

Office of the Councillors
Budget Review Task
Force

Edmonton

Private and Confidential

**Report to Council
July 4, 2023**

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Dene, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux) and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report fulfills the Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force's obligation set forth in Bylaw 20132 to report to City Council on findings and options for equitable resources based on a review of pertinent gathered and available resourcing information. The Task Force was also required to apply an accountability, transparency and equity lens to this work.

The Task Force accomplished this review by holding 33 interviews comprising all Councillors, their Ward office staff and Administration staff that directly or indirectly support Council. The Task Force then conducted a current state assessment based on insights gleaned from the interviews, a review of the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, relevant policies, Ward composition data (Ward profiles), Ward and Common budget financials, a review of centralized supports, and information extracted from a scan of 17 municipalities in other Canadian jurisdictions (their policies and follow-up question interviews with eight of the municipalities scanned).

Current Resourcing Assessment

The Task Force's review resulted in an assessment of the current Office of the Councillors' resourcing which showed:

- Councillors and their Ward offices perform their governance and constituent representation duties differently enabled by Council Policy Councillors' Budget and Expenses C618B's autonomy and flexibility principles. This results in differences in Councillor and Ward office capacities and work demands, with many experiencing variability in their capacity deficits. Staffing is a key example of one of these differences with offices having different numbers of Ward office staff (one to three), experiences, related backgrounds and roles, and employment status (contracted, part-time or full-time).
- There are many reasons for the variability in demand: the Council and Committee meeting schedule, number of assigned committees to Councillors, number of motions generating additional work, number and types of constituent inquiries, chosen preparation approach, office operating model, selected communication channels, adopted constituent engagement methods, assigned or chosen extra obligations (e.g., Deputy Mayor, special projects, special committees, etc.).
- The current imbalances experienced by some Councillors create several undesirable consequences: overtime liabilities, Councillors spending personal assets, work/life balance challenges and challenges attracting and retaining staff.

- The budgets for use by Ward offices have had annual surpluses from 2015-2022. These surpluses are significant enough, if they were to continue, to fund additional staff. Consideration of the impact from COVID-19 may have also contributed to the surplus environment with less travel and face-to-face engagement options. However, if 2022 is an indicator, these surpluses could turn into deficits in the future.
- Ward composition is different, with population differences between the smallest and largest. Several other factors have similar differences including: volume and variability of needs from households, spoken language, geography, and volume of 311 requests, which could all create variable demands on Councillors and Ward offices.

Emerging Issues

Issues arising from the current state assessment fall into two groups: General and Inequity.

General Issues:

- The Office of the Councillors budget model is not consistently meeting the individual and shared needs of many Councillors: some desire more control and autonomy and others see the benefits of opportunities for resource sharing, but desire new and different resources.
- A tension exists between the recurrent annual Common and Ward budget surpluses with the majority of Ward offices experiencing a shortage of capacity and inability to hire additional staff.
- There is a lack of awareness among some Councillors and their staff of centralized support services' capability and capacity leading to duplication of effort, contracting out work when in-house resources are available, unrealized scaling potential and inefficient time use.
- Evolving preferences for public communications means that existing resources and supports are frequently out of step with Councillors' needs, although demand for traditional communication means is evident in all Wards.
- There is a growing time strain between Councillors' governance role and constituency responsibilities caused by increasing constituent needs and mandatory governance duties.
- Despite comprehensive and quality-focused centralized support services, Ward offices are frequently not fully aware of these offerings and do not take full advantage of them, despite fulsome orientation and ongoing education opportunities.

Equity Issues:

- The current model of providing equal funding allocations to all Ward offices does not reflect nor address the differences between Wards, which include: population differences, volume and needs of households, variance in spoken language, average

and median age, number of business licenses, volume of 311 requests, needs of community leagues and overall geographic size of the Ward.

- Councillors themselves have different needs, whether personal or professional, which are not accounted for in the current budget model. For example, child care responsibilities, transportation access and preferences, familiarity and/or use of social media, etc.

Future State and Recommendations

The Task Force developed a desired future state and recommendations for resourcing and policy changes to better meet Councillors' needs and help them fulfill both their governance and constituency roles. The recommendations fall into three themes:

1. Mechanisms to accommodate Ward and Councillor inequities.
2. Methods for improved coordination and developing common practices.
3. Adjustments to address budget allocations, accountability and transparency.

These recommendations, if adopted, should be incorporated into policy by amending Council policies Councillors' Budget and Expenses Policy C618B and Human Resources Management for Council Staff Policy C608 — if approved, would ensure sustainment of equity-based Ward office resourcing and enhanced demonstration of transparency and accountability principles.

INTRODUCTION

At the April 4/5/6, 2022 City Council meeting, Council passed the following motion:

“That Administration prepare a bylaw for an independent task force, comprised of five individuals, for the purpose of reviewing:

- Roles and responsibilities of City Councillors and their offices;
- Councillors’ Budget and Expenses Policy C618B;
- Councillors Ward and Common Budget allocations;
- Centralized supports funded under the Common Budget;

and bring forward any changes/recommendations, if any, to assess current allocation of resources and to ensure equity among all 12 Ward offices.”

This led to the passing of City of Edmonton Bylaw 20132 Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force Bylaw that established a temporary Council Committee mandated to:

“no later than September 30, 2023, provide a written report to Council with their findings and options for equitable resources for Councillors and their Ward offices based on but not limited to a review of:

- The legislated and other duties of Councillors;
- Information gathered from Councillors and Councillors’ office staff;
- Information gathered through jurisdictional scans and other relevant inputs, such as Ward composition;
- The financial and human resources available to Councillors within the Office of the Councillors; and
- Current policies that govern the Office of the Councillors budgets.

The Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force will apply an accountability, transparency, and equity lens to their work and ensure their findings consider equity among all 12 Ward Offices.

Prior to presenting findings and options to Council, the Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force must consult with:

- All Councillors;
- The Office of the Councillors staff;

- The City business areas that provide dedicated services and resources to Councillors; and
- Other subject-matter experts and stakeholder groups that the Task Force identifies as relevant.”

Membership

The Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force consists of five volunteer members of the public:

- Brendan Boyd
- Maya Pungur-Buick, Vice Chair
- Samira Hamana
- Lara McClelland
- Darcy Wiltse, Chair

Governance

As a Committee of Council, the Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force falls under the scope of:

- Bylaw 18156 Council Committees Bylaw
- Bylaw 18155 Council Procedures Bylaw
- Bylaw 19870 Council Committee Code of Conduct Bylaw

As such, the Task Force met and conducted its meetings in accordance with all applicable bylaws, ensuring that meetings were open to the public, either to attend, speak at, or view online, and that meeting agendas were posted at least 10 days in advance of meeting. Bylaw 20132 Office of the Councillors Budget Review Task Force Bylaw prescribes a mandate, the composition and reporting requirements for the Task Force.

Work Method

The Task Force followed the directed reporting structure, meeting frequently from November through June guided by eight principles: Flexibility, Accountable, Needs-based, Evidence-driven, Equitable and Inclusive, Agility and Simplicity, Independence, Alignment and Efficiency. The Task Force established a work plan to fulfill its mandate using expected materials (reports and guides, bylaws and policies, and relevant data sources).

The Task Force conducted a total of 33 interviews from January to March 2023 with all City Councillors, their available Ward office staff and applicable Administration Council support business areas. These interviews provided foundational insights gathered from dialogues held that were guided by key questions:

1. How is your time spent? (What support is provided?)
2. What 'readiness' for the role supports are in place (e.g., orientation and training).
3. What is working well? What is missing? (e.g., in terms of resources).
4. What are the barriers in relation to equity?

The Task Force, with data provided by the City of Edmonton's Data Analytics team, also gathered and analyzed Ward composition data resulting in Ward profiles that provided an independent, quantitative information source that complemented and corroborated the qualitative information gathered from the interviews. Additional information related to population internet usage was also reviewed.

In addition, municipal comparator information was gathered from 17 municipalities across Canada, seeking information about their approaches to resourcing Ward offices. The Task Force also reviewed their relevant bylaws and/or policies.

The Task Force then analyzed all this information that resulted in an assessment of the current state, determining emerging issues that together informed solutions expressed as recommended future resourcing and changes to the relevant policies guiding the Office of the Councillors budgets and expenses. What follows is a report on this work, organized into current state of resourcing, emerging issues and ends with a possible resourcing future state.

Defining Equity

The Task Force defines equity for Office of the Councillors budgeting review purposes as follows:

Equity is treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has fair and just access to results and benefits. Equality means treating all people the same. Though equality is a time honored and important principle in a democratic system, it is not perfect. Equity means people could be treated differently in the interest of giving all people access to local government.¹

¹ Kavanagh, S, and Kowalski B (2021, Feb) Based on and excerpted from The Basics of Equity in Budgeting, *Government Finance Review*. Retrieved from: the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada website [80d22a0b-d880-4387-96a1-a1872d226aab_GFRFeb2021-Equity-Budgeting.pdf](https://www.gfoa.org/~/media/2021-02-26/Equity-Budgeting.pdf) (prismic.io)
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Equity is about fairness in access to resources and in the opportunity to succeed in the pursuit of political choices. Equity principles, policies, and practices enable equitable access, representation, opportunities, and meaningful participation of socially diverse people.²

² University of Alberta (2023). Based and excerpted from *Strategic Plan for EDI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ualberta.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion/strategic-plan-for-edi/index.html>. Socially diverse groups identified by the Task Force are included in Appendix one and two recognizing that this is not an exhaustive list of all the groups that may exist.

CURRENT RESOURCING ASSESSMENT

The current resourcing assessment addresses each of the mandated areas of consideration, which include: Roles and responsibilities of City Councillors and their Ward office staff, Common and Ward budget allocations, centralized supports, and relevant bylaws and policies.

Roles & Responsibilities of City Councillors and Staff

The Councillors' roles and responsibilities as outlined in the provincial *Municipal Government Act* and City of Edmonton policy have been adopted by Councillors albeit in different manners. While all Councillors perform legislated governance roles and adopt 'constituent representation' roles, many have chosen different strategies and operational approaches in performing them. This flexibility is enabled by Councillors' Budget and Expenses Policy C618B's principles of "Autonomy of Council" and "Flexibility and Limits".

Through the review conducted by the Task Force, the Task Force finds that the majority of Councillors' time is spent on mandatory governance activities, leaving less available time to complete desired constituent representation and engagement activities. It is estimated by the Task Force that in 2022, a Councillor could spend upwards of 1,800 hours per year fulfilling their governance function alone, including: attending and preparing (assuming every page read) for Council meetings and Public Hearings — just attending Council meetings and Public Hearings was 696 hours or 90 regular 7.5 hour days, and with the addition of Committee meetings and external appointment work, the demands among Councillors would range from 1,900 to 2,600 hours, or 264-358 regular 7.5 hour work days out of 365 days.³ This workload leaves little time for constituency work within a normal 37.5-50 hour work week.

As stated earlier, Councillors have variability in capacities and demands. The capacity differences are partly due to volume of staff, experiences, backgrounds and work assignments. While the Ward office budget is for two full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) per office, several offices have leveraged the flexibility in the Ward budget to move funds between categories to bolster the personnel category, enabling different complements of full time and part time FTEs (e.g., 2 full-time/1 part-time; 1 full-time/2 part-time; 2 full-time; temporary, permanent-term or contract positions). Because of the capped Ward budget level, larger staff complements are not possible.

³ Meeting Statistic data from the Office of the City Clerk was provided including number of Council and Committee meetings, meeting length, and total agenda package pages. Based on the statistics provided the Task Force extrapolated hours of work based on assumptions around average length of time to complete tasks.

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There are several reasons for variability in workload among Councillors. The key factors include: Council and Committee meeting schedule, number of assigned committees, the variable workload of different committees, number of motions, number and needs of constituent inquiries and method of responding to them, and assigned or chosen extra obligations (e.g., Deputy Mayor, special projects, or special committees). These imbalances could be improved through Ward office management such as by staffing decisions, demand management strategies and adopting existing and emergent technological applications or platforms to best meet their needs. However, if uncontrollable factors, such as size and composition of Wards plus demands from constituents, continue to grow, then the current staffing cap limit changes may have to be reviewed to address these imbalances.

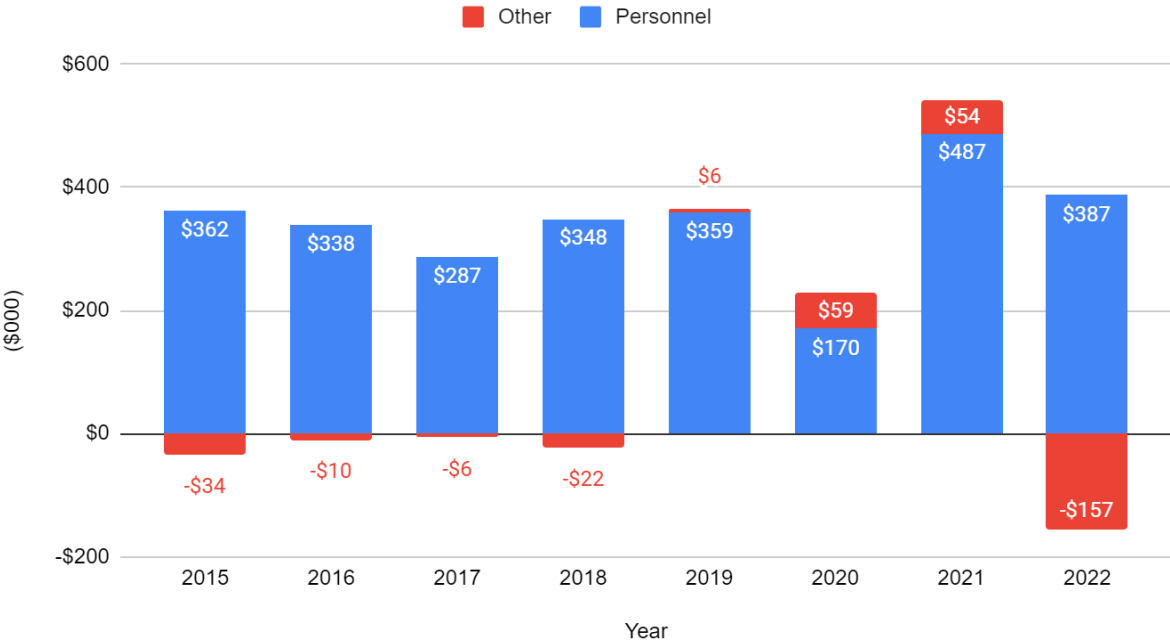
The current imbalances are creating consequences for some, such as: some Councillors may be using personal assets, creating overtime liabilities, contributing to Councillor and Ward office staff work/life imbalances, making it more difficult to attract and retain staff — to name the most critical factors. Contributing to this is the apparent mismatch in staff job classification duties, employment type, staff compensation levels, staff background and experience, and performance advancement with the evolution of Ward office needs and today's job market realities.

Councillors Ward and Common Budget Allocations

The Ward budget is equally allocated annually to cover seven expense areas: Personnel, Business Meetings and Hospitality, Community Expenses, Communications, Office Items, Travel and Transportation and Training Conferences. The governing policy enables flexibility in budget allocations and uses but the annual total budget allocation cannot be exceeded, nor surpluses carried forward.

For the period between 2015 and 2022, without exception, the total Ward Personnel budget has not been fully spent, with actuals falling less than budget by as low as 8.7% (\$170,000) to as high as 22.2% (\$487,000). Explanations reported by City of Edmonton Finance, include: Councillors not employing the full complement of Executive Assistant and Senior Councillor Assistant and Councillor Assistant vacancies throughout the year across Ward offices. However, in 2022, the first full year of the Council elected in 2021, a larger deficit in the category of 'Other' expenses was experienced, rendering an overall surplus of \$230,000, which was the lowest surplus over the eight years reviewed. This is due to several factors. The historical Ward budget variances are depicted in the following chart with supporting details captured in the Appendix.

Ward Budget Variances (Personnel and Other)



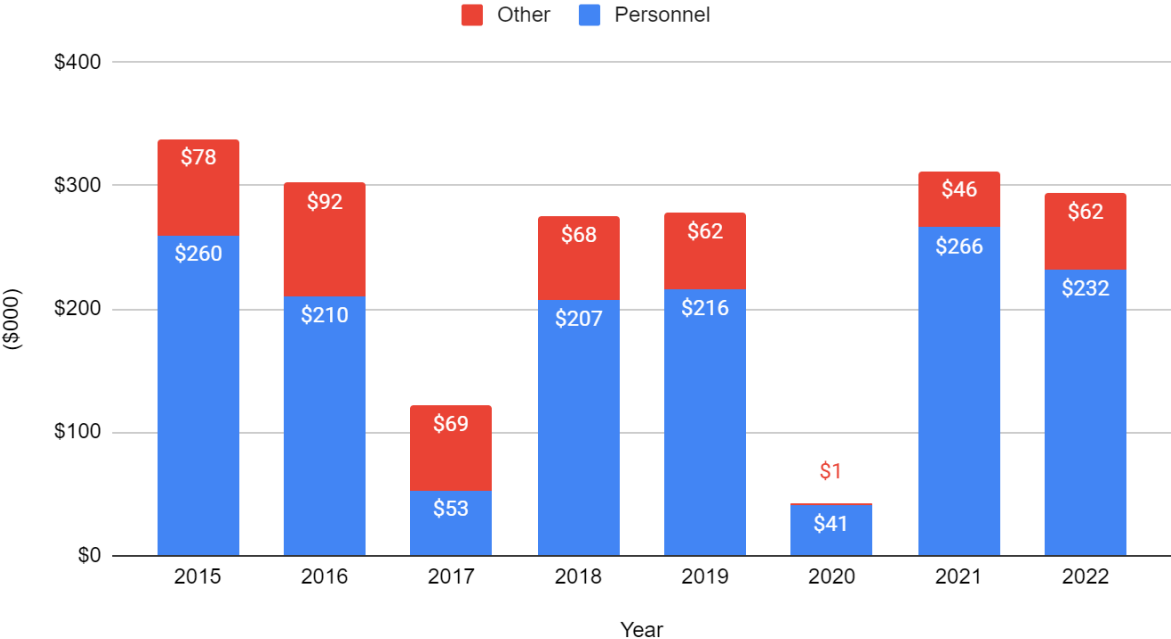
If surpluses of this size were to continue, they could potentially be used for about seven more staff (assuming an average base salary of \$75,000/year) to increase Ward office staffing capacity. However, it should be noted, a pattern may be emerging given that 2022 saw for the fifth time a deficit in the ‘Other’ or non-personnel Ward actual to budget spending. Some of this may be attributable to the use of ‘Other’ category allocations to offset increases being experienced in the Personnel category.

This is an example of using the flexibility and autonomy principles of Policy C618B, whereby some Councillors use Ward budget expense categories slightly differently to fund their different choices to meet their individual needs. For instance, the actual spending on Personnel in 2022, varied from as low as \$122,000 to as high as \$176,000. Similarly in the Communication category, the actual spending varied from \$1,100 to \$28,000 with some Councillors suggesting through the interviews with the Task Force that they could use more allocation in this category.

The Common Budget includes five categories which are: Personnel (e.g., compensation for Councillors, the centralized Administrative Assistants, and employee benefits for all employees in the Office of the Councillors), Material and Equipment (e.g., office furnishings/supplies, etc.), Services (parking at City Hall, maintenance services, etc.), Other Expenses (e.g., office phones, cell usage) and Travel and Transportation. This budget typically totals \$2.8 million, with a large majority going toward Personnel, which includes

the three shared Administrative Assistants and benefits for all staff and Councillors. Similar to the Ward budget, the Common budget is typically underspent by +/- \$300,000 or 10%-13% based on 2015-2022 Office of the Councillors year-end memos. The following chart shows this historical trend.

Common Budget Variances (Personnel and Other)



From the reported budget explanations, the variances are due to vacancies that affect employee benefit actuals and travel underspending when board meetings or conferences are held in Edmonton or virtually. COVID-19 likely had an impact, considering travel-related expenses and costs associated with face-to-face meetings, although based on prior years' trends, the impact is likely not significant. It is important to consider that several Councillors indicated in the interviews conducted that there is a shortage in the Services and Travel and Transportation categories despite a consistent annual overall surplus.

This is one example of how inequities can exist inside of a Common budget based solely on equality. Similarly, to the Ward budget, the major causes of inequities are: the dynamics of Ward composition, concentrations of City programs/projects and societal issues and trends coupled with Councillors choices for fulfilling their roles. Together these factors warrant a review of the existing Common categories.

Centralized Supports (Administration Support Areas)

The centralized support provided to Council is comprehensive, flexible and functionally broad. This support starts at term commencement and continues throughout the term on a scheduled and ad hoc basis. However, several Councillors and staff do not feel sufficiently supported as reported to the Task Force through interviews conducted. This can be attributable to several factors:

- Limited awareness of support that is available due in part to the method and timeliness of information sharing and education (e.g., intense, lengthy orientation presentation sessions).
- Dissatisfaction with fairness of shared support access arrangements (e.g., pooled Administration Assistants, Protocol Office and Council Services supports, etc.).
- Mismatch of Councillor response time commitments to constituents with Administration's service levels (e.g., 311 handling of everyday service, projects/programs and other citizen inquiries).
- Expectation for a more proactive component of support over offered advisory, reactive and confined support (e.g., Corporate Security - advisory and guard service only while on the premises of City Hall). A proactive approach could include: looking for patterns of insecurity and addressing them before they become issues, as well as special project work to look at their home security or community event security, etc.
- Cumbersome or complicated user interfaces of some of the information management and workflow tools (e.g., POSSE) and unawareness of the utility and applicability of others (e.g., TextDepot, Google extensions).
- Minimal time for experiential learning to put into action the knowledge that was provided at orientation or additional sessions.
- Different levels of understanding and some training unawareness in regards to dealing with conflict and micro-aggression that may contribute to unwanted workplace consequences.

Ward Profiles⁴

Ward composition has been profiled by the City of Edmonton Data Analytics team using 2021 Statistics Canada Federal Census Data and Open Data sets available through the City of Edmonton's Open Data Portal. As Ward and neighbourhood-level 2021 Census Data was not available during the Task Force's timeline to gather information and provide a written report, the Data Analytics team used dissemination areas as an approximate near match.

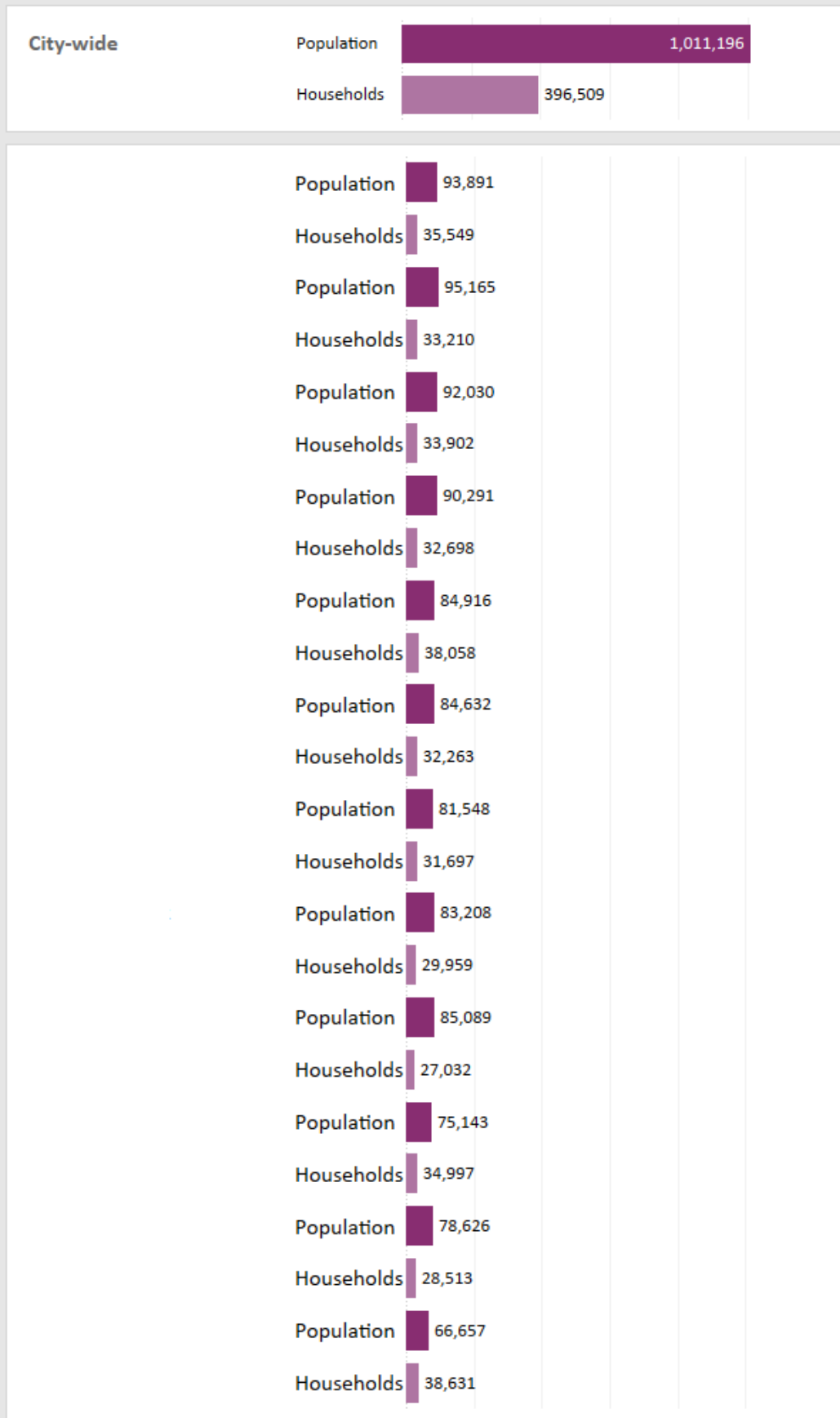
⁴ Important note on data limitations: The demographic data presented contains rough estimates only. These numbers are not precise and should not be taken as final counts or percentages. The City of Edmonton has not yet received neighbourhood-level census data from Statistics Canada for 2021. Once the City receives the updated data Ward profiles will be updated.

Therefore all of the figures contained in this report are considered estimates only until they are able to be updated with neighbourhood-level data which is expected to be available later this year. The following Ward composition information provides a sense for magnitude differences between Wards that may contribute to inequities for both the Councillors and the population they are representing. These should be taken into account when considering resourcing:

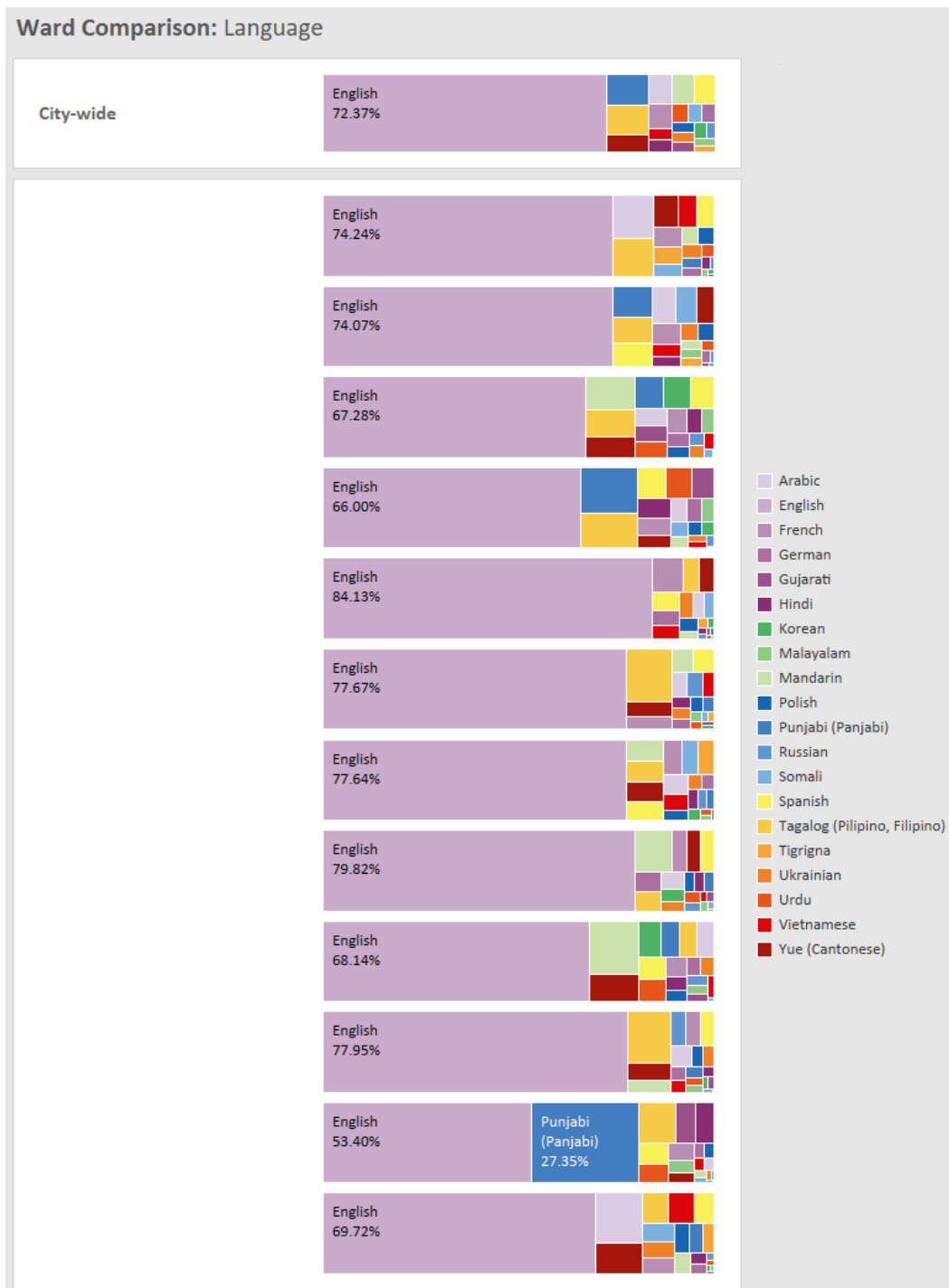
Population: Based on the approximate data available from the 2021 Statistics Canada Census Data at the time of writing this report population per Ward ranges from 66,657 to 95,165 (median about 84,000). This is about a 30% difference as can be seen in the chart below. Note Ward names have been removed to anonymize the charts to avoid specific comparisons for the purposes of this report and presentation to Council.

Number of Households: Based on the approximate data available from the 2021 Statistics Canada Census Data at the time of writing this report households range from 27,032 to 38,631 (median about 33,000). This is about a 30% difference which is also outlined in the next chart.

Ward Comparison: Population & Households



A Ward composition analysis conducted by the Task Force shows that there are important differences between the Wards that go further than population and household differences. For example, one key consideration, spoken language, is an area of inequity that resourcing based on equality alone may not be addressed adequately. The following chart shows spoken language by Ward and City-wide:



Based on the approximate data available from the 2021 Statistics Canada census, people who speak English as a first language range from 53% to 84% of the population depending on the Ward. The next six most spoken languages are Punjabi, Tagalog, Yue/Cantonese, Arabic, Mandarin, and French. Note: Language categories and terms are from Statistics Canada.

In one Ward, 27% of residents speak Punjabi as a first language. Tagalog is the language most distributed among Wards with five Wards showing a significant proportion (4.7%-7.6%). Arabic is significant in two Wards (5.5%-7.4%). The other most populous languages are at a 4%-8% frequency in some of the Wards. There are three Wards with no other prevalent or concentrated speakers of another language than English.

There are several other key differences between the Wards that suggest there are inequity considerations. The most pronounced are: 311 requests, volume of business licenses and development permits and the number of community leagues. A summary of all the Ward categories that have been profiled by the Task Force is found in the Appendix.

Affected Policies

The policies that are associated with Councillor, Ward office staff and centralized support resourcing such as Councillors' Budget and Expenses Policy C618B will require amendment depending on the impact of the recommendations that are approved by Council. From the current resourcing assessment, for Policy C618B, Councillors' Budget and Expenses, minor impact could be expected to the: Definition of equity, Guiding Principles and Purpose sections with more substantial impacts to the other sections, especially the budget categories and the associated procedures. Similarly, depending on what recommendations are adopted, the Human Resources Management for Council Staff Policy C608 would require amendments to sustain decisions on associated role and responsibility changes.

EMERGING ISSUES

Based on the review conducted by the Task Force, the issues that emerge from the current state assessment can be categorized into two groups: General office inequities and Councillor inequity issues.

General Councillor Office Equity Issues

From the analysis of Ward profiles and the evidence gathered during the interviews, there are inequity issues that suggest the current equal funding allocation method is problematic for some Ward offices. The problems stem from inadequate individual and shared resourcing that, without addressing the identified areas of Ward inequities, is less effective.

Ward composition factors can be found in the Appendix. The inequity issues that are most common and not adequately accounted for in the current equality resourcing allocation model between Wards include:

- Spoken language: Upwards of four other than English languages with high percentages of population speaking, which are Punjabi, Mandarin, Filipino and Arabic
- Age: Seniors (65-79) range between Wards from 8.8% to 12.4%
- Business Licenses: Range between Ward from 385 to 3,499
- 311 Requests: Range between Wards from 26,603 to 53,439
- Community Leagues: Range between Wards from 7 to 24
- Population and Household Distribution: Population ranges between Wards from 66,657 to 95,165; Households from 27,032 to 38,631
- Geographic ward size: Range between 20.9 Km² to 147 Km²

Examples of resourcing inadequacy include, but are not limited to:

Translation Services: While these services exist within Administration, access for Ward offices to communicate with constituents is not facilitated between the centralized supports and the Office of the Councillors budget allocations.

Postage Services: Age and income are key factors associated with the likelihood of not being a user or even a proficient user of online and digital services.⁵ While all Wards have seniors (>65 years old), the percentage of the Ward population ranges from 10%-17%, and people with high-school or no credentials range from 18-46% of Ward population. Yet the allocation for postage is allocated equally to all Wards. Household variability between

⁵ About 63% of seniors are either Non-users or Basic users of the internet and digital technologies. 40% of Canadians with a high school diploma are either Non-users or Basic users.

Wards is also a key differentiating factor. The Internet and Digital Inequities Appendix provides some insights to this divide, making the case for keeping and expanding traditional media distribution.

Communication Services: General information about the status of City services, programs and projects while on the edmonton.ca website are not available in multiple languages nor is written information produced in hard or electronic versions of newsletters, columns or other communications.⁶ In addition, given the inequities that exist among different populations regarding proficiency with internet and digital communication, consideration for all types of digital media and print communications is important. Appendix two provides additional information.

Cultural Services: While there is an Indigenous Relations Office and other internal supports, the Council Services and Protocol Office is relied on for cultural relations matters, which is not sufficient given the many cultures that exist in the different Wards. Different cultures, religious beliefs, and levels of diversity across the Wards means there are different needs, including attending various cultural events, being aware of cultural and religious sensitivities, protocols and cultural- and religion-related calendar dates.

Councillor Inequity Issues

Insights reported to the Task Force with respect to Councillor personal equity matters were minimal:

Inflexibilities: Work scheduling, location, duration, hours of work, meal coverage that act as barriers to role fulfillment is a key theme amongst several Councillors. These issues are exacerbated by the volume of committee and other Council work and representation obligations that create inequities in work levels.

Corporate Security: Inequities for work situations falling outside of City Hall. Whether at events within Wards, working from home or commuting after hours, current corporate guarding and advisory services are insufficient for some Councillors.

Individual Backgrounds: Councillors come from various backgrounds, including cultural and language, which can create barriers in interfacing with various groups including Ward constituents. It should be noted that being a first-time Councillor can bring a significant increase in workload compared to a returning Councillor.

⁶ For example, the City of Vancouver uses Google™ Translate to enable multiple language translations of their website content. <https://vancouver.ca/translate.aspx>

Individual Life Situations: Councillors with young families or single parents may be additionally challenged to meet the demands on their time, in juggling competing family and household needs without resources or support in place. In the spirit of diversity, equity and inclusion, these realities must be addressed.

FUTURE RESOURCING RECOMMENDATIONS

To resolve the general and inequity issues identified through the work of the Task Force the following recommendations are grouped into three priority themes. The options proposed within each theme are in rank order of importance — those thought to be most responsive to voiced Councillor and Ward office staff needs and speed of implementation.

Theme 1: Mechanisms to accommodate Ward and Councillor inequities.

Resourcing Councillor Offices should include mechanisms to accommodate inequities.

Inequity experiences, could be caused by differences in:

- **Governance expectations:** If assigned to committees that see greater volume of work, projects, Deputy or Acting Mayor coverage, etc. it creates inequitable work demands that are challenging to alleviate.
- **Ward composition:** The needs of the Ward may warrant additional Ward office resources, resulting from, but not limited to variances in population, households, 311 requests, business licenses, community leagues and homeowner associations.
- **Councillor's individual needs:** A Councillor may require additional support to successfully meet their Ward office work demands, e.g., due to English as a second language or infant/child care schedules.
- **Constituent representation:** Managing different workloads due to atypical constituent representation requirements brought on from communication and engagement differences, e.g., spoken language diversity, digital communication concentration, input gathering/engagement diversity, and community engagement intensity.

Recommendations to Accommodate Ward and Councillor Inequities:

1. Adjust Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses Policy current principle of "Equitable Access to Resources" to truly reflect this principle since it is inaccurately defined as it is currently written.
2. Modify the hybrid model (Ward and Common budget) to introduce methods, including individualized and shared resources, to better meet Ward office needs. Be clear about the general purpose of each. However, start with confirming the principles for the policy as all mechanisms for budgeting would then follow from that.

3. Interview existing Councillors and after which, all new Councillors to determine any equity issues that could be addressed by adjustments to their Ward budget. The City's Office of Diversity and Inclusion or the area within City Administration best suited to conduct the interviews could be utilized for this. The budget would be sourced from an equity resourcing fund, which could be allocated on a contingency basis by allocating any available surplus funds or using existing Council contingency budget.
4. Establish Constituency offices in Wards that are 30% larger than the average Ward in geographical size, such distances create excessive travel time, which is an access barrier for constituents and Councillors. This could be piloted and enabled through partnerships or rentals with community leagues (for hall access) or use of City facilities such as libraries, recreation centres, or rentals of hotel business/conference rooms.
5. Pool the annual surpluses in the Personnel category to fund additional personnel costs or other priority recommendations. Once surpluses have been reduced closer to zero, consider increasing the Ward Personnel budget for those Ward offices that meet a third full time equivalent trigger criteria — an agreed increase in Ward population or household growth amount (e.g., 10%-15% above average, whichever is higher) over the current Wards average or median. Other indicators of 311 requests, business licenses, number of community leagues, and homeowner associations, can be considered. The analysis would include a term assessment of Ward profile changes and adjust staffing requirements based on the impact of non-population/household factors.
6. Further to Recommendation 5, in the interim period, formalize a method to share an incremental Ward Office staff until a dedicated incremental staff addition is warranted.
7. Ward profiles could be monitored as part of the budget adjustment every four years and adjusted partly based on demographic information, such as education and age, the employment status, persons with disabilities, taking into consideration the StatsCan study on Internet Use, as well as income as the cost of internet plans and devices are barriers.
8. Create a more equitable process and procedure for accessing the shared resources, for example, establish service access level agreements (agreed on access, expectations and deliverables).

9. Consider a dedicated central resource to support Councillors with committee work and external appointments etc. High-volume committees could have shared resources that are assigned to support Councillors appointed to those committees, supplementing the work of Ward office staff, and providing expertise and continuity.
10. Create a dedicated team supporting the ongoing interface with Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board, Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Alberta Municipalities, etc., along the lines of government relations to support the Councillors' engagement with these bodies. The additional resources could also be part of the existing government relations and external partners teams supporting Councillors.
11. Formalize in Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses policy the ability for Councillors to work from home (e.g., standardized funding for items like City computer, internet, printer, supplies, etc.).
12. Explore diversifying the existing translation service, programming and project media messaging to include the top four to six non-English spoken languages in proportion to each Ward's needs.
13. Introduce a Community Grant Fund, with a supporting program policy outlining eligibility criteria and reporting requirements, but where all Councillors get to decide priorities. Applications to the fund could be adjudicated by the Council Services Committee or its designate. Sources for the fund could come from pooled Ward budget donation funds and allocated annual surplus funds prior to considering net new funding.
14. Evaluate Ward profile data to determine preference differences between digital and traditional communication media. Consider increasing the Common Budget 'Services' allocation to include postage for Ward mail-outs if the proportion of the number of households, seniors and lower income counts within a given Ward is 10-15% above the City average. Given that this demographic would likely rely on written communication with more than one mail-out necessary in a year.
15. Develop a service package including a modernized mandate for supplementing the Communication Services Central Support area, to provide the needed digital communications support (for example, scripting for podcasting) required to solicit constituents' input to Councillors.

16. Adjust the Ward office staffing model where at least one full-time equivalent Ward Office staff is hired by and reports to City Administration on a permanent basis instead of only during the term the Councillor is elected. The benefits of this model include: aligned wage schedule with other City positions, quick onboarding for Councillors to get started having a functional office, retention of institutional knowledge, consistent skills and background provided to the Councillors, and less staff turnover. The staff would report to Administration for management purposes but assigned to a Ward office for use by that Ward's Councillor. Once assigned, the role reports to the Councillor and their work is directed and evaluated by them.
17. Further to Recommendation 16, add another one full-time equivalent position and possibly a second full-time equivalent to the Ward office if the Ward population or household volume exceeds 10% to 15% of the City average or median, to perform duties per the current Executive Assistant, Senior Councillor Assistant or Councillor Assistant positions.
18. Create robust contracting/professional services capacity: this would be for three uses: a) hiring a contractor on a casual, project basis for office services support b) contracting a business or person(s) and/or the costs of supplies, rental of facilities and equipment relative to production, presentation and/or distribution of information to residents relevant to City business and/or c) contracting for a research project as specified by the employing Councillor.
19. Introduce an equity resourcing fund to accommodate above average constituent representation and Councillor needs requirements.
 - Could be included in the 'Other' category of the Common budget.
 - Could be offered in a new standalone inequity fund budget line item.
 - Access to such a fund could be triggered by meeting set criteria.
20. In addition to the Administration Assistant support, invest in more shared supports that would be accessible to all Councillors:
 - Personnel: Research specialists to assist governance role and Digital Media Communications specialists to assist with gathering constituent input for policy making, cultural coordination, event coordination and policy research.
 - Materials and Equipment: City branded Councillor event tents, tables and signs, portable PA equipment loanable for events and a standardized office furniture package.
 - Services: Common media buying capability.

- Travel: Broader travel expense coverage to cover professional development aligned with constituency and Ward needs.

Theme 2: Methods for improved coordination and move toward common practices.

The insights, gathered from Councillor and Ward office interviews highlighted several areas for improved coordination and development of common practices:

- Ward office day-to-day office operational processes and procedures
- Knowledge and understanding of City of Edmonton:
 - Municipal governance operations
 - Administration organization and access
- Attraction and retention of Ward office staff
- Community donation methods transparency and accountability

Typical Ward office work capacity should be normalized by introducing methods for improved coordination and move toward common practices.

Recommendations for Improved Coordination and Move Toward Common Practices:

21. Develop a digital source of centralized resource information, e.g., a Wiki page, which provides an electronic Ward office “Operations Manual”. It would be a collection of existing web pages and currently available information and hyperlinks. This application would allow Councillors and staff (Administration and Ward office staff) to quickly and easily share information, such as:

- Support for Ward office operations; common sources of information regarding Administration contacts, hyperlinks to information on City services, programs and projects.
- Training webinars to assist with use of existing tools such as TextDepot — a research search engine capable of finding pertinent City Administration bylaws, policies, Council report files including accessible resource references, and POSSE how to videos.
- Gateway access to translation services that already exist or use of Google™ Translate.
- Streamlined access for Ward office use to 311 and edmonton.ca topic information for harmonized response to everyday service, programs and projects status inquiries made easier with mutual agreement on response times.

22. Continue with the current level of orientation, information sharing and training and ad hoc support from all centralized support areas, leveraging a centralized medium such as the Wiki. City Administration should at minimum update the Wiki annually with changes that took place in the past year. Another option to improve knowledge transfer is to ensure that there are ongoing (e.g. quarterly) meetings between Council Services and the Ward offices. This would ensure that there is proactive communication occurring on projects, for example. Also, gathering feedback and adjusting to provide services that Councillors do need (for example translation or cultural advice).
23. Explore the possibility of diversifying the service, programming and project media messaging to include the top four to six non-English spoken languages in proportion to each Ward's needs.
24. Service Level Agreement for the provision of Administration's support services and other shared services is recommended to manage expectations for scope of services, turn-around times, etc.
25. Improve existing tool user interfaces e.g., POSSE.
26. Consider best practices to consult to determine options for responding to constituent inquiries that fall into the non-legislated category (e.g., every day City programs and services). Complemented by improving the existing array of centralized tools and capability, e.g., 311 hand off, POSSE use and escalations, senior management escalation support and management.
27. Select available Google extensions to standardize on common Ward office tasks and document management such as calendaring, scheduling, document creation sharing and viewing.
28. Have Employee Services arrange for access by Councillors to the appropriate Leadership/Management training that "Hiring" managers at the City must take. Make it the expectation in policy that this training be completed the first year on Council and refreshed once mid-term.
29. Modify the Management of Council Staff Policy C608 to include Councillors' responsibility to manage their staff in accordance with best practice leadership and management standards to ensure capacity efficiencies are maximized.

30. Assess public expectations for constituent input gathering that then is integrated into the applicable policy for Ward office reference and adoption. Modify the Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses Policy "Guiding Principle" on "Accountability" to clarify constituent representation method. For those with needs that go beyond this, strive to leverage other existing means for addressing their inquiries to reduce the impact on Ward office capacity.
31. Updating the Human Resources Management for Council staff Policy C608 to account for qualifications that better align with the diversity realities of the Ward.
32. Adopt best human resources attraction and retention practices for Ward office staff selection and engagement to minimize churn and maximize typical workload productivity. Utilize the expertise of Employee Services in recruitment of Ward office staff.
33. Fully leverage and expand Administration's existing contract to aid in translations, ensuring that the top four to six languages are included. Develop equitable access to these services for constituent input gathering approaches. Could also consider the use of translation services offered by social services organizations.

Theme 3: Method adjustments to budget allocations, accountability and transparency.

Resourcing Ward offices should include adjustments to budget allocations, transaction accountability and transparency methods. The relevant policies should be updated to support the recommendations, as adopted by Council. These are enabling actions in support of the above recommendations.

Recommendations for Method Adjustments to Budget Allocations, Accountability and Transparency:

34. Ensuring autonomy and accountability, suggest the Common Budget should be for expenses that all would use and where a) little discretion is needed, and where a City standard can be applied, such as paper, envelopes, photocopier, cell phones b) where it aligns with City of Edmonton budgeting practices/policy, whereas the Ward budget is for everything else that the Councillor can manage according to their own needs and goals. Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses policy should be consistent with this general division.

35. Adjust the Ward and Common budgets to singular purposes. Ward budget for the Councillor's office individual needs requiring discretion to reach role fulfillment. Common budget for shared needs requiring minimal discretion, more easily standardizable and economically scalable.
- a. Fine tune Personnel budget allocations between Ward and Common Personnel keeping all associated salary and benefits together instead of having all benefits in the Common budget. Move Ward staff benefits from Common to Ward.
36. Adjust Ward and Common budget "Other" subcategory allocations based on historical averages to establish an equal baseline and adjust from the baseline based on set equity criteria.
37. The Common budget could include:
- a. Broadening of business travel to accommodate professional development that aligns with needs of the Ward or of the constituents.
 - b. The shared resource(s) to support Council Committee work and external appointment commitments.
 - c. A new Constituency category in the Common budget for additional Ward mail-outs and Constituency office rental.
 - d. The shared hired or contracted digital communications specialists.
 - e. Budget for translation use – review budget and adjust accordingly.
38. Undergo variance analyses to monitor Ward budget surpluses and re-allocate any surpluses to ensure that budgets are fully utilized by year-end.
39. Ward profiles could be monitored as part of the budget adjustment every four years and adjusted partly based on demographic information, such as education and age, employment status, persons with disabilities, taking into consideration the StatsCan study on Internet Use, as well as income as the cost of internet, plans and devices are barriers. Update Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses policy to incorporate this expectation, once refined.
40. Modify Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses policy "Guiding Principle" on "Accountability" to also include expectations to not "subtract" from personal assets. If this were to happen, Council Service Committee could grant exemptions for expenditures not provided for in the governing policy at the request of an elected official.

41. Introduce a Community Investment program with a separate Common budget using a "grant" mechanism. For transparency, periodically and publicly report on sponsorships/donations. Ensure principles of accountability and transparency are embedded in the new program. If not adopted, modify Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses policy "Guiding Principle" on "Accountability" and "Transparency" to include expectations for donation decisions and reporting.
42. Create a service package to enable the inclusion of other shared resources in the Common budget that address capability and competency areas (e.g., Personnel, Materials and Equipment, Services, Travel). Add some new Personnel (hired or contracted) in the Common budget.
43. The Ward budget changes could include:
 - a. A new subcategory - Professional Services to provide transparency for contracted services (e.g., communications, research and office support).
 - b. Adjustment to the Ward budget 'Other' category to accommodate a set home-office budget.
 - c. Constituency office establishment for Wards.
44. Consider a provision for annual COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) increases for Ward office staff, if such increments are not tied to or guided by collective agreement terms.
45. Adjust the budget policy to enable contracting out for specialty expertise, e.g., communications, research and office support. The policy should also address e.g., conflict of interest, not hiring recent lobbyists, and a code of ethics for contractors, while the rate of pay is at the discretion of the employing Councillor to a predetermined maximum as per policy. Policy could support sharing of contracted resources e.g., communications support, printing, etc.
46. Modify Councillor expense reports so that actuals match to budget (where feasible) and report at the transaction expenditure accounting level. Modify expense reporting variance explanations to be more granular, disclosing the rationale for any hosting/meeting/travel.
47. The Task Force is unable to recommend specific amounts the budget should be adjusted by. The recommended approach is that once Council has determined the recommendations it supports, that Administration be tasked in assessing the general work required to implement the recommendations, and to cost it out and return to

Council for further deliberation.

Similarities with Other Municipalities

The completed scan of 17 Canadian municipalities involved policy and/or bylaw reviews combined with interviews of their available Clerk Offices.

The majority of these municipalities' Ward office resourcing is equality based. However, there were a few that deviated from this norm by including some means for addressing inequities in Ward or equivalent compositions.

The most frequently used mechanism was to offer some increment of staffing or resourcing based on reaching some level of Ward population above the average or mean. In addition there were circumstances where it was acknowledged that there were inequities in assignments to Committees or the like over and above the norm. In these instances there was additional support provided to accommodate for shortfalls in staff or resourcing.

Another area of difference was in the role and responsibility of Ward office staffing, where the Human Resources administration and reporting fell to the municipality providing access and use to each Councillor, thereby relieving the elected official the burden of dealing with this matter.

As well, there were insights for how to address donation funding with more accountability and transparency, which are similar to related recommendations listed above.

While the aforementioned recommendations and options were formulated to address the Edmonton general and inequity issues, it is important to note that they have similarities to other jurisdiction remedies. These similarities can be seen from review of the Jurisdictional Scan Appendix.

CONCLUSION

The inquiry as to whether equal resourcing of the Office of the Councillors is fair in today's municipal governing environment turns out to be a timely and important question.

Municipal governing based on the Ward system and policy principles of "Autonomy of Council" and "Flexibility and Limits" creates similar yet different operating environments. When the impact of these differences is examined in the context of no differences in allocated resources it becomes apparent that desired fulfillment of a Councillor's role becomes more difficult.

The worst-case operating scenarios are those where the Ward et al differences are significant relative to the City averages and include chosen flexibility and autonomy that is the most varied. With equal, finite resourcing, these scenarios result in the least desirable outcomes. The best-case scenarios are the polar opposite to these conditions and find the same, limited resources more than adequate.

One would conclude then that the only remedy for the worst-case scenarios would be to allocate more resources in those instances. However, based on insights gathered from interviews and analysis of budget variances over time some of the worst-case scenarios could have been made better despite equitable funding. For instance, if there was more operating normalization achieved and re-allocation of realized budget surpluses, some of the experienced imbalances could have been leveled out to some degree. Then, if differences in operating environments continued, the allocation of more resources would be reasonable.

The recommendations have been chosen to provide Council and Administration with potential remedies for achieving more normalization that could help manage Ward office work capacity and demand. Also, solutions for adjusting the budget model allocation mechanisms are offered to help with fiscal management. In addition, there are suggestions for how the existing budget model and resourcing could be changed to one based on equity, to assist Ward offices in fulfilling their governance and constituent representation roles.

The different demands on Ward offices are growing and evolving. While there are opportunities to tweak the resourcing model based on equality, such remedies will more than likely be short lived. This suggests then, that for those offices in the worst-case operating scenarios would benefit from adding equity components to the existing equality based model.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Ward Profile Summary

Appendix 2 - Internet and Digital Inequities

Appendix 3 - Jurisdictional Scan

Appendix 4 - Financial References

Appendix 1: Ward Profile Summary

Data Collection Methodology and Limitations

Important Note: The demographic and population census data referenced in this report contains rough estimates only. These numbers are not precise and should not be taken as final counts or percentages. They were calculated by mapping Statistics Canada dissemination areas (DAs) to City of Edmonton Ward boundaries. A dissemination area is a small, relatively stable geographic unit with an average population of 400 to 700 persons.

To produce the numbers in this report, the counts for each Edmonton dissemination area in the 2021 Federal Census were applied to Wards based on what percentage of their area overlapped the Ward. For example if 25% of a dissemination area was inside of Ward papastew, 25% of the total numbers for that DA were added to the count for Ward papastew. In taking this approach, there are two main limitations to consider:

When publishing dissemination area data, Statistics Canada rounds the count to the nearest 5 for privacy reasons. As such, the numbers published for DAs are slightly different from actual results. When adding together many DAs to form the results for a Ward, this error is likely to increase.

Population is unlikely to be uniformly distributed across the entire area of a dissemination area. Thus, the process of assigning results to a Ward based on what percentage of the DA overlaps it is imperfect, and likely to introduce some error.

Later this year the City of Edmonton anticipates it will receive neighbourhood-level census data for Edmonton from Statistics Canada, at which point Ward-level data for the 2021 Federal Census can be calculated more precisely.

Profiles

The following analysis conducted by the Task Force provides a sense for magnitude differences between Wards that may contribute to inequities for both the Councillors and the population they are representing. As noted above all numbers are approximate due to data limitations and availability of data. Categories and terms used are from Statistics Canada.

- Population: Population ranges from 66,657 to 95,165 (median about 84,000). This is about a 30% difference.
- Number of Households: Ranges from 27,032 to 38,631 (median about 33,000). This is about a 30% difference.

- Geographic area: Ward size ranges from 148 km² to 21 km². One Ward is the outlier at 147.6 km², with four wards between 74 and 80 km², four between 52 and 65 km² and three between 21 and 41 km².
- Community meeting spaces: Number of recreation centres: Range from 0 to 5, libraries range from 1 to 5, and community leagues range from 7 to 24. Overall number of facilities that could provide community meeting space ranges from 8 in the lowest Ward to 34 in the highest.

Demographic Profiles:

Age: Non-working age children range in proportion by Ward from a low of 8.5% to a high of 21%. Working age people range in proportion by Ward from a low of 66% to a high of 72%. The 65-79 year age group ranges by ward proportion from 9% to 12.5%. The 80+ group ranges from 1.5% to 5% between Wards.

Income: People making under \$25,000 range from 2% to 15% between Wards. People making between \$50,000 and \$99,000 range from 26% to 36% between Wards. People making between \$100,000-\$200,000 range from 20% to 44% between Wards. People making over \$200,000 range from 8% to 23% between Wards.

Indigenous Identity: Ranges from 2% to 9% between Wards.

Visible Minorities: Ranges from 17% to 61% between Wards. One Ward has 11% of the population identifying as Arab. Four Wards have an 11%-16% population identifying as Black. Three Wards have between 8%-17% population identifying as Chinese. Three Wards have between 10-13% identifying as Filipino. Four Wards have between 13%-44% identifying as Southeast Asian.

Immigrants: Immigrants by Ward range between 19% -45%. Immigrants within 2011-2021 range from 7% to 21% between Wards. Place of birth is predominantly from Asia, ranging from 41% to 82% between Wards. Immigrants from Europe range from 6% to 26%, Africa between 5% and 25%, and Americas range from 6% to 12%.

Education: People with no certificate, diploma or degree range from 3% to 16% between Wards. People with high school/equivalency range from 15% to 30% between Wards. People with post-secondary education range from 53% to 79% between Wards.

Language: People whose first language is English, range from 53% to 84% between Wards. The languages spoken by over 10,000 people in the City include Punjabi (42,200), Tagalog (41,500), Yue/Cantonese (24,200), Arabic (23,200), Mandarin (22,400), and French (18,700). In one Ward, 27% of residents speak Punjabi. Tagalog is the language most distributed among Wards, with five Wards showing a significant proportion (4.7%-7.6%). Arabic is

significant in two Wards (5.5%-7.4%). The other most populous languages are at a 4%-8% frequency in some of the Wards. There are three Wards with no other prevalent or concentrated speakers of another language than English.

Religion: Christianity ranges from 35% to 55% between Wards. No religion/secular group range from 23% to 48% between Wards. Islam has a significant presence in five Wards, ranging from 9% to 16% of the population between Wards. Sikhism is significant in two Wards, ranging from 8% to 27%. Hinduism is significant in two Wards, ranging from 6% to 9%. Buddhism, Judaism and Traditional Aboriginal Indigenous faiths are evenly distributed and range from 0.1% to 3% in Wards.

Economic Activity⁷: The number of business licenses range from 367 to 3,366 between Wards and are more prevalent in the established areas of the city, with three Wards in the 3,000's range, three Wards in the 2,000's range and six Wards under 1,000. Development permits are prevalent in the Wards towards the outskirts of the city, ranging from 465 to 1,478 approved between Wards.

Service Calls⁸, **Bylaw Infractions**⁹ and **Crime**¹⁰: Bylaw infractions (graffiti, weeds, nuisance to property, unlicensed business) range from 1,297 to 4,902 between Wards. The highest numbers are in the more central and established Wards. Reported incidents to the police for the first three months in 2023 related to property, mischief/graffiti, personal violence, disputes/disturbances and general disorder – ranged from 880 to 4,400 between Wards. Property crime was the most prevalent reported. People oriented incidents reported ranged from 15% of all calls to 35% between Wards.

Total 311 Transfers¹¹: Calls routed to Ward offices from 311 in 2022 ranged from 54 to 249. The median was about 100.

⁷ City of Edmonton - Active Business Licenses Open Data Set. Last updated March 2023.

<https://data.edmonton.ca/Urban-Planning-Economy/City-of-Edmonton-Business-Licences/qhi4-bdpu>

⁸ 311 Requests. Open Data Set for October 2021-April 2023.

<https://data.edmonton.ca/City-Administration/311-Requests/q7ua-agfg>

⁹ Bylaw Infractions. Open Data Set for October 2021-April 2023.

<https://data.edmonton.ca/Community-Services/Bylaw-Infractions/xgwu-c37w>

¹⁰ Community Safety Map, retrieved from <https://communitysafetydataportal.edmontonpolice.ca/>. April 14, 2023.

¹¹ 2022 Transfer Statistics 311 to Ward Offices

Appendix 2: Internet and Digital Inequities

The 2018 Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS), identified¹²:

- About 9% of Canadians are Internet Non-users.
- 16% are 'Basic users'.
- 20% of Canadians are identified as 'Intermediate users' of the Internet and digital technologies.
- 22% identified as 'Proficient users'.
- 34% identified as 'Advanced users'.
- Almost one-in-four Canadians (24%) had either no engagement or only very limited engagement with the Internet and digital technologies in late 2018 or early 2019.
- Age and education are strongly associated with the distribution of Canadians across these groups.
- About 63% of seniors are either Non-users or Basic users of the Internet and digital technologies. However, between 2018 and 2020, the share of Canadians aged 65 years or older who were Non-users of the Internet declined by six percentage points and the share who were Basic users declined by almost eight percentage points. Combined, the share of seniors who were either Non-users or Basic users declined from 62% to 48%. The shares of seniors classified as Intermediate and Advanced users both increased by over five percentage points.¹³
- 40% of Canadians with a high school diploma are either Non-users or Basic users of the Internet and digital technologies. In contrast, 77% of Canadians aged 15 to 34 are either Proficient or Advanced users, as are 76% of Canadians with a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, the shares of Canadians with high school or less who were either Non-users or Basic users of the Internet and digital technologies declined by 11 percentage points from 2018 to 2020, while the share who were Intermediate users increased by over five percentage points.¹⁴
- Individuals aged 15 to 34 were 12.3 percentage points more likely to be classified as Advanced users and 3.9 percentage points less likely to be classified as Basic users than individuals aged 35 to 49. Individuals aged 65 or older were 27.6 percentage points less likely to be classified as Advanced users and 12.9 percentage points more likely to be classified as Non-users than 35 to 49 year-olds.

¹² Internet-use Typology of Canadians: Online Activities and Digital Skills (excerpts). Statistics Canada (November 09, 2021). Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2021008-eng.htm> April 2023. Surveyed between November 2018 and March 2019.

¹³ Study: Canadians' use of the Internet and digital technologies before and during COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics Canada (Released: 2022-04-28). Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220428/dq220428b-eng.htm>.

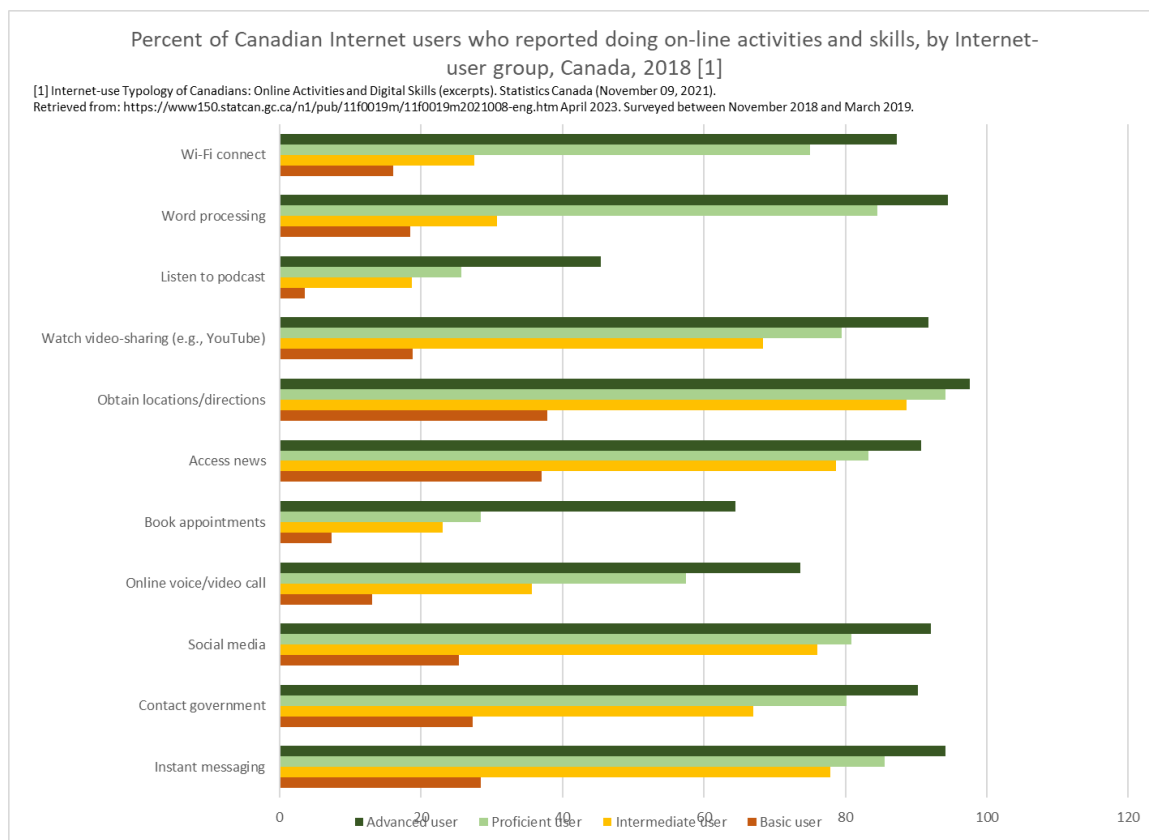
¹⁴ Ibid.

- A strong relationship between educational attainment and user groups. For example, compared with individuals who have a high school diploma, those with a university degree were 22.7 percentage points more likely to be Advanced users and 9.8 percentage points less likely to be Basic users.

Barriers to Access to Internet and Digital Devices:¹⁵

- Every 1 Mbps increase in home internet speed is correlated with an additional \$2,500 in total annual household income.
- While 58% of all households surveyed reported speeds above the CRTC minimum, this fell to 39% for households earning less than \$40,000/year. However, 76% of Canadians living in a census metropolitan area met the CRTC defined minimum.
- High cost of internet-enabled devices is a barrier: those in the lower household income bracket (under \$40,000/year) were twice as likely to cite the cost of devices as a barrier.

Chart of Internet User Proficiency Level by On-Line Activity



¹⁵ Digital Equity: Focusing on Every Canadian’s Digital Future. Future of Canada Centre, study conducted by Deloitte in 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/fcc/digital-equity-2/ca-catalyst-digital-equity2-a-oda-en.pdf?icid=de2-report-en>

Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan

Noteworthy similarities include but are not limited to:

Halifax: Councillor office staff are pooled City Administrative staff that report to a Manager of the Councillors' support office. These staff are permanent and funded from that office's budget. Each Councillor has a part-time Council Constituency Coordinator, one Coordinator supports two Councillors. Councillors have access to a small fund for communications, promotional items, and business travel as well as two district funds for donations/small grants and small capital projects. The Councillors' support office includes a Manager, Councillors' Support, Office Coordinator, Council Communications Specialist (pooled among all Councillors), Senior Council Constituency Coordinator, Council Constituency Coordinators.

Vancouver: Staff do not report directly to Councillors but instead are City Administration employees. Each pooled assistant supports two Councillors performing an administrative function. There are no additional Ward office staff as the City of Vancouver is an at-large system.

Ottawa: There is a common Council Administration Budget "used to finance a range of items commonly used in the operation of each office". Contributions / donations / sponsorships are limited to 3.5% of the Members annual Constituency Services Budget; contributions to individuals, businesses or City funded services and departments are prohibited; no material assets.

The City of Ottawa has a policy that if a Ward is larger than 30% on average than the other Wards, Councillors receive an extra amount of funds to their Ward budget (above baseline). Ward Boundary Reviews are regularly conducted to evenly redistribute the population; after which all Wards receive the same budget amount.

In addition to the Ward population equity mechanism they also provide additional funding to Committee Chairs to their Ward budget. The Standing Committee Chair for example receives additional funding to cover 0.5 full time equivalent. Other committees with higher than average workloads have 1.0 full time equivalents to address spin off work load requirements.

Calgary: The City of Calgary's Bylaw 36M2021 Councillors' Budgets and Expenses makes it clear what the role is for the Manager, Office of the Councillors, the City Clerk, Councillors and the Priorities and Finance Committee for managing various aspects of the Councillors'

budgets. The Manager, Office of the Councillors manages the budget, the Councillors are responsible for the expenditures and ensuring they don't exceed the budget, and the City Clerk is responsible for recommending their annual budget. The Chief Financial Officer provides the financial mechanism. The Priorities and Finance Committee can approve or deny budget overages or appeals of decisions of the Chief Financial Officer regarding expenses. Eligible expenses include: Paying for a limited term contract for a person to provide communication, research, or office support to the Councillors' Ward Office in accordance with "PAC010 Communication Research and Office Support Policy - Ward Budget - Office of the Councillors."

There is a Ward Community Event Fund (WCEF) which assists community associations or community-based groups hosting events or undertaking initiatives to enhance their community. Individual Councillors recommend approval of grants to initiatives or events. The Co-ordinating Committee of the Councillors Office makes funding decisions. Grants ranged in 2023 between \$200-\$2500. Annual maximum of \$10,000 per Ward.

Toronto: If a Ward exceeds the median households and population by 50% then the Councillor receives extra funding for one Constituency Assistant full time equivalent. This funding is not discretionary and may only be used to hire a staff position. The households and population numbers are provided by the planning department using census data available as well as projections.

Another equity measure is a newsletter entitlement fund which is based on the number of households and priced out based on the cost of regular mail from Canada Post.

Mississauga: The Ward budget amount is based on population figures with each Councillor receiving a different amount. The Ward budget also incorporates a calculation to ensure enough funds for newsletters. Personnel is treated separately from Ward budgets. There is one other newsletter budget in addition to the Ward budget that funds one newsletter to share information as Councillors sit on a regional council. The two staff per Councillor are hired by the City and report to City Administration. The Councillor assigns their day-to-day work and participates in the interviews (there is an Administrative Assistant and an Executive Assistant).

Appendix 4: Financial References¹⁶

Ward Budget to Actual Expenditure Historicals (in Thousands)

Budget	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Personnel	\$1,838	\$1,834	\$1,834	\$2,106	\$2,130	\$1,954	\$2,190	\$2,190
Other	\$135	\$139	\$139	\$159	\$169	\$169	\$169	\$169
Total	\$1,973	\$1,973	\$1,973	\$2,266	\$2,300	\$2,143	\$2,359	\$2,359
Expenditures								
Personnel	\$1,476	\$1,496	\$1,547	\$1,758	\$1,771	\$1,785	\$1,703	\$1,803
Other	\$169	\$149	\$144	\$182	\$163	\$110	\$115	\$326
Total	\$1,645	\$1,645	\$1,691	\$1,940	\$1,934	\$1,895	\$1,818	\$2,129
Variance								
Personnel	\$362	\$338	\$287	\$348	\$359	\$170	\$487	\$387
Other	-\$34	-\$10	-\$6	-\$22	\$6	\$59	\$54	-\$157
Total	\$328	\$328	\$282	\$326	\$366	\$229	\$541	\$230

Common Budget to Actual Expenditure Historicals (in Thousands)

Budget	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Personnel	\$2,241	\$2,233	\$2,234	\$2,504	\$2,497	\$2,312	\$2,546	\$2,606
All Other	\$298	\$306	\$303	\$307	\$284	\$198	\$257	\$253
Total	\$2,539	\$2,539	\$2,537	\$2,810	\$2,781	\$2,510	\$2,803	\$2,859
Expenditures								
Personnel	\$1,981	\$2,023	\$2,181	\$2,296	\$2,281	\$2,271	\$2,280	\$2,374
All Other	\$220	\$214	\$234	\$238	\$221	\$197	\$211	\$191
Total	\$2,201	\$2,237	\$2,415	\$2,534	\$2,502	\$2,468	\$2,491	\$2,565
Variance								
Personnel	\$260	\$210	\$53	\$207	\$216	\$41	\$266	\$232
All Other	\$78	\$92	\$69	\$68	\$62	\$1	\$46	\$62
Total	\$338	\$302	\$122	\$275	\$278	\$42	\$312	\$294

¹⁶ Office of the Councillors Year-End Memos - Financial Results (2015-2022)
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