

Ward Mail Out Options

At the May 7, 2024 Council Services Committee, the following motion was passed:

That Administration draft revisions to Council Policy C618B Councillors' Budget and Expenses to make mail outs an allowable expense within the common budget (postage), and consideration for other financial impacts.

Draft Amendment to Councillors Budget and Expenses Policy

Postage costs for one mail out per ward (constituency) per calendar year. This will be calculated using the Ward Dashboard to determine the number of households in each ward and the Canada Post Price per item for Neighbourhood Mail.

This amendment is recommended as it most closely aligns with the motion passed in relation to postage. Linking the policy with the Canada Post Price per item for Neighbourhood Mail rather than a flat rate will help this policy to be future proofed. The Ward Dashboard is the recommended source for number of households due to its accessibility and the ability to aggregate the data by wards, however this is only updated following the federal census every 4 years.

Other Options Considered

Work was done in anticipation of the January 24, 2024, Council Services Committee meeting regarding the historical costs associated with ward mail outs. This research determined the cost per item and cost per mail out varied drastically by year and ward even over this 3 year period and that it would be best to select another option to better meet the intent of this motion.

A flat reimbursement rate for each ward could be considered, however this seemed misaligned with the intent of the motion, rooted in follow up actions from the Budget Review Task Force, and specifying the use of the Common Budget as a centralized support intended to optimize economies of scale.

The Neighbourhood Mail rate is consistent with policies in other orders of government. Neighbourhood mail is targeted, but unaddressed and the lowest cost postage option. Addressed mail is almost seven times the cost of unaddressed mail.

Alternative sources for household data were also considered to provide updates between census years, however they were not publicly reported and additional time would be required to create a report that met the needs of this policy.