

# 2025 Operating Budget

Niagara Region Court Services  
Joint Board of Management

# Agenda

- Core Services
- Service Delivery Model
- Service Outlook
- Division Priority Projects or Initiatives
- 2025 Operating Budget Overview
- 2025 Budget Investments (Program Changes)

# Core Services

## Background

- Program transferred from the Province to the Region January 2001
- Region is the “Agent” on behalf of the 12 Local Area Municipalities (LAMs); responsible for administration of the program (Courts Administration, Prosecutions and Collections functions)
- Governed by:
  - Applicable legislation (including the Provincial Offences Act)
  - POA Transfer Agreements (Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] & Local Side Agreement);
  - Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) between the Region and the LAMs,
    - IMA was amended in 2022 to support the introduction of the Vision Zero Road Safety Initiative (Red Light Camera & Automated Speed Enforcement)
- Oversight by: Joint Board of Management

# Core Services

## Background

### Joint Board of Management

#### Membership:

- Municipal Staff Appointed (7 Members)
  - 4 Permanent - Niagara Region, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland
  - 3 Rotate Annually - Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold, Wainfleet and West Lincoln
    - 2024 – Thorold, Wainfleet & West Lincoln
    - 2025 – Fort Erie, Pelham, Port Colborne

#### Role:

- Coordinate/Oversee performance of the Transfer Agreements
- Provide advice to the Agent
- Approve Program (including annual budget)

# Core Services

## What are Provincial Offences?

- Non-criminal offences including (but not limited to):
  - Highway Traffic Act: speeding, careless driving, not wearing your seatbelt
  - Compulsory Automobile Insurance Act: failing to surrender insurance card
  - Liquor Licence Act: being intoxicated in a public place, selling alcohol to a minor
  - Trespass to Property Act: entering prohibited premises, failing to leave premises
  - Building Code Act: building without a permit or in contravention of an order
  - Fire Protection and Prevention Act: fail to maintain smoke alarms
  - Various Municipal by-laws such as Noise, Animal Care, Property Standards, Trees

Most provincial offences result in the issuance of tickets and out-of-court fine payments. Individuals/Corporations who are issued tickets are provided with a complete list of options for proceeding in accordance with the Provincial Offences Act.

# Core Services

## Key Activities

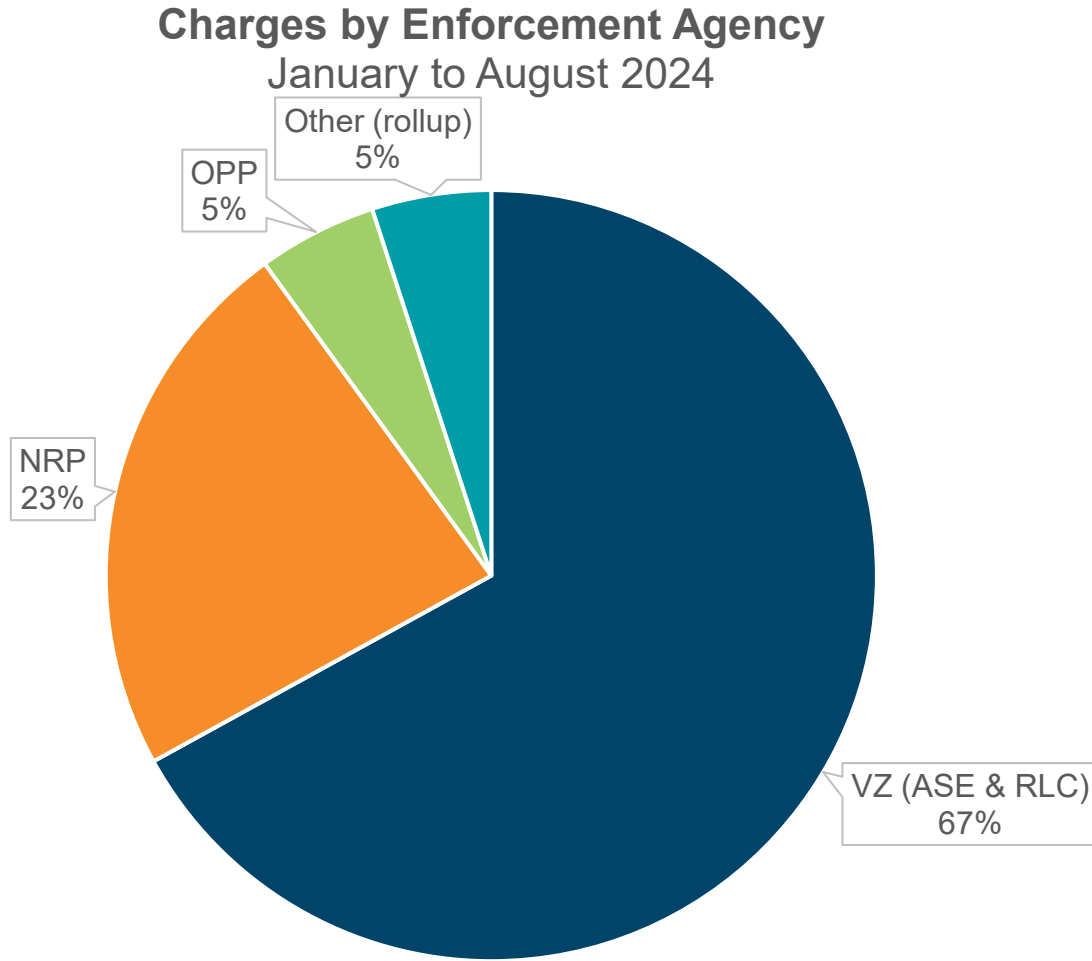
- Accept payment and pursue collection of POA fines (except parking)
- Schedule, support and prosecute POA trials
- Support an Early Resolution Program
- Manage the filing of POA matters including appeals, reopenings and extension of time to pay fines
- Respond to general inquiries
- Provide services in English & French and arrange for interpreter services for court proceedings as needed to support equal access to justice

# Core Services

## Ongoing commitment to being leaders in Court Services through innovation, program modernization and leveraging technology

- April 2021 - first POA courthouse in Ontario to launch virtual Zoom trials
- April 2022 – leader in successful launch of hybrid court matters
- July 2022 – creation of Virtual Payment Counter to support seamless customer service and fine payment
- February 2023 – enhancement to Early Resolution model resulting from proactive internal review
- September 2023 – CAMS modernization
- September 2023 – ASE launch
- March 2024 – RLC launch
- **AWARD WINNING** team:
  - 2024: Niagara Region Awards of Excellence – Innovation & Sustainability (ASE Implementation Team)
  - 2023: Municipal Court Managers Association of Ontario - Award for Innovation (Virtual Trials)
  - 2023: Niagara Region Awards of Excellence – Innovation & Sustainability (Virtual Trials)

# Core Services



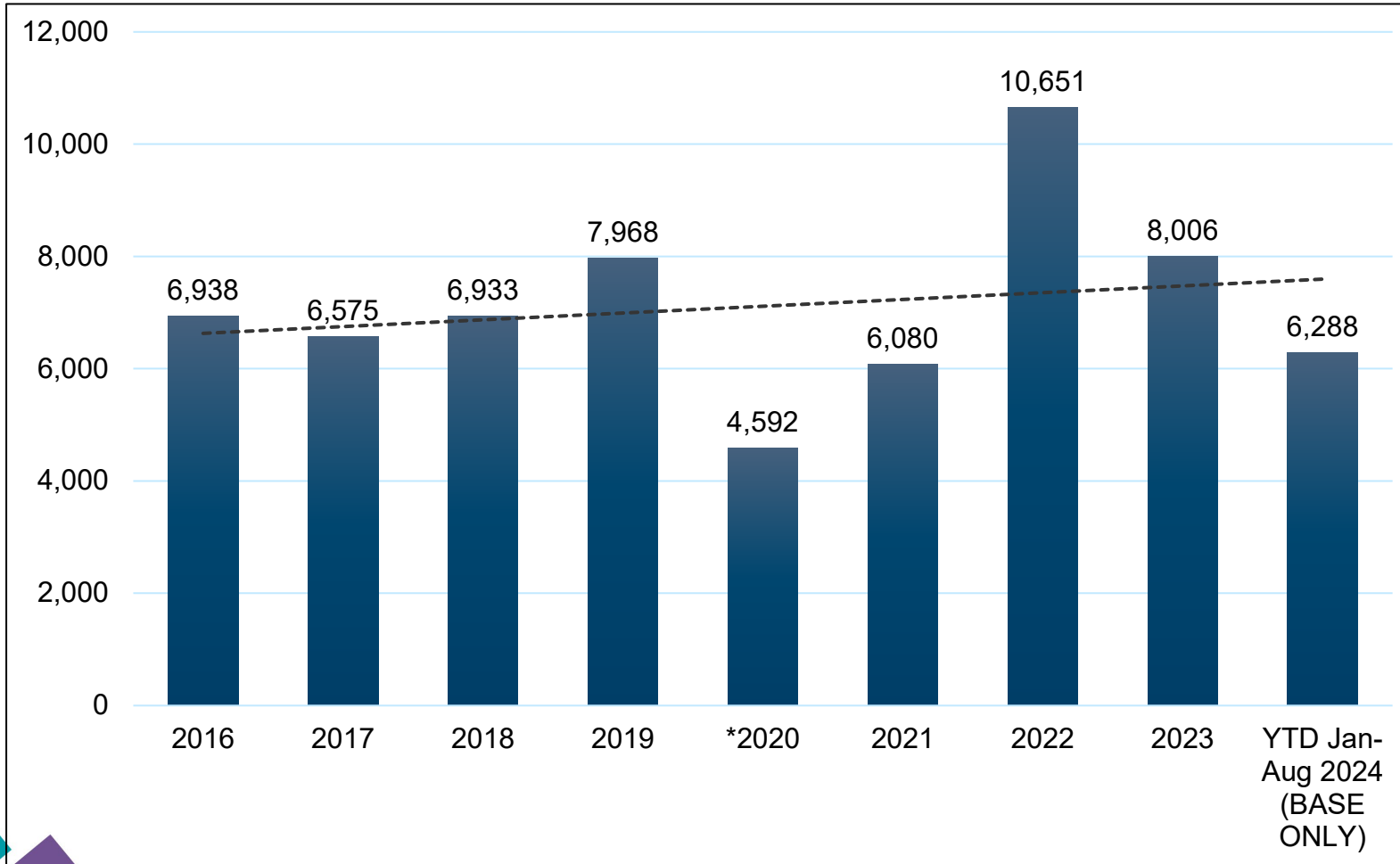
**2024 January-August  
YTD:**  
61,316 charges filed  
with POA



# Core Services

## New Delinquent Fines Volumes

### 2016 to August 2024

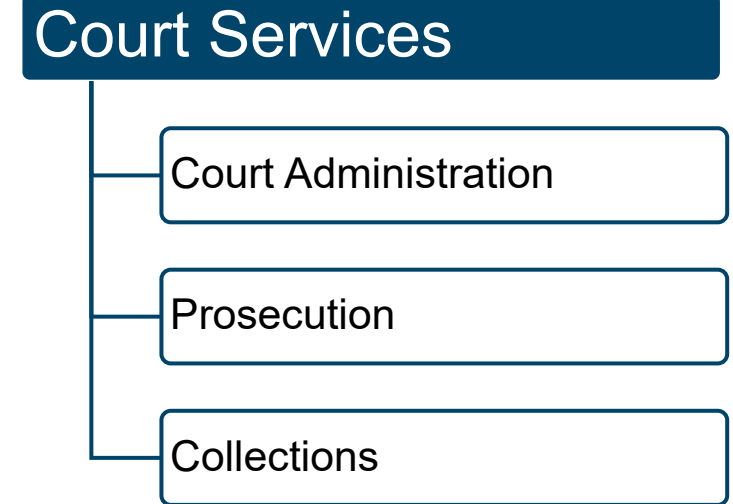


\*2020 shows a significant decrease as a result of the Chief Justice's order whereby time to pay was extended and enforcement paused. The extension of time and pause on enforcement activities expired on February 26, 2021, at which time all cases (including those from 2020) were then considered newly delinquent and enforcement resumed.

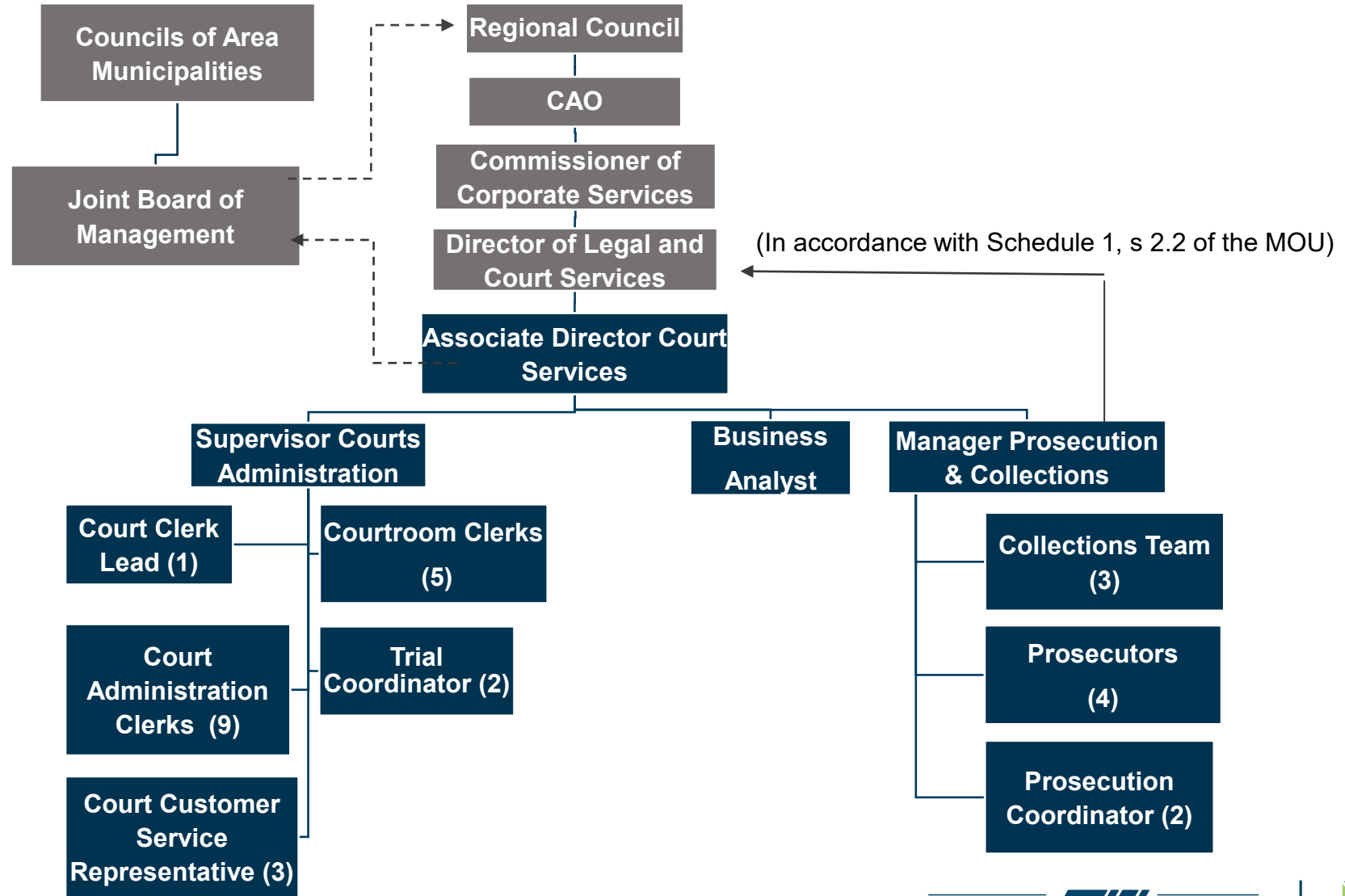
# Service Delivery Model

## How we do it

- Self-funded, not reliant on Levy
- Provides for Net Revenue sharing -Region 50% and LAMs 50%
- Service delivery is mandatory pursuant to the Transfer Agreement with the Province which also establishes service level requirements
- Operates out of a single site located at 445 East Main Street, Welland; modern facility constructed by the Region and opened to the public in October 2017



# Court Services Organizational Chart



This org chart represents the operational structure including 10 Vision Zero FTEs. As of October 2024, 7 of these FTEs have been Recruited

Total FTEs = 33

# Services Outlook

## 2025 Operational Considerations

- Ongoing evolution of the Vision Zero Road Safety Program: Administration and prosecution of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) and Red Light Camera (RLC) charges
  - ASE launch September 2023 & RLC launch March 2024
  - Program growth anticipated in 2025
  - Reliance in 2025 budget on assumptions given limited experience
- Ministry-led Modernization Initiatives
  - Bill 177 -Launch dates and business implications of remaining legislative modernization changes, such as Early Resolution, remain undetermined
- Collections Request for Proposal (RFP)
  - New contracts for Third Party Collections awarded in Fall 2024 through RFP
  - Anticipated increase in delinquent fine revenue as a result

# Services Outlook

## 2025 Operational Considerations

- Active offer of French Services
  - Expansion of French Language Services Act – 2023 – to include POA courts in designated areas
  - Access to funding for FLSA compliance
- Business Case: Transfer of Part III Prosecutions from Province
  - Currently voluntary, however future remains unknown with regard to change in prosecution fee structure, or potential mandatory transfer in future
- Business Case: Digital Evidence Management
  - Substantial increase in the use and availability of digital evidence
    - Need for technology to support prosecution and disclosure
    - Potential for continued growth and operational impacts in short-term

# 2025 Operating Budget

## Summary including Program Changes in thousands of dollars

Budget Component	Base	Vision Zero	2025 Total Program	2024 Total Program	Change
Labour Related Costs	\$ 2,490	\$ 831	\$ 3,321	\$ 2,992	\$ 329
Administrative	\$ 1,432	\$ 1,919	\$ 3,351	\$ 2,665	\$ 686
Operational & Supply (*)	\$ 238	\$ 946	\$ 1,184	\$ 419	\$ 765
Occupancy & Infrastructure	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment, Vehicles and Tech.	\$ 46	\$ 10	\$ 56	\$ 24	\$ 32
Financial Expenditures	\$ 174	\$ 35	\$ 209	\$ 179	\$ 30
Transfer to Funds	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ -
Intercompany Transfers	\$ (1)	\$ 3,143	\$ 3,142	\$ 2,094	\$ 1,048
<b>Gross Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 4,579</b>	<b>\$ 6,884</b>	<b>\$ 11,463</b>	<b>\$ 8,573</b>	<b>\$ 2,890</b>
Revenues	\$ (5,740)	\$ (7,255)	\$ (12,995)	\$ (9,909)	\$ (3,086)
<b>Net Expenditures (Revenue) Before Indirect Allocations</b>	<b>\$ (1,161)</b>	<b>\$ (371)</b>	<b>\$ (1,532)</b>	<b>\$ (1,336)</b>	<b>\$ (196)</b>
Indirect Allocations	\$ 1,062	\$ 371	\$ 1,433	\$ 1,254	\$ 179
<b>Net Expenditures (Revenue) After Indirect Allocations</b>	<b>\$ (99)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (99)</b>	<b>\$ (82)</b>	<b>\$ (17)</b>

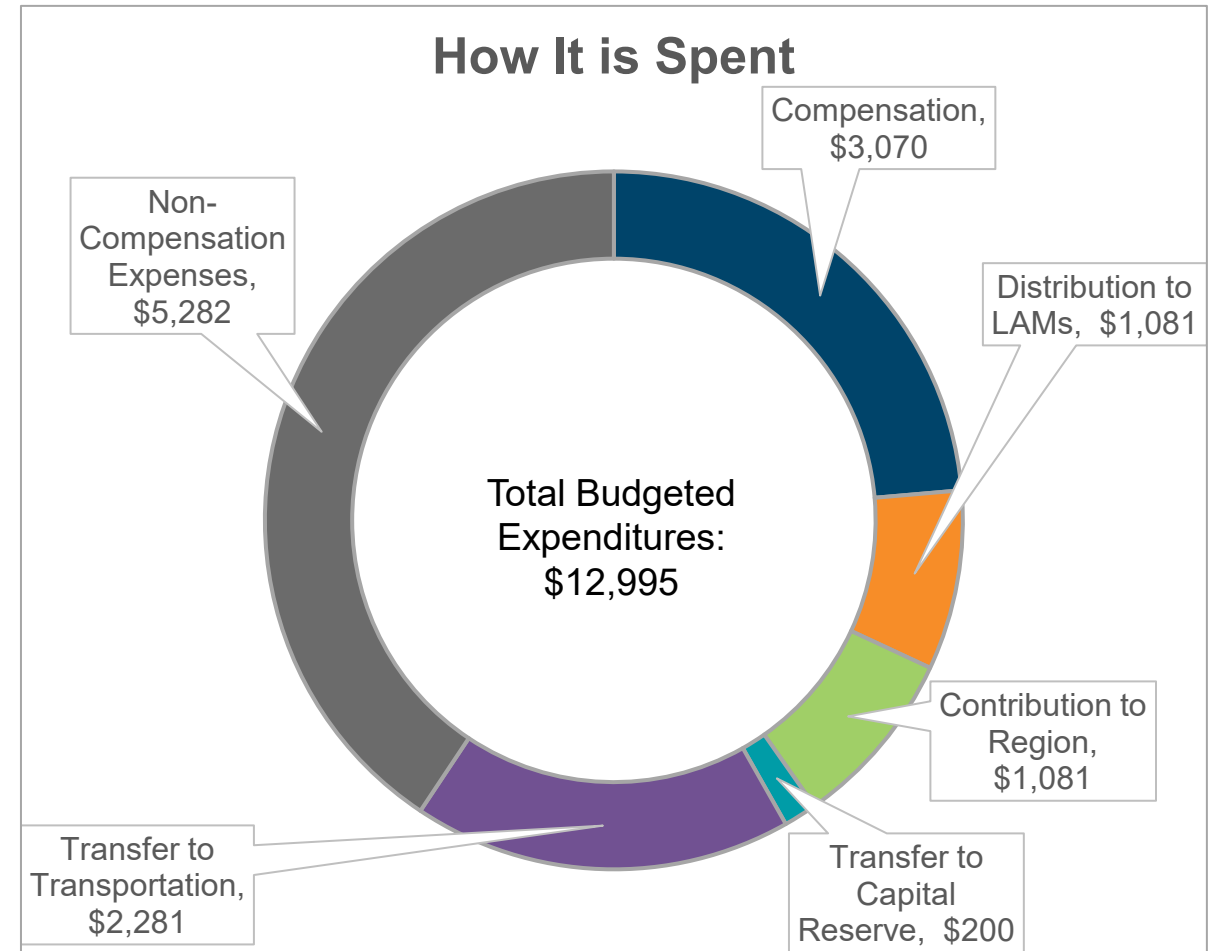
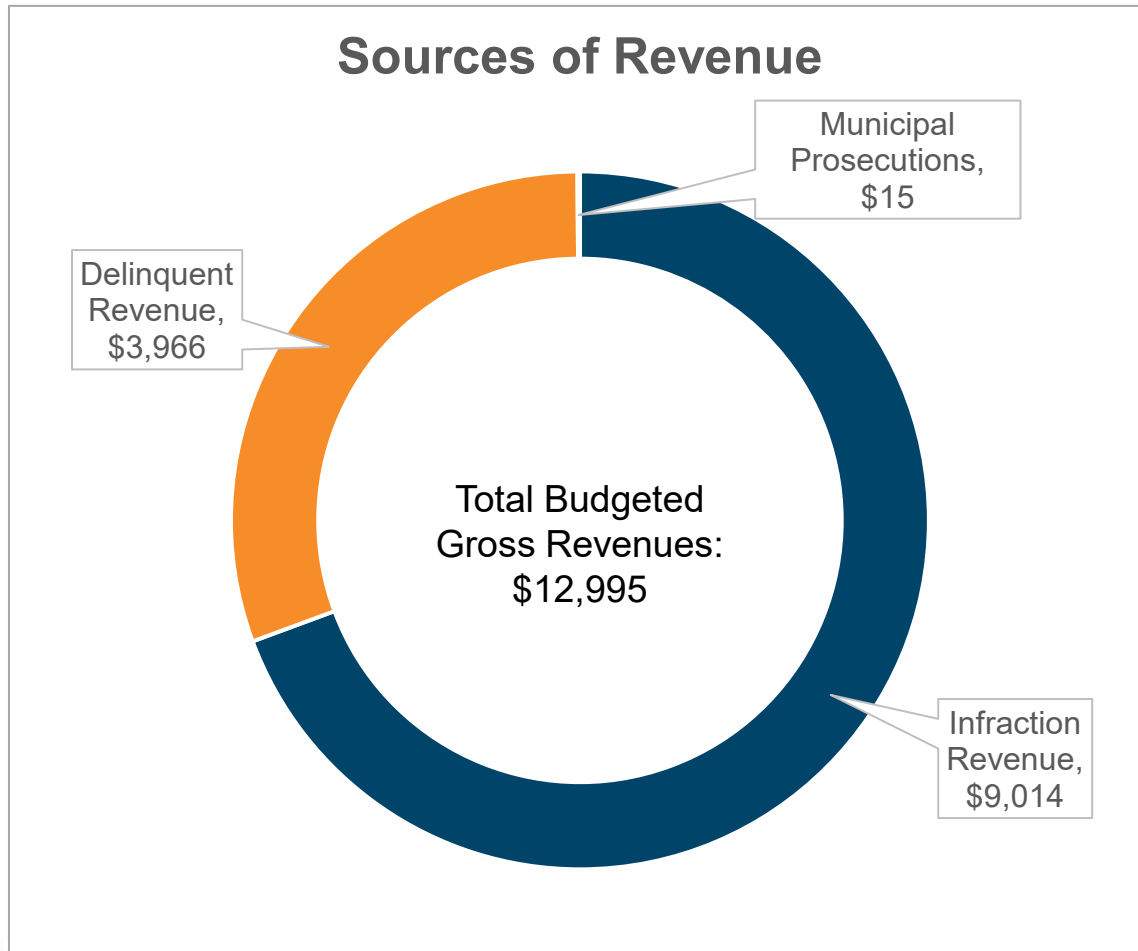
2025 base operating budget is in a net revenue position and has a \$17 thousand increase in the distribution to the LAMs

Vision Zero is self-sustaining and is projecting a \$862 increase in the distribution to the LAMs

\* Distribution to/(recovery from) LAMs is budgeted within this line

# 2025 Budget Summary

Total Program in thousands of dollars



# 2025 Proposed Budget Investments

## **Digital Evidence Management System: \$17,000 annual software fee**

- Purchase of digital evidence management system technology to support effective management of increased volume of digital evidence
- Same platform as NRPS and OPP resulting in efficiencies
- Modernization of evidence and disclosure management, resulting in increased efficiency and sustainability to manage the current and anticipated future pressures, allowing prosecution to meet the legislative as well as technical requirements of digital evidence management, including preparation and issuance of disclosure to defendants.



# 2025 Proposed Budget Investments

## Part III & Part IX Prosecution Transfer from Province

- Increased scope of control over the prosecution and management of complex cases; including the opportunity to achieve efficiencies in use of court time and resources, as well as supporting the effective administration of the Provincial Offences Court program
- Annual cost net of distribution to municipalities = \$105,563, addition of 2 permanent FTE, internal restructuring
- Mitigate potential risk of future mandatory transfer and mid-year budget change and increased Crown prosecution fees
- Other municipalities have confirmed positive benefits post-transfer; including enhancements related to program consistency, customer service and optimization of court time.

# Questions?

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