



COUNCILLORS' COMMON AND WARD BUDGETS - REVIEW

2026

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Administration bring forward an unfunded service package for the Office of the Mayor and Office of the Councillors 2027-2030 operating budgets as outlined in Attachment 1 of the March 11, 2026, Office of the City Clerk report OCC03321.
2. That Attachments 1 and 2 of the March 11, 2026, Office of the City Clerk report OCC03321 remain in private pursuant to section 29 (advice from officials) of the *Access to Information Act*.

Report Purpose

Decision required

Previous Committee Action

At the December 12, 2025, Council Services Committee the following motion was passed:

That Administration review the ongoing common and ward budgets for the Offices of the Mayor and Councillors to develop an unfunded service package and provide a report to Council Services Committee.

REPORT

Administration has reviewed the common and ward budgets for the Office of the Councillors as well as engaged with the Office of the Mayor to provide the information in this report for Council Services Committee's consideration as it related to preparing the draft 2027-2030 budget. This report provides a historical overview of the policy and budget adjustments, including a jurisdictional scan of the Ward Budgets (Common Budgets are too different to compare) and also includes population changes of the ward. Based on the analysis and discussions with Council in the last term and the most recent discussion with Committee, it is recommended that there are adjustments to both the Office of the Mayor and Office of the Councillors budget for 2027-2030.

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Historical Overview

Council Policy C618E Councillors Budget and Expenses guides the expenditures that support Councillors in performing their diverse roles and in representing their constituents.

This policy has been updated five times since it was initially approved by City Council on May 14, 2019. The date of each update and a summary of changes is as follows:

Council Approval Date	Summary of the Policy Adjustments
<p>May 23, 2025</p> <p>May 6, 2025 Council Services Committee</p>	<p>Add the following as ineligible expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization, sponsorship, or advertising expenses for events that occur after May 31 of a general election year. • Expenses for Ward newsletters, mass electronic mailouts, or other Ward-specific advertising that will be distributed after May 31 of a general election year.
<p>May 21, 2025</p> <p>May 6, 2025 Council Services Committee</p>	<p>Added language regarding cost guidelines for travel expenses from the Employee Business Expenses Procedure, and</p> <p>Revised disclosure requirements to specify that ward and common travel disclosures include the following categories: transportation, food and incidentals, accommodation, miscellaneous and registration fee (if applicable).</p>
<p>November 13, 2025</p> <p>November 6, 2025 Council Services Committee</p>	<p>Added mail outs as an allowable expense within the common budget,</p> <p>Added approvals for electronic approvals and</p> <p>Delegated financial authority, Director, Councillors' Office Liaison Team to approve common event infrastructure expenses to a specified limit to add to a common inventory.</p>
<p>September 12, 2022</p> <p>August 16, 2022 Council Services Committee</p>	<p>Increased the authority of the Chair of Council Services Committee to approve fund requests from the common Budget for office furniture from \$1,000 to \$1,500.</p>
<p>May 3, 2021</p> <p>April 20, 2021 Council Services Committee</p>	<p>Provided increased flexibility in travel booking,</p> <p>Discontinued petty cash,</p> <p>Added reference to Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 18483</p>

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The budget allocation of the Office of the Mayor and Office of the Councillors has had three major updates since 2014:

Council Approval Date	Summary of the Budget Adjustments
April 27, 2020	The Common Budget for Office of the Councillors, Mayor's Office Budget and Ward Councillor budgets was decreased by 10% on a one-time basis, for a total of \$695,000 to help offset negative financial impacts of the pandemic.
April 10, 2018 February 12, 2018 Council Services Committee	Council directed an increase to account for cost of living increases. In line with this 2018 amendment, ward and common budget personnel budgets have been indexed to any negotiated salary increase.
December 2/3/4/5, 2013	Council directed an additional 0.4 FTE was added to allow for 1 full-time Executive Assistant and 1 full-time Research Assistant per Ward

Budget Review Task Force

To support an analysis of the Councillors' ward and common budget in the 2021-2025 term, a Council Committee was established to provide an independent review of both budgets. This Council Committee was called the Office of the Councillors' Budget Review Task Force and was composed of five Edmonton residents. At the July 4, 2023, Council Meeting, the Budget Review Task Force presented their final report. Following this report being presented to Council, the report was referred to Council Services Committee. This committee directed the following changes, which have all been implemented:

1. Consider how to include in the appropriate policy tool the ability for Elected Official to work from home and charge their home office expenses.
2. Consider updates to Policy C608 Human Resources Management for Council Staff to include a hybrid working arrangement.
3. Undertake a review and classification of current Councillors' Office staff positions, including considerations for additional classifications.
4. Explore how to create centralized resource for Councillors and their staff to key corporate resources (e.g., infrastructure to support ward events).
5. Consider how to ensure equity regarding ward mail-outs and access to digital communications resources.

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6. Update the previous Constituency Office report from 2019.
7. Explore options for providing greater flexibility and equitable access to removing barriers to participate in Councillor duties as per resources in the Policy C618B Councillors Budget and Expenses.
8. Provide information on different approaches to donations requests from the public.
9. Explore policy changes to enable Councillors when traveling on behalf of the Corporation or one of the City of Edmonton corporations to be covered by resources outside the Common budget.
10. That Administration present previous work regarding the ward boundary review at the next Council Services Committee meeting.

Jurisdictional Scan

It can be challenging to compare budgets of elected officials across municipalities as there are different inclusions and exclusions. Ward budgets are more comparable, however some include travel costs and staff benefits, whereas these are common expenses in the City of Edmonton.

Unfortunately the common budget was not able to be included in the jurisdictional scan because of the significant variance in how this is managed across jurisdictions.

Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, and Winnipeg were used as comparison cities. While these cities range in population size, when the ward budget is compared to population, Edmonton has a notably smaller budget than all other cities.

Municipality	2025 Statistics Canada Population Estimate ¹	Annual Ward Budget ²	# of municipal Councillors	Average Population per Councillor	Ward Budget per person
Edmonton	1,238,295	\$209,169.00	12	103,191	\$2.03
Toronto	3,271,830	\$686,043.26	25	130,873	\$5.24
Calgary	1,612,834	\$373,697.00	14	115,202	\$3.24
Ottawa	1,188,114	\$367,698.00	24	49,505	\$7.43
Winnipeg	850,260	\$166,842.00	15	56,684	\$2.94

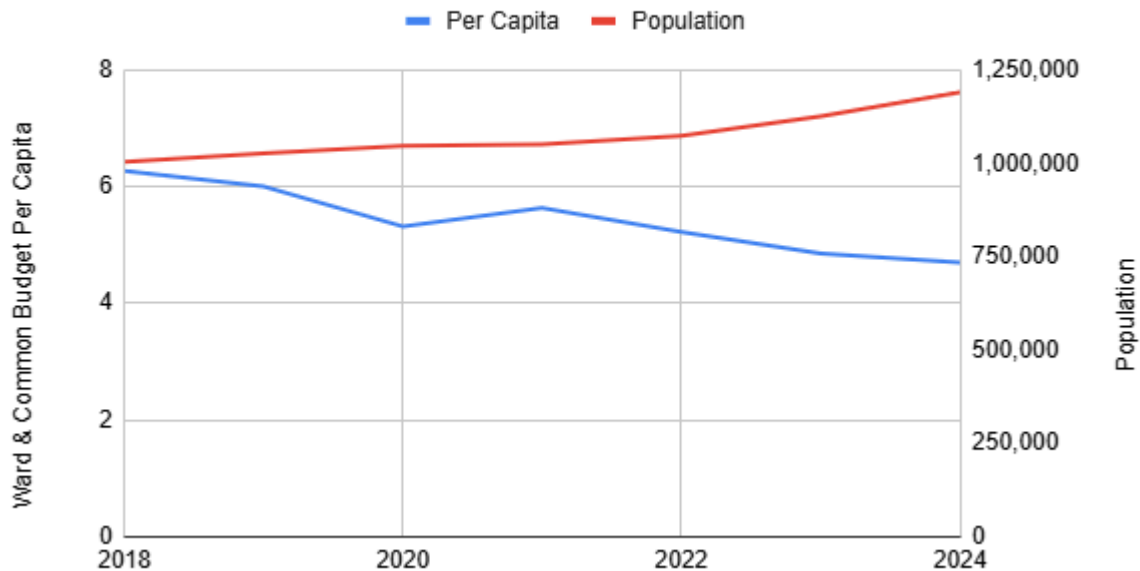
¹ Statistics Canada, Population estimates, July 1, by census metropolitan area and census agglomeration, 2021 boundaries

² The most recent ward budget for each municipality is included at time of writing. 2025 Budgets for Edmonton, Toronto and Ottawa; 2026 for Calgary and Winnipeg.

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Context

Ward & Common Budget Per Capita (Inflation Adjusted, 2025 Dollars)



Recommendations

Based on the review of the Common and Ward budgets as directed by the Committee, Administration is recommending a number of adjustments to the budgets of the Office of the Councillors as outlined in Attachment 1. These recommendations are being provided in a private attachment subject to section 29 of the *Access to Information Act*. Any changes to the budgets would not be considered until the 2027-2030 fall budget deliberations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. PRIVATE - Review Recommendations and Other Considerations
2. PRIVATE - Input from Councillors and the Office of the Mayor
3. Edmonton Ward Population Changes Over Time