

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: September 20, 2023</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>To: Chair and Members of Budget Committee - Fees and Charges</p> <p>From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer</p>	<p>Meeting date: October 4, 2023</p>

Subject

Support for City Councillor Offices

Recommendation

That the corporate report dated September 20, 2023 entitled "Support for City Councillor Offices" from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer be received for information.

Executive Summary

- On March 22, 2023, Council directed staff to prepare a report for deliberation at Budget Committee as part of the 2024 Budget outlining how Council offices are currently supported and options for increased support.
- Staff surveyed a number of comparable municipalities and found a range of staffing and support models across Canadian municipalities for Council offices.
- Staff have developed options for Budget Committee to consider to increase staff support for their offices. There are costs associated with each.
- If Budget Committee chooses to proceed with one of the options listed or a hybrid thereof, a motion would be required to request that the Mayor add this to the 2024 Budget. The Strong Mayor legislation would dictate the final decision on this motion.

Background

At the City Council meeting of March 22, 2023, Council directed staff to prepare a report to Budget Committee as part of the 2024 Budget deliberations regarding the support currently provided to Council offices, including a benchmarking of other municipalities, as well as options to increase this support, including cost implications.

The following report provides a review of the staff complement in comparator Canadian municipalities, a review of the supports currently provided to Council offices by the corporation, and potential options for Budget Committee to consider regarding staff complement.

Present Status

Staff Support

Prior to 2002, nine Councillors shared a pool of four Administrative Assistants. In 2002, Council added nine Executive Assistant positions – one for each Council Office. At the same time, the four shared administrative staff positions were eliminated. In 2005, Council expanded to 11 members. At that time, the decision was to provide two staff to each Council office – one Administrative Assistant and one Executive Assistant.

Councillors' staff are part of the Legislative Services Division, but functionally report to the City Councillor. They are City employees. There are currently 22 full time Council office staff. Council offices are supported by one shared Receptionist who assists in handling resident inquiries and phone calls when needed. The Clerk's Office also maintains a pool of Administrative Assistants that are called upon to fill short-term vacancies in Council offices.

Municipal Benchmarking

Staff undertook a benchmarking exercise of comparator municipalities. As the chart below shows, there is little consistency across municipalities in terms of the number of Council support staff.

Municipality	Number of Councillors	Number of Council Office Staff	Positions	Funding
Mississauga	11	2	Executive Assistant, Administrative Assistant	Corporation
Brampton	10	2-3 per Councillor	Executive Assistant, Council Aide, Administrative Assistant <i>Note: Not all wards are staffed the same. Some wards have an additional administrative support staff</i>	Corporation
Hamilton	15	2 (+1 if required) per Councillor	Administrative Assistant, Constituency Assistant, Administrative Assistant (if required)	Ward budget
Vancouver	10	5 staff in total in a pool for all Councillors	One Administrative Assistant supports 2 Councillors, for a total of five staff.	Corporation

Winnipeg	15	2 per Councillor	Varies based on Councillor need	Ward budget
Ottawa	24	Between 3-5 per Councillor, based on needs	Varies based on Councillor need	Ward budget
Toronto	25	No fixed number	Varies based on Councillor need	Ward budget
Vaughan	9	1.5 per Councillor	Executive Assistant, Administrative Assistant (part-time)	Corporation

Corporate Support

At the City of Mississauga, the corporation provides support to Councillors' Offices in a variety of ways, with the following business areas working directly with the offices as outlined below:

- **Strategic Communications and Initiatives**
 - Development of Ward newsletter
 - Souvenirs
 - Communications support (newsletter content, key messages)
 - Creative services
 - Media inquiries
 - Government advocacy
 - Event support/community recognition/official and ward events
- **Corporate Business Services**
 - 311 and Customer Service Desk
- **Various business areas** - Community meeting support
- **Legislative Services**
 - Printing
 - Support staffing (leaves of absence)
 - Council reception
 - Recruitment
 - Compensation and benefits administration including disability management
 - Onboarding
 - Performance management
 - Training

- **Information Technology**

- Equipment
- Tech support
- Virtual meeting support
- Video support

In the cities surveyed, there was variation in the support provided by the corporation to Council offices, but in general, communications, IT, and human resources were all provided to Members of Council by the corporation.

Comments

Staff have prepared options for Council to consider regarding support provided to Council offices.

Option 1 – Additional Administrative Staff

Additional administrative staff could be hired to manage workload. The cost to add one Administrative Assistant per office (11 in total) would cost between \$635,646 to \$847,561. Additional staff may also require a reconfiguration of existing office space to accommodate a third staff person, as well as IT costs for new equipment (laptop, phone, etc.).

Option 2 – Shared Administrative Support

As in the past, Council could create a pool of shared administrative support staff to offset workload. For instance, if one position was hired to support two wards, the cost for six Administrative Assistants would be \$346,716 to \$462,306. IT costs for new equipment (laptop, phone, etc.) would also be necessary. This pool of staff could also cover for staff in ward offices who are on short-term leave.

Option 3 – Modifying Roles

The job descriptions and titles of some of the support staff in Council offices could be changed to better reflect the demands of the office. For instance, the Administrative Assistant title could be changed to better reflect the needs of the office, which could also help to attract candidates with different skill sets. The change could be made on a ward by ward basis upon request, though this would create inconsistencies that may be problematic. This would require a job design exercise with Human Resources to establish the duties and correct pay grade. A further staff report would be required for this option, including associated costs.

Option 4 – Increased Support from City Staff (corporation)

Corporate staff could provide more support to Council offices beyond what is currently given. If Budget Committee chooses this option, a greater understanding of the requirements will be needed to ensure there is adequate capacity. If the Committee chooses this option, a further staff report would be required, including any potential associated costs.

Financial Impact

If Budget Committee chooses to receive the report for information, there are no financial implications. However, if the Committee chooses one of the four options listed, or hybrid thereof, there will be financial implications. For Option 1 the cost could be up to \$847,561 and for Option 2, up to \$462,306. Option 3 and 4 will require more study by staff and a follow up report with associated costs.

Conclusion

Council directed staff to prepare a report on the current support provided to Council offices and options to increase this support. Based on benchmarking, there is little consistency across comparator municipalities in terms of staffing levels for Councillors. If Budget Committee wishes to increase staff support, this can be done a variety of ways. There is a cost implication to all four options provided by staff. Any increase in staff support will have a cost implication, which will need to be included in the 2024 Budget. This will require a motion requesting that the Mayor add the expenses and staff complement to the 2024 Budget.



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