



MEDIA RELEASE  
DECEMBER 19, 2023

# CALGARY MAYOR & COUNCIL APPROVAL FALL TO RECORD LOW

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# Approval for Calgary Mayor and Council at Record Low



(CALGARY) There may be 671 days until Calgary's next municipal election, but there is already a mood for change among many voters, according to a recent ThinkHQ survey. Public approval for Calgary Mayor and Council has declined notably since June, now sitting at unprecedentedly low levels.

## Mayor Jyoti Gondek

Jyoti Gondek is now the least popular mayor in Calgary's history. The mayor presently sits at 30% approval compared to 61% disapproval in December, a significant slide in popularity since June. Over four-in-ten (43%) voters say they "Strongly disapprove" of the mayor, compared to only 7% reporting "strong" approval.

- Men tend to offer much harsher appraisals of the mayor than women
- Ratings of Gondek tend to decline with age, with those in the 55+ cohort offering the most negative assessments of the mayor
- Disapproval for the mayor is more concentrated in established communities and in households earning more than \$125,000 a year

# Approval for Calgary Mayor and Council at Record Low

... continued



## Calgary City Councillors

Calgarians were asked to rate their ward councillor's performance since they were elected in 2021. Aggregately, councillors receive modestly negative ratings from constituents, with 37% saying they approve of their councillor compared to 41% saying they disapprove. This represents a notable decline in councillor ratings over the past six months, down 6 points since our last survey in June. This represents an all-time low in Councillor ratings in Calgary.

Councillor performance ratings are reasonably consistent across demographic strata, with some variation, particularly in negative evaluations.

- Residents in new and suburban communities tend to offer the highest ratings for their councillors, while those residing in established communities tend to be the harshest in their evaluations
- Men tend to be more negative about their councillor than women

# Approval for Calgary Mayor and Council at Record Low

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## City Council Overall

Council's overall approval with citizens tends to track in line (though generally behind) that of the mayor. This December, just over one-quarter (28%) of Calgarians say they approve of the performance of their municipal council overall, compared to 60% who disapprove. Again, negative ratings tend to be more intense than positive ones.

- As with previous measures, age and gender influence performance ratings, with men and older voters decidedly more negative in their appraisals



Commenting on the new survey results, ThinkHQ President Marc Henry notes:

“For as long as there has been municipal public opinion polling in Calgary, there has never been a City Council this unpopular.

Mayor Gondek, for her part, did not get off to a great start. Her high-water mark for this term was 38% approval, and she’s down 8-points since then. Her current report card comes on the heels of a 7.8% residential tax increase, and our poll was two-thirds through field when the mayor refused to attend the annual Menorah lighting ceremony at City Hall, so there’s a fairly good likelihood her approval is actually lower than this now.

Gondek is running out of time if re-election is something she’s aspiring to. The next municipal campaign isn’t until October 2025, but 30% approval is not something that can be rehabilitated quickly, particularly when over four-in-ten voters **strongly** dislike your performance.

There are some City Councillors in a very similar position to the mayor, mostly for taking the same positions as the mayor. It’s not just the rising dissatisfaction with Council’s performance, but the growing intensity of that dissatisfaction that tends to drive voters to the polls when the time comes.

## Commentary

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Council still has a very contentious blanket city-wide re-zoning public hearing coming in April, and a 2025 residential tax increase that starts at 5.5% due to this year's increase. The year leading up to election year is likely to be bumpy for Council, but if they don't find the path to turning these numbers around, a good portion of Council may not be returning in 671 days."

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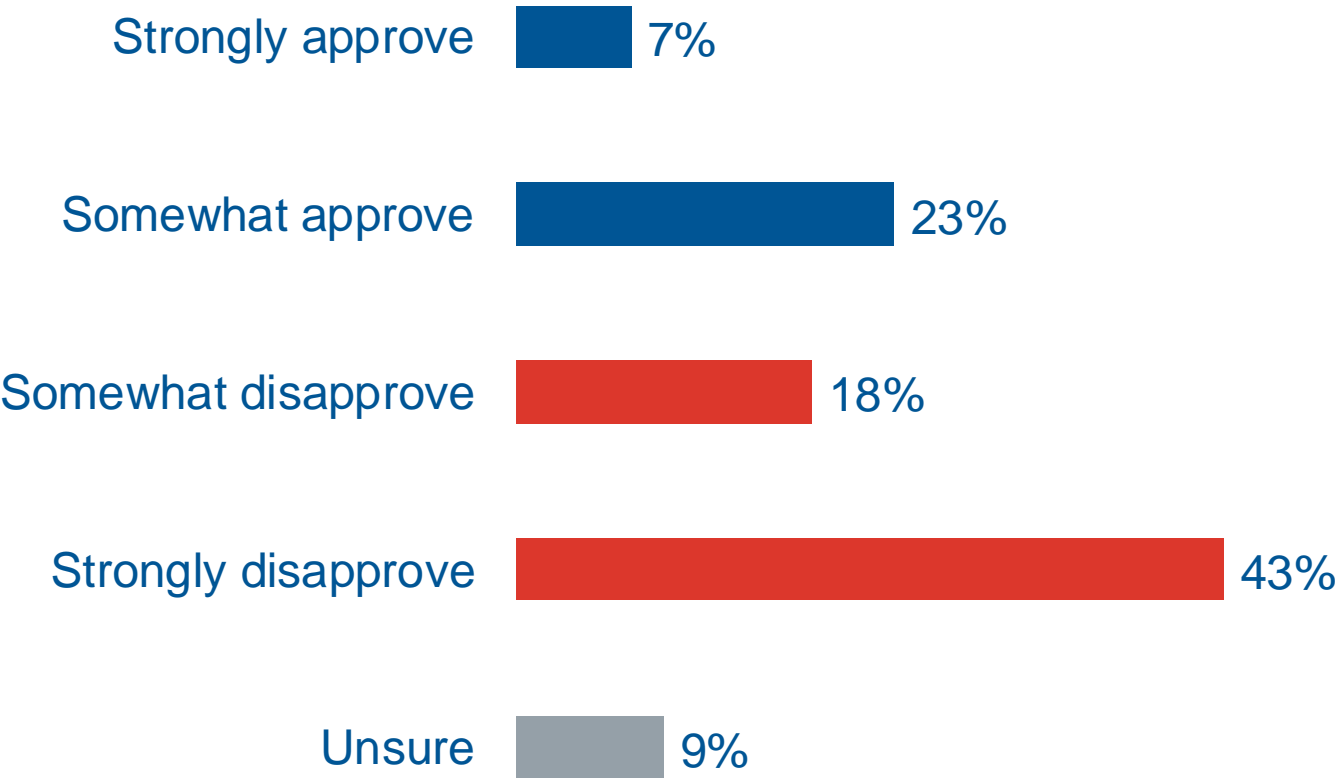
# ASSESSING MAYOR GONDEK



# Mayor Gondek Approval



*The current Mayor and City Council were elected in October 2021. How would you personally rate their performance since then?*



Summary	
Approve	30%
Disapprove	61%
NET "Approve"	-31

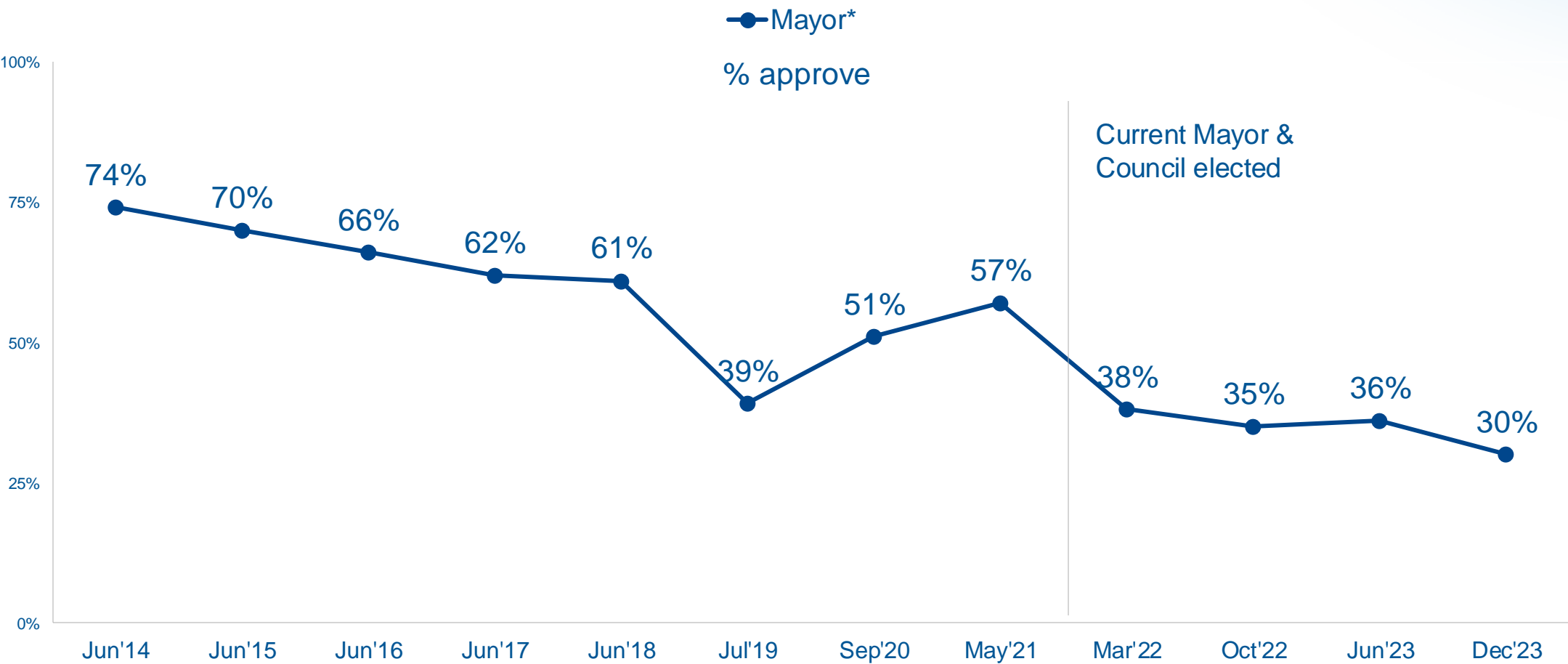
Base: All respondents (n=1,138) | NET: Approve minus disapprove



# Mayor Approval Tracking



The current Mayor & City Council were elected in (date). How would you personally rate their performance since then?



Base: All respondents | \*Note: Jun'14 to May'21 - Mayor Nenshi ratings; Mar'22 to Current - Mayor Gondek ratings

# Mayor Gondek Approval

## By Key Demographics



The current Mayor and City Council were elected in October 2021. How would you rate their performance since then?

	Gender			Age (years)			Household Income		
	Total	Men	Women	<35	35-54	55+	<\$75K	\$75-124	\$125K+
Base: All respondents	(n=1,138)	(n=558)	(n=560)	(n=361)	(n=443)	(n=334)	(n=286)	(n=292)	(n=345)
Approve	30%	25%	34%	35%	30%	23%	32%	36%	28%
Disapprove	61%	69%	53%	48%	63%	72%	55%	57%	68%
Unsure	9%	6%	13%	17%	7%	5%	13%	8%	5%

Note: Shading [blue] denotes significant differences among sub-samples

	City Quadrant					Community Type		
	Total	NW	SW	SE	NE	New/Sub	Estab.	Inner
Base: All respondents	(n=1,138)	(n=318)	(n=320)	(n=290)	(n=211)	(n=402)	(n=483)	(n=230)
Approve	30%	31%	29%	27%	33%	34%	26%	32%
Disapprove	61%	59%	63%	64%	55%	58%	66%	57%
Unsure	9%	10%	8%	9%	12%	8%	9%	11%

Note: Shading [blue] denotes significant differences among sub-samples

Base: All respondents



# ASSESSING CITY COUNCIL

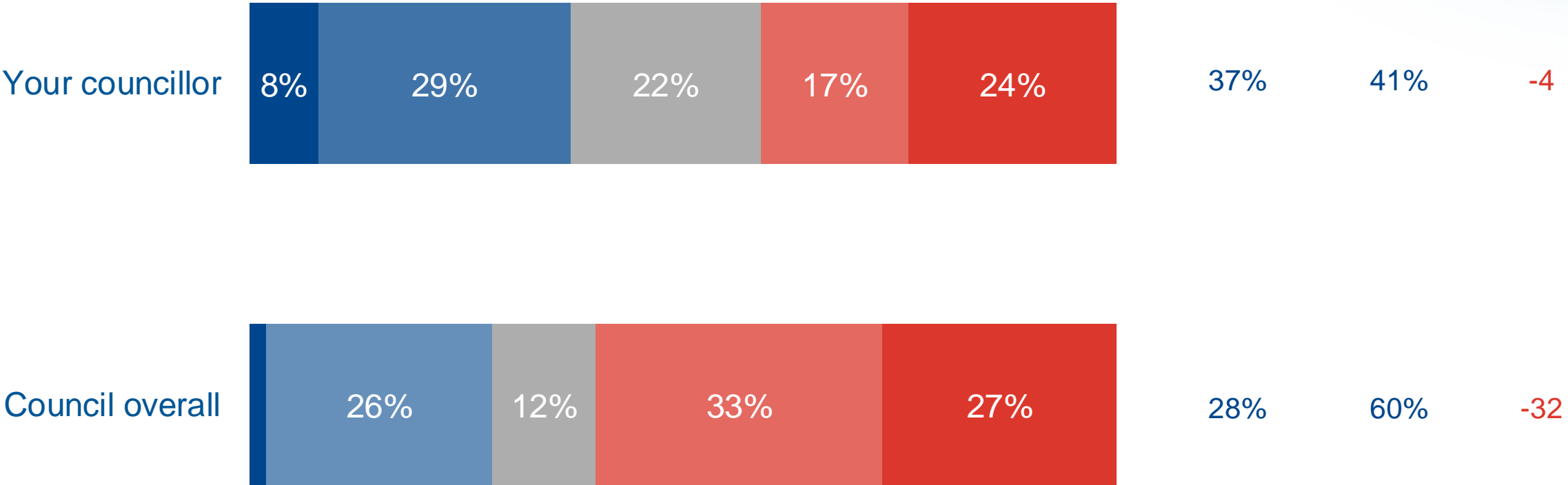


# Calgary City Council Approval



The current Mayor and City Council were elected in October 2021. How would you personally rate their performance since then?

Strongly approve   Somewhat approve   Unsure   Somewhat disapprove   Strongly disapprove   Approve   Disapprove   NET

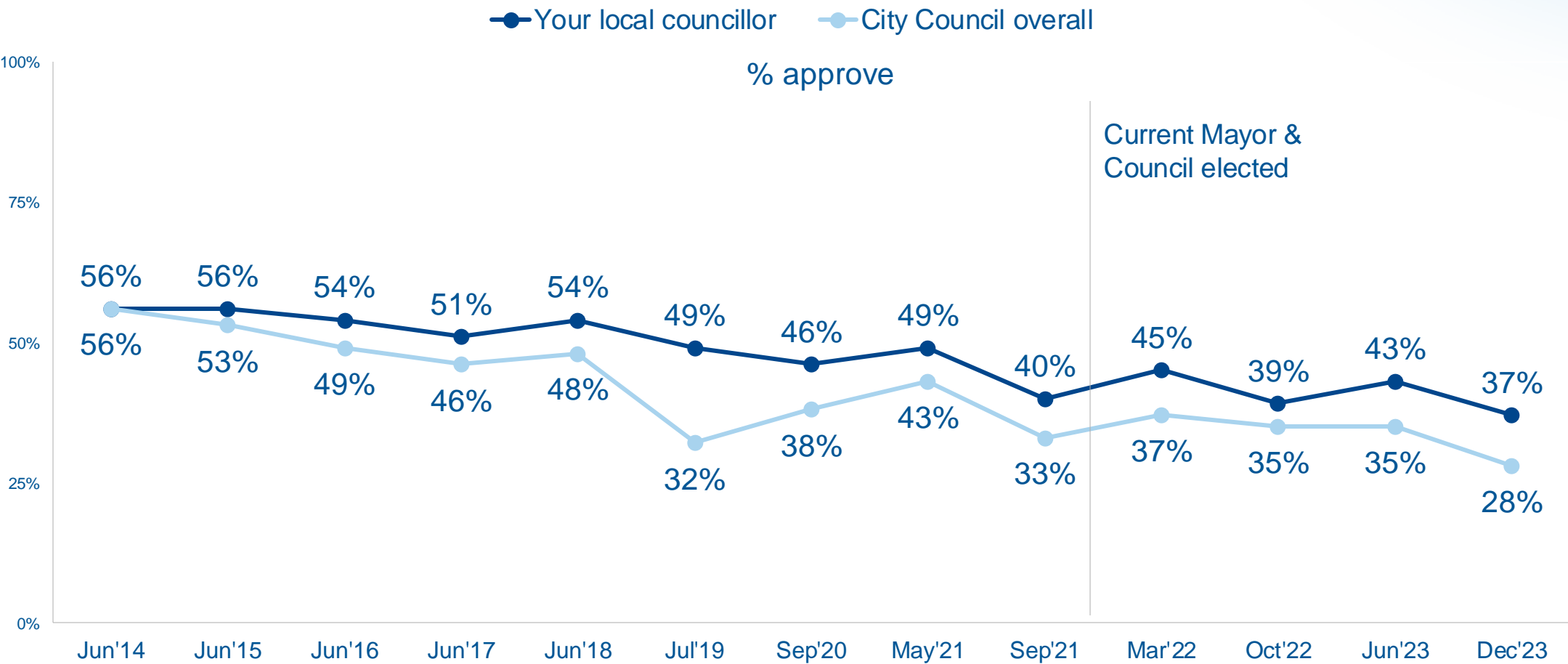


Base: All respondents (n=1,138) | NET: Approve minus disapprove

# Calgary City Council Approval Tracking



The current Mayor & City Council were elected in (date). How would you personally rate their performance since then?



Base: All respondents

# Calgary City Council Approval

## By Gender, Age and Household Income



The current Mayor and City Council were elected in October 2021. How would you rate their performance since then?

		Gender		Age (years)			Household Income		
	Total	Men	Women	<35	35-54	55+	<\$75K	\$75-124	\$125K+
Base: All respondents (n=1,138)		(n=558)	(n=560)	(n=361)	(n=443)	(n=334)	(n=286)	(n=292)	(n=345)
<b>Your local Councillor</b>									
Approve	37%	39%	35%	30%	40%	40%	30%	41%	41%
Disapprove	41%	46%	36%	33%	42%	48%	40%	35%	45%
Unsure	22%	15%	29%	37%	17%	12%	30%	23%	13%
<b>City Council overall</b>									
Approve	28%	24%	32%	33%	25%	26%	30%	33%	26%
Disapprove	60%	69%	52%	48%	64%	69%	52%	57%	67%
Unsure	12%	8%	16%	20%	11%	4%	17%	9%	7%

Note: Shading [blue] denotes significant differences among sub-samples

Base: All respondents



# Calgary City Council Approval

## By Calgary City Quadrant and Community Type



The current Mayor and City Council were elected in October 2021. How would you rate their performance since then?

### City Quadrant

### Community Type

	Total	NW	SW	SE	NE	New/Sub	Estab.	Inner
Base: All respondents	(n=1,138)	(n=318)	(n=320)	(n=290)	(n=211)	(n=402)	(n=483)	(n=230)
<b>Your local Councillor</b>								
Approve	37%	40%	34%	36%	39%	45%	33%	34%
Disapprove	41%	37%	43%	43%	41%	36%	46%	40%
Unsure	22%	22%	23%	21%	20%	19%	21%	26%
<b>City Council overall</b>								
Approve	28%	32%	23%	25%	32%	31%	24%	30%
Disapprove	60%	57%	63%	64%	57%	58%	65%	56%
Unsure	12%	11%	14%	11%	11%	11%	10%	14%

Note: Shading [blue] denotes significant differences among sub-samples

Base: All respondents



# APPROACH



# Research Methodology



- **Approach:** Online survey of adult Calgarians
- **Region:** Calgary Proper
- **Field dates:** December 5 - 11, 2023
- **Sample size:** n=1,138
- **Sampling:** A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from panel partners
- **Weighting:** Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of the Calgary population according to Stats Canada
- **Margin of error:** The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is **+/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20**

Sample sizes:	Unweighted	Weighted	MOE*
Calgary total	n=1,138	n=1,138	+/- 2.9
Northwest	n=330	n=318	+/- 5.4
Southwest	n=365	n=320	+/- 5.1
Southeast	n=263	n=290	+/- 6.0
Northeast	n=180	n=211	+/- 7.3
New/Suburb	n=386	n=402	+/- 5.0
Established	n=498	n=483	+/- 4.4
Inner city	n=234	n=230	+/- 6.4

\*Margin of error: Percentage points 19 times out of 20.  
The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size.  
Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes

## About this release:

Excerpts are from ***Eye on Calgary***, a syndicated subscription offering critical information to public affairs decision-makers, to inform client strategic planning, public and government relations in Calgary.

***Eye on Calgary*** is the city's only public opinion monitor of municipal issues, personalities, business, politics and society.



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