



Public opinion in the Waterloo Region & the rest of Canada concerning the CBC

January 19, 2012

Introduction

On September 26, 2011, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation announced plans to open a local radio station in Waterloo region¹ in the autumn of 2012. This station would be rooted in the community, broadcasting regional news and information shows in place of distant programming originating from Toronto.

To gauge reaction to this announcement and measure attitudes about the CBC in general, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting conducted a special opinion survey of a representative sample of adult residents of Waterloo region and area as part of a national opinion research project².

A series of three questions reveals that residents of the Waterloo region are generally very supportive of the CBC's proposal, would like their MP to champion the new station, and are prepared to see the CBC's budget increased in order to be able to deliver the station as promised.

This report also presents data from the survey comparing the attitudes of Waterloo region residents with Canadians generally.

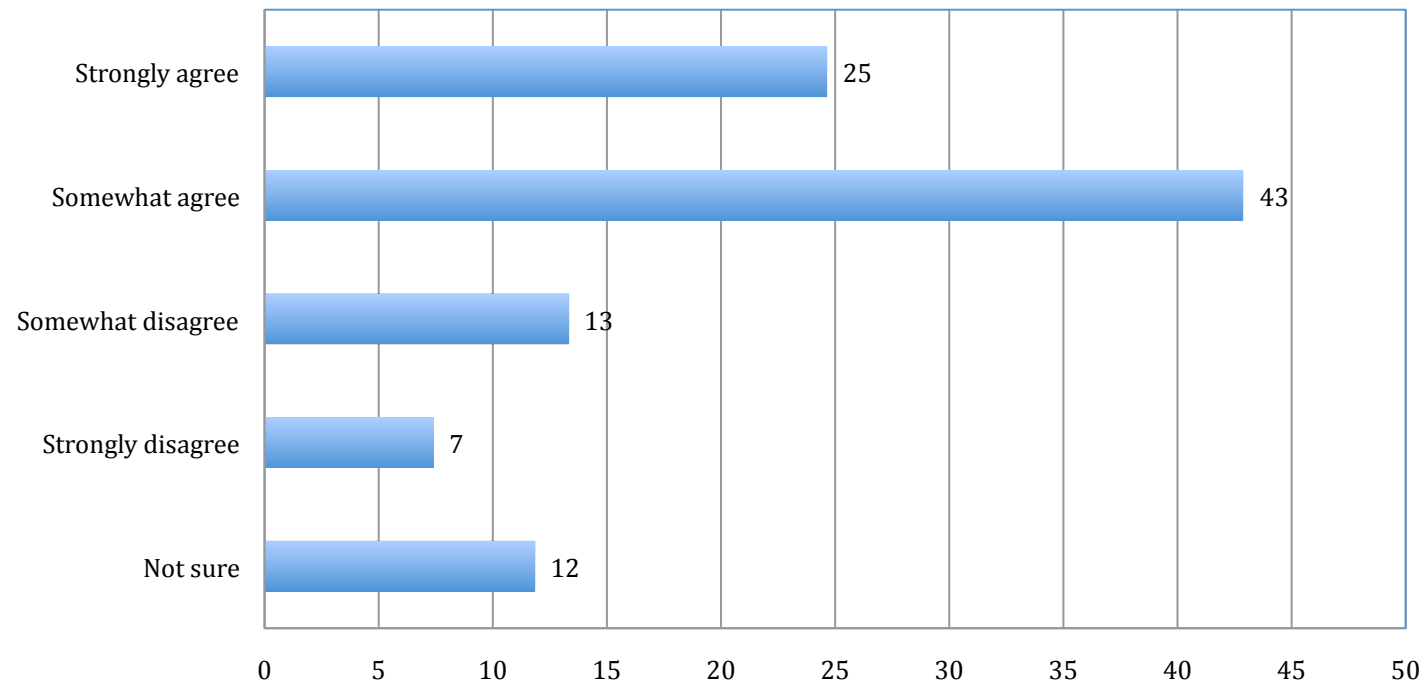
¹ The region includes the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, and also the communities of Ayr, Baden, Breslau, Conestogo, Elmira, Floradale, Linwood, New Dundee, New Hamburg, St. Jacobs and Wellesley, and the CBC radio station should also serve the Guelph area.

² The online survey of 2022 adult Canadians conducted from November 4 to 10 has a margin of error of +/- 2.18%, 19 times out of 20. Waterloo region data are based on a sample of 406 adult Canadians living in the area and have a margin of error of +/- 4.86%, 19 times out of 20. The survey was designed and administered by political scientists Peter Loewen, Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto and Daniel Rubenson, Associate Professor at Ryerson University. Fieldwork for the poll was done by Vision Critical on the Angus Reid Forum National Panel.

Section I – Waterloo Region Results

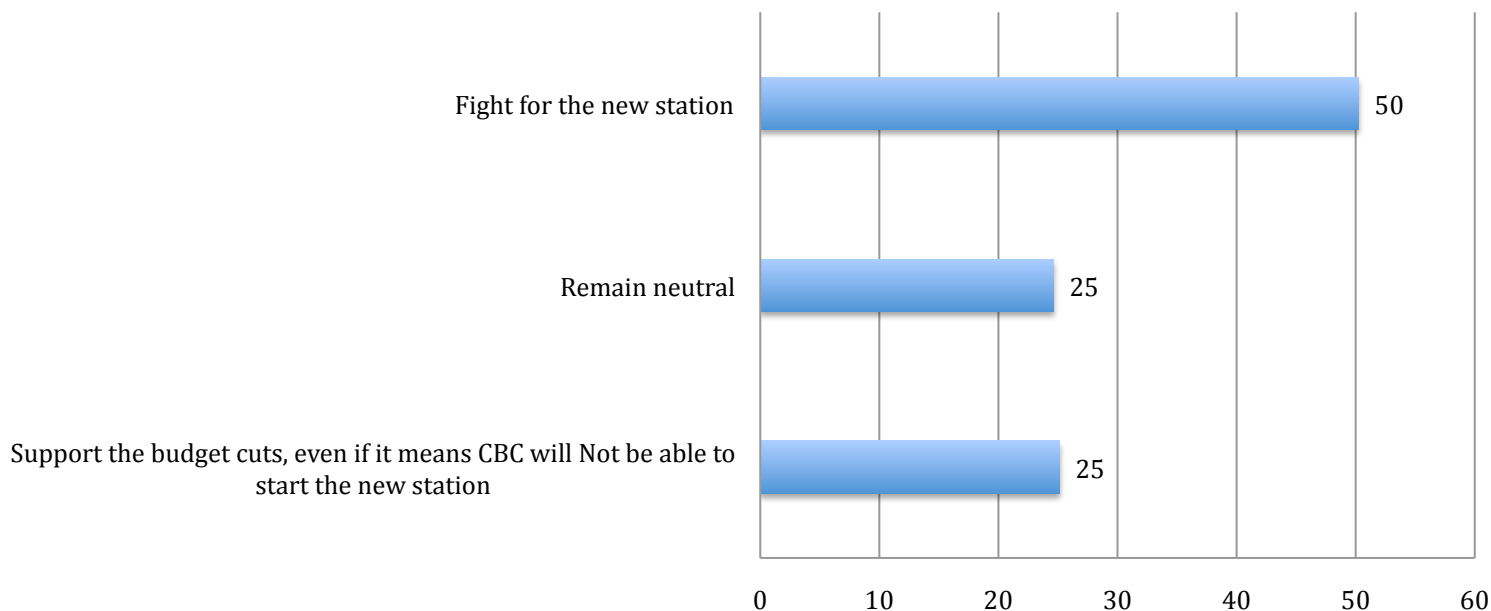
Seven-in-ten (68%) area residents would like a CBC radio station in their community to cover local affairs, including 25% who strongly agree with this statement.

“I would like a CBC radio station in my community to cover local affairs”



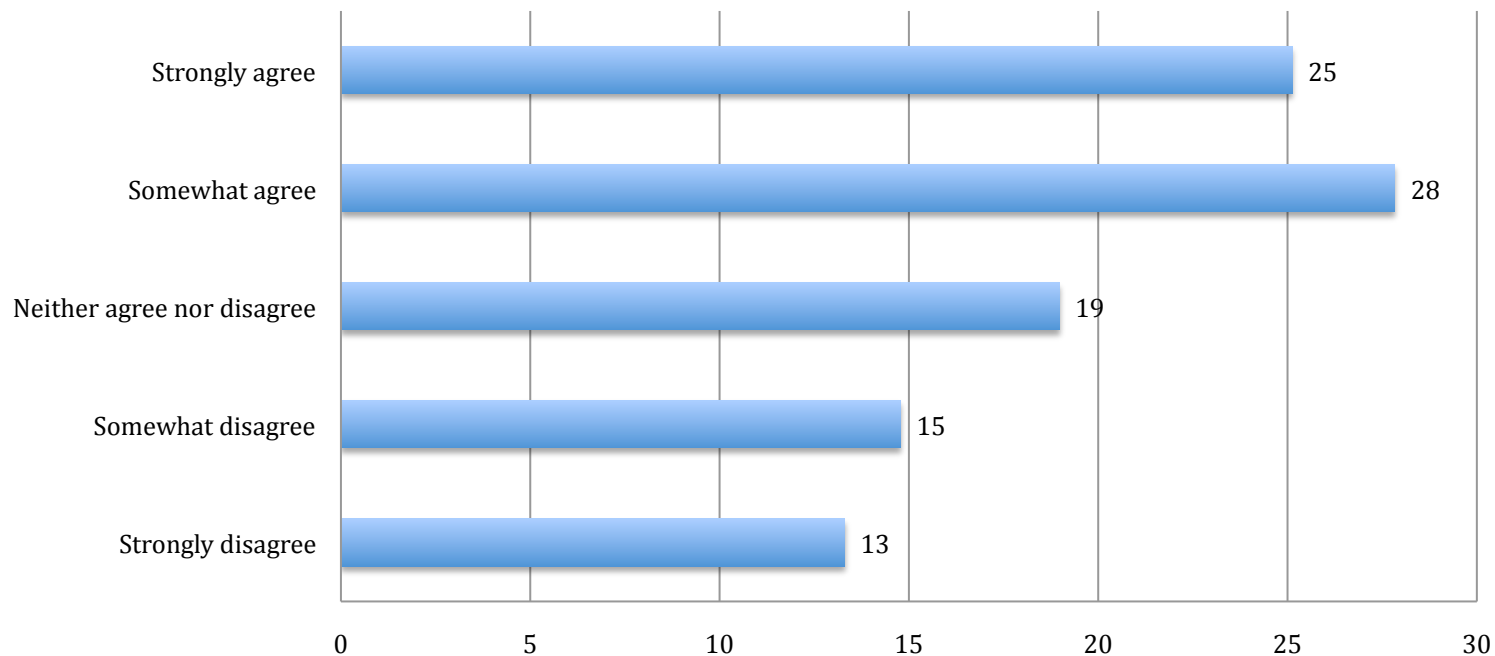
By a factor of two to one, Waterloo region residents who hope that their Member of Parliament will be a champion and fight for the new station outnumber those who would rather their MP support cuts to CBC’s budget, while one-in-four would prefer their MP to remain neutral.

“CBC has proposed to establish a new radio service in your community, but may not be able to deliver its promise because the government plans a substantial cut to CBC’s budget. In this circumstance would you hope your MP would...”



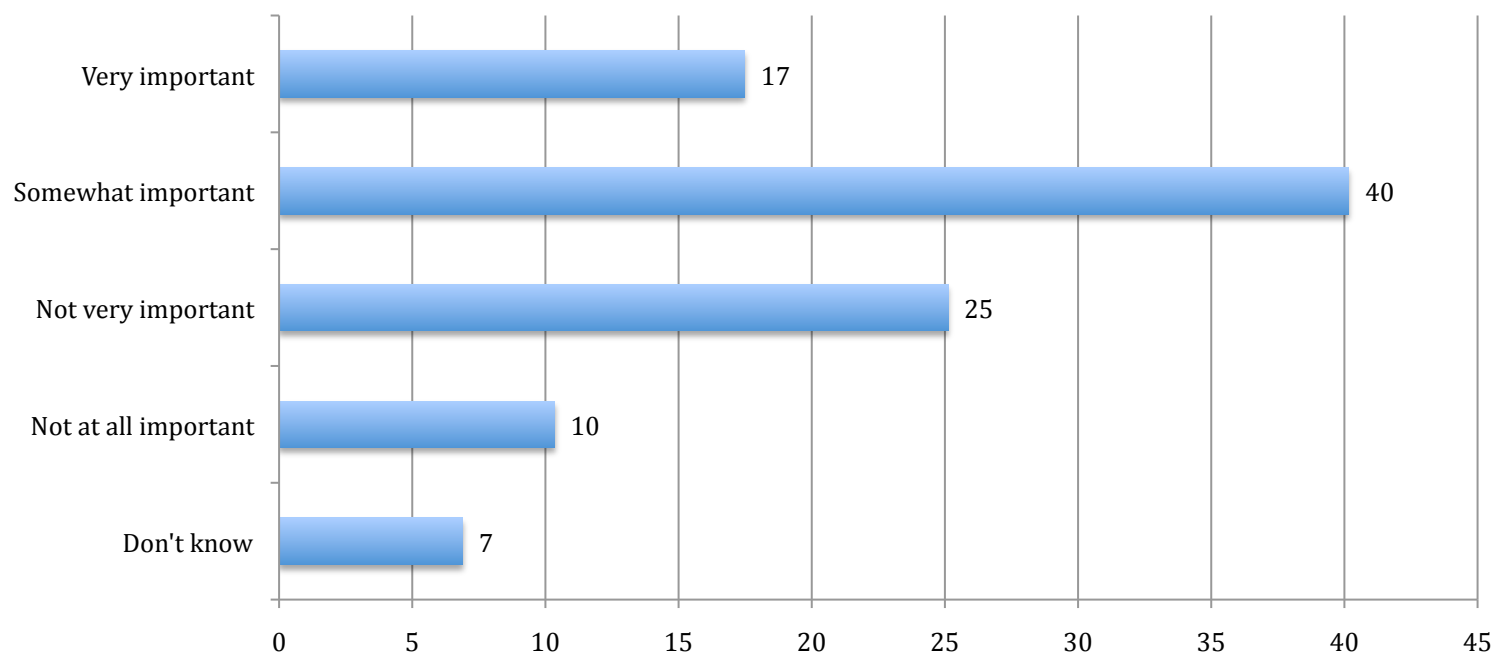
A majority of area residents think their region is big enough that it should have its own CBC radio station, even if it means providing the CBC with a bit more money, nearly double the number of residents who disagree with this statement.

"Just as small provinces have their own CBC stations, regions like mine should have their own stations, even if it requires the government giving CBC a bit more money."



Even without a local station, a majority of Waterloo region residents regard the role played by the CBC in their community to be important.

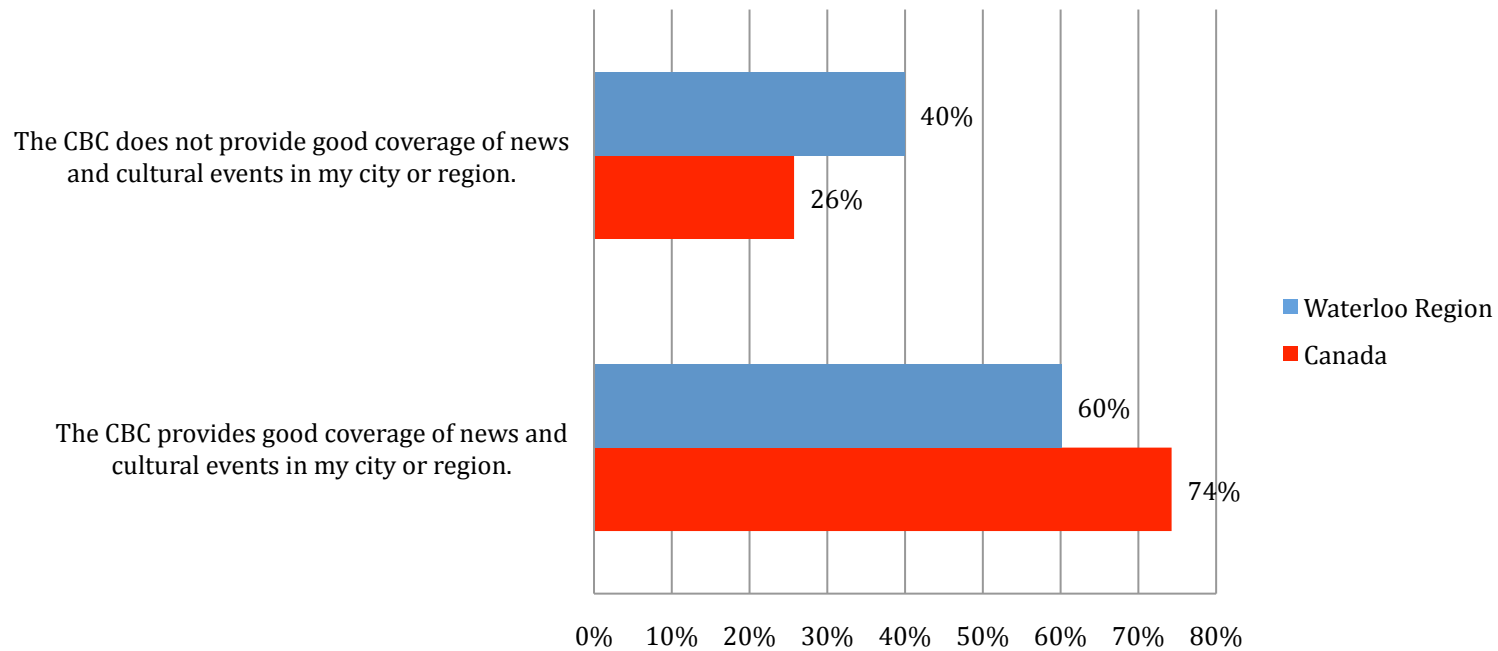
"Do you feel that the CBC plays an important role in your community?"



Section II – Canada-wide Results

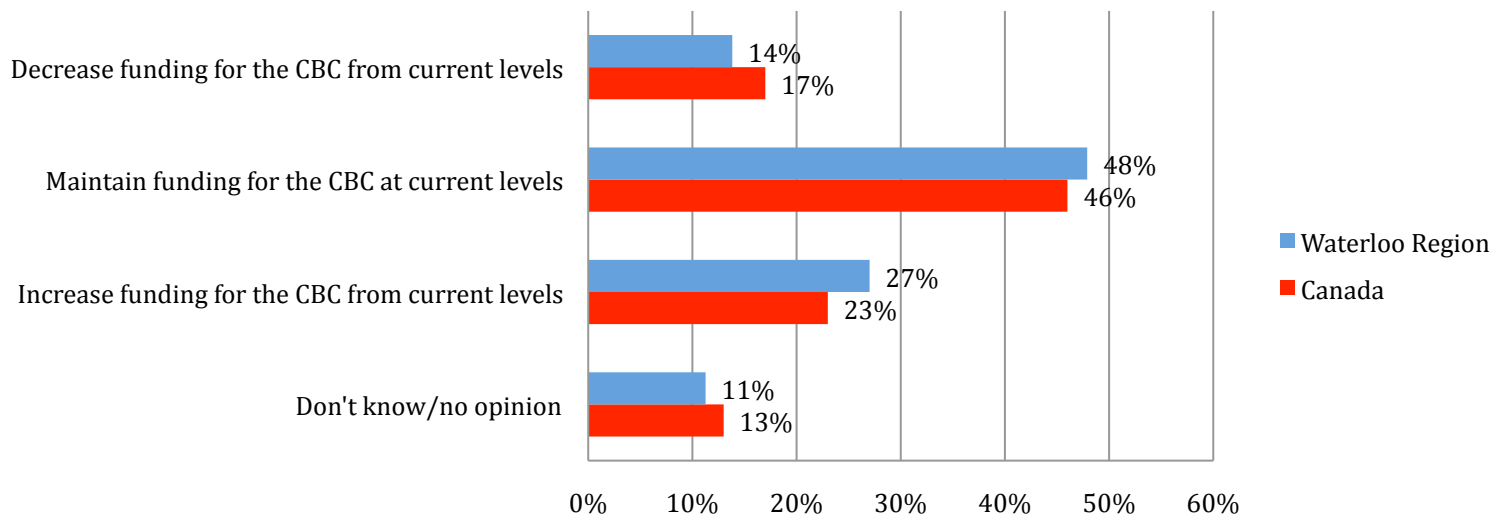
The rest of Canada has a higher level of satisfaction than residents of the Waterloo region concerning the quality of local coverage provided by the CBC.

"Which statement comes closer to your own views?"



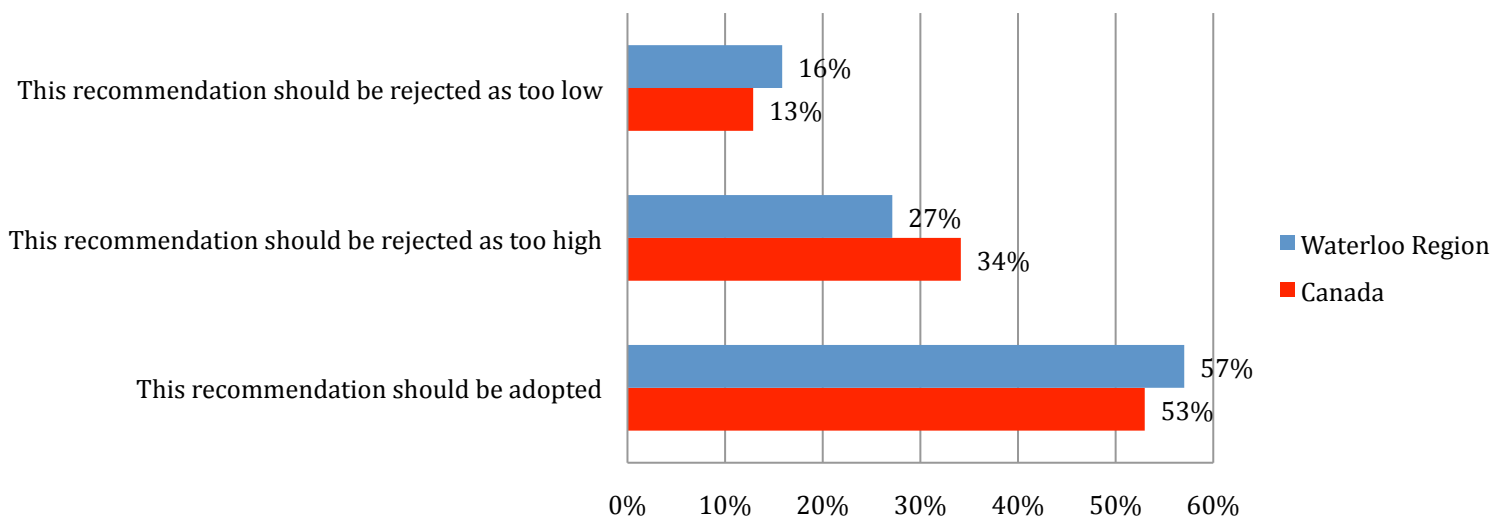
Three-quarters of Waterloo region residents would advise their MP to vote in Parliament to maintain or increase CBC funding, a result that is in alignment with the rest of Canada.

"Assume for a moment that your federal Member of Parliament asked for your advice on an upcoming vote in the House of Commons on what to do about CBC funding. Which of the following three options would you advise him /her to vote for?"

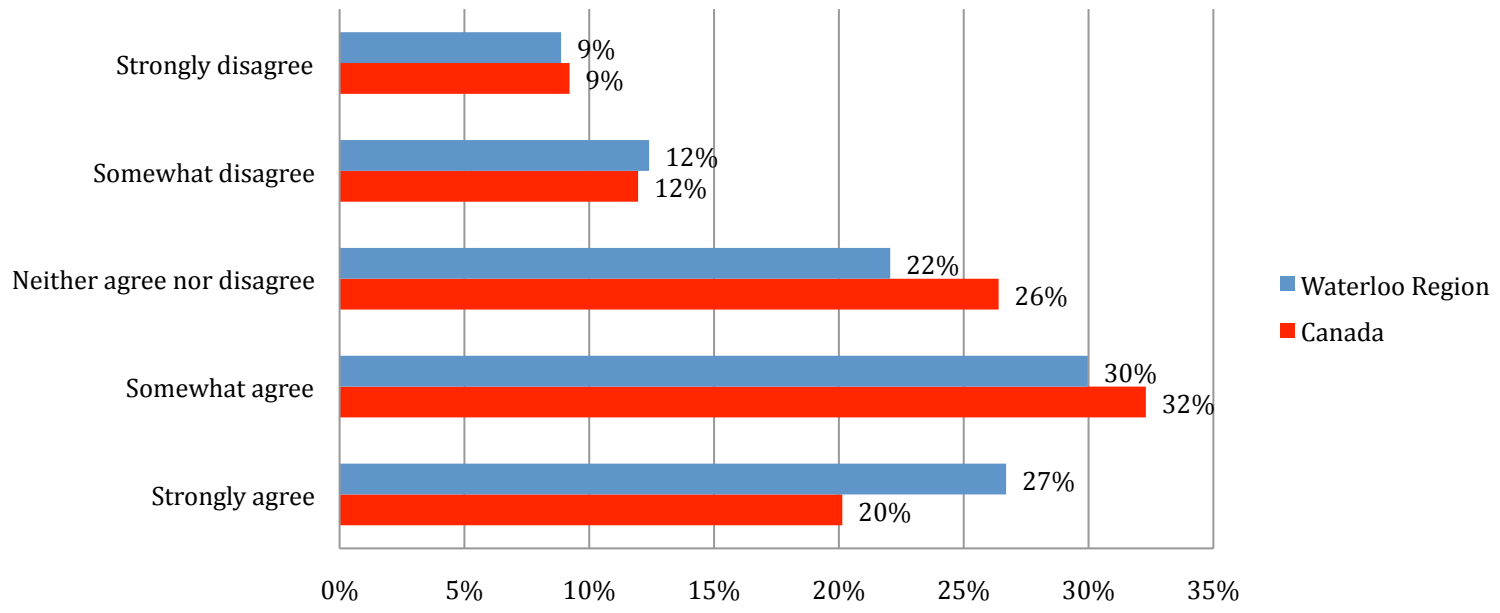


On questions related to CBC funding, Waterloo region residents are largely in agreement with the rest of Canada, with minor variations.

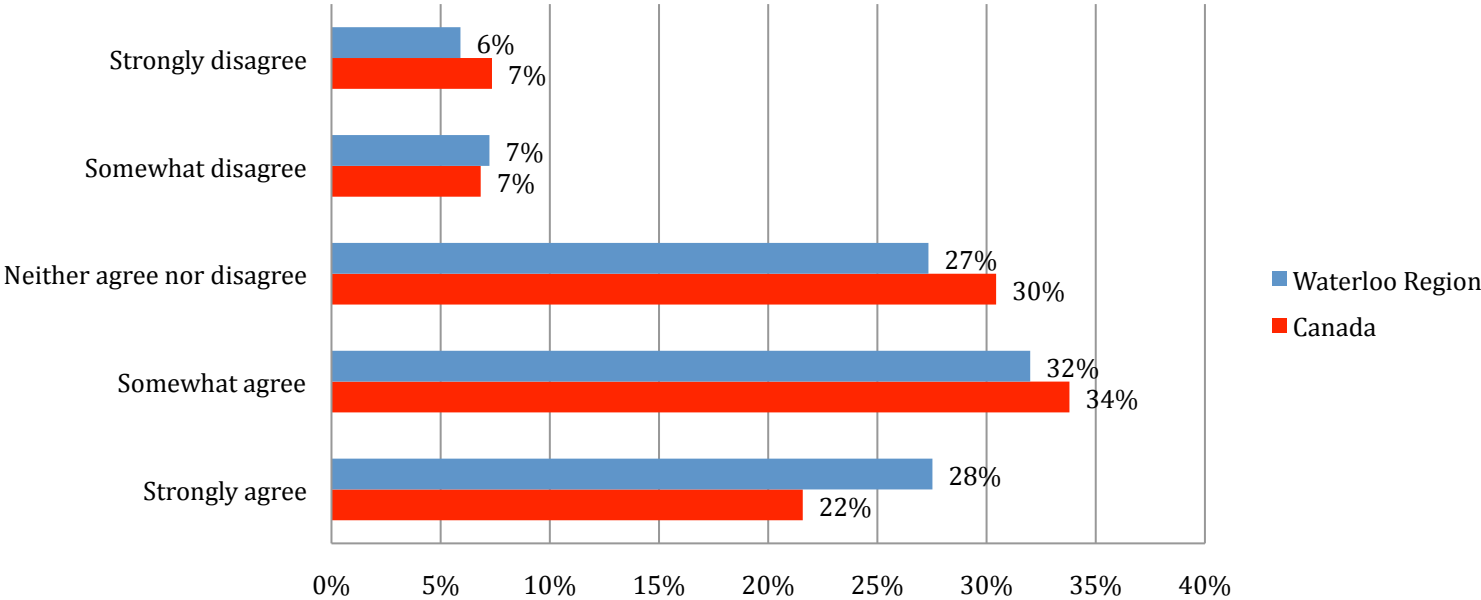
"Before the last election, the House of Commons Heritage Committee recommended an increase in annual funding of the CBC from \$33 per citizen to \$40 per citizen. Which of the following most closely reflects your view? "



"Canada's level of public broadcaster funding is insufficient to maintain a unique and vibrant Canadian identity and culture."

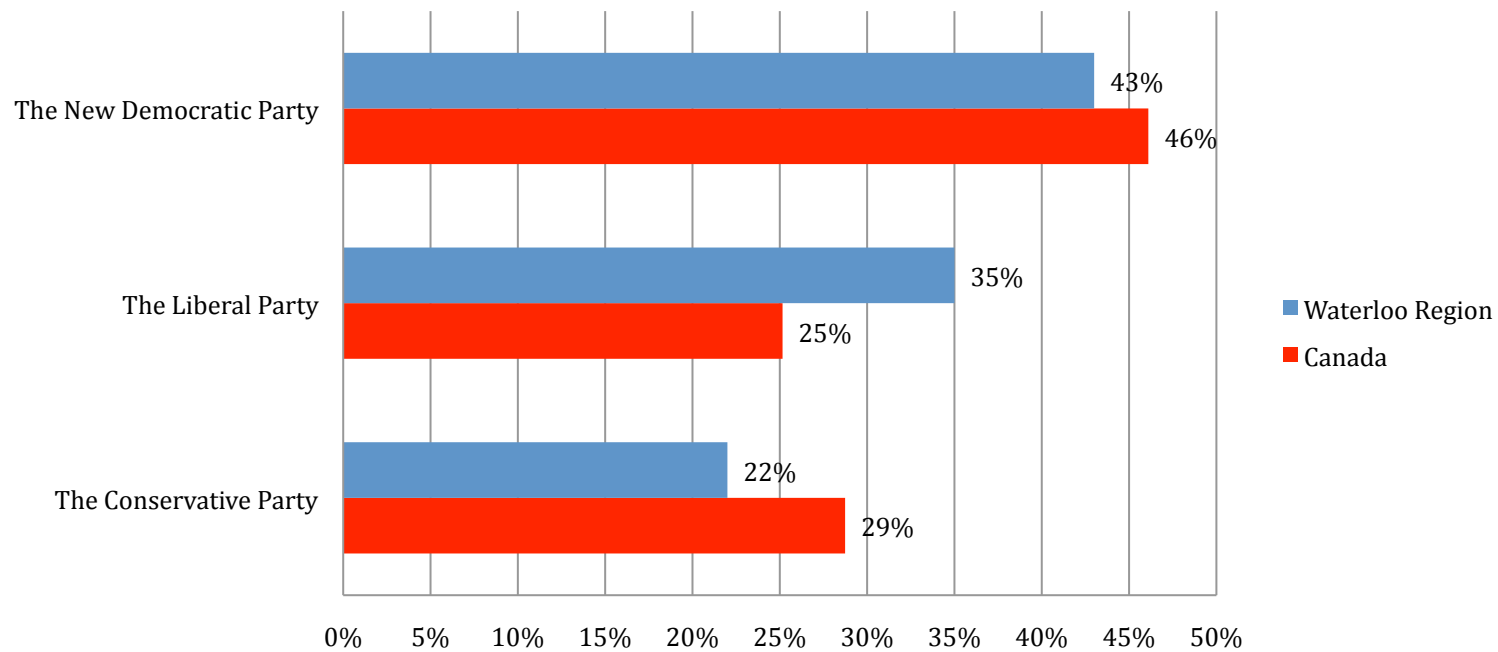


"Canada's level of public broadcaster funding is indicative of the federal government's treatment of the cultural sector overall."



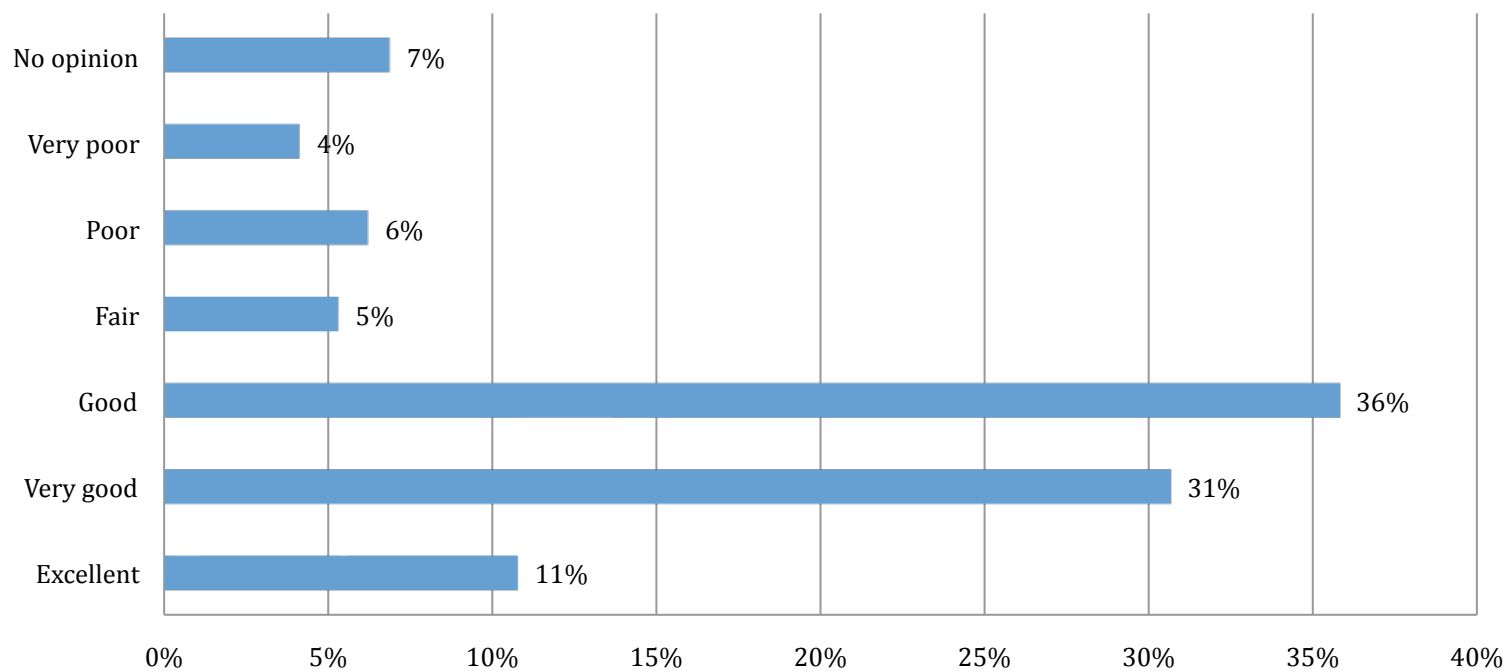
As for trust in the major political parties to protect the CBC, fewer Waterloo region residents most trust the Conservative Party while more trust the Liberal Party than the rest of Canada.

"Which political party do you most trust to protect the CBC?"



Canada-wide, eight-in-ten give the CBC high marks for fulfilling its national mandate.

"As you may know, as the national broadcaster the mandate of the CBC is to provide radio and television services incorporating a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens and entertains. Overall, how would you rate the CBC in fulfilling this man



The CBC also gets high marks from Canadians for its performance in fulfilling its regional mandate.

"As part of its mandate, the CBC is required to provide television and radio content that reflects Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, and to serve the special needs of Canada's diverse regions. Overall, how would you rate the perfo

