



CITY COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the following adjustments to Council Policy and Procedure C575E - Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions, be approved as follows:
 - a. Add the Governance Framework for Council Committees as set out in Attachment 1 of the March 17, 2026, Office of the City Clerk report OCC03459, as a new Schedule 3, and
 - b. That the "Guiding Principles" section bullet one be adjusted by inserting " in alignment with the Governance Framework for Council Committees," in front of "create City Agencies with a clear purpose, and which will make".
2. That Attachment 2 of the March 17, 2026, Office of the City Clerk report OCC03459 remain private pursuant to sections 20 (disclosure harmful to personal privacy) and 29 (advice from officials) of the *Access to Information Act*.

Report Purpose

Decision required.

Executive Summary

- This report recommends that Council approve an update to Council Policy C575E - Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions to create a new schedule 3 by adding the Governance Framework for Council Committees (Attachment 1).
- The report also clarifies the description of entities within Council's extended governance model. The extended governance model includes Council's Standing Committees (e.g Executive Committee) and Civic Agencies. Civic Agencies is the broad term that includes all entities, both internal and external, where Council, in its capacity as the governing body of the municipality, makes one or more appointments.
 - Internal Civic Agencies include Advisory Committees and Decision Making Bodies, these are commonly referred to as Council Committees.
- Over the past several years, City Council has examined the role of Council Committees within its extended governance model, with particular focus on accountability, mandate clarity, and alignment with Council priorities.

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- Governance reviews, recommendations from the City Auditor, and engagement with Council Committees and Administration identified the need for a more consistent governance approach. While Council Committees remain a valuable mechanism for community input and delegated decision making, current structures have evolved organically and vary in mandate, reporting, and evaluation practices.
- The Governance Framework for Council Committees (attachment 1) provides a modernized governance model that introduces lifecycle reviews, standardized mandates, and clearer reporting expectations while preserving the advisory role of committees.
- The framework assumes Council Committees remain as part of Council's extended governance model; however, it is recommended that there are structural updates to align with Council priorities and further policy and bylaw changes will be required if the framework is approved by Council.
- Additional considerations regarding implementation of the framework are included in Attachment 2.

REPORT

Background

Since 2021, Council has provided direction to strengthen governance clarity across its Council Committees.

Governance discussions with Council, an internal governance review and a subsequent governance audit completed by the City Auditor identified gaps related to:

- Alignment between Committee mandates and Council priorities
- Consistency in governance practices
- Accountability mechanisms within advisory structures

A comprehensive governance review completed by the Office of the City Clerk in 2023 made a number of recommendations, supplemented by recommendations from the Office of the City Auditor, to improve the governance of Council Committees. These recommendations, along with feedback received through engagement and jurisdictional research, informed the development of a Governance Framework for Council Committees (Attachment 1).

Attachment 3 summarizes prior Council direction regarding the governance of Council Committees, and the status and outcome of each direction, including how the direction is reflected in the Governance Framework.

Council's Extended Governance Model

Council's extended governance model includes Council's Standing Committees¹ and Civic Agencies. Civic Agencies is the broad term that includes all entities, both internal and external,

¹ The following Council Committees are designated as Standing Committees as per Bylaw 18156: Agenda Review Committee, Audit Committee, City Manager and City Auditor Performance Evaluation Committee, Community and Public Services Committee, Council Services Committee, Emergency Advisory Committee, Executive Committee, Infrastructure Committee, Urban Planning Committee and Utility Committee.

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where City Council, in its capacity as the governing body of the municipality, makes one or more appointments.

Civic Agencies include:

- **Council Committees:** all committees (excluding the Standing Committees), task forces, and ad-hoc committees that are created by Council through bylaw. These committees are fully accountable to and exist at the discretion of Council, and in most cases are advisory in nature. In almost all cases, Council appoints all of the members of the Committee. If approved, the Governance Framework for Council Committees will apply to these Committees.
- **External Agencies:** agencies created by Council or an external entity that operate with varying levels of independence from Council. The mandate, authority, and membership of the agency is determined by its governing documents; however, at least one member or advisor is appointed by City Council.
- **Tribunals:** created by Council to hear appeals and make impartial decisions on matters determined by legislation or bylaw. Council's role is limited to the appointment of members for a defined term.

A list of current Civic Agencies can be found in Attachment 4.

If an entity receives funding from the City of Edmonton, are they a Civic Agency?

Receiving funding from the City of Edmonton does not automatically categorize the entity as a Civic Agency. The accountability relationship between the entity and City Council is outlined in the funding agreement. The City may require certain reporting or other requirements, such as those included in Administrative Policy A1476A - Municipal Funding Arrangements. Examples of these entities fall into the following two categories:

- **City-Funded Entities with Council Appointments** (This is a Civic Agency, either a Council Committee or External Agency): Organizations where Council provides funding and makes an appointment. These entities often operate at arm's length but maintain a governance relationship with Council (Example: Edmonton Public Library Board).
- **City-Funded Entities with no Council Appointments** (This is not a Civic Agency): Organizations that receive municipal funding but where Council has no appointment authority or governance influence (Example: Telus World of Science).

Council Committees - Current Scope and Practices

The current Council Committees represent a diverse range of mandates, from providing advice on topics ranging from accessibility to matters affecting youth, to naming neighbourhoods and roads, to approving sponsorship agreements to support and recognize members of the military, veterans, and families. Membership ranges from seven to 20 members appointed by Council, with one Committee having a membership of 26, nine of whom are appointed by Council and the remainder by external municipalities and organizations.

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As required by the *Municipal Government Act*, all Council Committees are created by bylaw. Most are advisory in nature and in almost all cases, Council appoints all of the members of the Committee.

Currently, Council Committees formally report to Council twice each year. Following the Civic Agencies annual recruitment campaign in Q1, the Chair of each Council Committee submits a membership report to a Standing Committee to provide advice on recommended candidates for interview and appointment by Council. In Q3, each Council Committee provides an annual report summarizing their work over the prior year, presenting their work plan for the upcoming year, and seeking approval to establish subcommittees for the upcoming year, if required. Once established, there is no formal process for reviewing or evaluating Council Committees.

Council Committees receive governance and secretariat support from Administration to schedule and facilitate meetings, develop agendas, and ensure mandatory meeting requirements, such as publicly accessible livestreams and minutes, are available. Currently, approximately 10 FTEs from a number of branches within Administration support the work of the 11 active Council Committees.

The number of meetings held annually by each Council Committee varies, ranging from six to 24 in 2025. When combined with subcommittee meetings, the total number of meetings in 2025 was approximately 241. For comparison, the total number of Council and Standing Committee meetings in 2025 was 111. Detailed Council Committee meeting and membership data are provided in Attachment 5.

While Council Committees provide valuable expertise and community perspectives, governance practices have evolved differently across Council Committees over time. The Governance Framework introduces a consistent approach to strengthen alignment with Council priorities and clarifying expectations across advisory and decision-making bodies.

Development of the Governance Framework for Council Committees

The Governance Framework was informed by multiple streams of work, including:

- Governance analysis and jurisdictional research
- Engagement with Council Committees and Administration
- Feedback gathered through surveys, written submissions, and facilitated discussions
- Audit recommendations

Insights gathered through the Advisory Committee Mandate Review also informed the development of the Governance Framework by identifying broader governance considerations, including the need for clearer mandate alignment with Council priorities, improved role clarity, and more consistent governance expectations across Council Committees.

Through this combined work, several consistent governance themes emerged:

- The need for clearer alignment between Council Committee mandates and Council priorities

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- Greater consistency in governance expectations across advisory bodies
- Improved clarity of roles between Council, Administration, and Council Committees
- Lifecycle governance approaches that balance accountability with Council Committee continuity

Engagement confirmed strong support for clearer governance direction while emphasizing the importance of maintaining advisory independence and volunteer sustainability. The Governance Framework was developed to reflect this feedback, including clarification of lifecycle reviews and Committee evaluation process. A summary of the engagement findings are provided in Attachment 6.

Governance Framework High-Level Recommendations and Timelines

The Governance Framework introduces several key changes for Council Committees:

- **Mandate Alignment** - Council Committee mandates will be reviewed and aligned with Council priorities at the beginning of each Council term to ensure relevance and clarity of purpose.
- **Lifecycle Governance** - Council Committees will be subject to lifecycle reviews, including annual evaluations and end-of-term evaluations.
- **Structural Consistency** - Standardized Terms of Reference, work planning expectations, and reporting pathways will provide greater consistency across Council Committees.

If approved by City Council, Administration will advance the implementation of the Governance Framework for Council Committees focusing policy and bylaw changes for three key areas:

- Governance alignment and structural update to the Council Committees
- Annual recruitment updates
- Annual reports and terms of reference.

Attachment 2 includes an initial gap analysis of the Council Committees, compared to the Governance Framework.

Governance Alignment and Structural Updates

At the Council Committee level, the following is required to implement the new Framework:

1. Engagement with Council Committees to develop a transition workplan.
2. Review each of the establishing bylaws and recommend changes for Council approval, changes would include:
 - Reviewing Committee mandates to ensure alignment with Council priorities
 - Committee composition and size, where appropriate
 - Applying lifecycle governance practices, including evaluation and end-of-term review processes
 - Identifying opportunities to standardize governance expectations across Committees

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In addition to work with the Council Committees, changes to the Council Policy C575E Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions is required, including clarity specifically around the definitions. Additional recommendations may come forward for Council's consideration through the implementation of the Governance Framework, if approved.

Annual Recruitment

On March 16, 2026 each of the three primary Standing Committees will be reviewing the reports from the Chairs and moving forward with interviews in April and appointments effective May 1, 2026. It is recommended that this continue for 2026 and adjustments are made for the 2027 annual recruitment cycle.

Annual Reports and Terms of Reference

The 2026 annual reports from the Council Committees, which will be considered in Q3, will serve as a transition towards implementation of the Governance Framework. Council Committees will be asked to provide a concise look-back on accomplishments for the prior year, identify how the work aligns with the Council-approved mandate, and develop a forward-looking two-year workplan that reflects Council priorities.

Terms of Reference, which will provide greater detail on use of subcommittees, roles of Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and members, as well as tactics to confirm alignment with Council-approved mandates, will be included with the 2026 annual reports for Council approval.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Governance Framework for City of Edmonton Council Committees
2. PRIVATE - Council Committee Gap Analysis
3. Summary of Council Governance Direction and Implementation Status
4. Current Civic Agencies
5. Council Committee Meeting Data
6. What We Heard - Summary of Engagement Findings
7. Council Policy C575E Amendments