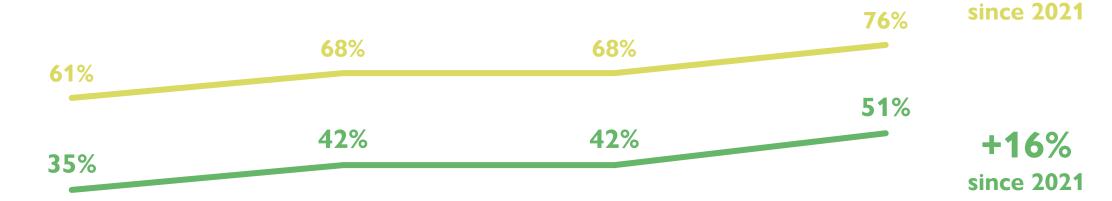
Nov 2023 Nov 2022 Jan. 2022 June 2021







#### Priority Assessment: Ensuring Housing is More Affordable Trend since June 2021



June 2021 January 2022 November 2022 November 2023

—Top Priority —Top/Very High Priority

Base [all] = 2000



+15%



#### Issues the provincial govt. could focus on

% Top/Very high priority **Tracking** Nov. Jan. Jun. 2023 2022 2022 2021 61% The rising cost of living 22% 83% 81% **76%** Improving the province's healthcare system 52% 26% **78**% **78**% **72%** 71% 51% Making housing more affordable 26% **76% 70% 70%** 69% 31% 38% Ensuring seniors have access to safe long-term care 68% 68% 69% 61% 29% 31% **Growing the economy** 60% **59%** 60% Controlling government spending, deficits, and debt 33% 27% **59%** 60% 60% **52%** 32% 24% **Cutting taxes 57%** 53% 51% 44% 23% 29% Improving the education system **57%** 51% **52%** 22% Encouraging the construction of more homes in the province 26% 48% 51% **50%** 46% 24% 23% Taking action to solve climate change 46% 47% 45% 39% 18% Making childcare more affordable 23% 41% 41% 41%

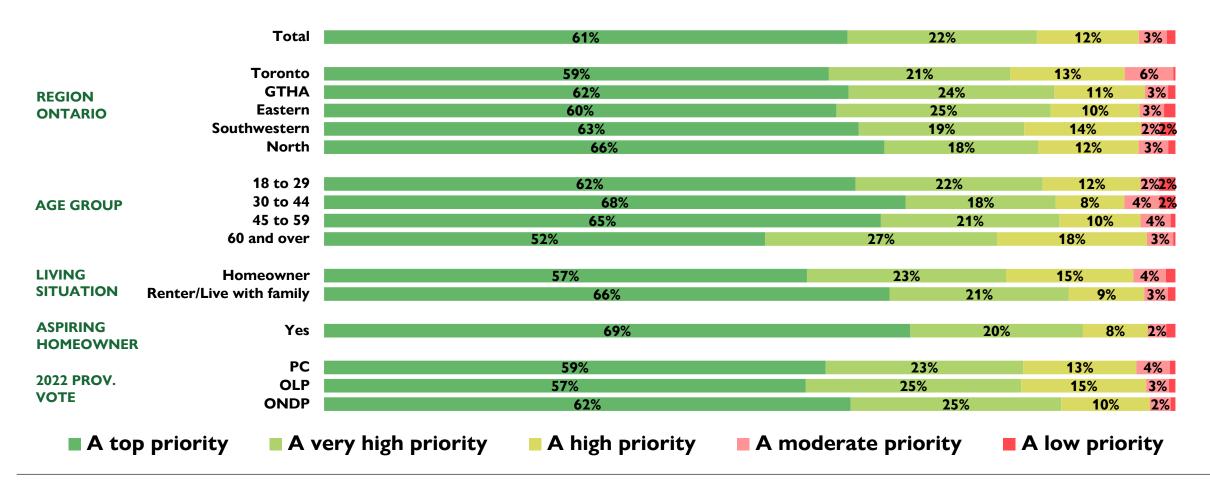
■ A top priority

A very high priority





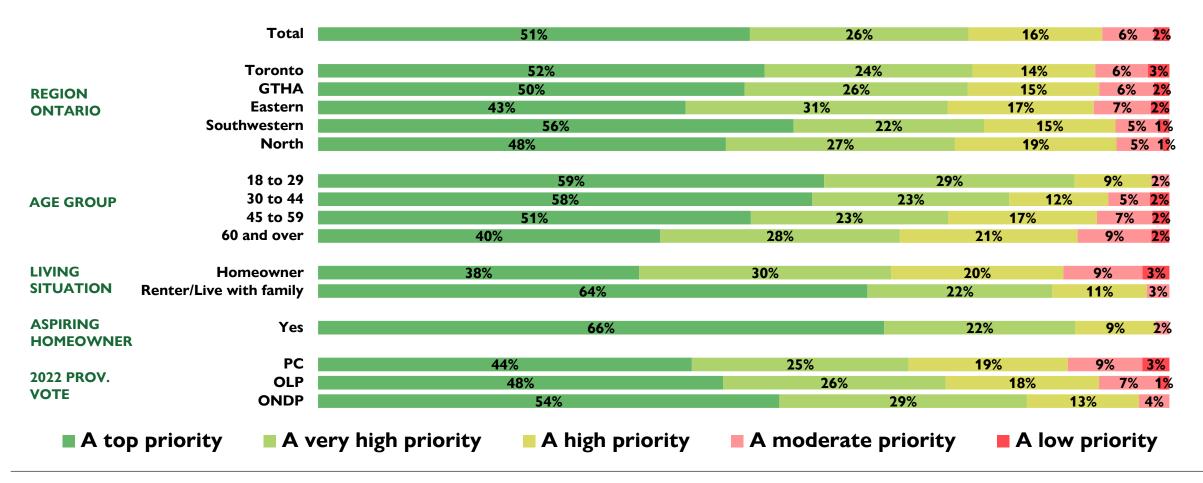
#### THE RISING COST OF LIVING







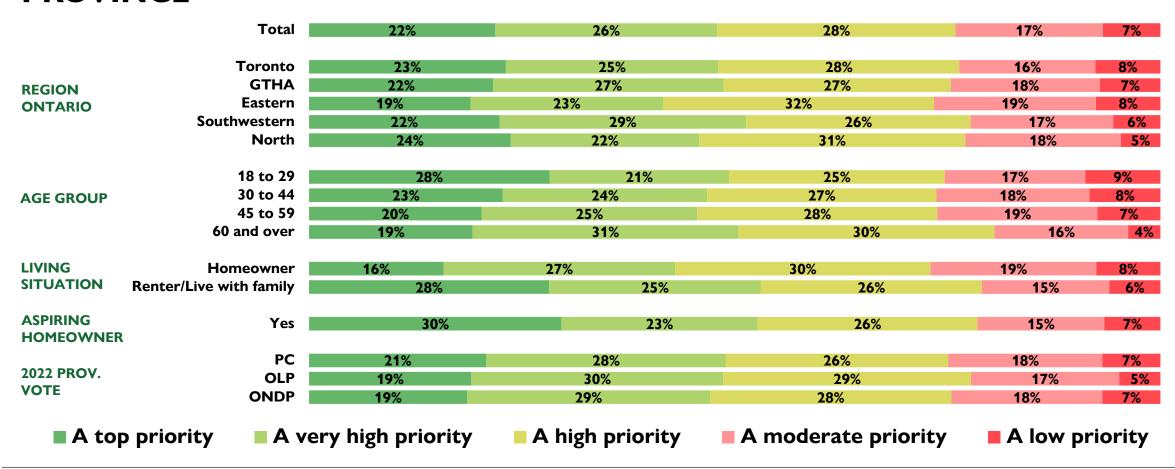
#### MAKING HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE







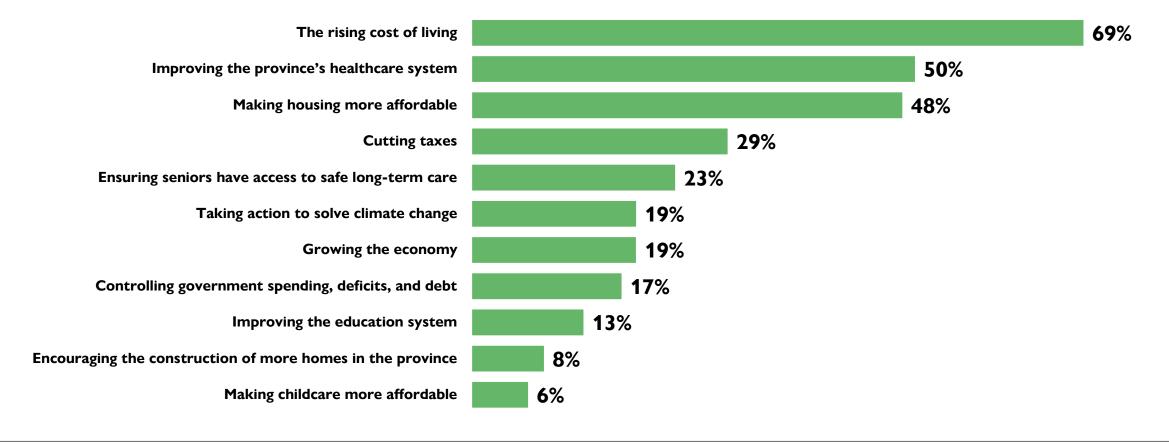
## ENCOURAGING THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORE HOMES IN THE PROVINCE







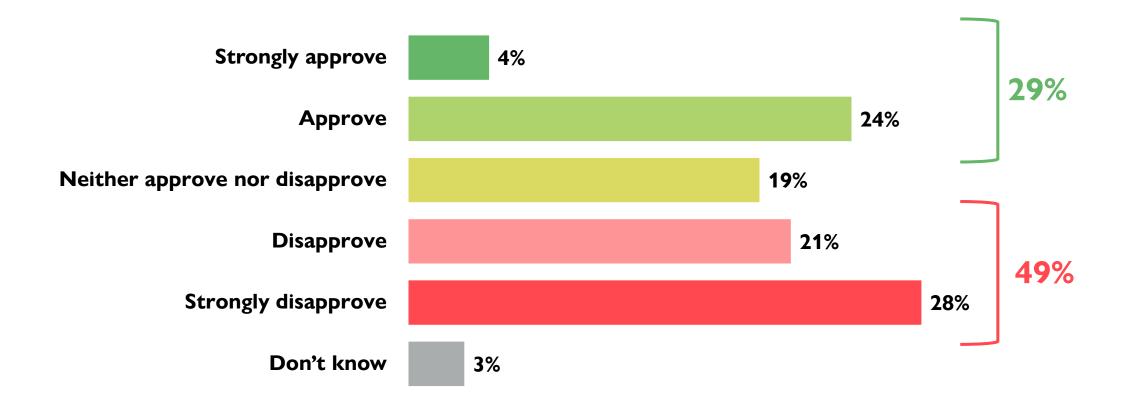
## Rising cost of living and housing affordability rank among the top three priorities for the Ontario government to focus on:





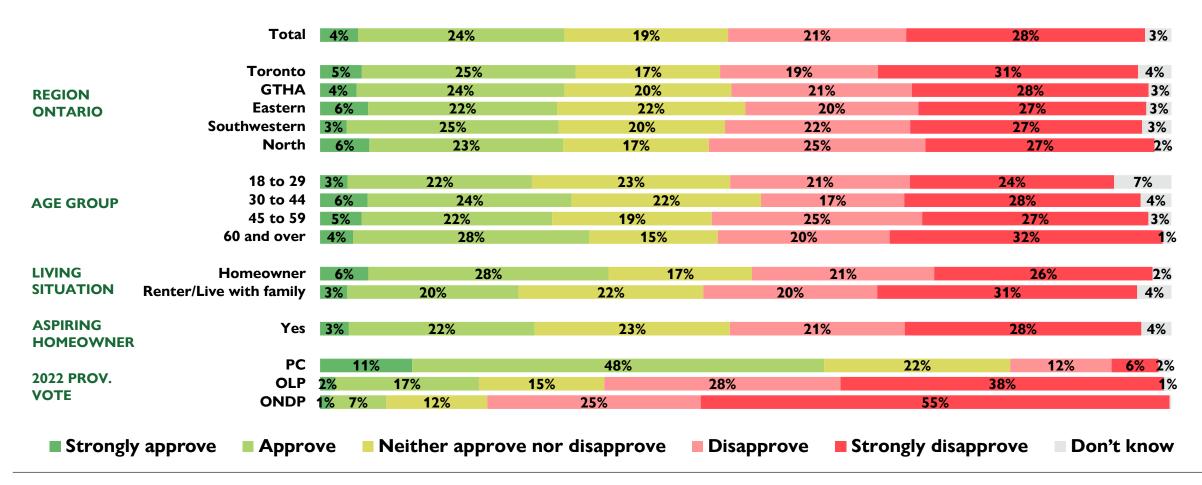


#### **GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, LED BY PREMIER DOUG FORD**





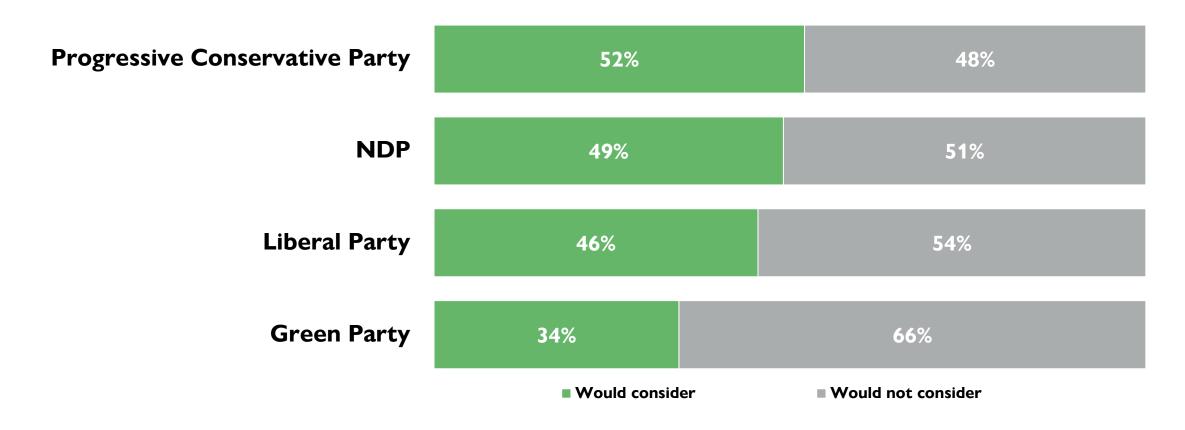
#### **GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, LED BY PREMIER DOUG FORD**







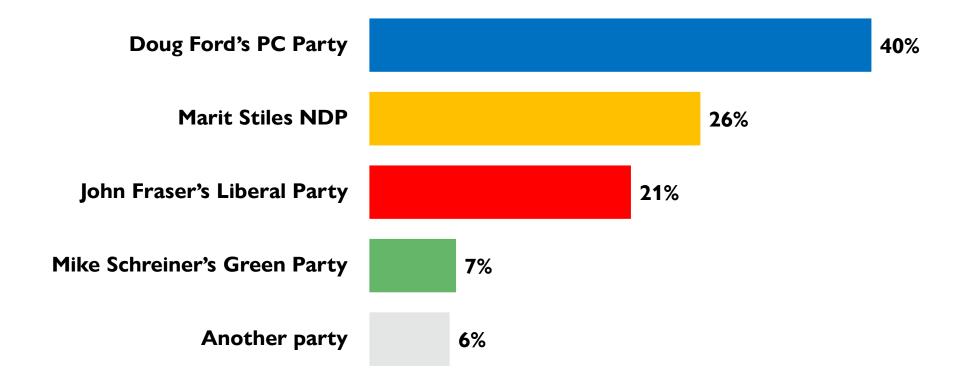
#### **VOTE CONSIDERATION**



Base [all] = 2000



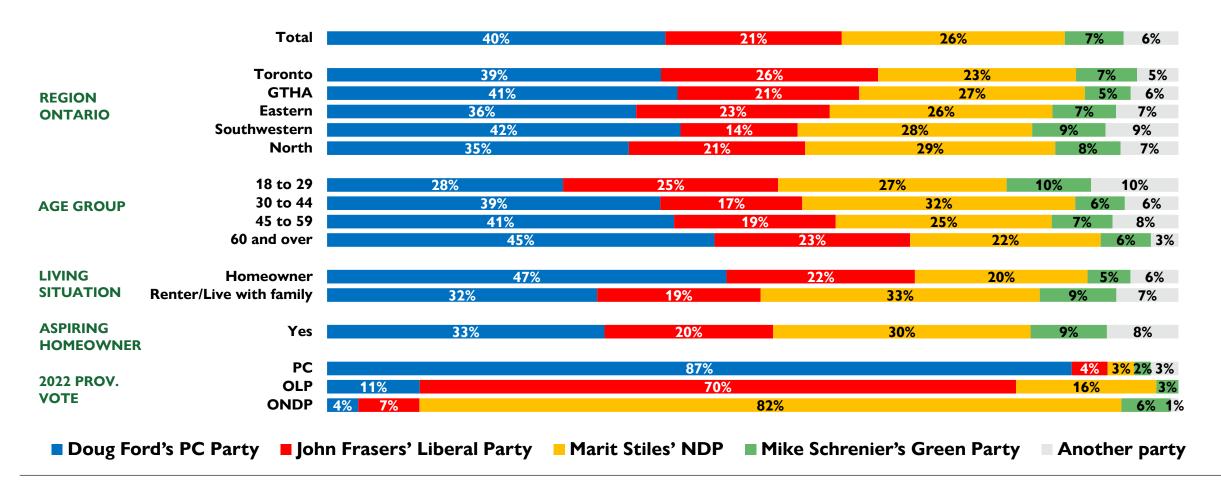
#### **CURRENT VOTE**



[UNDECIDED REMOVED N=1,508]



#### **CURRENT VOTE**



[UNDECIDED REMOVED N=1,508]

Note: Survey was conducted prior to Bonnie Crombie becoming new Ontario Liberal leader

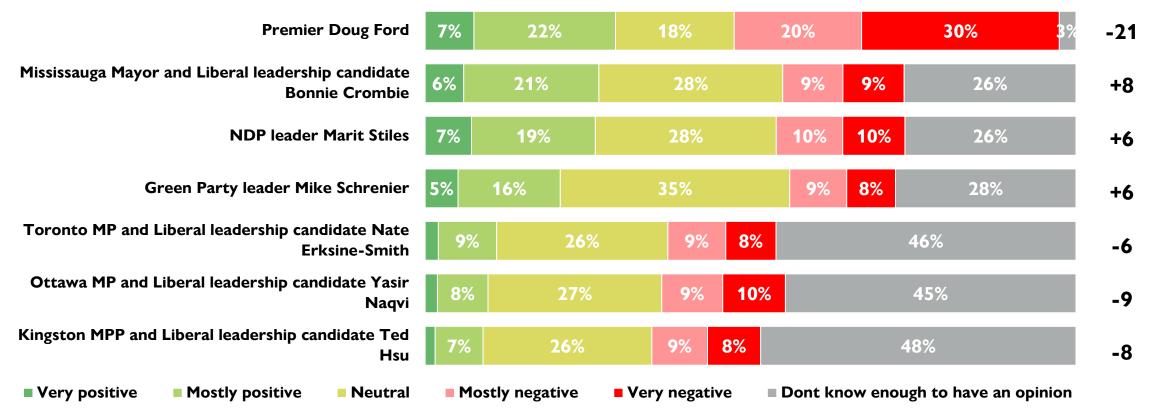


OREA | ABACUS DATA



#### **IMPRESSIONS OF...**





Base [all] = 2000

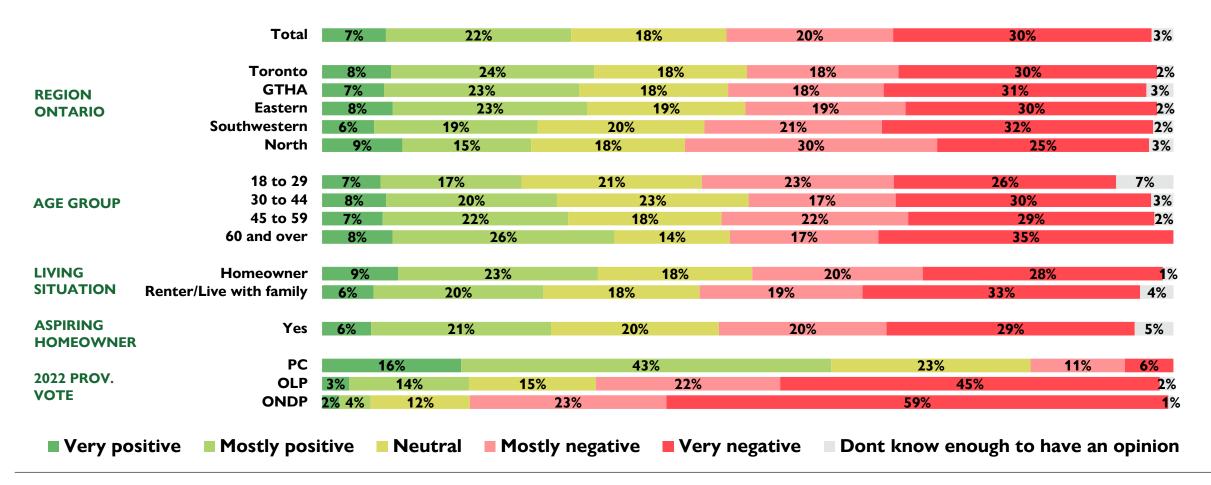
Note: Survey was conducted prior to Bonnie Crombie becoming new Ontario Liberal leader



18

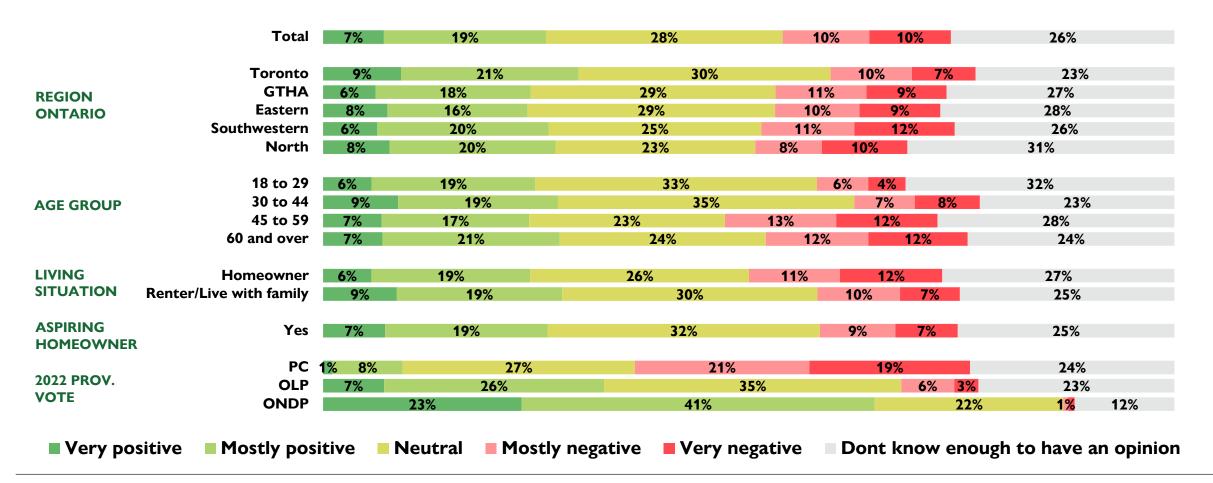


#### **IMPRESSIONS OF PREMIER DOUG FORD**





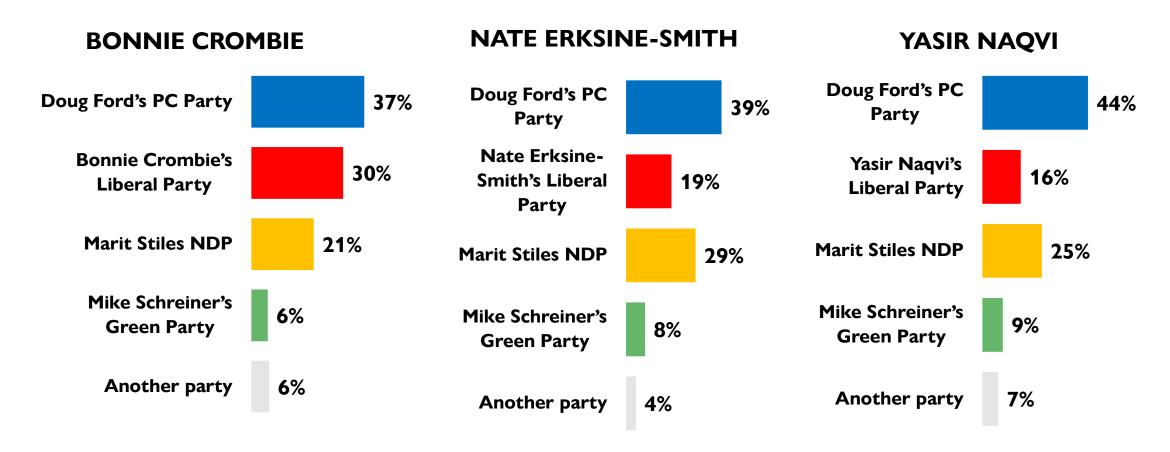
#### **IMPRESSIONS OF NDP LEADER MARIT STILES**







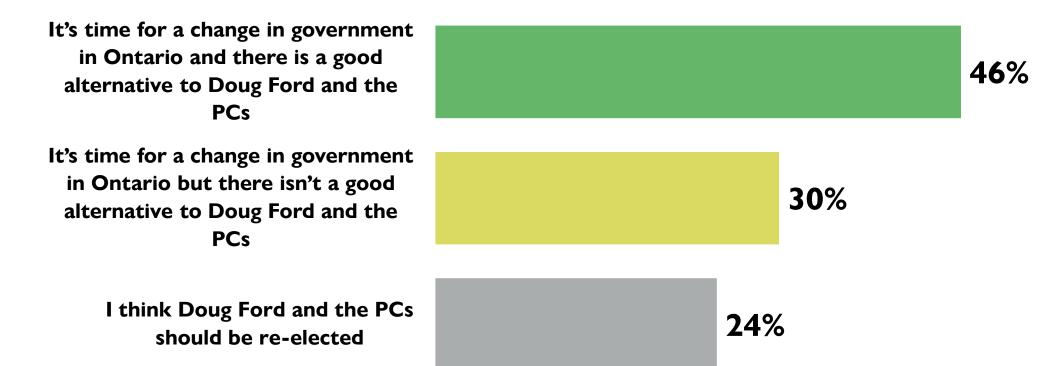
#### ONTARIO LIBERAL LEADER IMPACT ON VOTE



[SPLIT SAMPLE]



## MOST (76%) AGREE IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE IN GOVT BUT OPINIONS DIFFER ON WHETHER A GOOD ALTERNATIVE EXISTS OR NOT

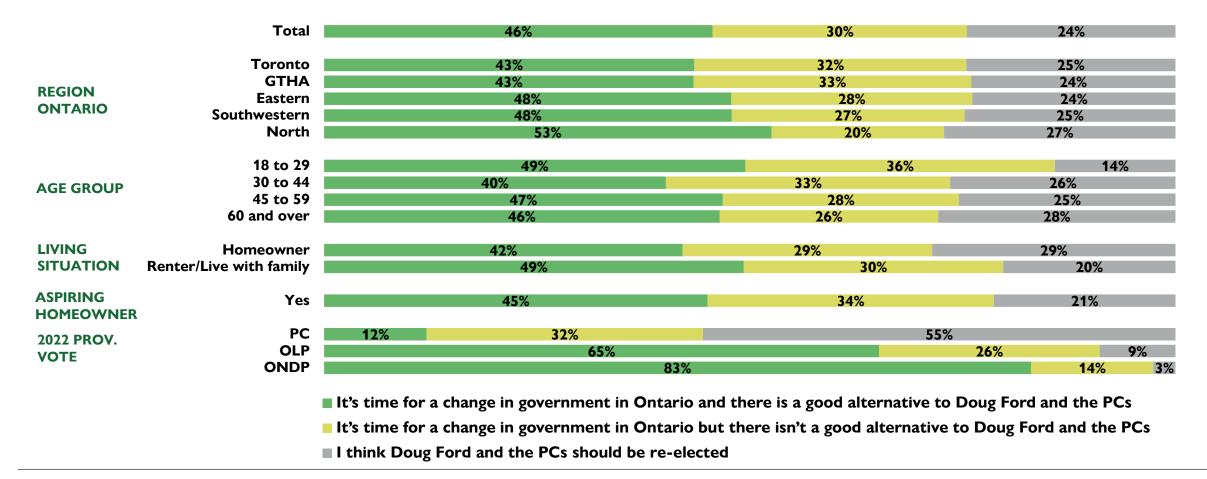


Base [all] = 2000



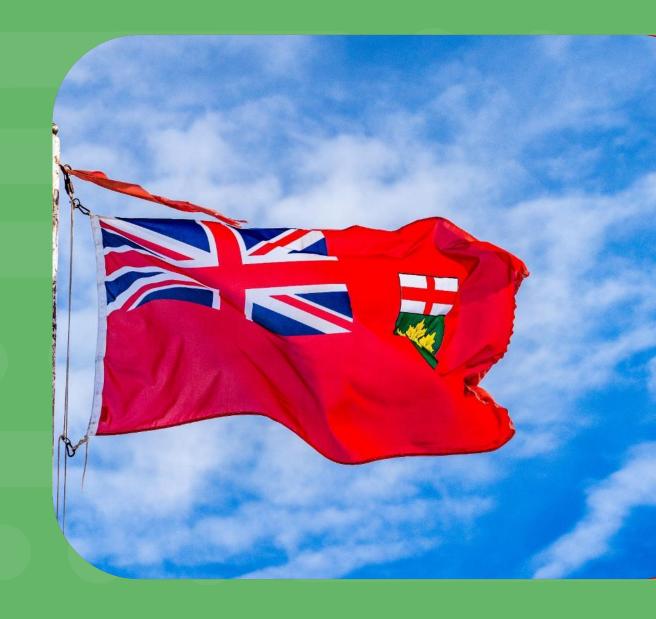


#### **CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT**



Base [all] = 2000

# ONTARIO HOUSING MARKET AND LANDSCAPE



#### **Key findings**

**Homeownership landscape:** More than half (51%) of Ontarians currently own the residential property they live in, while the remaining 49% either rent (38%), live with family who own the property (8%), or live with family who rent the property (3%).

- Half (50%, no change since Wave 3) of homeowners currently have a mortgage, but this figure jumps to 71% among 18 to 29-year-olds and 80% for 30 to 44-year-olds. More than one in ten need to renew their mortgage in the next year.
- Among those with a mortgage, a significant majority (79%) have opted for a fixed-rate mortgage.
- The amounts owed on these mortgages differ, with 40% owing between \$50,000 and \$200,000 and 24% owing between \$200,000 and \$350,000. Notably, residents of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) report higher mortgage amounts remaining. 13% of mortgage holders will undergo a mortgage renewal in the next 12 months, 28% expect a renewal in one to two years and 35% in two to three years.
- 73% (up 5% since Wave 3) of respondents value their homes at more than \$500,000, and majority (71%, up 9% since Wave 3) are unlikely to sell their current homes over the next five years.

Aspiring homeowners: Among those aspiring to own a home, the wish for homeownership is strong, with 70% expressing a desire to own a residential property and 60% (down 9% since Wave 3) really wanting to own a home. This desire is particularly pronounced among 18 to 29-year-olds (90%) and 30 to 44-year-olds (79%).

- While optimism about buying a home has minimally (+2%) improved since Wave 3, pessimism has also remained mostly unchanged. 56% are now feeling pessimistic. Optimism tends to decrease with age, and those in Southwestern and Northern Ontario are least optimistic.
- Only 13% (down 5% since Wave 3) of those who want to buy a home expect to be able to do so in the next 2 years. Many aspiring homeowners think they won't be able to buy a residential property for more than 10 years (12%, no change since Wave 3) or never (28%, no change since Wave 3).

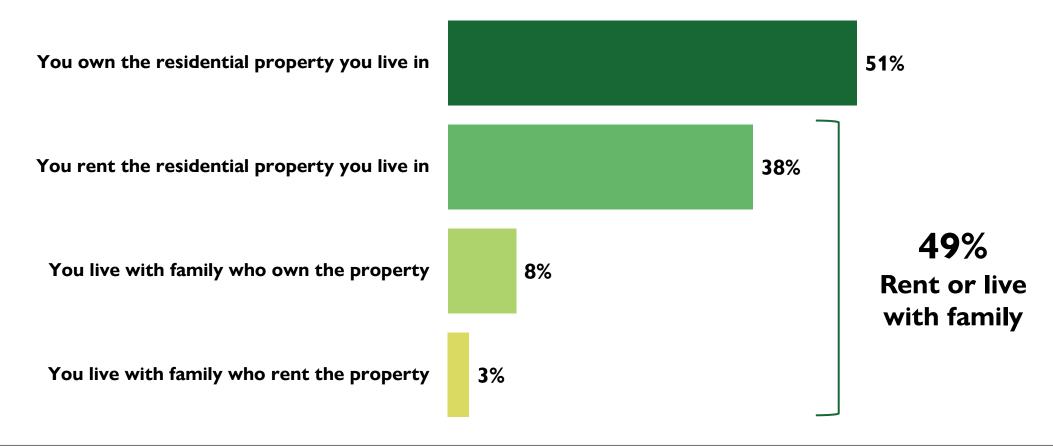
#### **Key findings**

The local housing market: 70% (down 7% since Wave 3) of Ontarians say that buying residential property became more difficult over the past year. Among aspiring homeowners, 82% think it has become more difficult.

- 44% (up 9% since Wave 3) of Ontarians and 56% of aspiring homeowners expect housing prices to increase somewhat over the next year. Only 17% (down 17% since Wave 3) anticipate a decrease. In the long term (next five years), 51% (up 7% since Wave 3) believe housing prices will be even less affordable than they are now.
- The top three words used to describe the housing market are "expensive," "overpriced," and "unaffordable."



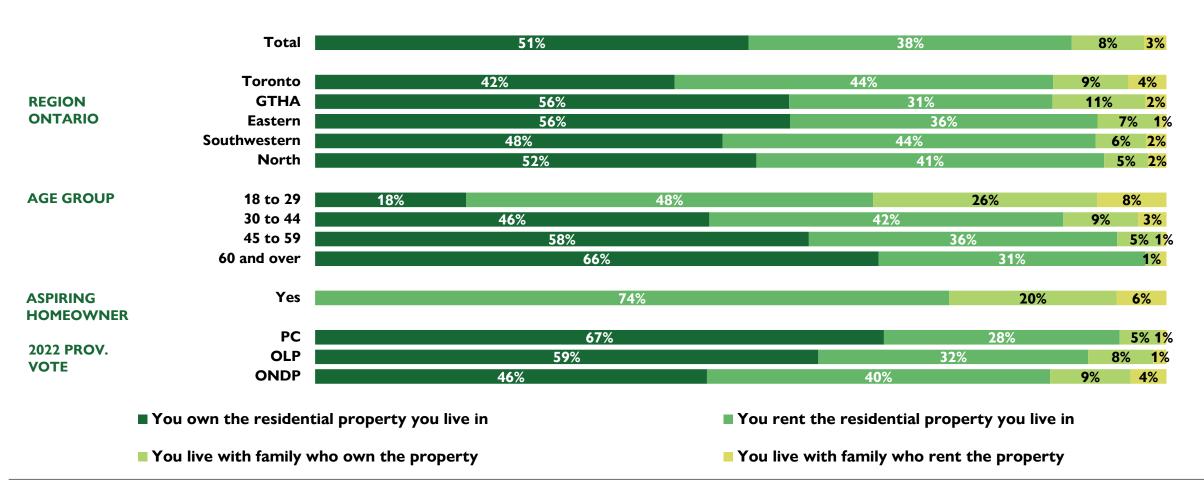
#### **CURRENT LIVING SITUATION**







#### **CURRENT LIVING SITUATION**

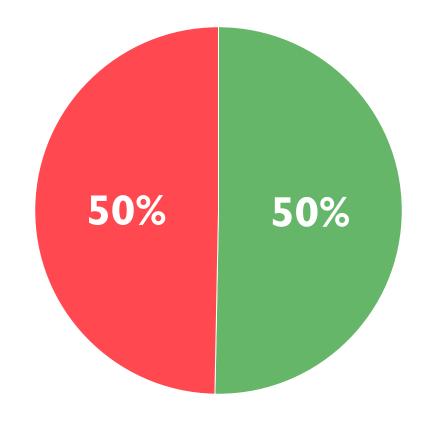


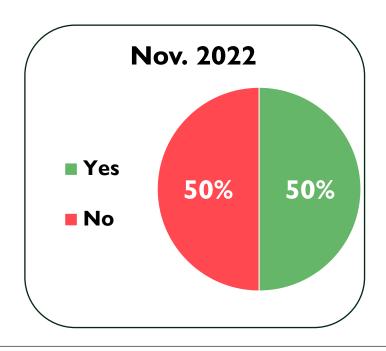




#### **CURRENT MORTGAGE ON PROPERTY**



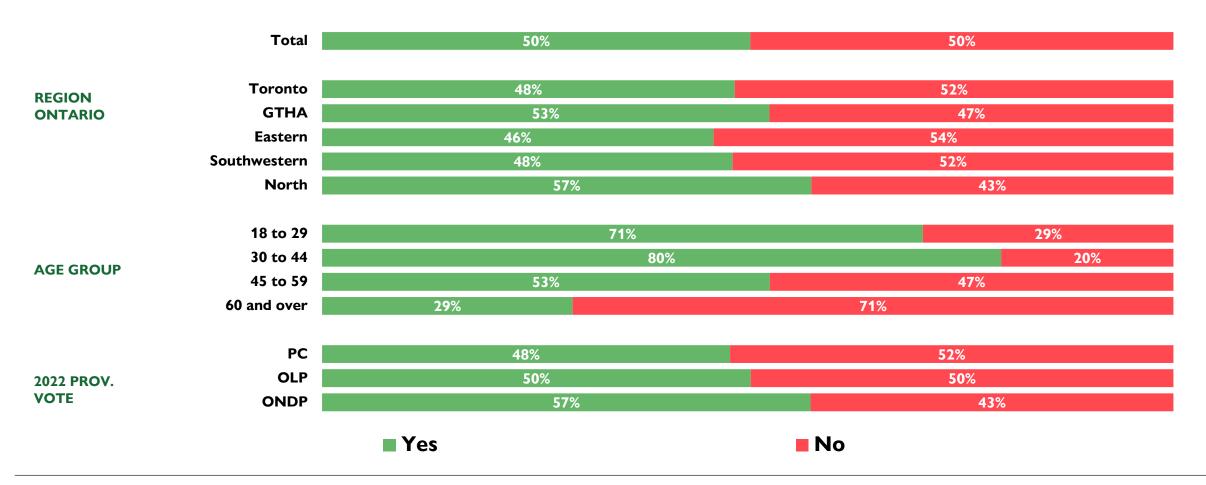




[HOMEOWNERS N=1,055]



#### **CURRENT MORTGAGE ON PROPERTY**

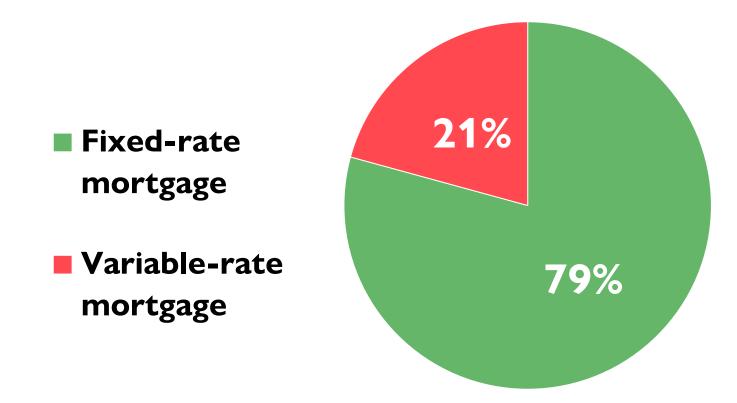


[HOMEOWNERS N=1,055]



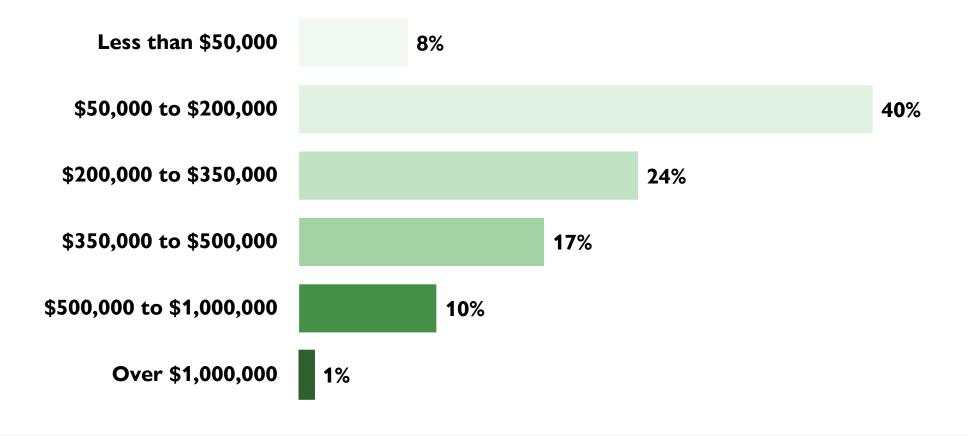


#### **FIXED OR VARIABLE RATE MORTGAGE**





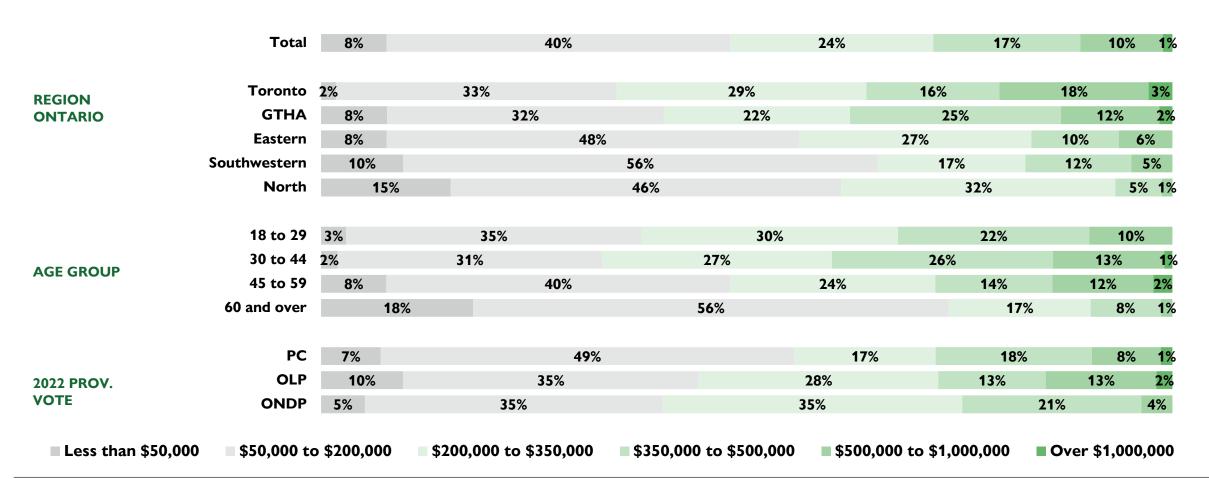
#### **CURRENT AMOUNT OWED ON MORTGAGE**





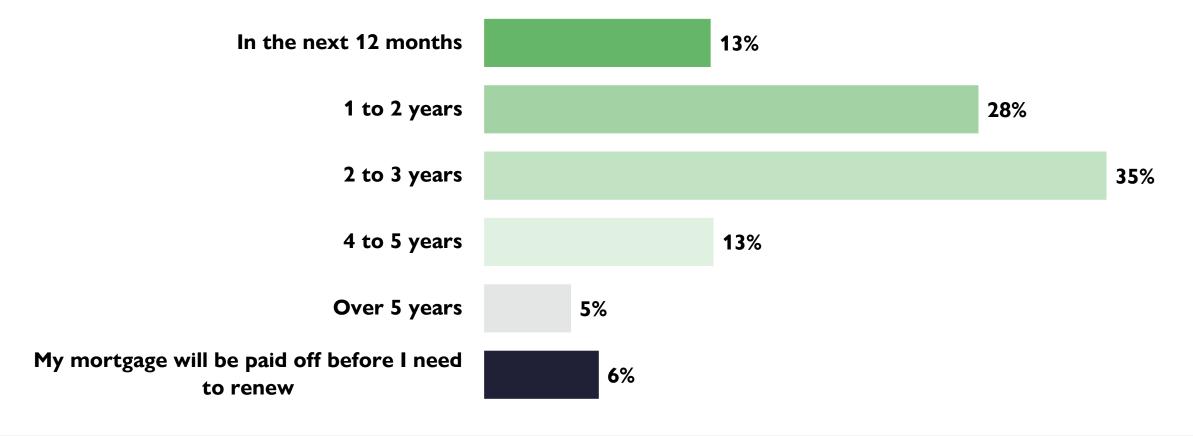


#### **CURRENT AMOUNT OWED ON MORTGAGE**



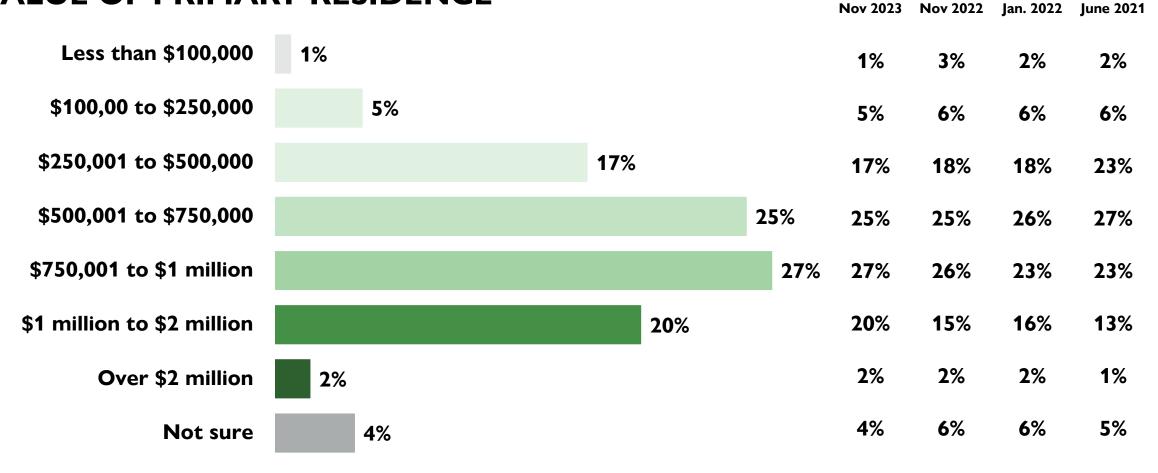


#### **RENEWAL TIMELINE**





#### **VALUE OF PRIMARY RESIDENCE**

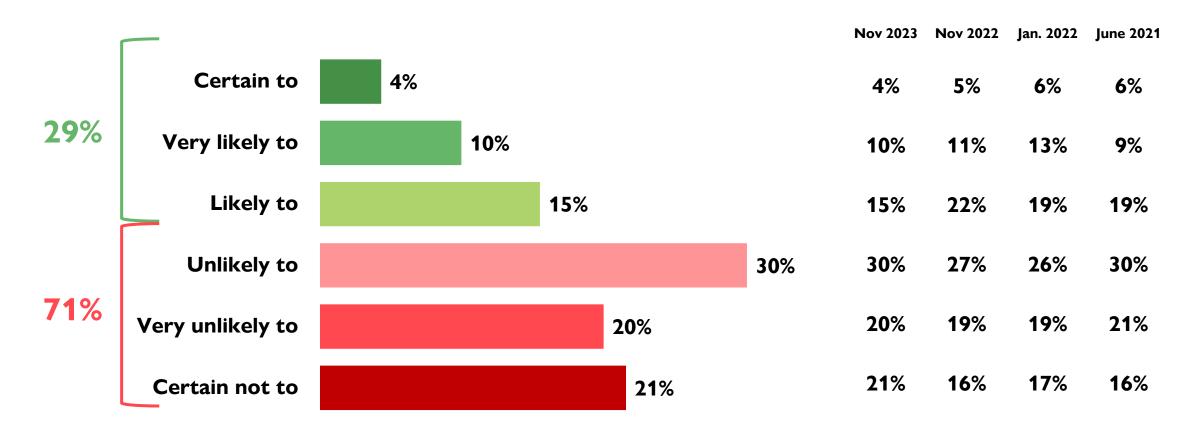


[HOMEOWNERS N=1,055]





#### LIKELIHOOD OF SELLING CURRENT HOME OVER NEXT 5 YEARS

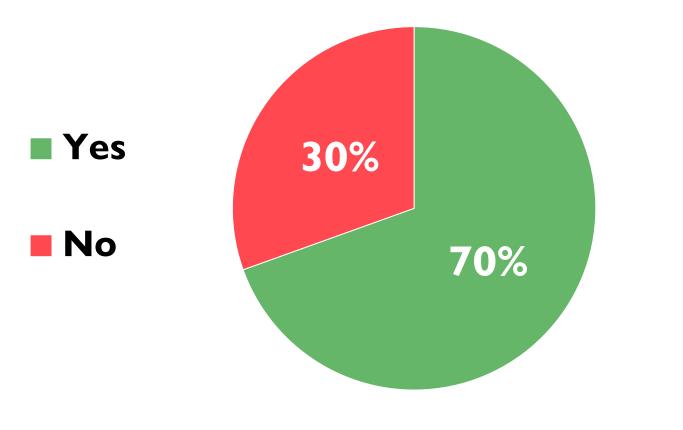


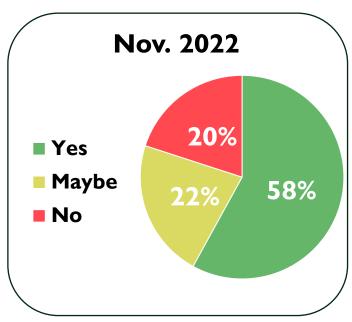
[HOMEOWNERS N=1,055]





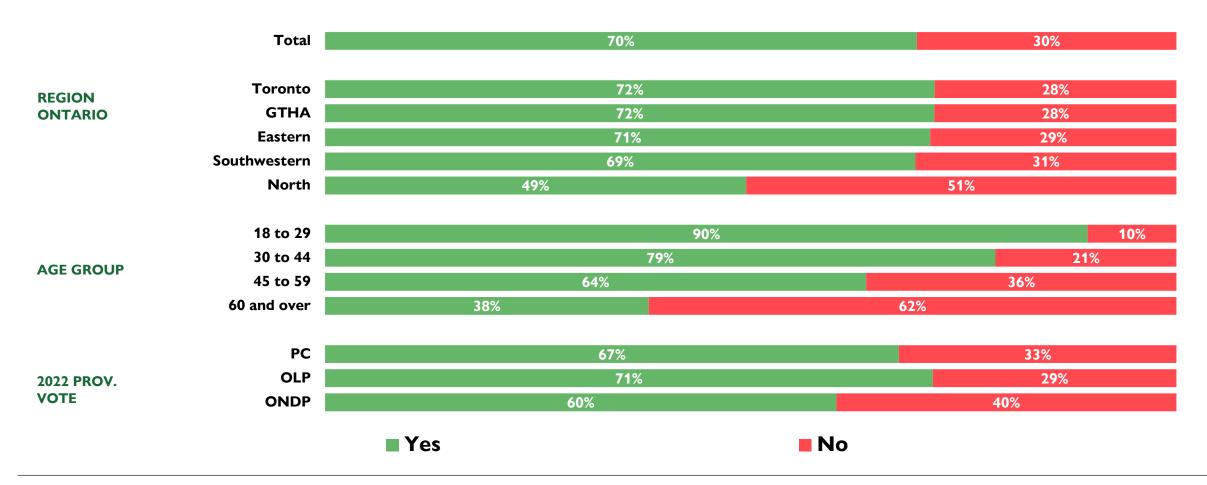
# 70% of non-homeowners would like to own a home





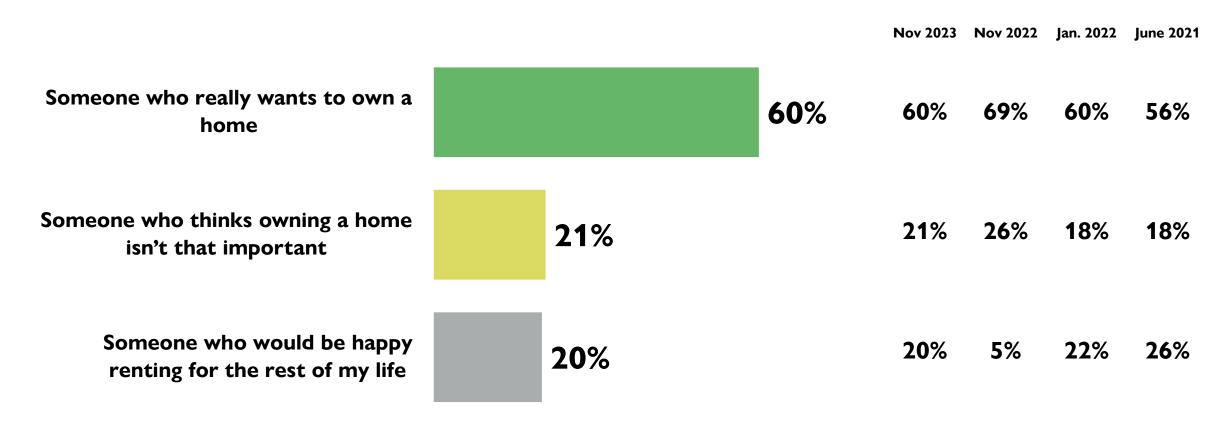


### **DESIRE FOR OWNING A PROPERTY**



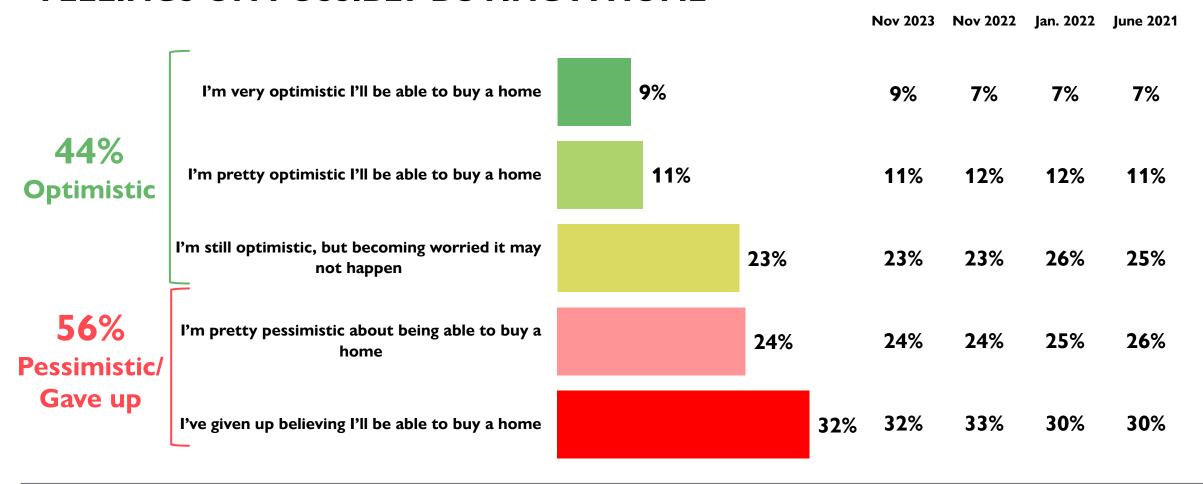


# 60% of non-homeowners really want to own a home





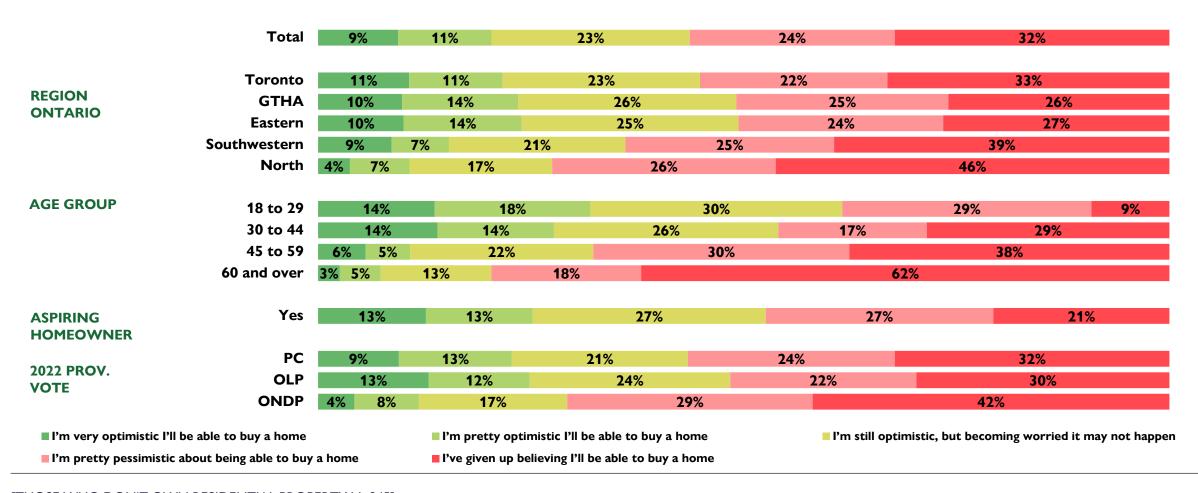
# **FEELINGS ON POSSIBLY BUYING A HOME**





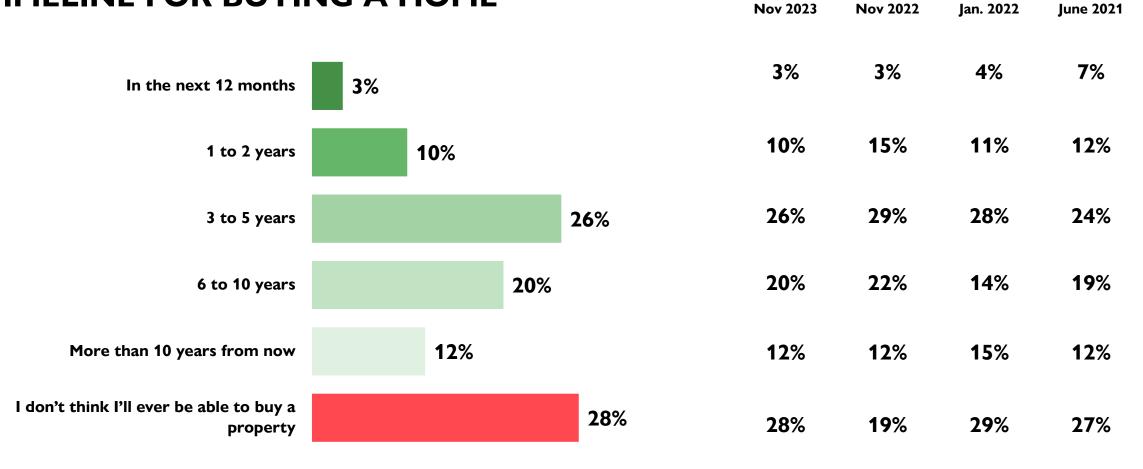


### FEELINGS ON POSSIBLY BUYING A HOME





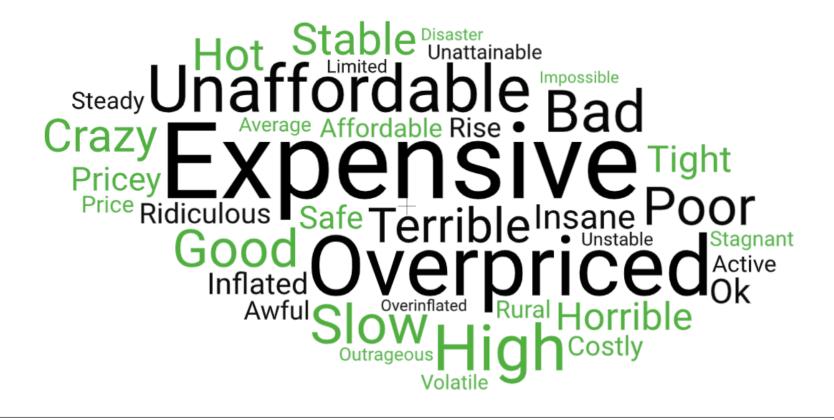
# TIMELINE FOR BUYING A HOME



[THOSE WHO WANT TO PURCHASE A HOME, N=669]

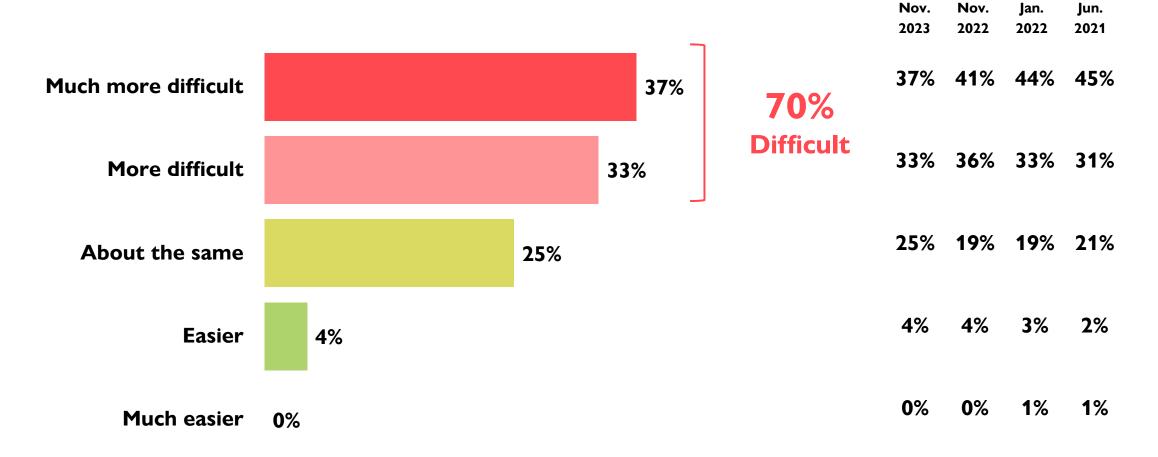


# TOP 3 WORDS TO DESCRIBE THEIR HOUSING MARKET WERE: EXPENSIVE, OVERPRICED AND UNAFFORDABLE



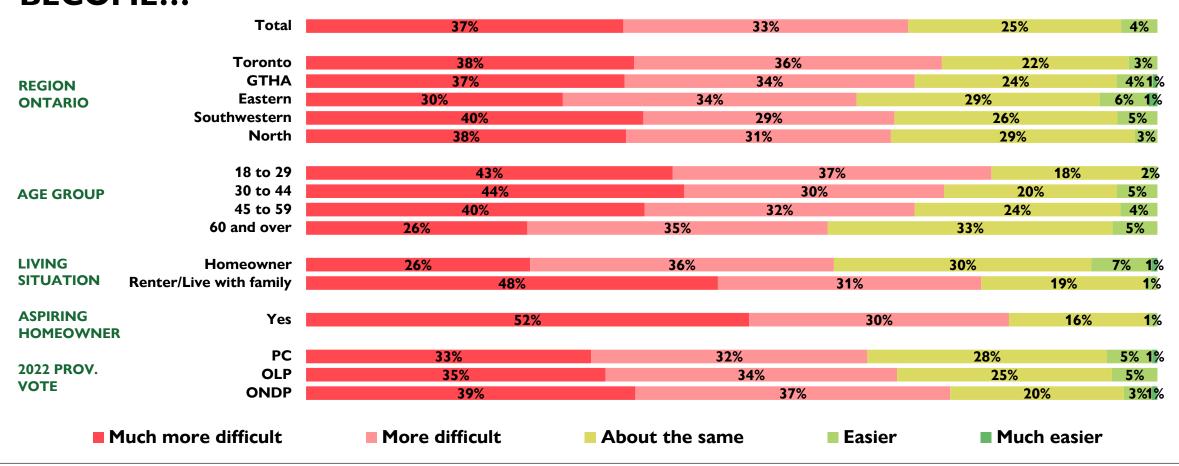
# ?

# OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUYING A RESISENTIAL PROPERTY HAS BECOME...



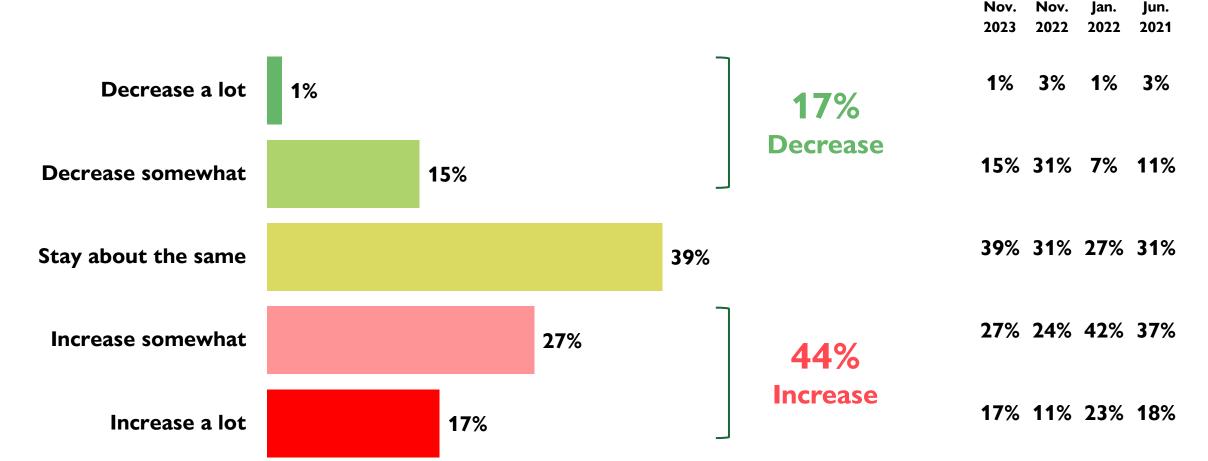


# OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUYING A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY HAS BECOME...





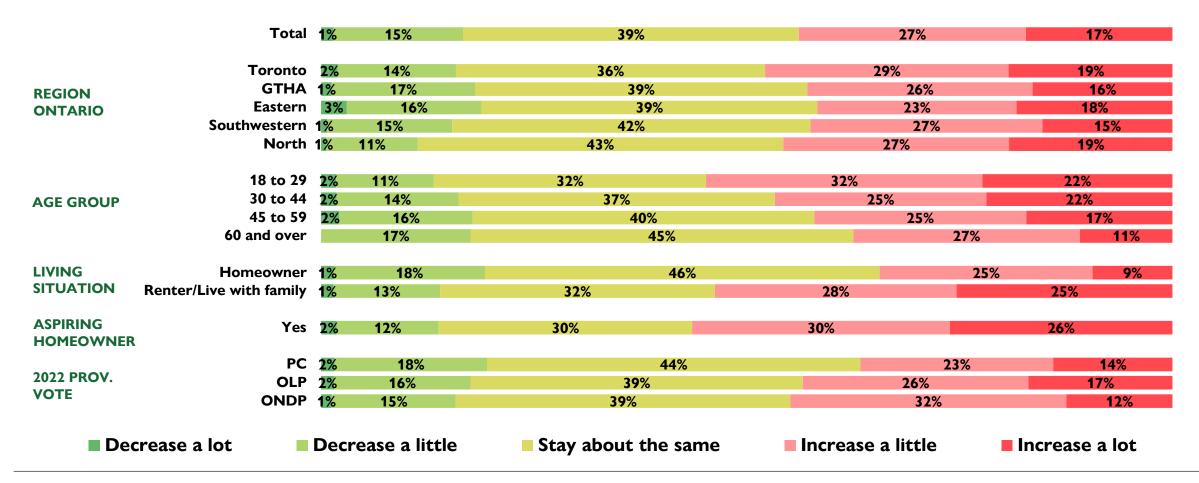
# OVER THE NEXT YEAR, HOUSING PRICES WILL...







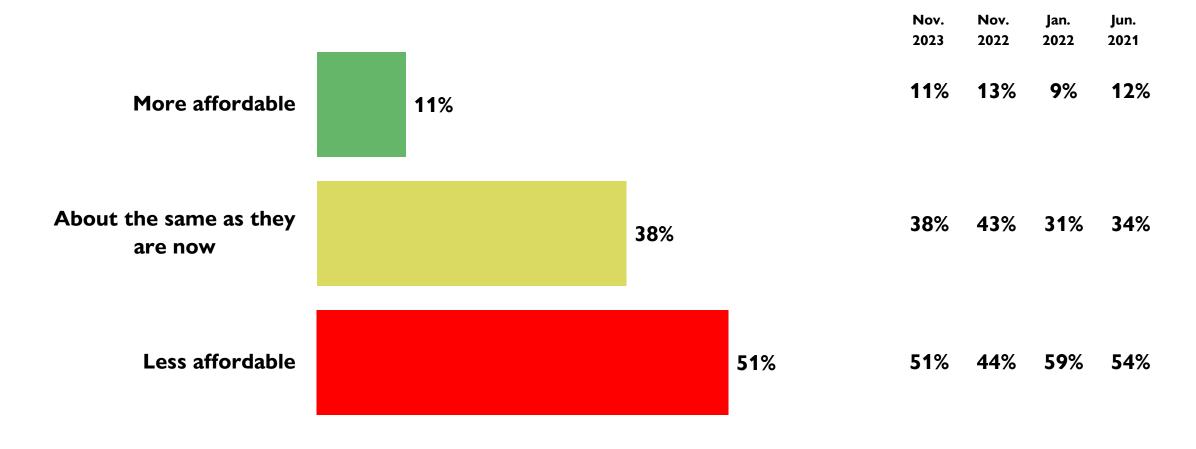
# OVER THE NEXT YEAR, HOUSING PRICES WOULD...





# (?)

# OVER THE NEXT 5 YEAR, HOUSING PRICES WILL BE...



# ONTARIO GOVT. IMPACT ON HOUSING



# **Key findings**

Government impact on homeownership: A majority (55%) believe that decisions made by the Ontario government in the past three years have increased the difficulty of purchasing a home. When asked what an ideal level of priority on housing affordability is, 78% (up 6% since Wave 3) of Ontarians, particularly the younger age groups and aspiring homeowners, say it should be a high or very high priority for the government. However, only 28% (down 2% since Wave 3) perceive this to be the case.

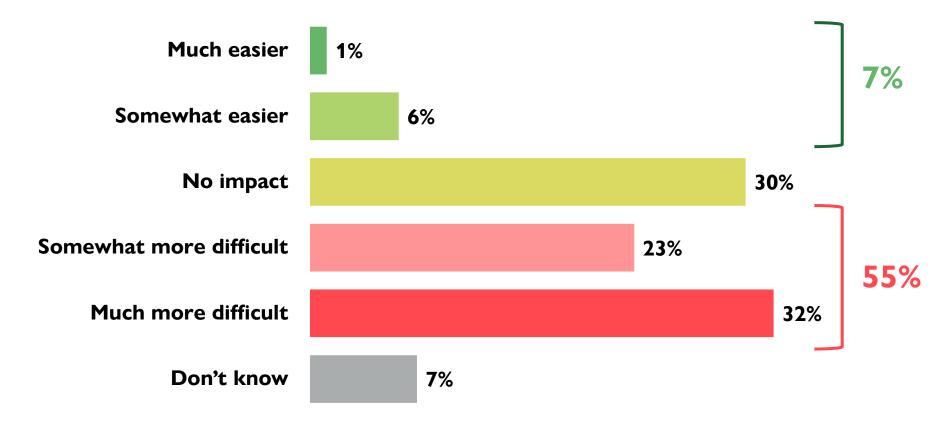
• The share of Ontarians who want housing to be a very high priority has increased from 35% to 44% since Wave 3. Ontarians also see the government putting more priority on housing.

Factors affecting affordability: The most important factors impacting housing affordability are the availability and cost of land for development (47%), foreign investors buying residential properties (42%), increased immigration to Canada (42%), and the cost of borrowing money for builders (42%). One in three think provincial policies and regulations are a top 3 factor.

Public perception of government actions: There is strong belief (80% definitely or probably) that the Ontario government can take actions to enhance housing affordability.

- However, only 14% believe Doug Ford and the PC party care a lot, and 29% think they care a little about making the housing market more affordable. More than one in four (43%) think don't care at all. Despite these perceptions, Doug Ford and the PC party are still seen as the leaders most suitable (35%) for addressing housing affordability, but they are closely followed by Marit Stiles (32%) of the NDP.
- A majority (53%) disapprove of the current government's efforts regarding housing affordability.
- There is, however, support for specific solutions, including increased funding for colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeships, as well as providing provincial loan guarantees for affordable housing projects and purpose-built rentals.

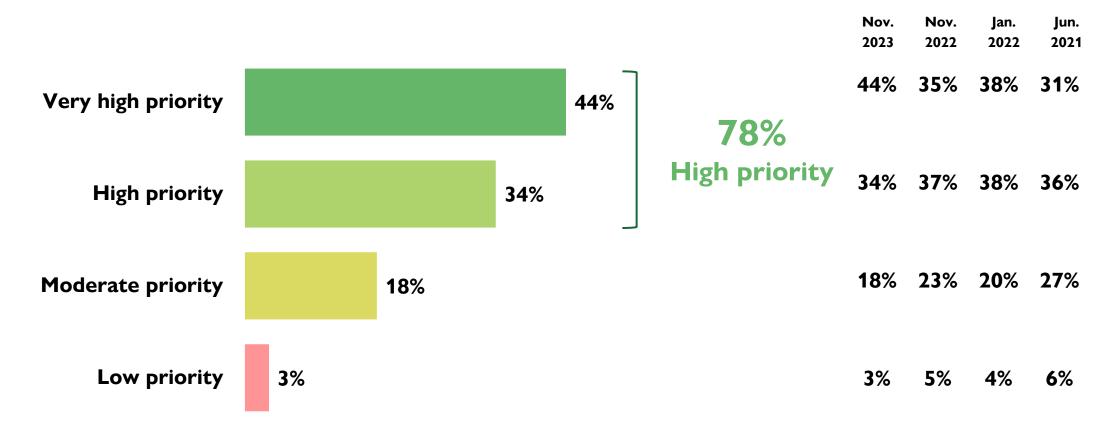
# MAJORITY (55%) BELIEVE DECISIONS MADE BY ON GOVT. OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BUY A HOME







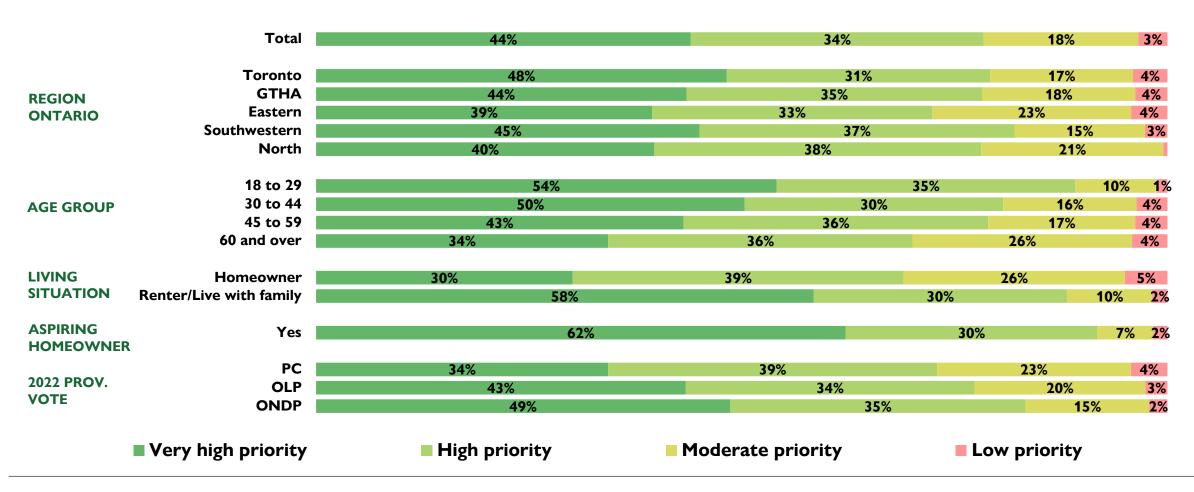
# **IDEAL LEVEL OF PRIORITY ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**







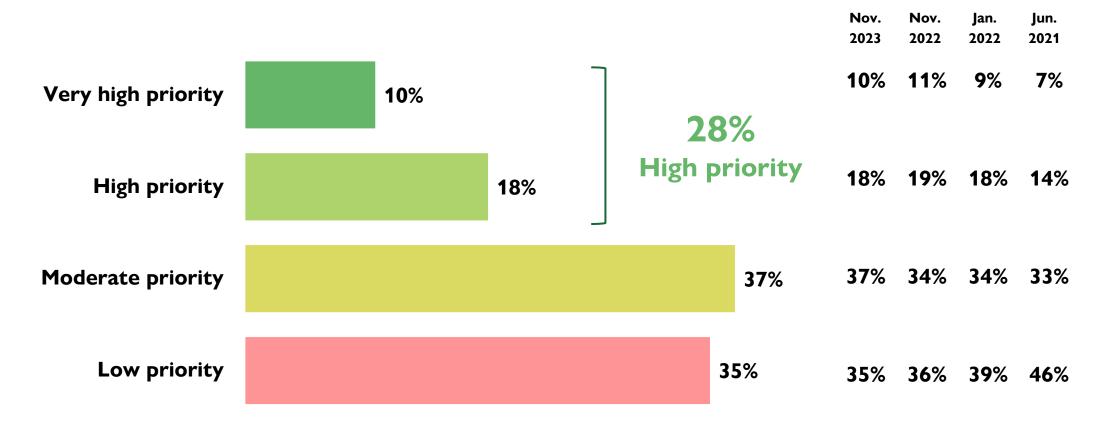
# IDEAL LEVEL OF PRIORITY ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY





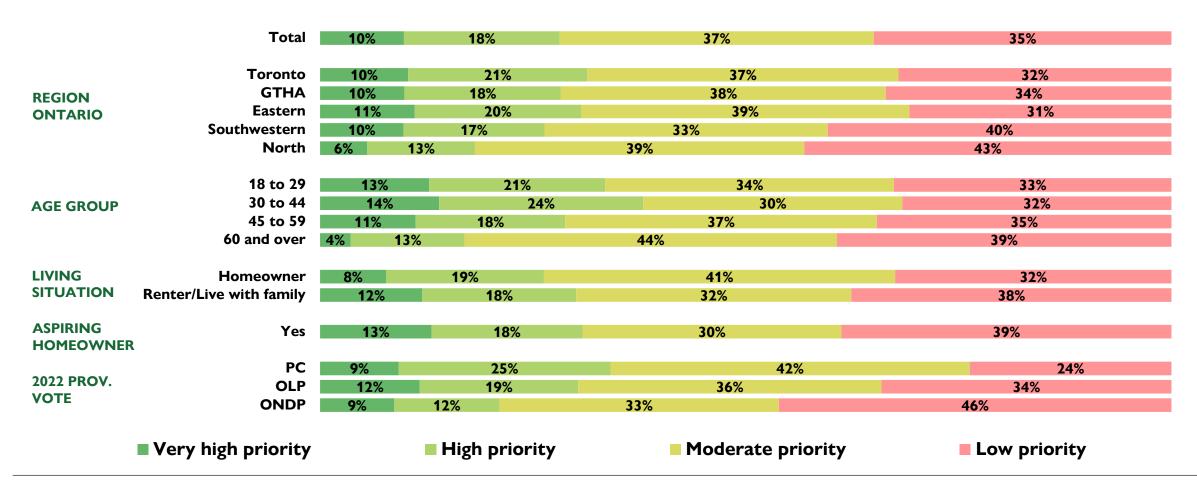


# **GOVT.'S CURRENT LEVEL OF PRIORITY ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**





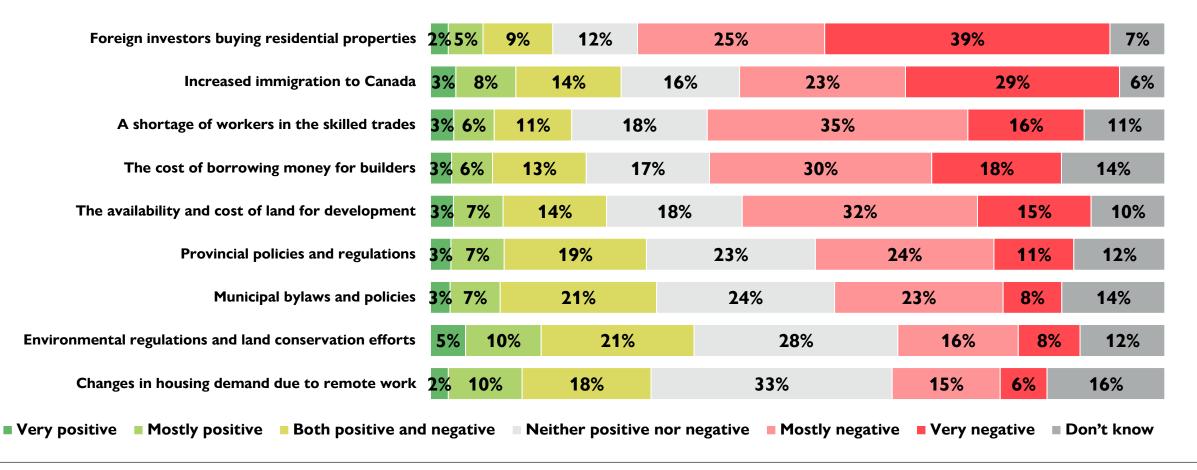
### **GOVT.'S CURRENT LEVEL OF PRIORITY ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**







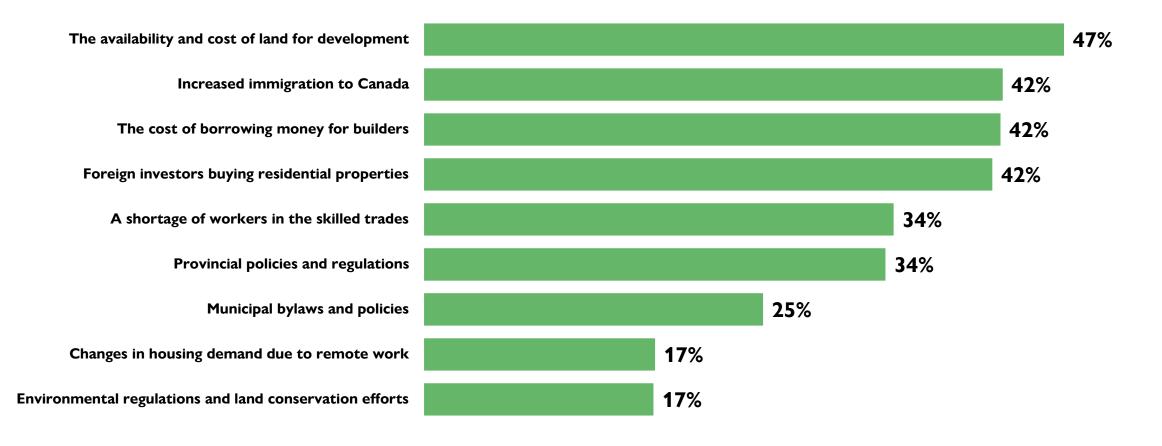
### **IMPACT ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**







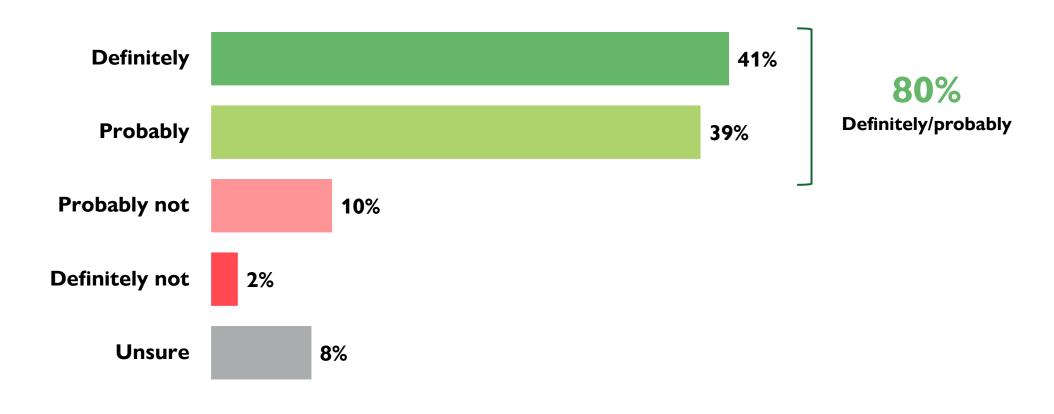
# THREE FACTORS MOST IMPORTANT TO HOUSING AFFORDABILITY





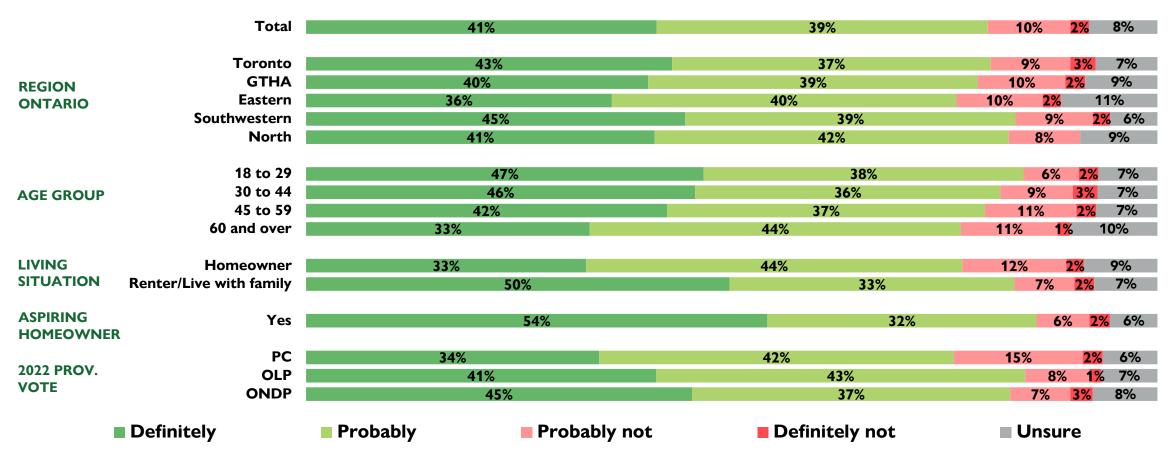


# 80% BELIEVE THE ONTARIO GOVT. CAN TAKE ACTIONS TO MAKE HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE





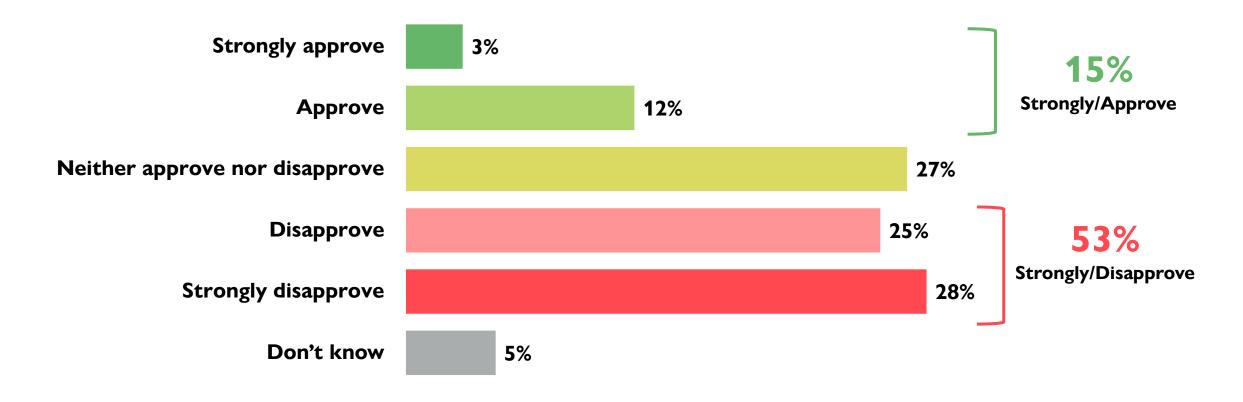
# BELIEF THE ONTARIO GOVT. CAN TAKE ACTIONS TO MAKE HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE







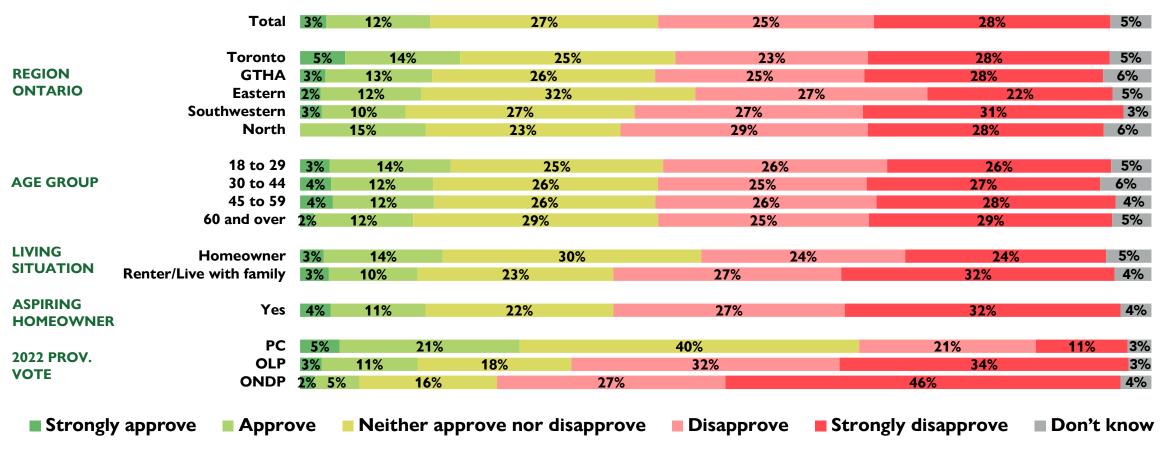
# APPROVAL OF ONTARIO GOVT. EFFORTS ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY







# APPROVAL OF ONTARIO GOVT. EFFORTS ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY







# SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING GOVT. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY...**

Can accept

Oppose

Increase support and funding for colleges, trade schools and apprenticeships



Provide provincial loan guarantees for affordable housing projects and purpose-built rentals



Eliminate exclusionary zoning province-wide and encourage gentle density everywhere



■ Strongly oppose

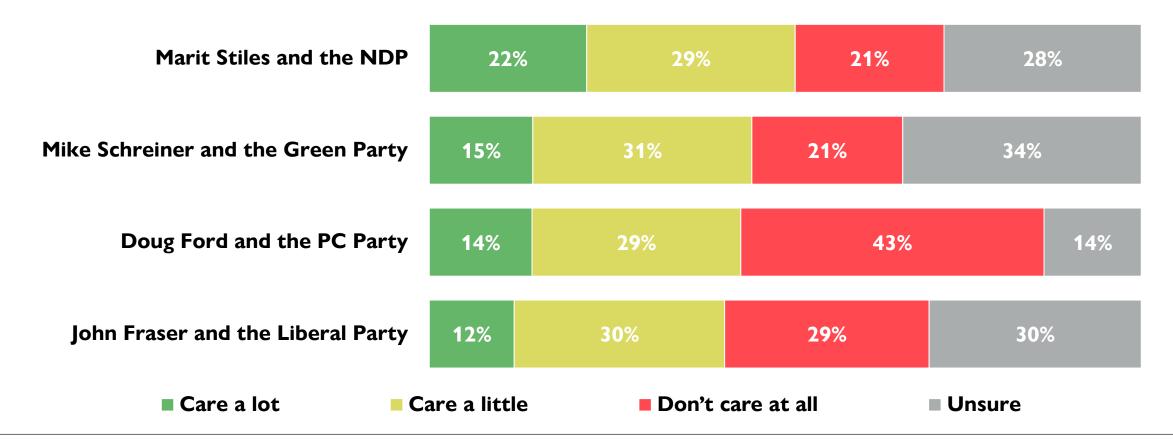
■ Don't know

■ Strongly support

Support



### POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

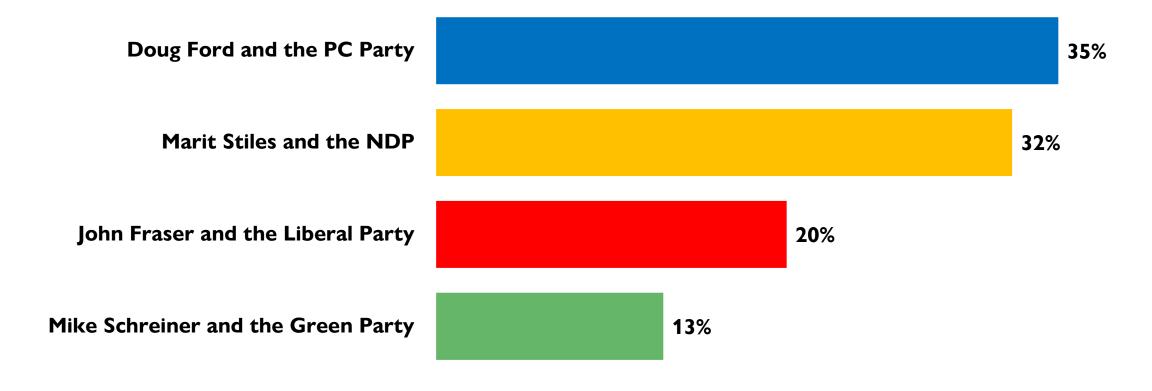


Base [all] = 2000

Note: Survey was conducted prior to Bonnie Crombie becoming new Ontario Liberal leader



# PARTY AND LEADER MOST SUITABLE FOR MAKING HOUSING MORE **AFFORDABLE**



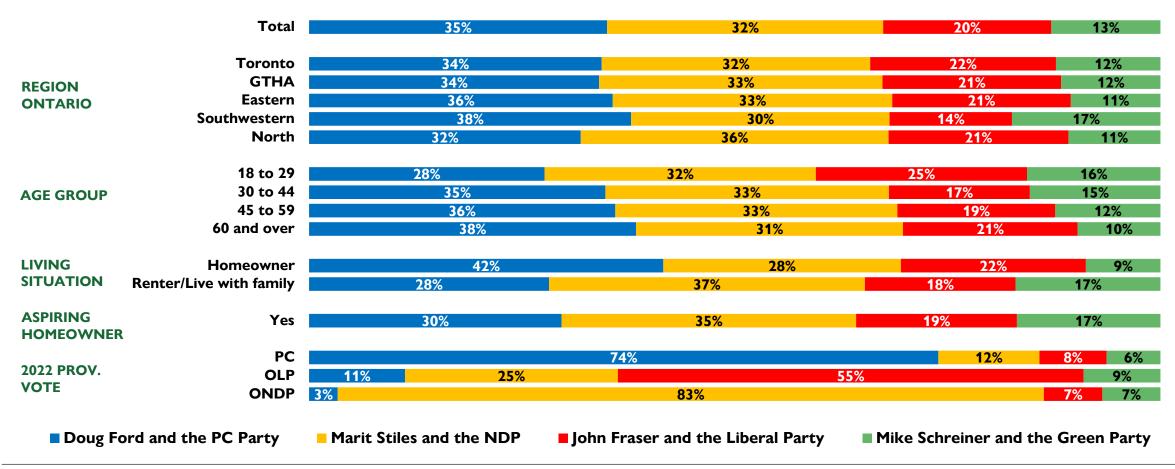
Base [all] = 2000

Note: Survey was conducted prior to Bonnie Crombie becoming new Ontario Liberal leader





# PARTY AND LEADER MOST SUITABLE FOR MAKING HOUSING MORE AFFORDABLE

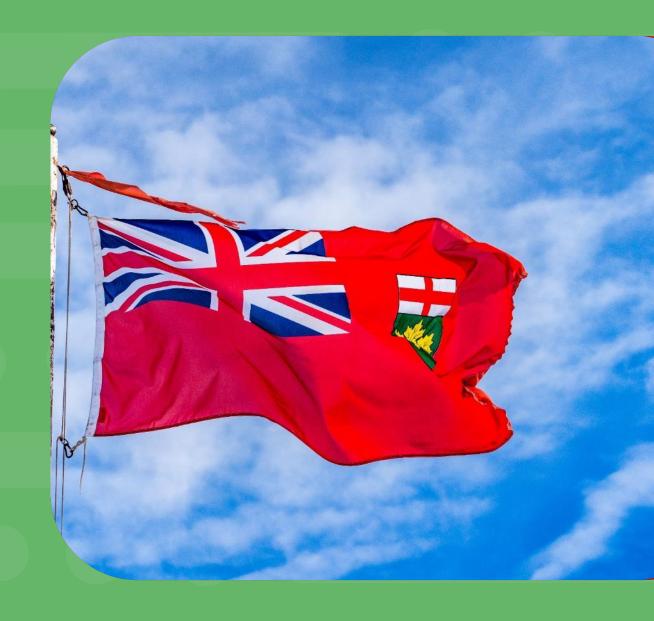


Base [all] = 2000

Note: Survey was conducted prior to Bonnie Crombie becoming new Ontario Liberal leader



# ONTARIO HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE



# **Key findings**

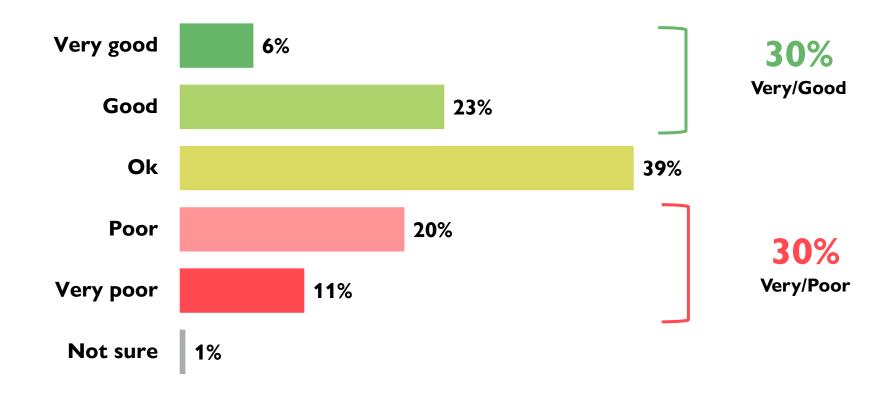
Household finances: 30% consider their current household finances as at least good, 30% rate them as poor or very poor, and 39% rate them as okay.

• A majority (52%) indicate that while they can cover their expenses, they are unable to save any money at the end of the month and 17% are unable to cover their normal expenses without resorting to debt or making significant spending cuts. This is especially true for aspiring homeowners in which this figure jumps to 29% which would significantly impact their ability to save for homeownership.

Financial stressors: The cost essentials such as food, utilities (such as gas, electricity, and home heating), and mortgage or rent payments are identified as the top three factors negatively affecting people's household finances.

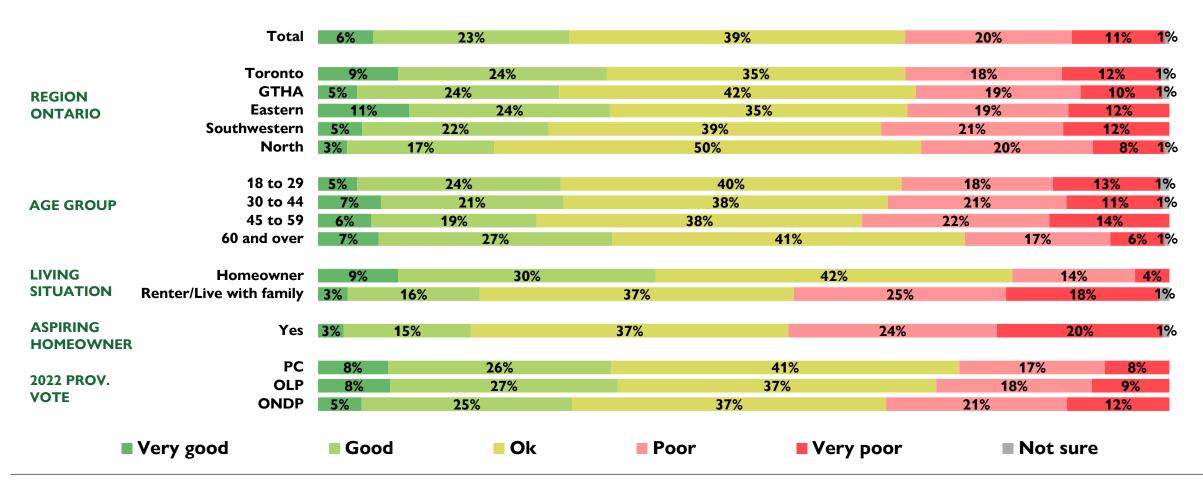


# **CURRENT STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCES**



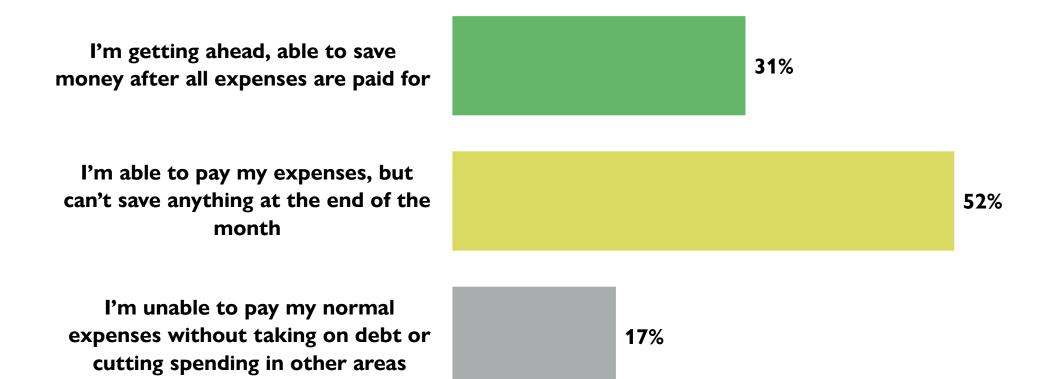


# **CURRENT STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCES**



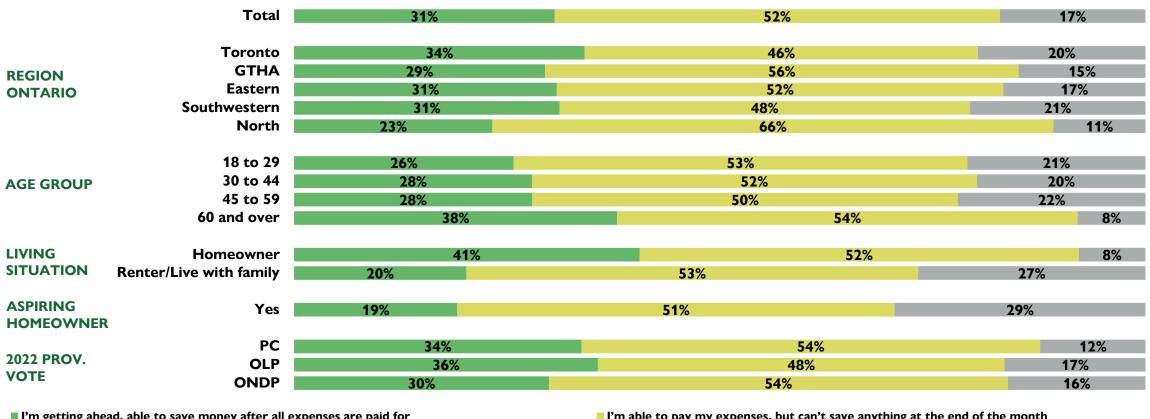


# **CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION**





# **CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION**



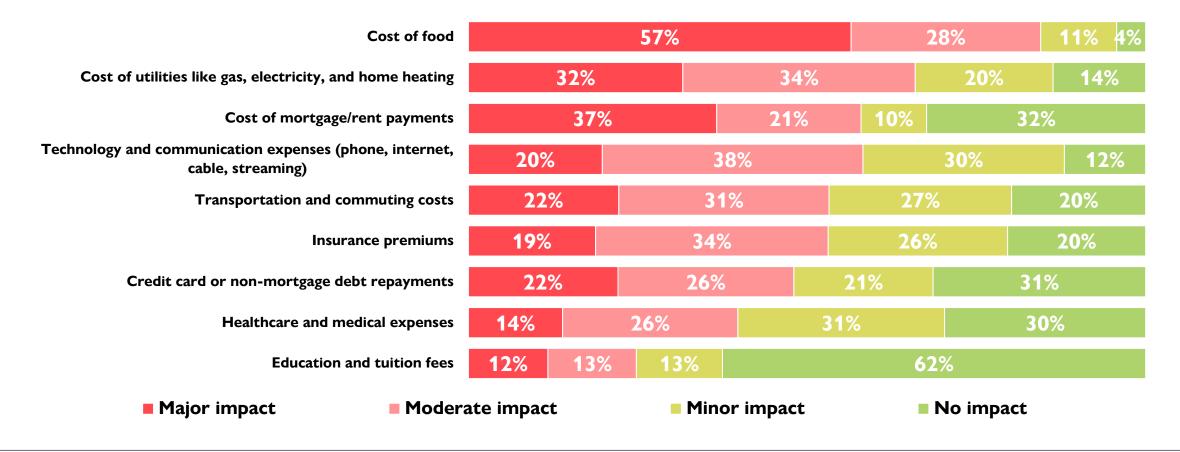
■ I'm getting ahead, able to save money after all expenses are paid for

■ I'm able to pay my expenses, but can't save anything at the end of the month

<sup>■</sup> I'm unable to pay my normal expenses without taking on debt or cutting spending in other areas



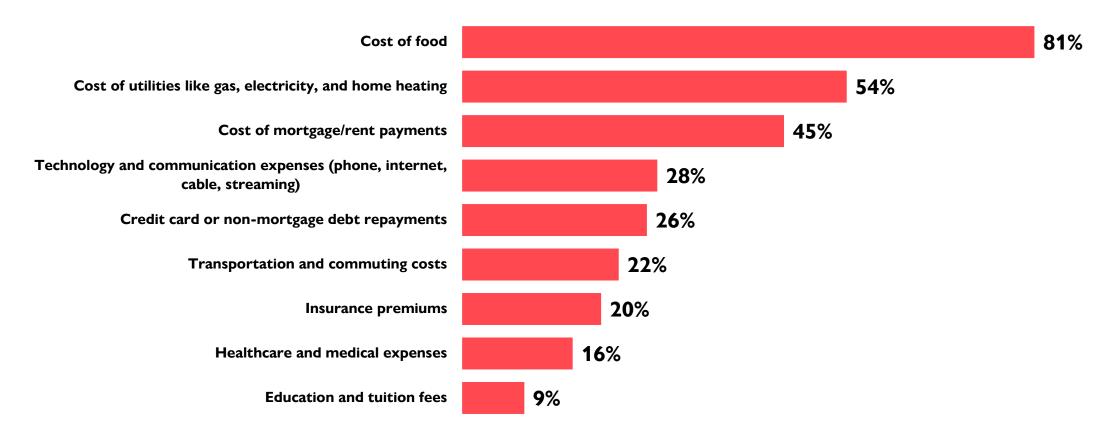
### **IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLD FINANCES**

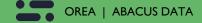






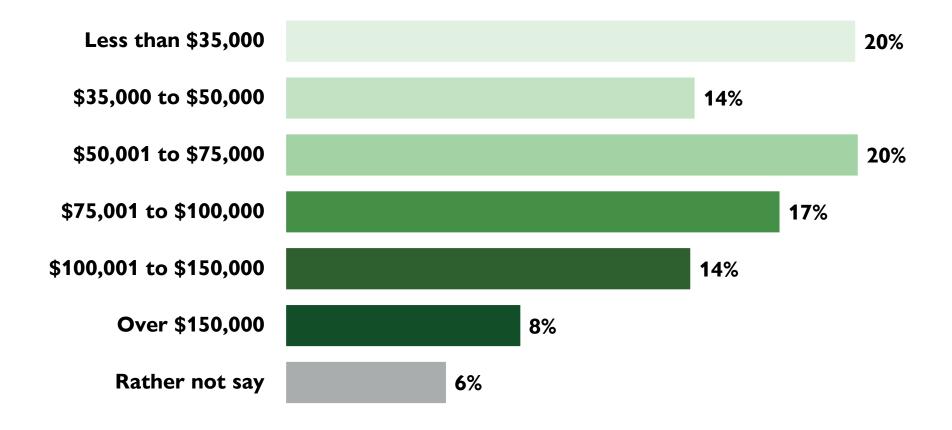
# TOP THREE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLD FINANCES







# **ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME**





# WORK AND COMMUTING TRENDS



# **Key findings**

A majority (73%) have not changed jobs or moved since 2020.

Prior to the pandemic, the average work commute involved traveling 4.1 days a week. In the post-pandemic landscape, there has been a slight reduction to 3.6 days a week – undoubtedly a result of changes to the traditional workweek structure since the pandemic.

Despite small changes in commuting frequency, the average commute time has seen minimal change, shifting from 33.3 minutes prepandemic to 34.9 minutes post-pandemic. Commute ratings have also remained relatively constant, with the majority of individuals expressing that their commute is at least fairly easy. This suggests that, despite adjustments in working patterns, the overall commuting experience has not changed drastically since the pandemic.

How many days a week to did you commute to a work location before the pandemic? How many days a week to do need to commute to a work location? On average, how long (in minutes) did it take for you to get home from work before the pandemic (March 2020)? On average, how long (in minutes) does it take for you to get home from work?

# **COMMUTE TO WORK (PRE AND POST-PANDEMIC)**

How many days a week did you commute to a work location before the pandemic?

4.1 -0.5 days

How many days a week do you need to commute to a work location?

On average, how long (in minutes) did it take for you to get home from work before the pandemic (March 2020)?

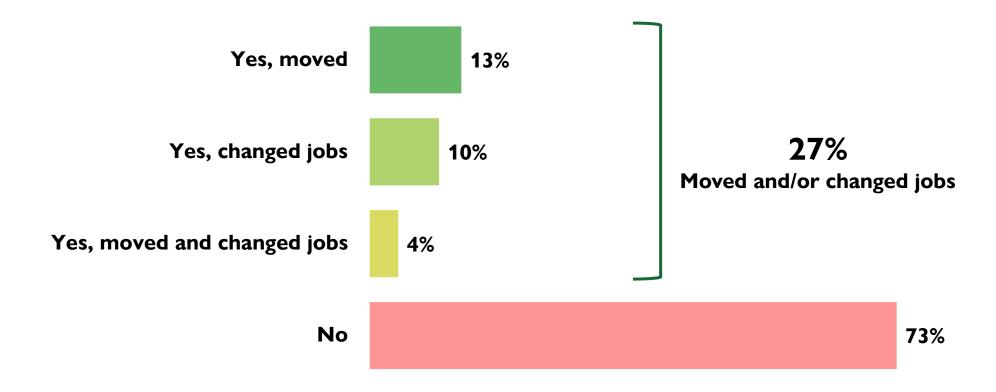
On average, how long (in minutes) does it take for you to get home from work?



N varies

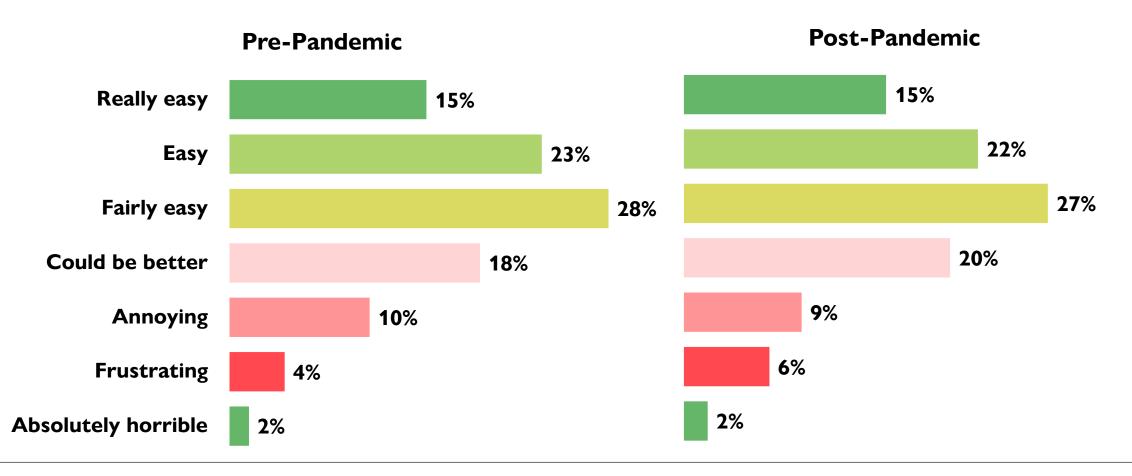


# MAJORITY (73%) HAVE NOT MOVED OR CHANGED JOBS SINCE 2020



How would you describe your typical commute to work before the pandemic started? How would you describe your typical commute to a work now when you need to go to a work location outside your home?

# **DESCRIPTION OF TYPICAL COMMUTE TO WORK**



[THOSE WHO COMMUTE TO WORK NOW N=992] [THOSE WHO COMMUTED TO WORK PRE-PANDEMIC N=1,038]



abacusdata.ca

# Thank You