

Summary of the Ward Budget Councillor Engagement

Overall Theme: More flexibility for ward office budgets, particularly in the areas of salaries of assistants (Bylaw 36M2021; Section 2(i)).

Theme	Feedback
Current Ward Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ward Budget has been reduced over time, creating challenges in ability to sustain levels of service to constituents and office operations. • Consensus that the base budget is generally sufficient; however, incremental increases relative to inflation could be a reasonable means to maintain levels of service over the 2023-2026 budget cycle. • Ward office budget needs may vary by ward, with some Councillors accountable for additional stakeholders and varied/complex issues (e.g., additional community associations, constituencies, and stakeholders and additional constituent engagement undertaken as a new ward Councillor). • A consensus prefers that Bylaw 36M2021 be amended to eliminate set limits by expense category, to accommodate varying ward needs. • Post-Covid reality drives additional expenses with in-person engagement.
Ward office staff and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer employment programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Would like to know ahead of time about summer student grants. • Flexibility in hiring and paying staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Part-time versus full-time roles to enhance capacity. – Flexibility in hiring additional staff. – Budget does not support staff promotion. • Ward office support staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Need to consider appropriate ward office support model. – Resource pool to draw on.
Ward size and complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wards vary in their needs, volume of issues, and complexity. • Limited capacity for some Councillors to be represented at meetings of community associations and cultural organizations, particularly in established wards. • Wards 7 and 8 include city-wide interests

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Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology<ul style="list-style-type: none">- IT support – executive support (desktop)- Room investments – lapel mics to support streaming/broadcast- Would like a plotter – one-time shared purchase• Communications<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 311 call volumes to be used as a measure of the demand in wards.- Public expectation about consistency in communications and engagement across wards• Ward boundaries and Council Composition<ul style="list-style-type: none">- In 2023, the Returning Officer will seek Council’s direction on the ward boundary review process and related Council composition considerations.