



# FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL OFFICE

JUNE 1, 2026 - DRAFT

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

**MATRIX**  
CONSULTING GROUP

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The primary purpose of this assessment is to conduct an evaluation of the Spokane City Council Office by analyzing staffing, operations, and overall organizational performance. Within the confines of institutional realities, this study identifies approaches to apply best practices through considering strengths, gaps, and opportunities to enhance the Council's capacity to effectively deliver legislative services within a Council-Mayor form of government.

### SCOPE OF EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

A central focus of this assessment is ensuring that the Council Office is appropriately structured, staffed, and managed to operate sustainably as a fully functioning legislative body. To ensure operational longevity and continuity across election cycles and staffing transitions, the evaluation prioritizes preserving institutional knowledge through formalized standard operating procedures, robust onboarding, and structured cross-training. This approach provides for the Council to maintain responsive support and technical expertise despite evolving policy priorities and legislative demands.

This comprehensive analysis evaluates the Council Office across five core areas:

- Legislative governance context and organizational structure;
- Staffing levels, roles, and reporting relationships;
- Workload distribution and core legislative functions;
- Workforce management practices; and
- Systems, technology, and process efficiency.

The findings are informed by individual interviews with Council Members and staff, workload allocation surveys, stakeholder feedback, and peer city benchmarking. Current practices were also evaluated against established best management practices in local government to ensure alignment with recognized public-sector standards. Recommendations are also designed to be resource-conscious, identifying where organizational design, workload realignment, and technology upgrades can improve accountability and service delivery options within the realities and constraints of budget limitations.

Operating within a structurally separated system of governance, the Council requires independent capacity to proactively develop, evaluate, and implement policy initiatives. This assessment addresses key legislative and governance needs, including enhanced data and fiscal analysis capabilities, independent fiscal review, strengthened legal and policy research resources, and standardized

customer/constituent relationship management (CRM) systems. Through refinement of the current hybrid staffing model, the assessment seeks to better align organizational resources with core legislative support functions, including policy analysis, ordinance review, strategic research, and the consistent provision of legislative expertise to all independently elected Council Members.

## **IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP**

This report ultimately provides the City Council with a comprehensive implementation roadmap that includes targeted, data-driven recommendations to strengthen organizational effectiveness, improve operational efficiency, and support long-term legislative capacity. A key product of this evaluation is the development of a comprehensive Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide, which formally documents roles, responsibilities, performance expectations, and internal protocols.

The recommendations are intended to enhance workload distribution and prioritization, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve accountability and internal coordination, and establish more consistent operational practices across the organization. In addition, the report identifies opportunities to strengthen workplace culture through clearer organizational structure, improved communication processes, enhanced employee support systems, and more sustainable staffing and service delivery models. Collectively, these recommendations are intended to support a more strategic, responsive, and resilient legislative organization capable of effectively meeting evolving expectations for governance, policy, and constituent services.

## **1.2 PRIMARY THEMES AND FINDINGS**

This analysis identifies several organizational strengths that provide a strong operational foundation and should be maintained as part of the Council Office's long-term organizational approach. These include:

- A formally codified separation of powers defined within the City Charter and Municipal Code that reinforces accountability, minimizes operational overlap with the executive branch, and establishes a framework for the Council to independently evaluate and advance policy initiatives.
- A culture of highly engaged and committed Council Members who actively participate throughout the legislative and policy development process and demonstrate a strong investment in effective governance and organizational performance.
- A capable and experienced staff structure, including both Central Staff and Legislative Assistants, that provides meaningful support to Council Members in managing extensive legislative, constituent, and community responsibilities.
- Clearly established procedural mechanisms for introducing, scheduling, and advancing legislative items, with no significant structural barriers identified in moving matters forward for discussion and Council consideration.
- Positive and collaborative working relationships with the Administration that support coordination, institutional continuity, and a generally constructive intergovernmental operating environment.

- A highly engaged community that views the Council as an accessible and responsive resource for addressing constituent concerns, policy issues, and neighborhood priorities.
- A robust public participation and transparency framework that ensures broad community inclusion and accessibility to legislative proceedings through the effective use of hybrid meeting technology, livestreaming, City Cable 5 broadcasts, and structured advisory bodies like Neighborhood Councils and the Community Assembly.
- A coordinated intergovernmental relations strategy that successfully leverages a dedicated position, such as the Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs, alongside independent advocates to proactively advance the City's regional, state, and federal legislative priorities.

At the same time, this study identified several organizational and operational constraints that would benefit from additional clarification, restructuring, and refinement. These include:

- The level of legislative, fiscal, and policy analysis provided for items advancing to the Council is inconsistent. Formalized fiscal note practices and standardized legislative review procedures remain underdeveloped, despite interest in expanding these tools, and current review capacity is impacted by the availability of dedicated policy and analytical staff resources.
- Coordination related to constituent matters is not consistently formalized, which can result in duplicated efforts, inconsistent tracking practices, and varying approaches to constituent follow-up and service delivery.
- Organizational accountability and supervisory alignment within the current structure remain challenging, particularly given the expectation that staff effectively report to and receive direction from seven elected officials simultaneously. While progress has been made in improving reporting relationships, additional refinement is needed, including the consistent application of employee evaluations, timekeeping practices, personnel documentation, and corrective action procedures, all of which are aligned with established Council and administrative Human Resources standards.
- Office dynamics can become overly politicized due to unclear operational boundaries, inconsistent expectations regarding staff roles and intergovernmental relationships, and limited formal guidance related to conflicts of interest, documentation requirements, and ethical decision-making processes.
- The Council Office Director is expected to regularly assist the Council President and Council members at a high level while managing staff operations without the proper authority, and to handle day-to-day tasks ranging from managing items flowing into the office to using systems and technology to manage constituent requests. This creates operational strain and reduces the office's long-term organizational effectiveness.
- Legislative Assistants frequently assume broader legislative development and policy support responsibilities despite varying levels of experience and inconsistent service alignment across Council offices.

- Ongoing role ambiguity exists within the Initiative Manager positions, which were originally established to address administrative coordination needs and have faced challenges transitioning into clearly defined legislative and policy-focused functions.
- Expectations and service definitions for the support provided to the Council by centralized City functions, such as Legal, Clerk, Human Resources, and City Cable 5, are not consistently defined, resulting in uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, communication protocols, and levels of operational support.

### 1.3 COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the project team’s comprehensive assessment and analysis, this report presents targeted recommendations for each core topic area examined. These recommendations are designed to address identified challenges, enhance operational efficiency, and align practices with best management standards. Each recommendation is presented within the corresponding section of the evaluation, providing context, rationale, and actionable guidance tailored to the specific findings of that topic area.

Recommendation	Timeline for Implementation	Fiscal Note
<b>LEGISLATIVE GOVERNANCE</b>		
1. Develop and implement a standardized legislative workflow that clearly defines the process for ordinance, resolution, and policy development from initiation through adoption.	Oct. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
2. Review recurring suspensions of Council rules to identify procedural issues, needed process improvements, or rule updates that would support more consistent and efficient meeting operations, and define circumstances that warrant future suspension of the rules.	Jan. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
3. Each standing committee should adopt an annual work plan that addresses Council priorities and identifies key policy objectives, timelines, deliverables, and expectations for progress reporting.	Jan. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
4. Establish and consistently apply clear standards for workplace conduct, supervision, and accountability to support a professional and effective work environment.	Oct. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
5. Require all Council Office staff to submit a standardized weekly timecard record documenting hours worked, work location, general work categories, and any telework or off-site assignments to	Oct. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity

Recommendation	Timeline for Implementation	Fiscal Note
strengthen supervisory accountability, workload tracking, and documentation of work completed outside the office.		
6. Create and implement a standardized onboarding, candidate orientation, staff training, and institutional knowledge management program.	Jun. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
7. Pursue and amendment to the City Charter to authorize the Council, under limited and clearly defined circumstances, to retain independent legal counsel when necessary to address conflicts of interest, separation-of-powers matters, or other circumstances requiring independent legislative representation.	Jan. 1, 2027	Cost of legal counsel retention/use

**FOUNDATIONAL TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY**

8. Adopt a Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide to establish consistent procedures, equitable access to shared staff and resources, clear professional and operational expectations, and a centralized framework for legislative workflows.	Jul. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
9. Establish a fiscal note process for qualifying Council legislation using standardized templates to provide consistent information on projected costs, revenues, assumptions, and long-term financial impacts prior to legislative action.	Oct. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
10. Establish a performance management process that includes annual employee evaluations with their supervisors, position-specific goals, and key performance indicators to clarify expectations and support accountability.	Jan. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity
11. Establish annual legislative goals, a unified strategic work plan, implementation timelines, staff support needs, measurable outcomes, and clear Council Member roles and service expectations.	Oct. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
12. Conduct an annual Council self-evaluation to assess governance effectiveness, review progress on adopted goals, and communicate key outcomes to residents.	Oct. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity

Recommendation	Timeline for Implementation	Fiscal Note
13. Scope and implement a CRM system, including a standardized process for documenting, assigning, tracking, coordinating, and reporting on Council-related inquiries and service requests.	Feb. 1, 2027	Approx. \$150,000 (depending on scope of work, software, etc.); and ongoing software costs
14. Develop and formally adopt a Council Communications Strategy that establishes office-wide priorities, messaging standards, protocols for member requests, and performance measures.	Oct. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
15. Develop and implement a standardized Council staff review memo template and analytical framework to ensure legislative proposals are evaluated consistently using defined criteria.	Oct. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
16. Develop service level agreements or formal coordination protocols with key administrative support departments to clarify roles, service expectations, request processes, timelines, cost responsibilities, and support levels for Council-specific projects and ongoing legislative operations.	Jul. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity

**STAFFING, WORK PROCESSES, AND SYSTEMS**

17. Refer Council Member workload and compensation considerations to the compensation review body for further evaluation of alignment between current role expectations, time commitments, and the existing compensation structure.	Jul. 1, 2026	Possible cost of compensation increase based on determination of Salary Review Commission
18. Reclassify the Office Director to a Council Executive Director or Chief of Staff position, with immediate and independent management of all Council Central Staff. This reclassification formally aligns authority with responsibility, strengthens management capacity, and establishes clear organizational leadership separate from administrative specialist functions.	Jul. 1, 2026	Approx. \$7,000 for the 2026 budget
19. Update the Policy Advisor and Budget Director job descriptions to more clearly define and distinguish roles, responsibilities, and areas of oversight, including specific responsibilities related to policy leadership (Policy Advisor) and fiscal analysis, including standards for the development and application of fiscal notes (Budget	Jul. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity

Recommendation	Timeline for Implementation	Fiscal Note
Director) for legislative proposals and projects, while also removing outdated or no longer applicable information.		
20. Continue the Intergovernmental Affairs Manager role with more clearly defined responsibilities and expanded year-round policy, regional coordination, and legislative support functions beyond the state legislative session.	Jul. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
21. Reclassify and transition the current Initiative Manager positions to Policy/Budget Analyst roles that incorporate existing subject-matter expertise into clearly defined policy portfolio assignments and legislative review areas.	Jul. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
22. Transfer the Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to an Executive Department.	Jul. 1, 2026	Budget Neutral
23. Dissolve the designation of Legislative Assistants II, through modifications to Spokane Municipal Code § 02.005. Maintain the prior-authorized pay scale for employees who currently meet this requirement during their tenure as a Legislative Assistant.	Jul. 1, 2026	2026 Budget Neutral; Qualified employees compensated in higher range in future budgets
24. Reclassify the vacant Council President Legislative Assistant position into a centralized Senior Executive Assistant role reporting to the Council Office Director, with the position description retaining specified Legislative Assistant support functions for the Council President while providing standardized administrative coordination and office-wide operational support services, including constituent communication management.	Jul. 1, 2026	Approx. \$5,000 for 2026 budget
25. Establish and clarify reporting relationships, decision-making authority, workload prioritization protocols, and administrative support responsibilities within the Council Office.	Jul. 1, 2026	Organizational time/capacity
26. Implement a standardized, office-wide project and workflow management system using shared platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Planner, supported by formalized task management procedures, naming conventions, templates, and accountability protocols to improve coordination, visibility, continuity, and operational efficiency across the legislative office.	Jan. 1, 2027	Organizational time/capacity

Each recommendation is supported through a detailed narrative in later chapters of this report.

## 2. LEGISLATIVE GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 OPERATIONAL PRACTICES AND WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT

Spokane City Council's legislative workflow follows a structured procedural path where proposed items are introduced through one of four standing committees, with multiple opportunities for public engagement before reaching the full Council for a vote. The existing legislative process is established, with mechanisms for introducing, scheduling, and advancing legislative items. There are no identified structural barriers to advancing diverse matters or topics for Council consideration. Focus group discussions with community stakeholders highlighted areas of operational success, including the Council's post-meeting communications, noting that meeting recaps and social media updates help keep the public informed. However, stakeholders also noted the lack of opportunity to provide earlier feedback in the process and challenges with not receiving enough advance notice to engage in process discussions as proposals change mid-process, often learning about an item for consideration only a few days before the action occurs. It was also noted that the Council often suspends its rules to expedite the process when an item is time-sensitive, which can inhibit public engagement.

The Council's rules provide important stability by establishing clear expectations and a consistent process flow. Frequent suspension of these rules should be evaluated to determine which provisions are most commonly suspended, how often suspensions occur, and whether they reflect needed process improvements, unclear procedural requirements, or inconsistent adherence to established rules. This can help determine whether the rules should be modified to better support Council operations or whether existing procedures should remain in place and be applied more consistently. The Council may also consider related process improvements, such as requiring petitioners or ordinance sponsors to account for Council review timelines when proposing changes. While short-notice agenda modifications may be legally permissible, they can also limit the public's ability to plan for and fully participate in Council proceedings.

The Council Office actively uses agenda submission deadlines and formal review processes, depending on the depth and complexity of an item, and, when available, provides staff support for the review. These tools are not yet supported by a fully standardized and consistently applied workflow from item initiation through final adoption. In practice, workload demands, varying staff access, and inconsistent training have contributed to uneven application of agenda-setting rules, review protocols, and prioritization criteria. As a result, the timing, routing, and readiness of Council items may vary depending on the nature of the proposal, the staff involved, or competing workload pressures. OnBase provides a centralized platform for tracking legislative timelines, records, and agenda materials, but its effectiveness is limited when access levels, user knowledge, and training vary. This creates limitations in fully utilizing and

relying on the OnBase platform. All relevant users must understand how to enter and use information held within a common system.

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*Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a standardized legislative workflow that clearly defines the process for ordinance, resolution, and policy development from initiation through adoption.*

*Recommendation 2: Review recurring suspensions of Council rules to identify procedural issues, needed process improvements, or rule updates that would support more consistent and efficient meeting operations, and define circumstances that warrant future suspension of the rules.*

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## **COMMITTEE WORKFLOW**

Standing committees currently operate at the direction of proposals and the discretion of Council requests, without formalized work plans. This limits their ability to advance proactive policy development in a coordinated way. Annual committee work plans would provide a practical structure for identifying priority policy areas and desired outcomes. These work plans should align with the Council's adopted legislative priorities and strategic work plan, while allowing each committee to focus on its assigned subject-matter areas.

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*Recommendation 3: Each standing committee should adopt an annual work plan that addresses Council priorities and identifies key policy objectives, timelines, deliverables, and expectations for progress reporting.*

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## **2.2 WORKPLACE CULTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Staff consistently demonstrate a strong willingness to collaborate and address the workload outlined within their respective positions. Working relationships with the Administration are generally constructive and functional, with occasional natural tensions, but overall, present a collaborative environment. The Council relies on informal, personality-driven coordination practices rather than consistently documented operational structures, supervisory frameworks, and standardized expectations. This approach currently functions, but makes the organization vulnerable to leadership transitions, staffing changes, periods of conflict, or increased operational demands.

The Council Office has not clearly defined or consistently applied standards for professionalism, workplace conduct, and general office expectations. This has made it difficult to establish shared norms for how staff and elected officials communicate, coordinate work, address concerns, and hold one another accountable. When expectations are unclear, conduct and performance issues can be difficult to address consistently, and accountability may vary depending on the individuals involved and circumstances.

The Council Office would benefit from clearer expectations, more consistent supervisory practices, and a shared understanding of professional conduct and accountability. Establishing these basic organizational standards would help clarify standards and expectations and ensure the office can operate professionally and effectively through future staffing or leadership changes.

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*Recommendation 4: Establish and consistently apply clear standards for workplace conduct, supervision, and accountability to support a professional and effective work environment.*

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## TIME TRACKING

Accurate documentation of hours worked promotes transparency and accountability in a hybrid work environment with frequent off-site meetings and work performed outside City Hall. The current PeopleSoft program requires the submission of hours worked but does not allow additional documentation to outline the location and way the hours were performed. Council staff should be required to use a supplementary timecard that documents work performed outside the main office, including the work location and whether it involves participation in an off-site meeting or event. This timecard should be signed by the employee to certify accuracy and approved by the employee's supervisor, with a comments section so either can provide additional clarification as desired.

This approach supports transparency, improves supervisory oversight, and provides more reliable documentation of employee work hours. The use of timecards provides Council Members with greater confidence that reported hours reflect actual work performed and that staff time is consistently documented, reviewed, and aligned with Council Office responsibilities.

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*Recommendation 5: Require all Council Office staff to submit a standardized weekly timecard record documenting hours worked, work location, general work categories, and any telework or off-site assignments to strengthen supervisory accountability, workload tracking, and documentation of work completed outside the office.*

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## DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The Council Office would benefit from a more standardized document management framework. Currently, there is a location with some shared templates, but they are not maintained or managed regularly, and verification is required prior to use. Having a standard approach to storing and updating shared documents helps ensure that templates, procedures, and shared work products are consistent and readily available. A document management repository should include:

- Clear and standardized templates.
- Uniform standard operating procedures.

- Centralized file-sharing protocols.
- Consistent naming and version-control practices.

This provides a unified office approach and simplifies training, both onboarding and ongoing, by keeping information up to date and accessible in a single location.

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*Recommendation 6: Establish a standardized Council Office document management system with uniform templates, SOPs, file-sharing protocols, naming conventions, version control, and records retention practices to improve consistency, workflow, institutional continuity, and compliance.*

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## ONBOARD TRAINING

There is no structured program for candidate orientation, onboarding, and ongoing training. A formalized program would reduce steep learning curves for newly elected officials and new staff, and document institutional knowledge to ensure a consistent understanding of roles, responsibilities, procedures, legal requirements, and operational expectations.

The Council Office would also benefit from developing a candidate orientation program to help individuals seeking a Council office better understand the role before assuming office. This should provide candidates with information on general roles, expectations, and time commitments of Council Members, helping to better prepare candidates and newly elected officials for the practical day-to-day responsibilities of Council service.

A structured program for staff onboarding, professional development, and cross-training should also be implemented to strengthen technical capabilities and support operational continuity. Staff training should address expectations within the office, as well as standard operating procedures, tools, and general protocols.

### SUGGESTED PROGRAM OUTLINE

#### Candidate Orientation Program

- Council role, authority, and form of government
- Time commitment, meeting schedule, committee workload, and constituent services
- Legislative policymaking versus administrative operations
- Budgeting 101
- Ethics, public records, open meetings, election-year restrictions, and conflicts of interest
- Appropriate use of staff support and City resources

#### New Council Member Onboarding

- Charter provisions, Council rules, governance structure, and legislative procedures
- Budget process, fiscal review, policy development, and committee responsibilities
- Constituent service expectations and request management protocols
- Communications, media relations, website/social media expectations, and public engagement
- Managing and working with Legislative Assistants, including work assignments, supervision, performance expectations, and professional boundaries
- Use of the City Council Rules of Procedure, and Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide

### **Council Staff Onboarding and Training**

- Roles and responsibilities of Central Staff, Legislative Assistants, and administrative support departments
- Agenda development, legislative tracking, staff review memos, fiscal notes, and post-adoption monitoring
- Records retention, document management, public records compliance, confidentiality, and information integrity
- Constituent request intake, routing, tracking, and follow-up protocols
- Technology systems, templates, SOPs, file-sharing standards, and reporting expectations
- Ethics, professionalism, workplace conduct, timekeeping, telework, and accountability standards

### **Ongoing Professional Development and Cross-Training**

- Annual refresher training on legal, ethical, procedural, and operational requirements
- Cross-training in core office functions to maintain continuity during absences, vacancies, or election transitions
- Periodic review of Council priorities, workload trends, process improvements, and staff development needs
- Documentation of institutional knowledge, key procedures, contacts, timelines, and recurring legislative workflows

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*Recommendation 7: Create and implement a standardized onboarding, candidate orientation, staff training, and institutional knowledge management program.*

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## **2.3 LEGAL ADVISORY SUPPORT**

The Council currently maintains positive and collaborative working relationships with the City Attorney's Office, and legal staff routinely coordinate with the Policy Advisor and the Council Office to support

legislative review, provide procedural guidance, and conduct legal analysis. At present, these relationships appear effective and functional in supporting the Council's day-to-day legislative responsibilities.

However, the current City Charter language is interpreted to limit the Council's ability, as a legislative body, to retain outside legal counsel independently when circumstances may warrant additional or separate representation. While this has not created noted operational issues under the City's current working relationships, it presents a potential long-term governance consideration from a legislative independence and separation-of-powers perspective.

The Council may periodically encounter situations involving institutional conflicts, legal disputes between branches of government, matters involving Charter interpretation, ethics, or procedural questions, or circumstances in which the City Attorney may have an identified conflict of interest or may be unable to provide independent representation to both the executive and legislative branches simultaneously. In these situations, the absence of a clearly authorized mechanism for the Council to obtain independent legal advice could limit the Council's ability to fully evaluate legal considerations, protect institutional interests, or obtain secondary legal review when needed.

Many legislative bodies retain a narrowly defined authority to procure independent counsel under specific conditions, such as conflicts of interest, intergovernmental disputes, or other separation-of-powers matters. Cost is a possible factor to consider here as well, as retaining independent legal counsel would have a monetary component if this resource were approved and utilized.

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*Recommendation 8: Amend the City Charter to authorize the Council, under limited and clearly defined circumstances, to retain independent legal counsel when necessary to address conflicts of interest, separation-of-powers matters, or other circumstances requiring independent legislative representation.*

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## 3. FOUNDATIONAL TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

The Council Office should continue strengthening the use of foundational operational tools, standardized processes, and supporting technologies to improve consistency, communication, legislative coordination, and organizational accountability.

### 3.1 LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AND COUNCIL OPERATIONS GUIDE

The Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide will serve as the Council Office's centralized administrative, operational, and procedural reference document. The guide establishes standardized expectations, protocols, and professional standards governing Council Office functions.

The Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide will provide a clear, practical roadmap for how the Council Office functions on a day-to-day basis. Rather than relying on informal practices or individual interpretation, the guide will help Council Members, Council Staff, and supporting departments to understand how work is assigned, how shared resources are accessed, how decisions and requests move through the office, and what standards apply to professional conduct and service delivery. Placing all of this in a single location can help the Council Office improve consistency, strengthen accountability, preserve institutional knowledge, and ensure that each Council Member has a fair and transparent process for accessing staff support and administrative resources.

The guide should be formally adopted by Council resolution, integrated with the Council's broader governance framework and Rules of Procedure, and managed by the Council Executive Director. The document should also be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current, practical, and aligned with Council priorities.

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*Recommendation 9: Adopt a Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide to establish consistent procedures, equitable access to shared staff and resources, clear professional and operational expectations, and a centralized framework for legislative workflows.*

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### 3.2 FISCAL NOTES

The City Council Office should formally implement a fiscal note program to provide Council Members with consistent, objective, and transparent analysis regarding the fiscal, operational, staffing, and long-term financial implications of significant legislative proposals and policy decisions. The use of fiscal notes strengthens informed decision-making through identifying operational impacts and considering long-range financial planning. Implementation of this process should occur collaboratively between the Council Office, Administration (Finance Department staff), and operational departments to ensure analysis remains accurate.

Fiscal notes should focus on legislative items anticipated to have measurable fiscal, operational, staffing, contractual, capital, service-level, or revenue impacts, rather than being universally required for all agenda items.

Fiscal notes are appropriate for:

- Ordinances or resolutions with clear budget implications.
- New programs, initiatives, or service expansions.
- Staffing additions, reorganizations, or compensation-related changes.
- Major contracts, interlocal agreements, or grant-related commitments.
- Capital projects or infrastructure-related proposals.
- Policy changes affecting operational service levels or organizational resources.
- Proposals creating identifiable long-term costs, liabilities, or savings.

The Council Budget Director, with support from designated Central Staff, should lead coordination and administration of the fiscal note process. This process should include producing nonpartisan analyses that identify key assumptions, projected fiscal impacts, operational considerations, and any limitations in the available data. Standardized templates and review procedures should be used to promote consistency in approach. Additionally, initial implementation should be adjustable to align with available staffing capacity and resources.

Philadelphia's fiscal impact statement process applies to pending Council legislation upon request and requires distribution to all Council members and public availability once completed. The adopted template includes operating costs, revenue, five-year plan impact, methodology, assumptions, funding availability, and additional fiscal comments. This is effective as it creates a practical, standardized template that connects proposed legislation to immediate and longer-term financial considerations.

## PHILADELPHIA, PA STANDARD FORM

### City of Philadelphia

BILL NO. 120107 continued

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Exhibit "A"

#### Philadelphia Fiscal Impact Statement

Date:
Bill No.:
Bill Title:
Prepared by:

**Section 1:** Provide overview of fiscal impact of the legislation.

	Increase	Decrease	Neutral
Operating Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on City's Five-Year Plan?			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
Fiscal Impact Cannot be Determined			<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section 2:** Fill in the changes to annual revenue and/or annual operating costs over the next five fiscal years.

	Current FY	FY+1	FY+2	FY+3	FY+4
Annual Cost					
Annual Revenue					

**Section 3:** Detail methodology for fiscal impact analysis and underlying assumptions.

*Describe how the estimates were derived:*

*Describe any assumptions used in deriving the estimates:*

**Section 4:** Describe impact, if any, of legislation on the City's Five-Year Financial Plan.

City of Philadelphia

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### City of Philadelphia

BILL NO. 120107 continued

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*Does the legislation affect the City's Five-Year Financial Plan? If so, briefly explain:*

**Section 5:** Describe whether funding is available to implement the legislation, if implementation has financial cost.

Funding exists to implement the legislation.  
*Please explain:*

Funding has not been provided for the legislation.  
*Please explain:*

**Section 6:** Provide any additional comments regarding the fiscal impact of the legislation, including, for example, the fiscal impact on third parties.

*Additional Comments:*

City of Philadelphia

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*Recommendation 10: Establish a fiscal note process for qualifying Council legislation using standardized templates to provide consistent information on projected costs, revenues, assumptions, and long-term financial impacts prior to legislative action.*

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## 3.3 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

### COUNCIL STAFF EVALUATIONS

Presently, employee evaluations have been conducted periodically, and a varied process has been applied without clear expectations for when and how evaluations are to occur. Without regular evaluations, it is more difficult to check in with employees, clarify expectations, assess workload, identify training or professional development needs, and ensure individual efforts align with Council priorities. This is especially important in a legislative office where staff balance a variety of responsibilities and

adjust quickly to changing priorities. An employee evaluation can provide a documented checkpoint and a two-way discussion about position responsibilities, goals, and development, as well as how each role contributes to the Council office's overall success. This also provides an opportunity to review job descriptions and individual workloads.

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*Recommendation 11: Establish a performance management process that includes annual employee evaluations with their supervisors, position-specific goals, and key performance indicators to clarify expectations and support accountability.*

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## **COUNCIL WORKPLAN AND GOALS**

The Council releases a general legislative agenda and annual legislative priorities that outline expectations for the upcoming year. It does not, however, have a formal goal-setting retreat or meet to develop a unified strategic work plan to guide its work throughout the year. These efforts and tools would allow the Council office to center on a shared legislative vision that reflects collective priorities, available capacity, and community needs.

Council Members' responsibilities have expanded over time, and they typically work at least 40 hours per week to meet current expectations. A clearer strategic framework could help the Council identify which responsibilities are most essential by considering which activities directly support the adopted goals and where expectations for involvement may need to be adjusted.

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*Recommendation 12: Establish annual legislative goals, a unified strategic work plan, implementation timelines, staff support needs, measurable outcomes, and clear Council Member roles and service expectations.*

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## **COUNCIL SELF-EVALUATION AND PRIORITY REVIEW**

The Council should establish a brief annual self-evaluation process to assess progress toward adopted goals and overall effectiveness as a legislative body. This should occur as an annual check-in rather than a lengthy or overly formal evaluation. During this discussion, the Council should review accomplishments, identify areas where additional focus or follow-through is needed, evaluate whether meeting and committee processes support effective decision-making, and determine whether staff support, communication practices, and coordination with the Administration remain aligned with Council goals.

This also provides an opportunity to communicate the Council's annual efforts to residents in a clear and accessible format. By summarizing accomplishments, major policy actions, progress on adopted priorities, constituent service efforts, and areas of need or continued focus. Publishing efforts can help the Council improve transparency, demonstrate accountability, and increase local understanding of how legislative work connects to community needs and long-term City goals.

The Seattle City Council requires an Annual Legislative Report that identifies Council accomplishments from the prior year and objectives for the coming calendar year. The Council also publishes annual reports summarizing legislative accomplishments and progress on major policy priorities. This type of process is effective because it creates a structured record of Council progress, connects legislative work to adopted priorities, and provides a practical framework for setting next-year goals.

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*Recommendation 13: Conduct an annual Council self-evaluation to assess governance effectiveness, review progress on adopted goals, and communicate key outcomes to residents.*

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### **3.4 CONSTITUENT REQUEST MANAGEMENT (CRM)**

Constituent Request Management (CRM) is a legislative office function that includes managing resident inquiries and requests. The Council Office spends a large portion of its time addressing these inquiries. Currently, there is no consistent protocol for how constituent inquiries and service requests are received, documented, assigned, monitored, or closed. Requests come through to Council Members and all staff, through email, phone calls, meetings, social media, or community events. Having a system and repository to provide all of this information office-wide could ensure a consistent internal process where inquiries are documented, routed appropriately, receive timely responses, and are retained as part of the Council Office's institutional record.

Requests received by Council Members and staff often inform policy priorities, identify recurring community concerns, and require coordination with administrative departments to provide responses or follow up. When requests are managed through a shared process, the Council Office is better able to maintain continuity across elected officials and staff, avoid duplicative or conflicting responses, track recurring issues by topic or district, and support more effective coordination.

Several cities address this through centralized intake forms or CRM platforms. The following includes a list of characteristics to consider in implementing a system:

- Centralized tracking, monitoring, and reporting of constituent inquiries for multiple users.
- Integration with existing City communication channels.
- Role-based access controls for privacy and security.
- Searchable historical records of constituent interactions.
- Case management and workflow automation.
- Assignment of inquiries to specific staff members.
- Dashboards showing pending and resolved requests.
- Reporting on trends by topic, such as public safety, infrastructure, and City services.

- Mobile access for Council Members and staff, including remote access.

A staff position needs to be assigned to manage this process and any software or other systems used to implement a CRM system.

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*Recommendation 14: Scope and implement a CRM system, including a standardized process for documenting, assigning, tracking, coordinating, and reporting on Council-related inquiries and service requests.*

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### **3.5 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

The Council has a full-time Communications Director to support the office's communications and to facilitate the Council's voice. While the Mayor and Administration typically communicate from an executive and operational perspective, the Council has a separate need to communicate its legislative priorities, policy work, budget decisions, constituent service efforts, and community engagement. More structured communication presents the Council's independent voice, and communication should be coordinated and aligned with the Council's legislative goals.

A Legislative Communications Strategy would provide a practical framework for the use of Council communications resources. This strategy should help define when Council-wide communications are appropriate, when individual Council Member communications should be supported, how communications staff time is allocated equitably, and how major legislative initiatives are communicated before, during, and after Council consideration. It should also address the Council's webpage, social media, newsletters, meeting recaps, public education materials, community outreach, informal surveys or polls, and project-specific communication plans so residents can better understand what the Council is considering, how to participate, and what actions were ultimately taken.

Establishing this strategy would also provide clear, Council-endorsed direction for the Communications Director position. The Communications Director should be responsible for developing the proposed strategy for Council review and consideration, using professional communications practices and input from Council Members, staff, and community engagement needs. Once adopted, the strategy would provide the position with a work plan, help prioritize communication requests, and ensure that communications support is aligned with Council priorities rather than handled only on a request-by-request basis.

The strategy should include:

- Purpose and guiding principles for Council communications: transparency, accessibility, accuracy, neutrality, equity, and preservation of the Council's legislative voice.
- Distinction between Council-wide, committee, district, and individual Council Member communications.

- Protocols for communications on pending legislation, including public education before consideration, meeting notices, summaries of key issues, and post-meeting results.
- Equitable support standards to ensure each Council Member receives appropriate communications support for assigned committees, initiatives, district issues, and legislative priorities.
- Website strategy, including clear ownership, update responsibilities, issue pages, committee pages, meeting summaries, legislative explainers, and resident participation resources.
- Social media strategy, including platform purpose, approval workflows, posting frequency, content standards, accessibility, public comment moderation, and records retention.
- Public engagement tools, such as surveys, online comment forms, explainer videos, newsletters, town halls, district updates, translated materials, and targeted outreach before major policy decisions.
- Meeting communication protocols, including previews of upcoming items, plain-language summaries, post-meeting action updates, and links to legislation, agendas, minutes, and recordings.
- Media relations protocols, including spokesperson roles, press release standards, talking points, response coordination, and distinction between institutional Council positions and individual member views.
- Training for Council Members and staff on social media use, public records, open meetings, election-year limitations, accessibility, messaging, media interaction, and use of City-managed platforms.
- Performance measures, such as website traffic, newsletter reach, social media engagement, public participation levels, response timeliness, translation usage, and resident feedback.
- Annual review process to update communications priorities, tools, assignments, and protocols in alignment with Council goals and legislative work plans.

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*Recommendation 15: Develop and formally adopt a Council Communications Strategy that establishes office-wide priorities, messaging standards, protocols for member requests, and performance measures.*

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### **3.6 COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW MEMOS**

The Council Office uses an Agenda Sheet to capture background information, rough fiscal impacts, and equity considerations. Various staff also contribute and provide feedback on proposals that come forward through discussions, emails, and, in some cases, written analyses. While all these insights are helpful, there is no consistent approach to legislative analysis as the Council considers hundreds of proposals each year. Council Members receive a range of information when evaluating operational considerations, legal issues, implementation needs, and alignment with adopted priorities.

A more consistent staff review memo process would help strengthen legislative analysis, particularly for significant or complex proposals. In the Council-Mayor form of government, these memos allow the

legislative branch to independently review policy items, identify key questions, summarize impacts, evaluate implementation considerations, and present Council options in a consistent format. Considering staff capacity, the Council should establish clear criteria for when a full staff review memo is needed, such as items with a high fiscal impact, major policy change, operational complexity, significant community interest, amendments to major programs, or referral by the Council President, a committee chair, or a defined number of Council Members.

A Council staff review memo template could include the following elements:

- Item title, Sponsor(s) or requesting Council Member(s), and Committee Assignment
- Legislative action request and decision point
- Executive summary
- Background and policy issue/problem statement
- Summary of proposed action
- Fiscal, operational, legal, and procedural considerations
- Equity, community, and stakeholder impacts
- Implementation considerations, risks, and tradeoffs
- Alignment with Council goals/priorities (as applicable)
- Council options and staff analysis
- Recommended next steps and attachments

Developing a staff review memo template would improve consistency and support more informed legislative deliberation. This also creates a record of the Council's evaluation and consideration of legislative items. The appendices provide a few options of memo templates for consideration.

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*Recommendation 16: Develop and implement a standardized Council staff review memo template and analytical framework to ensure legislative proposals are evaluated consistently using defined criteria for fiscal, operational, legal, equity, policy, stakeholder, implementation, and procedural impacts.*

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### **3.7 COORDINATION WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**

Coordination between the Council Office and administrative departments is generally functioning well, with regular communication, constructive working relationships, and a strong willingness to collaborate. These relationships are particularly important in areas where Council efforts require administrative support, technical expertise, data, and resources.

Expectations for these shared services are not always clearly defined. This creates some uncertainty about the level of administrative support available for Council-specific projects, how requests should be prioritized, and who is responsible for follow-through. There is also some confusion about how project-specific costs should be assigned.

Establishing service-level agreements or similar written coordination protocols could help formalize expectations without undermining the collaborative relationships that already exist. These agreements can define the scope of services provided, request and approval processes, expected response times, project timelines, escalation procedures, cost allocation methods, and points of contact for both routine and Council-specific needs.

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*Recommendation 17: Develop service level agreements or formal coordination protocols with key administrative support departments to clarify roles, service expectations, request processes, timelines, cost responsibilities, and support levels for Council-specific projects and ongoing legislative operations.*

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## 4. STAFFING, PROCESSES, AND SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

This section includes the entire analysis of staffing, processes, and systems, prepared for an individual report. The data is a key part of the analysis and decision options in this report to the extent that its inclusion provides needed insights and context, as well as specific implementation recommendations.

### 4.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This analysis evaluates the organizational structure, staffing levels, operational processes, and technology systems of the Spokane City Council Office. Informed by interviews with Council Members and staff, staff time-allocation data, stakeholder interviews, the Council’s legislative service framework, and peer-city benchmarking, the report presents key findings and targeted recommendations to enhance the Council Office’s capacity to deliver legislative and constituent services effectively.

This Staffing, Processes, and Systems Analysis evaluates how the Spokane City Council Office is currently structured, staffed, and managed to fulfill its legislative responsibilities in the Council-Mayor form of government. The review addresses five core areas:

- Governance context and organizational structure;
- Staffing levels, roles, and reporting relationships;
- Workload distribution and core legislative functions;
- Workforce management practices; and
- Systems, technology, and process efficiency.

### 4.2 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

#### COUNCIL-MAYOR GOVERNANCE

Spokane operates with a seven-member Council structure, and the City Charter vests legislative authority exclusively in the Council. This governance structure makes a well-resourced and professionally staffed Council Office essential to preserving the Council’s institutional independence, legislative effectiveness, and ability to provide balanced oversight of executive operations. Dedicated staff capacity enables elected officials to further evaluate policy options, respond to constituent needs, manage complex legislative workloads, and make informed decisions independent of administrative departments.

The Council Office is responsible for a broad range of functions, including legislative agenda development; ordinance and resolution drafting, processing, and consideration; committee and board coordination; policy research and analysis; constituent services and district operations; communications and public engagement; budget review and fiscal oversight; and intergovernmental coordination. These responsibilities require staff who can provide continuity, technical expertise, and responsive support across changing policy priorities, election cycles, and time-sensitive legislative matters.

Staff serve either centralized or member-specific roles. Centralized positions provide specialized expertise, operational continuity, and officewide coordination in areas that benefit all Council Members. Member-specific Legislative Assistants provide direct support to individual Council Members through calendar management, constituent casework, district engagement, legislative research, and day-to-day operational assistance. Together, these roles form the professional infrastructure that enables the Council to function as an effective legislative body while maintaining accessibility, accountability, and public responsiveness.

## OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Workload and scheduling expectations for Council Members, Legislative Assistants, and Central Staff vary by role, reflecting the unique responsibilities of each, particularly regarding evening meetings, community events, constituent engagement, and other activities outside the traditional workday. While schedules vary by position, a workweek of at least 40 hours is typical, with many roles requiring additional flexibility to meet legislative deadlines, public service demands, and evolving Council priorities. The following section summarizes the generally required working hours and tasks across the primary Council Office groups.

- **Council President and Council Members.** Council Members consistently dedicate at least 40 hours per week to Council responsibilities, with the Council President often contributing an additional 10 or more hours each week. Council Member time is heavily concentrated on constituent engagement, meetings, agenda and packet review, policy research, regional and intergovernmental participation, stakeholder coordination, and ongoing community engagement activities, with external governance and related obligations representing a significant share of overall workload. Council Members assume several administrative/office functions and constituent duties themselves, which can create overload and limit legislative focus.
- **Legislative Assistants.** Legislative Assistants (LAs) spend the largest share of their time on constituent services (approx. 30%), while also providing direct support for individual Council Member initiatives, office operations, policy research, ordinance and resolution development, social media coordination, public outreach, attending meetings (Council, Committee, neighborhood, and community), and other priorities established by their supervising Council Member. The Legislative Assistant II (LAI) position was designed as a promotional opportunity to support employee retention by expanding responsibilities through assistance with core central office functions under the direction of the Council Office Director.
- **Central Staff.** This includes the Council Office Director, Policy Advisor, Budget Director, Communications Director, the Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs, and three Initiative Managers (Housing and Homelessness, Neighborhood Connectivity, Equity and Inclusion). The core central staff time is heavily concentrated on administrative operations, staff coordination, ordinance and resolution review, fiscal and economic analysis, presentation development, media relations, and other day-to-day support functions. These responsibilities require significant responsiveness to immediate operational and legislative needs, frequently directing staff capacity toward reactive support activities as initiatives and proposals are advanced by the administrative branch, individual Council Member

priorities, and public or community-driven requests. Initiative Managers dedicate a substantial portion of their time to constituent services, administrative coordination, and public outreach. This provides a significant service to residents but doesn't always relate to or contribute to legislative processes and outcomes. The current allocation of responsibilities also reflects areas of functional intersection with services and community coordination efforts performed within the administrative branch.

Schedules are often flexed to minimize overtime, which requires prior approval from the Council Office Director. Staff have experienced challenges with a midweek submission timeline for reporting hours worked, noting that the process may not fully capture total hours worked, especially when overtime is incurred later in the pay period.

### **4.3 GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING CONTEXT**

Operating within a Council-Mayor governance structure, Spokane maintains a formal separation between executive responsibilities and the Council's legislative and appropriations authority. Within this framework, Council Members play an active role in legislative policy development, ordinance drafting, regional governance, constituent engagement, and coordination with the Mayor's Office and City departments. The Council's central staff supports these functions through legislative research, fiscal and policy review, communications, operational coordination, and provides administrative support activities to advance Council priorities and maintain day-to-day legislative operations.

The current organizational structure reflects an evolving blend of legislative support, operational coordination, and community-facing responsibilities distributed across Legislative Assistants, Initiative Managers, and Central Staff positions.

### **4.4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Council Members consistently carry workloads that are substantially greater than those traditionally associated with part-time legislative service models, with most members reporting at least 40 hours per week on Council responsibilities, and the Council President frequently contributing additional time beyond that threshold. Work activities are heavily concentrated in constituent engagement, meetings, agenda and packet review, policy research, stakeholder coordination, regional and intergovernmental participation, and ongoing community engagement obligations.

Based on the workload information provided, there appears to be a disconnect between the actual operational expectations of the Council Members and the assumptions reflected in the current compensation structure. The breadth, complexity, and time intensity of the role suggest that further evaluation is warranted to determine whether the existing compensation framework appropriately reflects the level of service, expectations, workload commitment, governance responsibilities, and public engagement expectations currently associated with Council service. As compensation structures are often intended to reflect the nature and demands of the role, additional review by the appropriate compensation or salary review body would provide an opportunity to more formally evaluate alignment between actual workload expectations and compensation practices. As an alternative, the operational expectations of Council Members could be refined to better align workload demands with those of

comparable jurisdictions. Council Members currently devote a significant amount of time to committees, community meetings, and Neighborhood Council activities compared with peer agencies, contributing to a substantial workload beyond formal legislative responsibilities. Reducing or streamlining participation requirements in certain meetings and committees could help balance workload expectations if compensation adjustments are not deemed appropriate.

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*Recommendation 18: Refer Council Member workload and compensation considerations to the compensation review body for further evaluation of alignment between current role expectations, time commitments, and the existing compensation structure.*

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## **4.5 CENTRALIZED AND DECENTRALIZED STAFFING MODEL**

The Council Office hybrid staffing model blends centralized professional staff with Member-assigned legislative staff. This structure allows the organization to balance individualized support for independently elected Council Members with shared access to specialized policy, fiscal, communications, and administrative expertise. The model also provides operational flexibility by allowing centralized staff to support organization-wide legislative priorities while Legislative Assistants remain responsive to the unique needs, constituent concerns, and committee responsibilities of individual Council offices.

Various Council members and staff identified a need for enhanced data analysis capabilities, budgetary fiscal notes, improved access to legal and policy research tools, and structured technology replacement planning. At present, constituent communications, service requests, and legislative support activities are often managed through informal processes and fragmented tracking that limits capacity. Part of this challenge stems from an evolving governance structure in which operational needs and legislative expectations have expanded over time, while staff roles and responsibilities have not historically been clearly defined or strategically structured to align with specific legislative goals and functions. As a result, overall capacity for proactive legislative analysis, coordinated research support, and consistent policy review remains limited, particularly where positions such as Initiative Managers have broader community engagement responsibilities that reduce the time available for dedicated legislative analysis.

### **CENTRAL STAFF**

Central staff provides operational, legislative, fiscal, communications, and policy and initiative support functions that contribute to the Council's day-to-day operations. The existing structure reflects opportunities to strengthen organizational alignment, role clarity, and supervisory authority. The central staff structure operates within a uniquely complex governance environment, supporting seven independently elected officials with differing priorities, communication styles, and service expectations. As a result, staff frequently navigate competing requests and shifting priorities without fully standardized intake processes, formalized operational procedures, or clearly established prioritization frameworks.

These operational challenges are further compounded by the absence of a single staff position serving in a leadership capacity to guide and be accountable for central staff operations. In particular, the Council Office Director position would benefit from reclassification to a more formal executive-level director role with clearer authority over office administration, staff supervision, operational oversight, and organization-wide coordination. This is the sole Central staff position recommended for reporting to the entire Council to better support consistency, accountability, and an effective span of control across central staff functions.

The Council Office Director position currently serves as the primary coordination and operational leadership role for the Council Office, overseeing internal Council operations, interdepartmental collaboration, agenda development, legislative item processing, and day-to-day administrative management functions. The position also serves as the central organizational contact for internal and external stakeholders, provides supervisory oversight of central staff positions, and coordinates communication among Council Members, the Mayor's Office, and City departments. Core responsibilities include managing the office budget, minor contracts, hiring and onboarding, payroll and leave approvals, legislative workflow coordination, agenda authorization, hybrid meeting administration, public records coordination, and broader office operations support. The position also serves as a significant repository of institutional knowledge and a source of operational continuity for the legislative branch.

As responsibilities have expanded over time, the role has evolved into a broad operational, administrative, supervisory, and coordinating position encompassing a wide range of functions that extend beyond a traditional office management structure. The breadth of responsibilities, combined with ongoing operational demands, vacancy-related absorption of Legislative Assistant duties, and the absence of dedicated administrative support capacity, has increasingly limited the position's ability to focus on higher-level strategic leadership, organizational planning, and office-wide management functions. The current structure creates challenges related to span of control, workload sustainability, organizational role clarity, and strategic oversight capacity, indicating a need for a more formally structured executive-level leadership position with clearly defined authority, supervisory responsibilities, and operational support resources.

In the comparative analysis, most cities within this form of government have a Council Executive Director or Chief of Staff position to assist the Council and manage the day-to-day legislative central staff and functions.

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*Recommendation 19: Reclassify the Office Director to a Council Executive Director or Chief of Staff position, with immediate and independent management of all Council Central Staff. This reclassification formally aligns authority with responsibility, strengthens management capacity, and establishes clear organizational leadership separate from administrative specialist functions.*

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The Communications Director position provides the Council with an independent communications function and a distinct public voice, separate from the administrative branch, to support transparency,

legislative messaging, community engagement, and the timely dissemination of Council information. The role can be particularly valuable in helping communicate policy priorities, meeting actions, constituent resources, and public participation opportunities on behalf of the legislative body. Continued collaboration with the Administrative branch and City communications staff remains important, particularly for joint initiatives and citywide messaging, to support organizational alignment and ensure the Council maintains a clear and effective public voice. However, the position has operated within a complex governance environment in which direction is received from all seven elected officials with differing priorities, messaging preferences, and timelines. The absence of a formally adopted communications strategy has created challenges with prioritization, messaging consistency, workload management, and clarity of reporting relationships, and limits the ability to proactively plan outreach efforts and measure communication effectiveness.

Establishing a distinct administrative support position independent from the traditional Legislative Assistant structure would help strengthen organizational consistency, improve centralized coordination of office operations, and provide additional administrative continuity across the broader Council Office. This approach would also help reduce operational fragmentation by creating a position dedicated to executive administrative support, workflow coordination, scheduling management, and office-wide operational assistance, while allowing Legislative Assistants to remain more focused on constituent services, legislative support, and Council Member-specific priorities.

The Policy Advisor and Budget Director position descriptions would benefit from targeted refinement to more clearly define strategic legislative analysis, research, fiscal review, and the expectations for support within the Council Office's evolving structure. For the Policy Advisor position, refinements should more clearly distinguish the role's procedural, legislative coordination, and ordinance review responsibilities, including clarification of expectations related to ordinance drafting workflows, coordination with Legislative Assistants, and management of legal review processes with the City Attorney's Office. The position description would also benefit from updating outdated subject-matter assignments to better align with the Council's current committee and policy structure.

Similarly, the Budget Director position description would benefit from refinement to better reflect the role's analytical and advisory nature, including an emphasis on fiscal analysis, economic review, development of fiscal notes, data evaluation, financial forecasting, and support for long-range strategic and performance-based budgeting initiatives. Additional clarification regarding the role's responsibility in evaluating municipal programs, analyzing organizational performance data, and supporting objective financial decision-making would further strengthen alignment between the position and the Council's evolving operational and legislative support needs.

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*Recommendation 20: Update the Policy Advisor and Budget Director job descriptions to more clearly define and distinguish roles, responsibilities, and areas of oversight, including specific responsibilities related to policy leadership (Policy Advisor) and fiscal analysis, including standards for the development and application of fiscal notes (Budget Director)*

*for legislative proposals and projects, while also removing outdated or no longer applicable information.*

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The Intergovernmental Affairs Manager should continue serving in a lead coordination role for the City's legislative and lobbying activities in collaboration with the Administration, given the specialized relationships, institutional knowledge, and policy expertise associated with the position. This role provides important value in monitoring legislation, coordinating advocacy efforts, facilitating communication with regional and state partners, and helping align Council priorities with broader governmental initiatives. However, the position would benefit from more clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and annual work expectations to strengthen accountability, clarify priorities, and better utilize staff capacity throughout the full calendar year rather than primarily during the state legislative session. During non-legislative periods, the role could provide expanded support in areas such as proactive policy research, grant and funding coordination, intergovernmental relationship management, regional committee participation, strategic planning initiatives, and legislative impact analysis to further enhance the Council's policy and governance capacity.

*Recommendation 21: Continue the Intergovernmental Affairs Manager role with more clearly defined responsibilities and expanded year-round policy, regional coordination, and legislative support functions beyond the state legislative session.*

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Initiative Manager roles were originally established to provide subject-matter expertise and coordinated support in areas identified as collective Council priorities, including Equity and Inclusion, Housing and Homelessness, and Neighborhood Connectivity. Over time, however, these positions have increasingly assumed operational, liaison, and community coordination responsibilities that overlap with functions traditionally administered through the executive branch. While these efforts have provided valuable support during periods of elevated organizational and community need, the expansion of Administrative operational responsibilities has reduced clarity in role alignment and created duplication in service coordination.

Collectively, these conditions provide an opportunity to further align central staffing resources around core legislative functions and long-term organizational support needs. Reclassifying Initiative Manager positions as more defined Legislative Analyst roles that participate in expertise-driven policy review, initiative development, and strategic research would help strengthen the Council's legislative and institutional capacity, while valuing and utilizing these skill sets and improving role clarity across the organization. These positions should lead the development, intake, review, analysis, and coordination of policies and initiatives within their assigned focus areas while supporting broader legislative analysis, strategic policy support, workload distribution, and organizational alignment through formal job descriptions, portfolio assignments, and annual work plans. A more centralized, legislative-focused staffing model would also help reduce overlap with administrative branch functions, support more objective, organization-wide policy analysis, and provide dedicated analytical resources to assist all

Council Members in evaluating complex initiatives, ordinances, fiscal impacts, and long-range policy considerations.

The Council's current workload and the overall complexity of legislative operations support the continued retention of the existing Initiative Manager positions, particularly given the substantial volume of policy matters, legislative proposals, community issues, and intergovernmental coordination efforts regularly moving through the organization. However, the roles would likely provide greater organizational value if they were transitioned away from primarily administrative or operational support functions and more fully aligned with a focused legislative and policy analysis model. Council Members have also expressed interest in strengthening budgetary analysis capacity and incorporating fiscal notes into legislative proposals to provide a clearer understanding of operational and financial impacts. To support this objective, one reclassified position should be dedicated, in whole or in part, to assisting the Budget Director with budget development, fiscal analysis, and the preparation and review of legislative fiscal notes.

With Council meetings occurring weekly and averaging approximately 36 agenda items per meeting, the volume of work creates a significant and ongoing need for structured legislative review, coordination, and analysis. Refocusing Initiative Managers toward a more formal legislative-support role would enable these positions to assist in reviewing and evaluating forthcoming agenda items, coordinate background research and policy analysis, identify operational and fiscal considerations, and support more proactive legislative planning and prioritization.

This structure would improve continuity and institutional knowledge by assigning subject-area expertise and long-term policy oversight responsibilities to dedicated staff resources. In addition, these positions could provide greater stability and coordination for Council committee operations by supporting committee scheduling, agenda development, meeting preparation, follow-up tracking, and managing legislative items as they move through the committee process. Establishing clearer ownership over the coordination and progression of agenda items could help streamline approval workflows, improve transparency and consistency in the legislative process, strengthen coordination between Council offices and administrative departments, and better manage the timing and sequencing of public comment opportunities and Council consideration. This approach could also strengthen both Council Member decision-making and public accessibility to legislative information by providing more consistent analysis, summaries, background materials, and proactive policy support. Additionally, these positions could expand capacity for proactive Council initiatives, policy development, intergovernmental coordination, and strategic legislative work that may currently be constrained by operational workloads.

At the same time, the long-term number, classification structure, and overall scope of these positions remain policy- and service-level decisions for the Council. While the current workload and existing service expectations provide operational justification for retaining the positions at their present levels, the Council could also consider modifying service expectations, narrowing the scope of legislative support functions, or reclassifying a portion of these positions to align with evolving organizational priorities, budget considerations, or a different desired level of Council support.

Even with a reduced staffing model or a modified structure, the Council would likely continue to maintain a comparatively strong legislative support capacity relative to many peer jurisdictions. If pursued, adjustments could be implemented gradually through attrition, reassignment of responsibilities, or future vacancy management to minimize operational disruption, preserve institutional knowledge, and allow for a measured transition to a revised staffing model.

Given the evolving nature of Council priorities, election cycles, and legislative workloads, any future consideration regarding the number of Initiative Manager positions should be reassessed against actual agenda volume, policy complexity, constituent service demands, and desired service levels at that time. It is also important to recognize that, despite providing full-service legislative operations and direct constituent support functions, the Council Office accounts for only a relatively limited share of overall General Fund expenditures, given the breadth of its governance, legislative, and public engagement responsibilities.

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*Recommendation 22: Reclassify and transition the current Initiative Manager positions to Policy/Budget Analyst roles that incorporate existing subject-matter expertise into clearly defined policy portfolio assignments and legislative review areas.*

*Recommendation 23: Transfer the Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to an Executive Department.*

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## **LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANTS**

The Legislative Assistant positions provide direct day-to-day support to individual Council Members based on each member's priorities, ranging from committee assignments, constituent needs, communication, and legislative focus areas. Because each Council Member operates independently, Legislative Assistant roles often require significant adaptability and responsiveness to evolving priorities and workload demands. At the same time, Legislative Assistants remain heavily focused on direct support to individual Council Members, requiring substantial responsiveness to constituent concerns, committee activities, communications, scheduling, and office-specific legislative priorities.

Additionally, there may be an opportunity to evaluate a district-based staffing model in which one Legislative Assistant supports the two Council Members representing each district. Because district-level constituent concerns, neighborhood issues, community meetings, and policy priorities often overlap geographically, a shared district support structure could improve coordination, reduce duplication of effort, strengthen continuity of constituent services, and provide greater operational flexibility while maintaining direct Council Member support.

The Legislative Assistant II position was established to expand promotional and operational support opportunities within the office by adding responsibilities that support broader central office functions. However, the combination of member-assigned responsibilities and organization-wide support functions has introduced structural complexities in role alignment, reporting relationships, and organizational

expectations. By blending direct support to individual Council Members with broader central staff responsibilities, the position can create challenges in balancing office-specific priorities with the impartial, organization-wide support functions typically associated with Central Staff roles.

To honor the work that has been completed by those who have earned the title of Legislative Assistant II, including those who have met the prequalifications, grandfathering in an adjusted pay structure recognizes the additional qualifications met and skills being brought to the table, while also recognizing the need to transition to a structure that does not include a tiered model.

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*Recommendation 24: Dissolve the designation of Legislative Assistants II, through modifications to Spokane Municipal Code § 02.005. Maintain the prior-authorized pay scale for employees who currently meet this requirement during their tenure as a Legislative Assistant.*

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## **SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

There is an opportunity to reclassify the currently vacant Council President Legislative Assistant position as an office-wide Senior Executive Assistant role, providing centralized administrative coordination and executive-level support functions across the Council Office. The role of the Council President is to represent the City as a whole and, based on current interactions, often involves working with and relying on Central Staff to fulfill roles and responsibilities. Under this structure, the position would formally report to the Council Office Director while maintaining dedicated support responsibilities for the Council President, including scheduling, coordination, communications, meeting preparation, and legislative support activities.

In addition to direct executive support functions, the position could serve as a centralized coordinator for constituent communications, office workflow management, meeting logistics, records coordination, scheduling administration, travel and training coordination, and standardized administrative processes across Council offices. The role could also assist with maintaining centralized calendars, coordinating the intake and routing of public inquiries, supporting document management and ensuring consistent filing, monitoring response timelines, and helping administer standardized office procedures and templates. Establishing a dedicated executive administrative position would improve operational continuity, reduce fragmentation of administrative tasks among legislative staff, strengthen organizational consistency, and enable Legislative Assistants and Central Staff to maintain greater focus on legislative analysis, constituent services, policy development, and strategic support responsibilities.

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*Recommendation 25: Reclassify the vacant Council President Legislative Assistant position into a centralized Senior Executive Assistant role reporting to the Council Office Director, with the position description retaining specified Legislative Assistant support functions for the Council President while providing standardized administrative*

*coordination and office-wide operational support services, including constituent communication management.*

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## **SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

There is ongoing ambiguity within reporting relationships and decision-making authority within the Council Office. There is uncertainty as to whether their primary accountability rests with the Council Office Director, the Council President, or individual Council Members who may direct portions of their day-to-day work. This appears to be influenced by an organizational structure in which central staff is formally supervised by the Council President and the Office Manager, while also being expected to support the broader legislative body and respond to evolving priorities from each elected Council Member.

As a result, staff experience challenges in navigating competing requests, setting priorities, and understanding when direction from one source supersedes another. Multiple employees specifically identified the need for clearer lines of authority, defined escalation protocols, and more consistent expectations regarding workload prioritization. Office leadership expressed similar concerns, noting that management responsibilities currently blend strategic leadership, staff supervision, operational coordination, and direct administrative support functions. This diffusion of responsibility can constrain management capacity and limit the ability to provide sustained office-wide oversight.

Survey and interview data further indicate that central management is currently absorbing a substantial volume of routine administrative work, including temporary Legislative Assistant support for the Council President, coordination of public records requests, travel and purchasing card administration, scheduling, and related logistics. With the Council President's dedicated Legislative Assistant position vacant, several of these responsibilities have shifted to leadership by necessity. While operationally responsive in the short term, this arrangement places higher-level management resources on transactional tasks that are better suited to administrative support roles.

Collectively, these conditions suggest a need to better align authority, accountability, and staffing capacity. When management positions are routinely drawn into day-to-day support functions, less time remains for workforce supervision, process improvement, strategic planning, policy coordination, performance management, and long-range organizational development. Clearer governance protocols and sufficient support capacity would likely improve efficiency, responsiveness, and overall organizational effectiveness.

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*Recommendation 26: Establish and clarify reporting relationships, decision-making authority, workload prioritization protocols, and administrative support responsibilities within the Council Office.*

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## 4.6 ALIGNMENT OF STRUCTURE TO LEGISLATIVE NEEDS

A well-defined legislative office structure is critical to ensuring that elected officials receive the operational, analytical, and administrative support necessary to effectively fulfill their legislative, fiscal, and policy-making responsibilities. In a council-mayor form of government, legislative offices must balance responsiveness to individual Council Member priorities and constituent needs with the broader organizational responsibility to provide impartial, coordinated, and strategically focused support services across the legislative body. As the scope and complexity of Council responsibilities continue to expand through increased community engagement expectations, policy initiatives, intergovernmental coordination, and legislative review demands, the organizational structure supporting the Council must evolve accordingly. The following recommendations are intended to strengthen legislative capacity, improve role clarity and operational consistency, reduce duplication of effort, and better align staffing resources with the Council's long-term governance, policy, and oversight responsibilities.

- Strengthens the Council Office's core legislative focus by aligning staffing resources more directly with policy analysis, ordinance review, fiscal evaluation, and strategic legislative support functions.
- Clarifies organizational roles, reporting relationships, and responsibilities between centralized staff, Legislative Assistants, and executive branch functions.
- Reduces functional overlap and duplication between Council staff responsibilities and administrative branch operational activities.
- Improves the Council's internal analytical capacity through expanded legislative research, data analysis, fiscal review, and long-range policy evaluation support.
- Enhances organizational consistency through more centralized administrative coordination, standardized procedures, and clearly defined operational expectations.
- Supports more equitable and impartial organization-wide support services for all independently elected Council Members.
- Allows Legislative Assistants to remain more focused on constituent services, committee support, and office-specific legislative priorities.
- Establishes clearer policy portfolio ownership and accountability for legislative review, research, and initiative development within assigned subject areas.
- Improves workload distribution and operational sustainability by reducing fragmentation of administrative and coordination responsibilities across staff positions.
- Strengthens institutional continuity through formalized job descriptions, annual work plans, centralized administrative functions, and improved document and workflow management practices.
- Increases the Council Office's capacity for proactive strategic planning, performance evaluation, and legislative initiative development rather than primarily reactive operational support.
- Enhances coordination and communication between Council offices while preserving the flexibility necessary to support independently elected officials with differing priorities and constituent needs.

## 4.7 CORE LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

A mini survey was conducted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the specific workloads of Council Members, LA, and Central Staff. The survey was completed by 16 Council Members and staff, and evaluated how time is distributed across legislative, administrative, and constituent service responsibilities during a typical workweek. Survey responses identified consistently high workload demands, frequent work outside traditional schedules, and operational challenges related to workload management, communication systems, and process consistency.

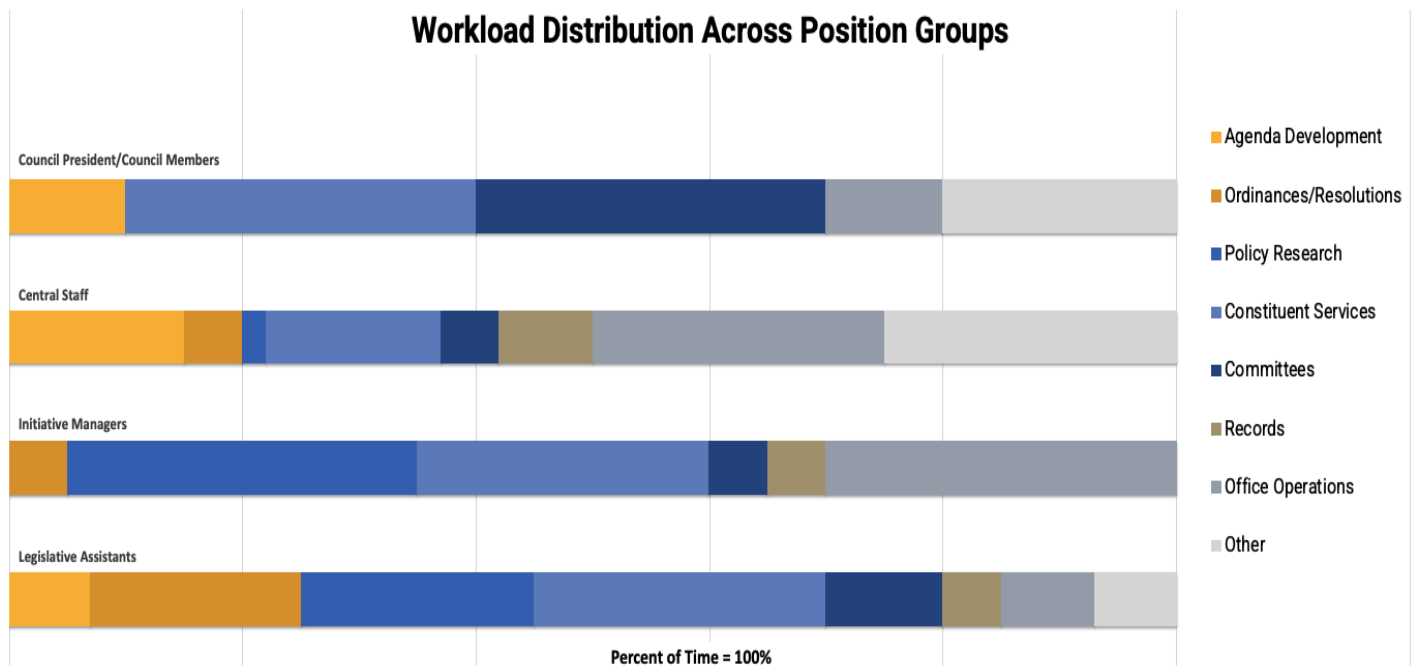
A clearly defined legislative function and strategic focus are not consistently identifiable across all Council and staff responsibilities, including the extent of community engagement activities, attendance at neighborhood council meetings, and participation in various external committees and community events. While these efforts help maintain strong relationships within Council districts and support accessibility and visibility within the community, they also require significant time commitments that are not always directly connected to legislative policy development, ordinance review, fiscal oversight, or other core governing functions.

As additional committees, stakeholder groups, meetings, and community engagement expectations have expanded over time, the overall scope of Council Members' and staff responsibilities has likewise increased. Without more clearly defined prioritization, role alignment, and legislative focus, these growing demands may continue to reduce organizational capacity for strategic policy analysis, long-range planning, and core legislative responsibilities, while also contributing to workload expectations that are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain over the long term.

Survey findings closely align with the broader organizational assessment, reinforcing the need for improved data analysis capacity, more centralized constituent relationship management tools, and standardized templates and procedural practices to support organizational efficiency and continuity.

### TIME ALLOCATION: SURVEY FINDINGS

The time-allocation mini-survey asked staff to estimate the percentage of time across eight functional categories. The following table summarizes responses by position type, revealing clear patterns of concentration and gap.



**Council President/Council Members:** Most time is devoted to constituent services and committee participation, reflecting a highly public-facing role centered on community engagement, policy discussions, and legislative leadership responsibilities.

**Central Staff:** Workload is predominantly dedicated to office operations, agenda development, and administrative support functions, indicating a strong emphasis on organizational coordination, workflow management, and internal operational continuity.

**Initiative Managers:** Time is largely devoted to policy research and office operations, reflecting a strategic, project-oriented role focused on subject-matter expertise, coordination, and operational support activities rather than direct legislative processing.

**Legislative Assistants:** Workload is primarily concentrated in constituent services, policy research, and ordinance/resolution support, reflecting a role heavily centered on direct legislative support, research coordination, and day-to-day constituent response functions.

## AGENDA, MEETING, COMMITTEE, AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

The agenda development process requires significant coordination among multiple Council staff, including Central Staff and Legislative Assistants. Current practices vary in how legislative items are routed and scheduled, suggesting an opportunity for greater standardization through shared templates, clearer procedures, and more consistent committee agenda-setting practices. A meaningful share of staff capacity is dedicated to coordinating recurring meetings and preparing agendas, limiting the time available for higher-value policy development, strategic planning, and long-range analysis.

Legislation follows a path through one of four standing committees—Public Safety and Community Health; Public Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainability; Urban Experience; and Finance and Administration—before reaching the full Council. The City Council held 38 regular meetings in 2025,

processed 1,053 agenda items, and participated in 28 committees (9 city-specific, 19 external/intergovernmental), with approximately 259 committee meetings per year. Committee coordination consumes 5-30% of individual staff time, depending on role, yet no centralized committee management tool or protocol exists to track action items, follow-up timelines, or cross-committee dependencies.

## CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Constituent services are among the most significant and consistent workload categories across all Council Office functions, reflecting the fundamentally public-facing nature of legislative operations. The data demonstrates that constituent engagement consumes a substantial share of staff capacity for Legislative Assistants (25%), Initiative Managers (25%), Central Staff (15%), and Council Members themselves (30%) illustrating that responding to residents, managing inquiries, coordinating follow-up, and facilitating communication with the public are not isolated responsibilities, but rather core operational functions embedded throughout the organization.

This level of distributed constituent interaction creates a strong operational need for more centralized coordination, standardized tracking, and improved visibility into requests and response timelines. Currently, fragmented tracking limits staff capacity and creates administrative duplication, such as parsing multi-district emails to determine which Legislative Assistant is responsible for responding. (See Chapter 4 for detailed technical solutions).

## 4.8 WORKLOAD AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

### INTERNAL COORDINATION, PRODUCTIVITY, AND QUALITY CONTROL

At present, assignments, deadlines, follow-up responsibilities, and project status updates are largely managed through decentralized methods, including individual email tracking, personal calendars, spreadsheets, and informal communication practices. This fragmented tracking limits capacity, reduces visibility into project status, and increases duplication of effort.

The ongoing Microsoft Teams and Planner pilot represents a positive operational step toward improving coordination and workflow management; however, current use appears inconsistent across staff groups and has not yet evolved into a standardized, office-wide system. Without clearly defined processes, shared templates, standardized naming conventions, and uniform expectations for task management, the organization risks fragmented adoption, which limits the platform's overall effectiveness. In legislative offices, where priorities frequently shift in response to emerging policy issues, public concerns, agenda deadlines, and Council direction, the ability to quickly assign, monitor, prioritize, and reallocate work is particularly important. A centralized work-tracking system can also improve transparency regarding staff capacity, project timelines, and unresolved tasks, thereby supporting more informed managerial oversight and operational planning.

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*Recommendation 27: Implement a standardized, office-wide project and workflow management system using shared platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Planner,*

*supported by formalized task management procedures, naming conventions, templates, and accountability protocols to improve coordination, visibility, continuity, and operational efficiency across the legislative office.*

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## **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND ONBOARDING**

The Council Office operates in a highly dynamic and politically sensitive environment where expectations shift around election cycles, frequently disrupting operational continuity. Because the Council's makeup and priorities change every two years, staff emphasize the critical need to preserve institutional knowledge to prevent standard operations from shifting with every election. When employees depart, specialized knowledge, institutional history, and informal operating context can be diminished or lost, particularly where key procedures are not fully documented.

There are limited standard operating procedures, onboarding materials, process documentation, and standardized file-sharing practices, increasing the risk of lost institutional knowledge during staff transitions and election cycles. Processes need to be implemented to capture institutional knowledge and ensure continuity across election cycles and staff turnover.

Onboarding processes for new Council Members and staff have historically varied in structure, timing, and consistency. Multiple employees reported receiving limited foundational training upon hire, resulting in steep learning curves. Newly elected officials similarly indicated that a more structured post-election transition process would improve readiness upon taking office. Best practice elements include standardized orientation materials, role-specific training plans, technology access checklists, written procedures, ethics and open-meetings guidance, budget and legislative process overviews, key contact directories, and milestone training during the first 90 days of service.

## **TRAINING, CROSS-TRAINING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Staff expressed interest in expanding their technical skills in data visualization, automation, software platforms, and analytical tools, but noted that professional development opportunities are often self-initiated due to limited time and insufficient structured organizational support. A more formalized training approach would help align staff development with operational needs, technology advancements, legislative processes, and constituent service expectations while improving consistency, adaptability, and long-term organizational capacity.

Cross-training and succession planning are also particularly important within the Council Office due to the dynamic nature of election cycles, staffing transitions, and evolving Council priorities. Significant institutional knowledge and critical operational functions are concentrated within a small number of key roles, particularly the Office Director, Policy Advisor, and Budget Director, creating continuity risks during staff turnover or absences. More structured cross-training, documented procedures, and knowledge-sharing practices would improve operational resiliency, preserve institutional knowledge, and reduce disruption during organizational transitions. The continued development and implementation of the Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide framework would further support continuity by

codifying procedures, workflows, and operational standards within a centralized resource accessible to all staff.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY MEASURES**

No formalized performance management framework is currently in place, and staff did not identify a consistent or standardized approach to goal setting, performance measurement, KPIs, or employee evaluations tied to Council priorities and operational expectations. Although Spokane utilizes a six-month collaborative review cycle, staff noted that implementation and evaluation practices have varied over time, limiting consistency and long-term effectiveness. The absence of a streamlined performance management structure reduces the organization's ability to align individual responsibilities with strategic objectives, consistently recognize high performance, identify training or support needs, and address performance concerns constructively and transparently.

In legislative environments, structured employee evaluations serve an important role in clarifying expectations, strengthening accountability, supporting employee development, and reinforcing organizational priorities. Similarly, periodic Council self-evaluations can provide value by helping elected officials assess governance effectiveness, communication practices, operational alignment, strategic priorities, and overall measures of success for the legislative body and Council Office.

## **TIMEKEEPING, OVERTIME, TELEWORK, AND POLICY COMPLIANCE**

Effective timekeeping is a significant challenge in an office where staff are required to attend many out-of-office or after-hours meetings and events. The combination of flexible scheduling, telework, and extensive after-hours community engagements limits visibility into actual hours worked. Without a formalized, centralized timekeeping protocol, the organization risks informal overtime accrual, inequitable workload distribution, and diminished operational accountability. While these arrangements provide important operational flexibility, they can also reduce visibility into actual hours worked and increase the risk of informal overtime, uncompensated after-hours work, and inconsistent workload expectations. This is particularly relevant in legislative environments where staff frequently attend evening meetings, community events, committee sessions, and time-sensitive legislative activities outside of traditional business hours. Without consistent timekeeping practices, the organization has a limited ability to accurately assess workload demands, monitor staffing capacity, ensure compliance with labor requirements, or identify potential employee burnout and inequitable workload distribution.

From an accountability and management perspective, formal timekeeping is not solely an administrative requirement; it also serves as an important operational management tool. Accurate reporting of work hours provides leadership with better visibility into staffing demands, supports more informed workload allocation decisions, strengthens transparency regarding overtime and compensatory time usage, and helps ensure employees are appropriately supported and compensated for actual work performed. Establishing a clear, consistent, and non-punitive approach to time reporting can also help normalize accountability expectations while reinforcing employee well-being and operational sustainability.

## 4.9 TECHNOLOGY, WORKFLOW, AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Council Office currently relies primarily on email, shared drives, and standard productivity tools to support daily operations. While these systems provide a functional operational foundation, staff identified opportunities to strengthen coordination, workload visibility, constituent responsiveness, records management, and operational consistency through more integrated technology platforms and standardized digital workflows. More centralized systems would improve transparency, accountability, institutional continuity, and coordination across Council offices and staff functions while supporting increasing legislative and constituent service demands.

Key opportunities include:

- Implementing a centralized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) or constituent case-management system to improve inquiry tracking, follow-up coordination, and service responsiveness. A modern CRM system will significantly strengthen operational efficiency and customer service consistency by enabling the office to:
  - Log and categorize incoming calls, emails, web submissions, and walk-in requests.
  - Route follow-up tasks to the appropriate Council office staff member or department liaison.
  - Track response timelines, service status, and final resolution outcomes.
  - Maintain constituent contact histories and recurring issue trends.
  - Generate dashboards on workload volume, response performance, and common service topics.
  - Improve continuity during staff absences or turnover through shared records.
  - Support proactive communication on neighborhood issues affecting multiple residents.
- Establishing a centralized project and work-tracking platform to improve assignment visibility, coordination, accountability, and workload management.
- Standardizing agenda development, records management, naming conventions, and workflow practices across the office to improve consistency and operational efficiency.
- Developing standardized agenda templates, defined submission windows, shared drive organization protocols, and standard forms for legislative requests, committee referrals, and policy analysis requests.
- Implementing structured post-meeting follow-up procedures with assigned responsibilities, deadlines, and status tracking.
- Expanding the use of data visualization, automation, AI-supported tools, and CRM technologies to better manage increasing workloads and constituent communications.

Agenda development and records management were identified as key areas where standardized processes could improve efficiency, consistency, and compliance with Washington State public records and open meetings requirements. To support operational continuity and accountability, the Council Office

should establish a formalized document management and workflow policy and provide standardized staff training.

#### **4.10 PROJECT TRACKING, REPORTING, AND DATA USE**

No formal project management or work-tracking system is currently in use for legislative assignments, policy research requests, or constituent service cases. Staff manage assignments through informal channels (email, verbal direction), and there is no shared dashboard to show active workload, upcoming deadlines, or policy initiative status.

Best-practice Council offices serving comparable-sized cities have adopted project-tracking tools such as Asana, Monday.com, or purpose-built platforms like Granicus (formerly Legistar) that provide agenda workflow management integrated with records and tracking capabilities. The City should evaluate a tiered adoption approach: lightweight project management tools in the near term, with a longer-term assessment of an integrated legislative management platform.

## 5. BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

### 5.1 BUDGETARY IMPACT OF COUNCIL OPERATIONS

The City Council and its staff provide all legislative services for the City of Spokane. These responsibilities include developing, reviewing, and considering policy proposals and amendments, as well as the Council’s central role in establishing the annual budget and evaluating the ongoing allocation of City resources. The Council Office plays a significant role in public outreach and community engagement, supporting constituent communication and ensuring that residents across the City’s three districts remain connected with their elected representatives. From a budgetary perspective, Council Office funding is a relatively small share of the City’s overall General Fund (an average of 1.88% over 5 years). This percentage has remained consistent, with a 2023 reduction due to the elimination of a Sustainability Initiative Manager position. The Initiative Manager for Transportation is currently funded outside the Council’s budget, and its scope of work cannot be modified due to the current funding sources.

### 5.2 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The following table provides an overview of the Council’s budget history and the current 2026 budget allocation. In response to budgetary constraints, the City Administration proposed budget cuts for each City department during the 2026 budget process. This resulted in the City Council approving a total reduction of \$550,000 to its 2026 Council operating budget, with full staffing levels funded through July 1, 2026.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>COUNCIL</b>	1,895,942	2,008,854	1,973,650	2,022,291	2,323,518	1,854,045
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	91,895,087	99,873,252	107,744,023	119,747,537	125,109,627	133,552,324
<b>PERCENT</b>	2.06%	2.01%	1.83%	1.69%	1.86%	1.39%

### 5.3 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS

The Council has undertaken this study to better understand and evaluate its approach and staffing needs before making a final decision on resource allocation. Either a staffing reduction is required to meet funding appropriations, or a budget reallocation is required to retain the present staffing level.

Four options have been developed for Council consideration to evaluate potential paths forward. These options are not intended to be all-inclusive, and modified or blended approaches may also warrant consideration. Each option reflects a different balance of staffing capacity, legislative support, constituent services, and overall cost. Where staffing reductions are proposed to better align with fiscal constraints, corresponding adjustments to service expectations are also necessary, particularly in constituent support and general legislative assistance. At the same time, several recommendations are intended to better align staff roles with the Council’s core legislative and policy responsibilities through

clearer role definition, refined reporting relationships, and increased emphasis on policy analysis, fiscal review, and legislative research.

Each developed option also includes and considers funding required to address the following baseline recommendations:

### **BASELINE RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDED IN ALL OPTIONS)**

- Reclassify the Council Office Director to the Council Executive Director and designate this position as the primary lead responsible for coordination, staff oversight, and Council Office operations.
- Reclassify the Council President’s Legislative Assistant position into a Senior Executive Assistant role reporting to the Council Executive Director, with some defined and dedicated support to the Council President.
- Transition and reclassify the Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager position to an Executive Branch Department role. This position is currently funded outside of the Council’s budget.
- Realign fiscal analysis functions to more directly support Council legislative review, budget analysis, and policy evaluation efforts.
- Establish an equal cost-sharing arrangement with the Mayor’s Office for the Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs position and expand the position’s year-round responsibilities to include broader policy coordination, legislative analysis, intergovernmental collaboration, strategic initiatives, and organizational support functions outside of the state legislative session.

Structural changes should be implemented through a deliberate workforce transition strategy that balances fiscal responsibility, operational continuity, and appropriate support for affected employees. Potential implementation approaches may include evaluating reassignment opportunities, utilizing vacancy management and attrition where feasible, and providing transition assistance or separation benefits where positions are eliminated. Applying these strategies can help minimize disruption to Council Office operations, preserve institutional knowledge where appropriate, and support employees throughout the organizational transition process.

### **OPTION 1 – CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS WITH 2 INITIATIVE MANAGERS RECLASSIFIED, AND 1 INITIATIVE MANAGER TRANSFERRED**

This option retains current staffing levels while reclassifying and relocating initiative manager positions to strengthen legislative, policy, fiscal, and administrative coordination functions. This option requires \$201,581 in additional funding beyond current budget appropriations.

### **OPERATIONAL RATIONALE**

The completed staffing assessment further identified opportunities to modernize the staffing structure by transitioning select responsibilities toward more proactive legislative development, coordinated policy evaluation, fiscal analysis, performance measurement, and long-range strategic planning. Maintaining the current staffing level is operationally justified given the existing workload demands, constituent

service expectations, and the legislative coordination currently required of the Council Office. Benchmarking also supports maintaining dedicated legislative support capacity within similarly sized jurisdictions operating under comparable governance structures and staffing models.

**GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS**

This option strengthens organizational alignment by clarifying reporting relationships, centralizing internal coordination, and expanding dedicated capacity for legislative and fiscal analysis. The proposed structure includes one Initiative Manager position reclassified to a Policy Analyst role and one to a Budget Analyst role, creating a more legislative-focused staffing model that strengthens policy analysis, fiscal review, legislative development, and support for the Council’s ongoing meeting and legislative workload. This also includes transitioning the Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to an Executive Branch Department role.

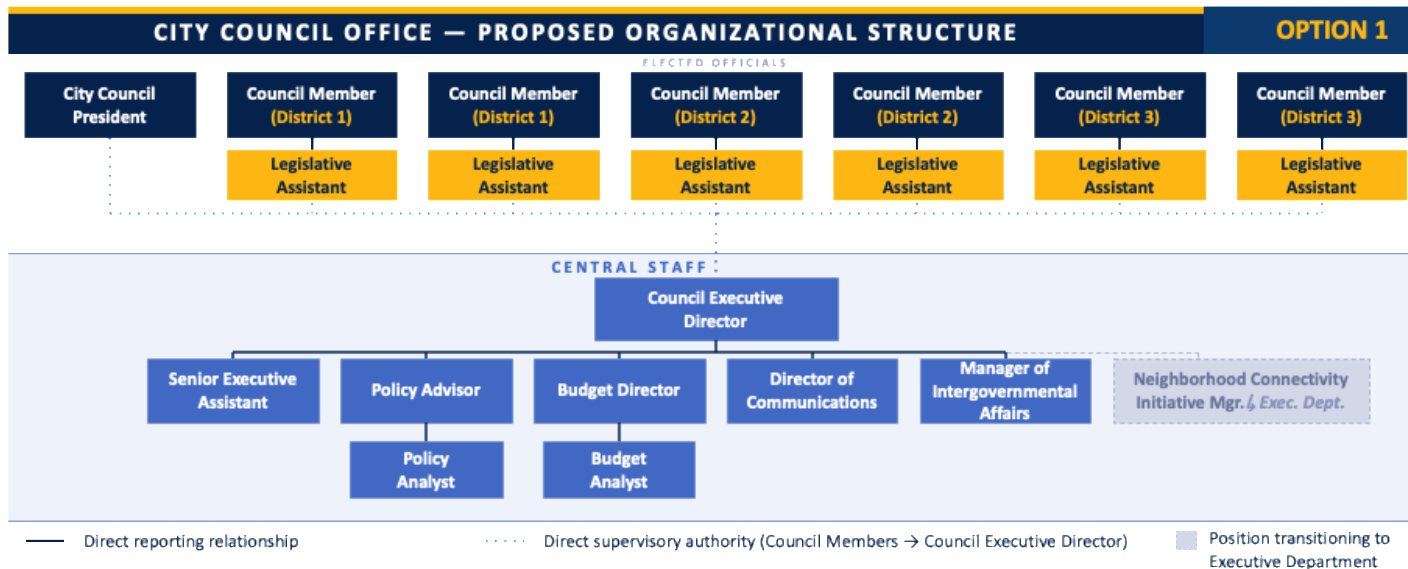
**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

As this option retains current staffing levels, its implementation exceeds the adopted budget and requires a budget amendment and the strategic reallocation of previously committed funds.

**OVERVIEW – OPTION 1**

Key Organizational Changes	Option-Specific Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reclassify one Initiative Manager position into a Policy Analyst role focused on policy analysis, legislative development, strategic planning, and program evaluation. This position would report to the Policy Advisor.</li> <li>Reclassify one Initiative Manager position into a Budget Analyst role dedicated to fiscal analysis, budget review, and financial support for legislative initiatives. This position would report to the Budget Director.</li> <li>Transfer Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to Executive Department</li> </ul>
<b>FTE Change</b>	Transfer 1.0 FTE position.
<b>Annual Budget Impact</b>	(\$46,838)
<b>Service Impact</b>	Maintains current staffing levels while refocusing and strengthening the Council Office’s capacity to provide dedicated legislative, policy, fiscal, and strategic support resources.
<b>Organizational Impact</b>	Restructures the organization to better align staff roles, reporting relationships, and administrative oversight with the Council’s legislative governance functions.

The proposed structure of the Office after implementation of these changes is shown in the following organizational chart:



## OPTION 2 – ELIMINATE INITIATIVE MANAGER POSITIONS

This option reduces current staffing levels to help address budget constraints while realigning the Council Office structure toward core legislative, governance, and constituent service functions. The proposed approach reduces overlap between legislative support activities and administrative or operational responsibilities that are more traditionally managed within the executive branch, allowing staff resources to remain focused on legislative priorities and Council-directed functions.

### OPERATIONAL RATIONALE

The completed staffing assessment identified that the Initiative Manager roles currently support a combination of legislative, community coordination, and administrative functions. These positions were developed to fill administrative gaps at the time of their establishment, particularly in response to service and coordination needs that were not otherwise fully addressed within the organization. Since that time, the City’s administrative structure, staffing resources, and service delivery capacity have continued to evolve, with many of these responsibilities now closely aligned with functions performed within the executive branch.

### GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS

Eliminating these positions would reduce overall staffing costs, simplify the organizational structure, and provide greater distinction between legislative responsibilities and administrative operations. At the same time, this approach reduces broad levels of staff support and service and removes the Council Office’s internal subject-matter expertise, policy development capacity, and direct constituent support resources currently available to assist Council operations and community engagement efforts.

## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Even as this option reduces current staffing levels, its implementation exceeds the adopted budget and requires a budget amendment and the strategic reallocation of previously committed funds.

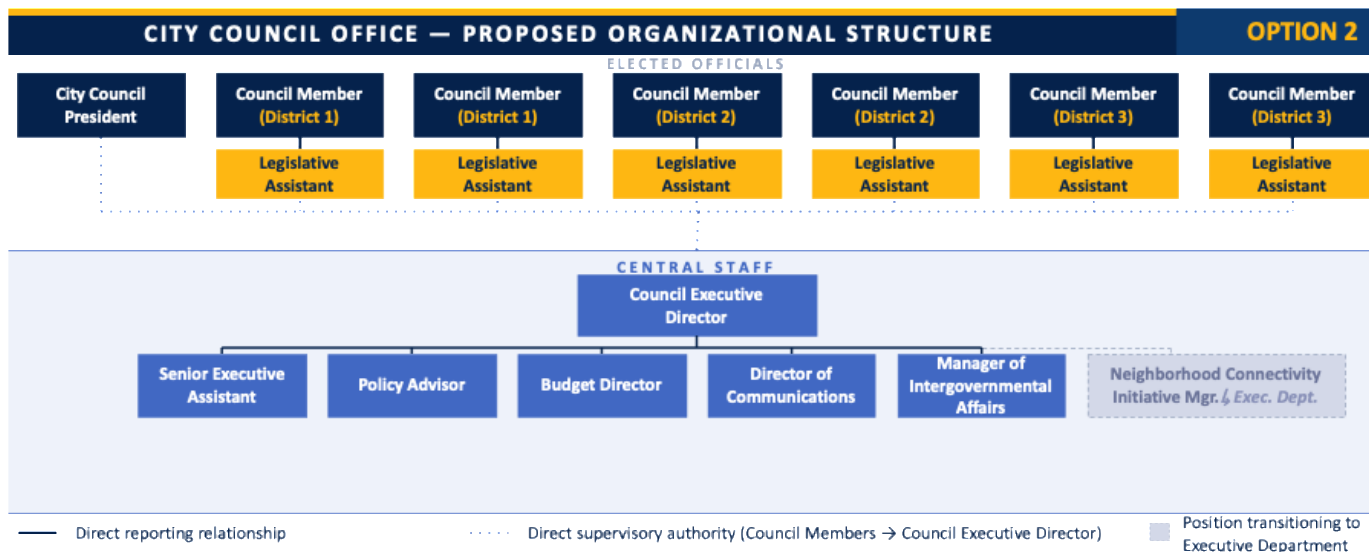
### OVERVIEW – OPTION 2

#### Key Organizational Changes

#### Option-Specific Recommendations

- Eliminate the Housing and Homelessness Initiative Manager and Equity and Inclusion Initiative Manager positions.
- Transfer of Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to Executive Department

<b>FTE Change</b>	Reduction of 2.0 FTE positions and transfer 1.0 FTE position.
<b>Annual Budget Impact</b>	(\$321,838)
<b>Service Impact</b>	Reduces overall service capacity, responsiveness, and ability to provide specialized policy and constituent support.
<b>Organizational Impact</b>	Restructures the organization to discontinue positions that are not primarily focused on core legislative functions.



### OPTION 3 – ONE LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT PER DISTRICT; ONE POLICY ANALYST & ONE BUDGET ANALYST

This reduces the current staffing level by eliminating three Legislative Assistant positions, leaving one Legislative Assistant per district. This also includes reclassifying two initiative manager positions to one policy analyst and one budget analyst.

**OPERATIONAL RATIONALE**

This maintains a level of district services while strengthening Central Staff capacity to support the Council’s broader legislative and governance responsibilities by establishing policy and budget analyst positions. The completed staffing assessment identified overlapping responsibilities between the two Legislative Assistants assigned to each district, particularly in constituent services, scheduling, communications, committee coordination, and community engagement.

**GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS**

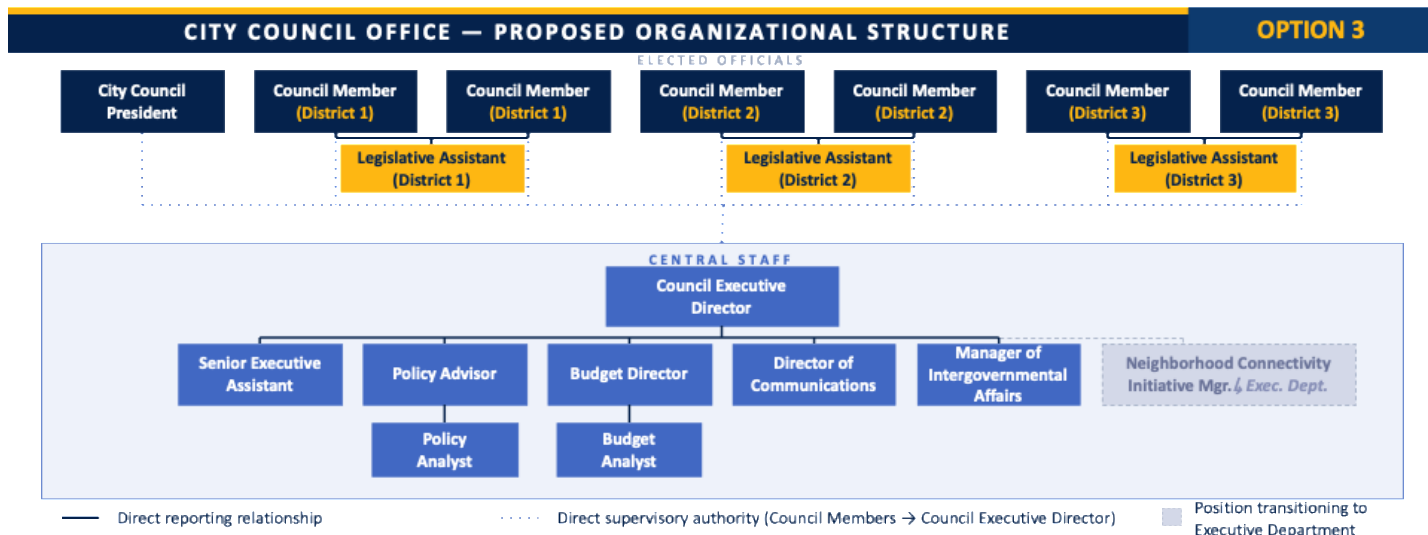
This approach streamlines staffing resources and aligns the City’s staffing model more closely with comparable jurisdictions, which generally do not provide individual Legislative Assistants for each Council Member. The proposed structure would support more centralized Council services, communication, and coordination. However, it would also substantially reduce the level of customized support currently available to Council Members, who maintain significant legislative, constituent service, and community engagement responsibilities. While the model may improve district-level consistency and coordination, it may also reduce overall responsiveness and service capacity.

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Even as this option reduces current staffing levels, its implementation exceeds the adopted budget and requires a budget amendment and the strategic reallocation of previously committed funds.

**OVERVIEW – OPTION 3**

Key Organizational Changes	Option-Specific Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate three Legislative Assistant positions by combining tasks into the role of one Legislative Assistant position per district.</li> <li>• Reclassify one Initiative Manager position into a Policy Analyst role focused on policy analysis, legislative development, strategic planning, and program evaluation. This position reports to the Policy Advisor.</li> <li>• Reclassify one Initiative Manager position into a Budget Analyst role dedicated to fiscal analysis, budget review, and financial support for legislative initiatives. This position reports to the Budget Director.</li> <li>• Transfer of Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager to Executive Department</li> </ul>
<b>FTE Change</b>	Eliminate 3.0 FTE positions and transfer 1.0 FTE position.
<b>Annual Budget Impact</b>	(\$364,124)
<b>Service Impact</b>	Reduces overall service capacity, responsiveness, and ability to provide specialized policy and constituent support.
<b>Organizational Impact</b>	Restructures the organization to reduce support provided to individual Council Members, while increasing overall legislative review and support for the Council as a whole.



### OPTION 4 – ONE LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT PER DISTRICT; ONE POLICY/BUDGET ANALYST

Reduce the current staffing level by eliminating three Legislative Assistant positions, leaving one Legislative Assistant per district. This also includes reclassifying one Initiative Manager position to a policy/budget analyst and eliminating one Initiative Manager position.

#### OPERATIONAL RATIONALE

This option combines elements of Options 2 and 3 by reducing both dedicated and central staff resources while maintaining baseline support within each district. The approach also includes a reclassified Budget/Policy Analyst position to provide broader legislative, fiscal, and policy-focused support services to the Council.

#### GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS

This approach reduces overall staffing support by five FTE positions to align with the current budget. As a result, service levels, staff responsibilities, and operational expectations would need to be adjusted, and Council Members would possibly assume greater responsibility for legislative support functions.

#### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

This option is most closely aligned with the current budget and the only option that doesn't exceed budgeted funds, with an estimated remaining balance of \$25,812.

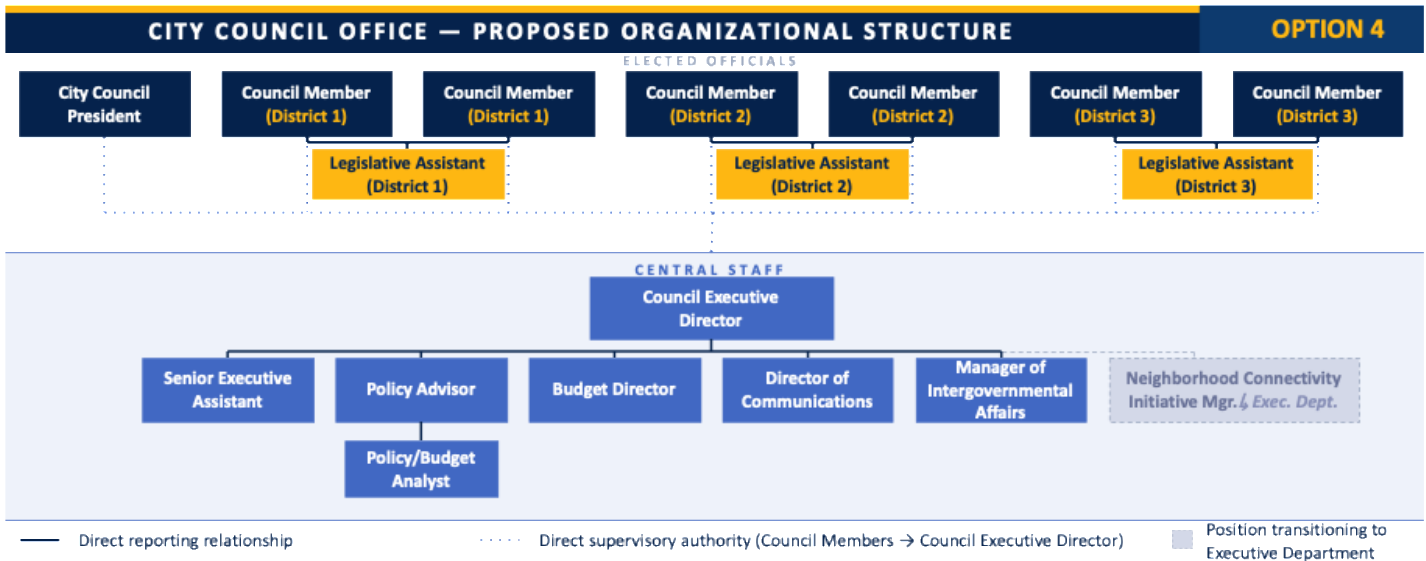
OVERVIEW – OPTION 4

Key Organizational Changes

Option-Specific Recommendations

- Eliminate three Legislative Assistant positions by combining district tasks into the role of one Legislative Assistant position.
- Eliminate one Initiative Manager position.
- Reclassify one position to a Policy/Budget Analyst. This position reports to the Policy Advisor.

<b>FTE Change</b>	Reduction of 4.0 FTE positions and transition of 1.0 FTE position.
<b>Annual Budget Impact</b>	(\$501,624)
<b>Service Impact</b>	Reduces overall service capacity, responsiveness, and ability to provide specialized policy and constituent support.
<b>Organizational Impact</b>	Restructures the organization to discontinue a position that is not primarily focused on core legislative functions and to share legislative assistant resources to increase cost-savings.



5.4 COST-COMPARATIVE OF OPTIONS

The costs in the comparative below considers the \$550,000 budget reduction that will go into effect on July 1, 2026, along with \$320,000 of prospective funds from cost savings from an unfilled position, and reserves that could be used within the Council budget to reduce this amount to a \$230,000 funding deficit. The salary amounts included in the calculation are within position ranges, with the assumption that the estimated annual salary and benefits for an Initiative Manager position are \$137,500, and for a Legislative Assistant position are \$105,762. This also assumes a \$7,000 cost to reclassify the Council Office Director to a Council Executive Director position and a \$5,000 to reclassify the Council President’s Legislative Assistant position to a Senior Executive Office Assistant. The assumptions also include a proposed position cost-share with the Administration for the Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs, who

currently works with and supports both the Council and Administration, with the position's annual salary and benefits estimated at \$141,676. The transfer of the Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager proposal is budget-neutral, as funding for this position is not located within the Council's budget.

The following table summarizes the annual impact on the City Council Office budget for each option.

**BUDGETARY IMPACTS OF CHANGES/OPTIONS**

Brief Description	FTE Change	Annual Impact of Change	6-Month Impact
<b>Base Changes for all Options</b>			
Reclassify Council Office Director to Council Executive Director	0	\$14,000	\$7,000
Reclassify Council President Legislative Assistant to Senior Executive Assistant	0	\$10,000	\$5,000
Transfer Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager position to Executive Branch/Dept.	(1)	\$0	\$0
Cost sharing with Admin for Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs position	0	(\$70,838)	(\$35,419)
<b>Option 1</b>			
Current staffing with 2 initiative managers reclassified.	0	\$0	\$0
<b>Option 2</b>			
Eliminate 2 Initiative Manager positions.	(2)	(\$274,999)	(\$137,500)
<b>Option 3</b>			
One Legislative Assistant per District; one Policy Analyst & one Budget Analyst	(3)	(\$317,287)	(\$158,643)
<b>Option 4</b>			
One Legislative Assistant per District; one Policy/Budget Analyst	(4)	(\$454,787)	(\$227,393)

The following table summarizes the net impact on the City Council Office Budget for each option for the remaining 6 months of the current fiscal year. This uses a significant amount of one-time "reserve funding" derived from cost savings in the current budget. Unless these changes are made permanent, they will only help to address this fiscal year's budget until they are integrated into future budgets.

OPTIONS FOR CURRENT \$550,000 6-MONTH DEFICIT

Option Summary	2026 Operating Budget Reduction	Reserve One-time Funding	Unaddressed Budget Gap	6-month Impact	Budget Gap Remaining
<b>Option 1</b> Current staffing with 2 initiative managers reclassified (\$0), and 1 initiative manager transferred.	(\$550,000)	\$325,000	(\$225,000)	\$23,419	(\$201,581)
<b>Option 2</b> Eliminate 2 Initiative Manager positions, and 1 initiative manager transferred.	(\$550,000)	\$325,000	(\$225,000)	\$160,919	(\$64,081)
<b>Option 3</b> One Legislative Assistant per District; one Policy Analyst & one Budget Analyst	(\$550,000)	\$325,000	(\$225,000)	\$182,062	(\$42,938)
<b>Option 4</b> One Legislative Assistant per District; one Policy/Budget Analyst	(\$550,000)	\$325,000	(\$225,000)	\$250,812	\$25,812

## **6. APPENDICES**

- A. CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT**
- B. COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT**
- C. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES EVALUATION**
- D. LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AND COUNCIL OPERATIONS GUIDE**

## APPENDIX A – CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

The City of Spokane, WA, with an estimated population of 230,609, serves as the economic and cultural hub of the Spokane Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and as one of the state's primary urban centers. The City provides a comprehensive range of municipal services designed to support residents, businesses, and visitors. Within this framework, the City Council serves as the legislative body, responsible for setting policy direction, adopting the annual budget, enacting ordinances and resolutions, and overseeing municipal operations through committee engagement, public hearings, and constituent services.

Matrix Consulting Group has been engaged to conduct an independent assessment of the City Council Office, focusing on its organizational structure, staffing, and operational practices that support the City Council's legislative functions. This current state assessment documents the Council Office's existing framework, including its organizational design, staffing allocations, roles and responsibilities, and the processes and systems that support legislative activities. The analysis also considers how the Office supports elected officials in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities within a strong-mayor form of government.

The information presented in this assessment was developed through a series of confidential interviews with City Council Members, Council Office staff, and key stakeholders, as well as a review of relevant documents, workload data, and operational practices provided by the City.

The primary objective of this current state assessment is to document existing practices, establish a baseline understanding of how legislative support functions are currently performed, and provide a foundation for evaluating operations against best management practices. This work will inform the development of practical, data-driven recommendations in the final report.

This document focuses on the following key areas:

- The organizational structure and staffing of the City Council Office, including the number of positions, reporting relationships, and defined roles and responsibilities supporting legislative functions.
- The policies, procedures, and internal practices that guide legislative support activities, coordination, and compliance with applicable legal and governance requirements.
- Training, professional development, and onboarding practices that support staff effectiveness, institutional knowledge, and continuity of operations.
- Workload and service demands associated with legislative functions, including agenda preparation, ordinance and resolution development, committee support, constituent services, and interdepartmental coordination.

- The use of technology, data tracking, and management systems to support legislative workflows, workload management, reporting, and communication.

This assessment provides a validated foundation for subsequent phases of the study by confirming an accurate understanding of current operations, staffing, and resource deployment. It ensures that future analysis and recommendations are grounded in documented practices and aligned with the operational realities of the City Council Office.

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

This chapter summarizes the current organizational structure, staffing levels, and the roles and responsibilities of the staff in the Spokane City Council Office. This document serves as a baseline assessment of existing conditions to inform future strategic and operational recommendations.

### 2.1 ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND VISION

The City Council has adopted city-wide organizational vision, values, and mission statements. There is strategic planning for the budget process that results in annual objectives; however, the Council has not produced specific statements or outlines of its goals as a legislative body.

#### 2012 ADOPTED VISION, VALUES, AND MISSION STATEMENTS FOR THE CITY OF SPOKANE

<b>Vision:</b>	Spokane: A City near nature unequalled for living, working, learning, and leisure.
<b>Values:</b>	<p><u>Trust</u>. We are committed to earn, maintain, and enhance the trust of each other and the community.</p> <p><u>Integrity</u>. We conduct our work in an atmosphere of honesty, respect, and courtesy.</p> <p><u>Quality</u>. We will provide excellent service in a cost-effective manner.</p> <p><u>Teamwork</u>. We nurture successful working relationships with all our partners.</p> <p><u>Accountability</u>. We take responsibility for our actions.</p> <p><u>Openness</u>. Our actions are transparent to all our citizens and ourselves.</p> <p><u>Innovation</u>. We encourage and support new ideas and creative approaches.</p> <p><u>Diversity</u>. We embrace and respect the uniqueness of our employees and citizens.</p> <p><u>Community</u>. We believe in our employees and our citizens.</p>
<b>Mission:</b>	To deliver efficient and effective services that facilitate economic opportunity and enhance quality of life.

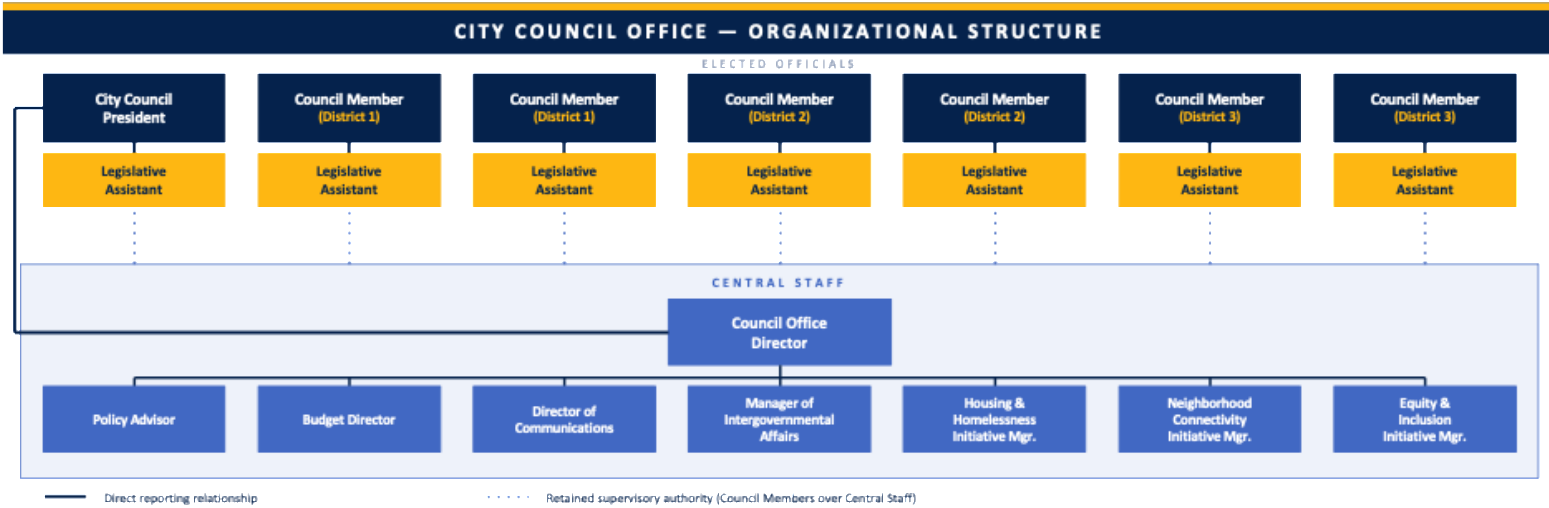
### 2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Council is composed of seven elected members (one Council President and six District Representatives) who are supported by a team of non-elected administrative, policy, and communications staff. The City Council Office functions as an independent legislative division separate from the Mayor's executive administration.

The current structure outlines that the Council President and each Council Member maintain supervisory responsibilities within the Council Office. Legislative Assistants report directly to the individual Council Members whom they serve. Central Staff operates within a multilayered management environment that

includes directional guidance and administrative oversight from all City Council members and the Council Office Director.

### CITY COUNCIL OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Position Title      Authorized Position(s)      Key Roles and Responsibilities

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

<p>City Council President</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves in a city-wide elected leadership role as presiding officer of the Council and provides leadership on behalf of the governing body.</li> <li>• Chairs and facilitates Council meetings, parliamentary process, and public deliberations.</li> <li>• Represents the Council on internal and regional boards, committees, task forces, and intergovernmental initiatives.</li> <li>• Provides executive oversight of Council Office staff, with routine day-to-day supervision commonly delegated to the Office Director.</li> <li>• Manages various designated responsibilities, including appointments of Council Members to boards/committees, subject to Council approval, and review of Council Member travel requests.</li> <li>• Participates as a full member of the City’s legislative body through overseeing a Legislative Assistant, exercising budget and contract responsibilities, serving on committees and external boards, advancing policy initiatives, and providing constituent outreach and community engagement.</li> </ul>
<p>City Council Member</p>	<p>6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds a District-wide elected office and represents the interests, priorities, and concerns of their respective district within City governance.</li> <li>• Oversees assigned Legislative Assistant staff and District office functions, including scheduling, constituent services, and administrative support.</li> <li>• Serves as part of the City’s legislative body by reviewing, considering, and amending ordinances, resolutions, and other municipal policy actions.</li> <li>• Exercises budgetary and fiscal oversight through adoption of the annual budget, and periodic budget modifications, and approval of major contracts and expenditures.</li> <li>• Chairs or serves on standing committees and represents the City on local and regional boards, commissions, and intergovernmental bodies.</li> <li>• Develops and advances policy initiatives addressing community priorities, infrastructure, public services, and quality of life.</li> <li>• Provides constituent services through outreach, issue response, community engagement, and communication with residents and the media.</li> </ul>

Position Title      Authorized Position(s)      Key Roles and Responsibilities

**LEGISLATIVE STAFF**

<p>Legislative Assistant</p>	<p>7 (1 vacant)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned to and directly supervised by an individual Council Member, providing dedicated administrative, legislative, and constituent support aligned with the Member’s priorities and district needs.</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities vary significantly based on the needs, priorities, and operating style of the assigned Council Member, as well as the individual staff member’s experience, strengths, and specialized skillsets.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assists with management of the Council Member’s calendar, including appointments, board and committee meetings, community events, and related scheduling coordination.</li> <li>○ Conducts policy and issue research, evaluates emerging matters, and prepares memoranda, briefing materials, or background information to support legislative initiatives and decision-making.</li> <li>○ Serves as a primary point of contact for constituent services by responding to calls and emails, coordinating public records requests, and assisting with community concerns.</li> <li>○ Supports communication and outreach efforts, including social media coordination, public messaging, and community engagement activities.</li> <li>○ Provides additional support when their Council Member chairs a standing committee, including agenda coordination, meeting preparation, and liaison work with City staff regarding presentations and briefings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Current classification structures provide a promotional opportunity to Legislative Assistant II for employees who meet established qualifications, experience, and competency requirements. This promotion entails an expanded role to provide further support and backup to the Council Office Director and some Central Staff functions.</li> </ul>
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Position Title      Authorized Position(s)      Key Roles and Responsibilities

**COUNCIL CENTRAL STAFF**

<p>Council Office Director</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees daily Council Office operations and leads office administrative functions such as internal coordination, onboarding, and routine personnel administration.</li> <li>• Directs day-to-day office organization and management, including workflow coordination, operational consistency, and internal service delivery.</li> <li>• Manages Council meeting logistics and agenda development and distribution, including coordinating with the City Clerk’s Office, video production, public participation processes, and placement of items on official agendas.</li> <li>• Acts as the Council Office public records officer and monitors operational budgets for the Council President and shared office functions.</li> <li>• Coordinates communication and legislative workflows among Council Members, Legislative Assistants, the Mayor’s Office, and all City departments.</li> <li>• Provides officewide management and support with some delegated responsibilities to manage Central Staff, though supervisory authority is diffused by shared reporting relationships and decentralized staffing assignments.</li> </ul>
<p>Policy Advisor</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts independent policy research, provides legal and risk analysis, and drafts and reviews ordinances, resolutions, and related legislative actions for the City Council.</li> <li>• Serves as the Council’s lead reviewer for legislative items to help ensure alignment with adopted Council Rules of Procedure before matters advance for Council consideration.</li> <li>• Coordinates various policy requests and inquiries with Council Members, Legislative Assistants, Central Staff, Administration, and the public.</li> <li>• Provides procedural guidance to Council Members on legislative processes and coordinates requests with the City Attorney’s Office for formal legal review and counsel.</li> </ul>

Position Title	Authorized Position(s)	Key Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Budget Director</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads the City Council's review of the annual city budget and special budget ordinances proposed by the Mayor, while also drafting budget amendments.</li> <li>• Oversees the development of the internal Council office budget and facilitating the office's contracts and grants.</li> <li>• Evaluates the fiscal impact of new or proposed legislation on city resources, in coordination with the Administration, and provides recommendations to the Council regarding performance-based budgeting and opportunity costs.</li> <li>• Conducts payroll, monthly reporting and analysis, internal and external education and outreach, special research projects, coordination with administration, economic analysis, forecasting, and policy research.</li> <li>• Coordinates the Council's public engagement on financial issues and serves as a liaison to the City's Administrative Departments during budget development and labor contract negotiations.</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Communications</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates and implements a communications strategy to inform the public, stakeholders, and the media about City Council activities.</li> <li>• Partners with Council Members and staff to produce written materials, including press releases, speeches, briefing materials, and digital media content.</li> <li>• Serves as a primary media liaison by proactively sharing information with media outlets, coordinating responses to inquiries, and organizing necessary press conferences.</li> <li>• Develops and executes public outreach strategies for community engagement and input on Council initiatives.</li> </ul>

Position Title	Authorized Position(s)	Key Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees the City Council's Intergovernmental Affairs Program by providing advice and briefings to Council Members regarding federal, state, and regional initiatives.</li> <li>• Directs the City's independent federal and state lobbyists and oversees the implementation of their lobbying strategies.</li> <li>• Manages the development and execution of the City of Spokane's annual federal and state legislative agendas.</li> <li>• Facilitates intergovernmental communication and coordinates with neighboring jurisdictions, county partners, and other agencies to advance the City's legislative goals.</li> <li>• Coordinates regularly with the Mayor and administrative staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness Initiative Manager</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as the City Council's primary subject matter expert regarding homelessness and housing issues.</li> <li>• Researches, evaluates, and develops policies options and provides advice and briefings to Council Members on social, human services, and housing matters. Evaluates the impact of proposed legislation and prepares comprehensive written reports to present findings and recommendations.</li> <li>• Plans, coordinates, and facilitates community engagement groups and stakeholder meetings to actively support the City Council.</li> <li>• Coordinates with a staff who manage administrative programs and functions in housing and homelessness initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood Connectivity Initiative Manager</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advises City Council on transportation policy issues, including opportunities to seek federal and state funding.</li> <li>• Serves as the Council Liaison for the Red Light and School Radar Traffic Calming Programs and tracks their associated budgets and projects. Acts as the Transportation Benefit District Administrator and is responsible for overseeing the Citizen Transportation Advisory Board.</li> <li>• Facilitates stakeholder working groups and consults with various parties to develop revenue and financing strategies for Council-initiated transportation programs.</li> <li>• Coordinates with staff who manage administrative programs and functions in transportation and neighborhood connectivity initiatives.</li> </ul>

Position Title	Authorized Position(s)	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Equity & Inclusion Initiative Manager	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops equity and inclusion policies and advises City Council members on potential equity-related impacts of proposed and current policies.</li> <li>• Evaluates the impact of new or proposed legislation on policy goals while reviewing policy language for accuracy and constituent understanding.</li> <li>• Plans, coordinates, and facilitates stakeholder working groups and research teams to actively support the City Council's priorities. Works closely with regional partners to reform the criminal justice system to create better outcomes and reduce institutional and systemic bias.</li> <li>• Coordinates staff who manage administrative programs and functions in equity and inclusion initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>15</b>	

The City Council has currently authorized seven (7) full-time legislative assistants and eight (8) full-time central staff.

### STAFFING ALLOCATIONS

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANTS	7	7	7	7	7
CENTRAL STAFF	9	9	8	8	8
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

Central Staff was expanded in 2019 to address Council outreach needs identified as urgent but not receiving sufficient administrative prioritization. A Manager of Sustainability Initiatives position was eliminated in 2023. The current staffing levels have remained in place over the past three years.

## 2.3 GOVERNING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CITY CHARTER

- **Powers, Rights, and Liabilities.** The City possesses all powers, functions, rights, and privileges granted to first-class municipalities under Washington law and is subject to the corresponding duties, obligations, liabilities, and limitations. The City Council and the Mayor’s authority are exercised within the Mayor-Council form of government. (*Spokane Charter, Article I*)
- **Elective Officials, Qualifications, and Salary.** The City Council serves as the legislative body of the City and consists of the Council President and six Council Members; each elected to a four-year term by qualified voters in accordance with the Charter and Washington law. The City is divided into three population-based districts with two Council Members representing each district, while the Mayor and

Council President are elected at large. Candidates for City Council must be qualified voters and reside in the district they seek to represent. The Council President and Mayor are required to reside in the City. Council Members, the Council President, and the Mayor are limited to two consecutive terms, and no elected City official may simultaneously hold another elective public office or serve in any other City employment or office capacity. Salaries for the Mayor, Council President, and Council Members are established by the City Salary Review Commission in accordance with municipal code and state law. (*Spokane Charter, Article II*)

- **Code of Ethics.** An elected City official may be subject to a recall election if the ethics committee determines a known ethics violation involving moral turpitude, no mitigating circumstances, and recommends recall in addition to any other penalties authorized by ordinance. The City Council may, by a majority-plus-two vote, place the official on the next eligible recall ballot and may adopt procedures by ordinance to implement this process. (*Spokane Charter, Article II § 8*)
- **Council President and Council.** The Council President presides over City Council meetings, serves as a voting member with equal rights and privileges, and participates fully in all matters before the Council. The City Council establishes its own rules and committees, determines committee membership and staffing support, and may employ staff who serve at the pleasure of the Council outside of civil service. (*Spokane Charter, Article III § 9*)
- **City Council Meetings.** The City Council meets at times and places established by ordinance and is required to hold regular weekly meetings unless a cancellation notice is provided in advance. Special meetings may be called by the City Clerk at the written request of the Mayor, Council President, or a majority of Council Members, with at least twenty-four hours' notice, limited to stated agenda items, and all meetings must remain public except as allowed by state law. (*Spokane Charter, Article III § 9*)
- **Ordinances.** Ordinances generally require two public title readings on separate days, with at least three consecutive business days between introduction and final passage, unless otherwise permitted by the Charter or state law. Appropriation measures follow state law, and certain contract ordinances must remain on file for five calendar days before passage. Non-emergency ordinances must be presented to the Mayor for signature, veto, partial veto, or no action within ten days; the Council may override a veto within thirty days by at least five affirmative votes, and qualified emergency ordinances may take effect immediately without mayoral veto. (*Spokane Charter, Article III § 13*)
- **Administrative Branch.** The Mayor serves as the City's chief executive with authority over appointments, removals, budget preparation, ordinance recommendations, investigations, contract oversight, and veto powers subject to Council approval or override in specified cases, while the City Council maintains approval authority over key appointments, certain compensation decisions, appointments to boards and commissions, and receipt of required reports, recommendations, and the annual budget message. Except as provided by the Charter, the City Council, Council President, and individual Council Members may not direct employees under the Mayor's authority, though they may request information from staff, may not improperly influence contracts or purchasing decisions, and retain authority to ratify certain Mayoral actions. (*Spokane Charter, Article IV § 22*)
- **Mayor Pro Tem.** If the Mayor is absent, incapacitated, or the office becomes vacant, the Council President serves as Mayor Pro Tem and assumes mayoral duties until the Mayor returns or a

successor is appointed. During that time, the Council President steps away from legislative responsibilities and does not act as a City Council member. The Mayor may designate this transition in writing, and a court may also determine or later rescind a finding of incapacity. (*Spokane Charter, Article IV § 23*)

- **Duties of City Clerk.** The City Clerk performs duties required by the Charter and City Council, maintains official records of Council proceedings and matters presented or acted upon, and certifies accounts approved for payment by the Council. (*Spokane Charter, Article IV § 27*)
- **City Attorney.** The City Attorney serves as legal advisor to City officers, represents the City in legal proceedings, and performs additional duties as required by the City Council. The Mayor holds the power to appoint and remove the City Attorney, with this appointment subject to the approval of the City Council. (*Spokane Charter, Article IV § 28*)
- **Conflicts of Interest.** City Council Members with a personal interest in any matter before the Council must disclose the interest to the Council President and must not vote or participate in that matter. City officers and employees are prohibited from having interests in City contracts or transactions, or from receiving gifts, favors, compensation, or other benefits connected to official actions, and all City contracts must remain free from improper influence or personal gain, except for lawful compensation. (*Spokane Charter, Article IV § 36*)
- **Neighborhood Councils.** Neighborhood councils and the community assembly may establish bylaws for their operations and serve in an advisory role to the City Council and Mayor on community matters. The Office of Neighborhood Services, operating as a separate department within the Mayor's administrative branch, provides staff support and serves as liaison among neighborhood groups, the City Council, the Mayor, and City departments under the direction of a designated director. (*Spokane Charter, Article VIII*)
- **Legislation by The People.** The Charter establishes a framework for direct voter participation through initiatives, referendums, and required public votes on certain tax and capital expenditure measures. The City Council administers key elements of this process by receiving petitions, passing or referring measures to voters, submitting certain proposals to the election, reconsidering challenged ordinances, and amending or repealing voter-approved measures as authorized. (*Spokane Charter, Article IX*)
- **Amendment of the Charter.** The Charter may be amended by a majority vote of City electors. Charter amendments may be proposed and submitted to voters through the initiative process or by action of the City Council. The Council may also adopt regulations to implement this article, provided they are consistent with the Charter. (*Spokane Charter, Article XIV*)
- **Plan Commission.** The City Council must establish a ten-member City Plan Commission by ordinance, with members serving without pay, and may define its powers and functions through ordinance. The Council may direct the commission to take specific actions related to legislative matters and may appropriate funding for its operations, staffing support, and expert assistance through the annual budget and tax levy. (*Spokane Charter, Article XV*)

## SPOKANE MUNICIPAL CODE

- **Council President and City Council.** The City Council consists of the City Council President and six City Council Members and serves as the City’s legislative body. The City Council and its members do not hold general administrative authority over personnel matters, but retain authority to appoint, evaluate, and discharge the Hearing Examiner and City Council staff, approve Mayoral nominees to boards, commissions, and official agencies as applicable, and hire, supervise, evaluate, and discharge their individual legislative assistants. The Council President reviews Council meeting agendas, presides over Council meetings, serves as Mayor Pro Tem, and acts as the primary signatory for Council Office budgetary expenditure and appropriation matters consistent with City procedures and policies. *(SMC § 02.005)*
- **Council Ad Hoc Committees.** The City Council establishes standing and ad hoc committees to support its duties. Committees with more than three Council Members are treated as full Council meetings and must meet public notice and open meeting requirements, with legislative action permitted only when properly noticed. *(SMC § 02.005)*
- **Council President Pro Tem.** The Council President Pro Tem is a Council Member elected to perform the duties of the Council President during temporary absences and to support efficient Council operations. When both the Mayor and Council President are absent, the Council President Pro Tem may act as Mayor as needed to maintain normal operations. *(SMC § 02.005)*
- **City Council Office Staff.** As part of budget appropriations, the City Council may create, modify, or eliminate Council positions as needed to support legislative duties and determine the number, type, and scope of duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities for regular staff by majority vote. The Council President serves as department head, with day-to-day supervision of Council staff other than legislative assistants, and may hire or discharge staff, seasonal or project employees, and outside consultants, consistent with Council procedures and available budget. *(SMC § 02.005)*
- **Council Legislative Assistants.** Each Council Member, including the Council President, may hire, supervise, and discharge a legislative assistant at their sole discretion, while the City Council may establish uniform employment standards by majority vote in consultation with the City Attorney and Human Resources. Each legislative assistant’s primary duty is to support their employing Council Member. The Council Office includes a Legislative Assistant II position with added skills and responsibilities that support the City Council as a whole. *(SMC § 02.005)*
- **Rules of Procedure.** The City Council may implement and specify this chapter and applicable state law by appropriate rules. All administrative policies and procedures related to the conduct of City Council meetings, including the preparation and submission of the City Council agenda, shall conform to City Council Rules of Procedure and practices. *(SMC § 02.01)*
- **State and Federal Lobbying.** The Mayor, City Council Members, and employees under their direction are authorized to advocate for or against state and federal legislation, rules, regulations, and other governmental actions. Any lobbying activities performed through private contracts must receive prior approval from the City Council. *(SMC § 02.03)*

- **City Legislative Agenda.** Any legislative agenda advanced on behalf of the City at the state or federal level must be formally adopted by City Council resolution after consultation with the Mayor. The City Council retains authority to establish and amend the City's official legislative agenda, and all lobbying activities by City officials or authorized private parties must be consistent with Council-approved priorities. *(SMC § 02.03)*
- **Salary Review Commission.** A Salary Review Commission is responsible for reviewing and establishing compensation for the Mayor, Council President, and City Council Members based on the duties and responsibilities of each office, and to support the recruitment of qualified public officials. The commission meets at least in even-numbered years, considers information on official responsibilities, and files final salary decisions with the City Clerk, with increases taking effect the following year and decreases applying at the start of the next term. *(SMC § 02.05)*
- **Office Hours and Employee Leave.** City offices generally operate during standard business hours, with flexibility for individual departments to adjust schedules based on operational needs, customer service demands, or continuous service functions such as public safety and utility emergencies. The municipal code also establishes employee leave provisions, including accrual and use of sick leave and vacation leave in accordance with collective bargaining agreements and employment status. Department heads and supervisors play a key role in approving leave, maintaining staffing coverage, and ensuring leave practices support both employee needs and City operating requirements. *(SMC § 03.02)*
- **Established Ethics Standards.** The City's ethics framework establishes expectations for elected officials, appointed officials, employees, and board members to act with honesty, integrity, fairness, responsibility, and proper stewardship of public resources. Officials may not use their position, authority, information, or City resources for personal gain, and the code is intended to protect the public from conflicts of interest, undue influence, favoritism, dishonesty, or misuse of authority. These standards supplement state ethics laws and reinforce that public service must be carried out in the public interest. The code sets broad standards for conflicts of interest, covering financial interests, family or household relationships, business ownership, and contractual ties. Officials and employees are expected to avoid participating in matters in which they or their related parties could receive a material benefit, particularly those involving contracts, permits, regulatory decisions, or legislative actions. Restrictions also apply to gifts, honoraria, confidential information, and other benefits that could influence judgment or reward official action. Accountability is supported by the Ethics Commission's enforcement and oversight, which may investigate complaints, interpret the code, provide training, and promote transparency. *(SMC § 01.04)*

## 2.4 CITY COUNCIL OFFICE BUDGET

The City Council is responsible for reviewing and approving the City of Spokane's operating budget and establishing funding priorities that guide service delivery across all departments. Within this broader responsibility, the Council Office budget supports the elected officials, staffing salaries, and resources necessary to carry out the legislative, policy, constituent service, and administrative functions of the Council. Personnel within the Council Office directly influence the City's capacity to provide timely legislative support, responsive public service, policy analysis, and effective governance.

The following table summarizes total budget allocations and associated fee revenue for the past five years. During this period, the Council Office has accounted for an average of 1.88% of the City’s General Fund. A modified budget was approved for 2025-26 to further evaluate and consider future operational and staffing needs within the Council Office.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>COUNCIL</b>	1,895,942	2,008,854	1,973,650	2,022,291	2,323,518
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	91,895,087	99,873,252	107,744,023	119,747,537	125,109,627
<b>PERCENT</b>	2.06%	2.01%	1.83%	1.69%	1.86%

## 3. OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

This section summarizes the current operational practices of the City Council Office. The review considers key administrative processes, communication workflows, meeting and legislative support functions, use of facilities and workspace, technology tools, records management, and overall office operations.

### 3.1 OVERALL SERVICES AND APPROACH

The Spokane City Council Office is responsible for establishing local laws, balancing the legislative agenda, and ensuring that community voices are represented in legislative decision-making. The Council holds ultimate authority over the city's annual budget, approving municipal contracts, and passing ordinances and resolutions. The current approach to service delivery emphasizes community engagement, interdepartmental coordination, and policy development. Legislative initiatives are generally drafted into proposals, introduced through one of four standing committees (Public Safety and Community Health; Public Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainability; Urban Experience; and Finance), and subjected to public hearings before a final vote by the full Council. Throughout this process, the office provides essential services, including legal and risk analysis, public outreach, and the facilitation of stakeholder working groups to advance public safety, neighborhood connectivity, housing, and equity initiatives.

Key responsibilities of the City Council Office include:

- **Legislative and Policy Development:** Researching, drafting, reviewing, and adopting city ordinances, resolutions, and proactive policy initiatives that govern municipal operations.
- **Financial and Budgetary Oversight:** Leading the review and adoption of the city's annual budget, evaluating the fiscal impact of proposed legislation, drafting budget amendments, and approving municipal contracts.
- **Agenda and Committee Administration:** Managing the legislative workflow, authorizing the placement of matters on the official agenda, and providing organizational and administrative support for the Council's standing committees.
- **Constituent and Community Services:** Serving as a primary liaison to the public by responding to constituent inquiries, fulfilling public records requests, and actively engaging with Neighborhood Councils and the Community Assembly.
- **Intergovernmental Relations:** Representing the City Council on local, regional, and intergovernmental boards, overseeing federal and state lobbying strategies, and coordinating with outside agencies to advance shared legislative goals.

- **Public Communications and Transparency:** Executing a comprehensive communications strategy to keep the public and media informed through digital media, press releases, strategic public outreach, and the broadcasting of Council meetings via City Cable 5.

## FACILITY SPACES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Spokane City Council primarily operates from Spokane City Hall, where it holds regular public legislative sessions, committee hearings, and formal proceedings. The Council Chambers and an adjoining conference room are the primary spaces for conducting Council meetings. Inside City Hall, Council administrative functions are housed within a decentralized open-office environment that faces notable space constraints. Council Members and staff frequently lack privacy for focused work and confidential conversations. Due to space constraints, some staff are also required to share workspaces. Despite the limitations of individual employee spaces, the facility is equipped with shared amenities to facilitate collaboration and legislative duties. City Hall features conference rooms on each floor that Council staff can reserve through the internal Outlook system to host meetings. To support operations and provide flexibility, the Council Office also uses a structured hybrid telework model that allows shared staff to perform certain functions remotely while maintaining a regular in-person presence at City Hall for at least three days a week.

### TELEWORK POLICY

The Spokane City Council Office telework policy emphasizes continued productivity, accountability, and accessibility regardless of work location. Remote employees are expected to remain available during scheduled hours, obtain advance approval for leave, and report on-site when job duties require in-person presence.

Under the standard arrangement, shared staff are generally expected to work on-site at City Hall at least three days per week, with up to two remote workdays supported through a formal telework agreement outlining schedules and work locations. Ad hoc remote work requests require advance approval, and the Council President retains discretion to modify on-site requirements based on operational needs.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Formalized key performance indicators do not currently exist within the Spokane City Council Office to measure legislative outcomes, service levels, or staff productivity, with success often assessed more informally through policy accomplishments, responsiveness, and stakeholder relationships. Individual employee performance is evaluated through annual reviews, though staff noted past inconsistencies in the process.

### 3.2 WORKFLOWS AND COORDINATION

The core legislative workflow for the Spokane City Council follows a structured procedural path from initial proposal and drafting to final adoption. Once a new ordinance or policy idea is fully drafted and analyzed into a proposal, it must be introduced to the full Council. The Council Office Director manages this phase, leading the legislative workflow for staff and Council Members while assisting other City

departments with the timing of committee and agenda items. The Council Office Director coordinates the placement of matters on the City Council Agenda and ensures compliance with the Council's rules regarding agenda placement and timing.

Legislation is first placed on the agenda of one of the four standing Council Committees: Public Safety and Community Health; Public Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainability; Urban Experience; or Finance. Following committee review and discussion, an item is placed on the official Council Agenda for a First Reading, which includes a public hearing to gather formal community feedback. Throughout this process, legislative proposals, documents, and timelines are tracked and managed using the City's legislative organizing software, OnBase.

Public transparency is supported through televised meetings and streamlined public records requests. The Council has also utilized longer public review timelines on legislative items to improve transparency, public awareness, and opportunities for community input.

### INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Council Office Director serves as the primary administrative and human resources contact for the office and oversees the departmental budget. Existing controls govern business travel, overtime, and telework, including preapproval requirements, use of PeopleSoft for hour tracking, and minimum in-office attendance expectations for staff. However, traditional timecards documenting the time and place of off-site work, as well as overtime and its purposes, are not currently used in the office.

Reporting relationships, supervisory expectations, performance management practices, and chain-of-command protocols are not uniformly defined, creating uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, and oversight.

### 3.3 TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

The Council Office utilizes a mix of specialized and standard administrative software systems to support legislative and operational functions. Current technology conditions include aging computer equipment, limited formal software training, and the absence of a unified constituent relationship management system for centralized tracking of community inquiries and service requests. Standardized file-sharing protocols and document naming conventions are also not formally established, resulting in files being stored across multiple locations or labeled inconsistently.

#### IMPLEMENTED SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

<b>OnBase</b>	This legislative organizing software is used to track documents, manage legislative timelines, and file or research ordinances and resolutions.
<b>PeopleSoft</b>	Employees utilize this system to submit hours worked, log overtime hours, and submit vacation or sick leave time.

<b>Microsoft Outlook</b>	This platform serves as the primary system for managing constituent emails, scheduling appointments, and reserving conference rooms within City Hall.
<b>Microsoft Teams and Planner</b>	Staff are currently piloting these applications to collaborate, break out projects, and assign specific tasks to team members.
<b>SharePoint</b>	This platform acts as an internal repository where staff can access some document templates, letterhead, and administrative procedures.

### 3.4 CONTRACTED SERVICES

The Spokane City Council Office primarily handles its legislative and administrative duties internally, but it does utilize specialized contracted services to support specific operational goals. The most prominent use of external contractors is within the Intergovernmental Affairs Program, where the City employs independent contractors to act as federal and state lobbyists. The Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs is directly responsible for supervising these contract lobbyists and overseeing the implementation of their lobbying strategies to advance the City's legislative agenda.

## 4. WORKLOAD DATA

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the workload data across the Spokane City Council Office, evaluating the time and effort required of elected officials and staff to fulfill their core legislative, administrative, and community engagement responsibilities.

### 4.1 COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

#### COUNCIL PRESIDENT-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council President holds additional leadership and administrative authority over the legislative body. In addition to general Council duties, the President's specific responsibilities include:

- **Legislative Leadership and Representation.** The President chairs legislative meetings, serves as the central point of contact for overarching community engagement expectations, and represents the Council on high-level boards, such as the Airport Board and the PFG board. The President also regularly attends the regional Community Assembly meetings.
- **Committee Appointments.** While Council Members submit their preferences at the end of the year, the Council President is responsible for making the final assignments to various boards and commissions, which are then confirmed by the full City Council at the beginning of each year.
- **Central Staff Supervision.** The Council President serves as the primary manager and provides day-to-day supervision for all shared Central Staff, including the Office Director, Budget Director, Policy Advisor, Communications Director, and specialized Initiative Managers.

#### GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The six City Council Members who serve as district representatives, with two elected from each district, carry out a broad range of legislative, administrative, and community leadership responsibilities. Core duties include:

- **Legislative and Policy Development.** Researching, drafting, and introducing ordinances and amendments to establish proactive policy. They hold ultimate authority over the adoption of the city's legislation, annual budget, and municipal contracts.
- **Committee and Board Leadership.** Chair and attend the Council's four standing committees: Public Safety and Community Health; Public Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainability (PIES); Urban Experience; and Finance and Administration. Furthermore, they represent the City on numerous regional boards and joint committees, such as the Board of Health, regional transit boards, and the Fire and Police Pension Board.
- **Constituent and Community Engagement.** Engage with district constituents through open-door meetings, town halls, and community events. They also fulfill regular media obligations, including weekly morning radio call-ins on KQNT and KXLY to recap legislative meetings.

- **Administrative Duties:** Each Council Member is directly responsible for hiring and managing their own dedicated Legislative Assistant. They also participate in bi-weekly, one-on-one "huddle" meetings with the Mayor.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

The City Council generally holds three to four regular meetings each month, with proceedings that typically include an Agenda Review Session and an evening Legislative Session, both of which are open to the public. Regular meetings commonly include appointments, a consent agenda for routine items, first and final readings of ordinances and resolutions, public hearings conducted in accordance with applicable procedural requirements, opportunities for public comment, and closed sessions when authorized under Washington State law. Proposed legislation is typically introduced through a first reading and later considered for final action at a subsequent meeting, allowing time for public review and Council deliberation.

Agenda items vary significantly in complexity and staff effort and should not be viewed as equal units of workload. Routine consent items may involve limited discussion during meetings but still require coordination, documentation, legal review, and internal approvals, whereas public hearings and major policy items often require presentations, analysis, deliberation, and public testimony. As a result, meeting agendas provide a general indicator of legislative activity and operational demand rather than a precise measure based solely on item counts or meeting duration.

### NUMBER OF ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

<i>2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS</i>	<b>Total Meetings</b>	<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Average Items Per Meeting</b>
Agenda Review and Legislative	38	1,053	28
Town Halls	3	3	1

## 4.2 LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANTS

The daily workload for Legislative Assistants (LAs) is highly variable, blending legislative research with heavy administrative support. Because each Council Member utilizes their staff differently, individual workloads can fluctuate significantly across the office. Generally, LAs can be responsible for organizing their Council Members' calendars, drafting policy proposals and amendments, and serving as the primary support staff for Council standing committees by organizing agendas and coordinating presentations. Depending on their specific assignments, LAs may also take on additional technical and operational tasks, such as running the hybrid meeting technology during legislative sessions.

## **RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER CORRESPONDENCE**

A substantial portion of an LA's workload is dedicated to correspondence with residents and stakeholders. LAs may be tasked with monitoring inboxes and responding directly to constituent calls, emails, and letters. They handle correspondence to furnish or request information, document public inquiries, and ensure that public records requests are processed appropriately. Beyond direct correspondence, LAs may also manage broader communications by drafting speeches, distributing media releases, and running their Council Members' social media accounts and electronic newsletters.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS**

LAs often carry some workload related to community engagement and Neighborhood Councils. They help individual Council Members stay connected to their constituents by planning and organizing local events, and some LAs attend various Neighborhood Council meetings to represent their district and gather community feedback. By managing these localized relationships and facilitating public discussions, LAs ensure that neighborhood concerns are effectively communicated and integrated into the Council's broader legislative priorities.

## **LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT II POSITION**

A Legislative Assistant II performs standard administrative duties while also utilizing advanced competencies and being available to provide broader operational support for the entire City Council office. Specifically, they assist the Council Office Director and Central Staff by managing committee agendas, drafting legislation, and operating the hybrid meeting technology and livestreaming equipment during legislative sessions.

### **4.3 CENTRAL STAFF**

The Central Staff is designed to serve the entire legislative body. Composed of specialized experts, including the Office Director, Budget Director, Policy Advisor, Communications Director, and Initiative Managers, this team provides objective research, legal and fiscal analysis, and strategic communication support.

The overarching workload for Central Staff is highly variable and requires balancing the competing priorities of all seven elected officials. Because there is currently no formalized "funnel" or standardized process for prioritizing Council Member requests, central staff frequently juggle urgent, deadline-driven legislative needs alongside long-term strategic projects.

## **OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

The Office Management workload is primarily driven by the Council Office Director, who is responsible for keeping the legislative body functioning. This workload is administrative and operational, encompassing the management of the office's budget, minor contracts, and overarching human resources duties such as hiring, onboarding, payroll, and time-off approvals. The Director also directly manages the legislative workflow, including authorizing items for the official agenda and ensuring compliance with Council rules.

In addition to internal administration, the Office Director’s daily workload involves facilitating vital communication between Council Members, the Mayor’s Office, and various City departments to prevent duplication of effort. The role also requires hands-on logistical support, such as serving as the producer for hybrid virtual meetings, managing complex public records requests, and acting as a primary hub for institutional knowledge.

## **POLICY AND BUDGET FUNCTIONS**

The Policy Advisor and Budget Director shoulder the core analytical and legislative-drafting workload for the Council. The Policy Advisor’s time is largely dedicated to translating Council ideas into enforceable law by drafting ordinances and resolutions, conducting legal and procedural research, and coordinating formal legal reviews with the City Attorney’s Office. Simultaneously, the Budget Director is tasked with rigorous financial oversight, which includes evaluating the fiscal impacts (fiscal notes) of proposed legislation, analyzing the Mayor’s proposed budget, and drafting specific Council budget amendments.

Both positions face a demanding, deadline-driven workload that relies heavily on the quality and timing of requests from Council Members. Because municipal priorities can shift rapidly, these roles frequently balance the need to produce quick, reactive analyses for impending votes with the need to conduct deep, proactive policy research and long-range economic planning.

## **COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY OUTREACH, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The Director of Communications serves as the Council’s central communications lead, providing a singular voice for the legislative body through coordinated public messaging and external outreach. Core responsibilities include developing and executing public relations efforts, drafting press releases, coordinating media briefings, managing the Council’s digital and social media presence, and overseeing content and scripts for City Cable 5 broadcasts. Individual Legislative Assistants also support communications at the Council Member level by handling constituent correspondence and managing district-specific messaging platforms.

A formal communications strategy with defined service standards and resource allocation protocols has not been adopted. As a result, communication support and capacity are not consistently structured or evenly accessible across all Council offices, with priorities often shaped by timing demands, evolving requests, or informal operating practices rather than standardized organizational criteria.

## **COUNCIL INITIATIVE MANAGERS**

Council Initiative Managers serve as specialized subject-matter experts in the following policy areas:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Neighborhood Connectivity
- Equity and Inclusion
- Intergovernmental Affairs

Initiative Manager assigned tasks are distinctly external and collaborative, requiring them to plan and facilitate stakeholder working groups, manage community engagement efforts, and serve as the Council's liaison to regional boards, state/federal lobbyists, and external agencies.

Their workload is shaped by evolving Council priorities and often includes coordinating with related administrative departments in the same policy areas, supporting policy implementation efforts, clarifying roles and responsibilities across functions, and helping to orient newly elected officials to complex policy and operational matters.

#### **4.4 WORKLOAD MINI SURVEY**

A workload mini survey was distributed to Council Members and Council Office staff to gather input on workload demands, primary areas of focus, time allocation, and operational pressures affecting service delivery. The survey results provide an initial snapshot of current workload conditions and will be incorporated into the broader workload analysis, where findings will be examined in greater depth to inform staffing, process, and resource considerations.

## APPENDIX B – COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

As part of the organizational analysis of the Spokane City Council office, a comparative assessment was conducted for a selection of similar cities across the US. The scope of this assessment was designed to gain insight into how peer communities staff, organize, and operate their City Councils.

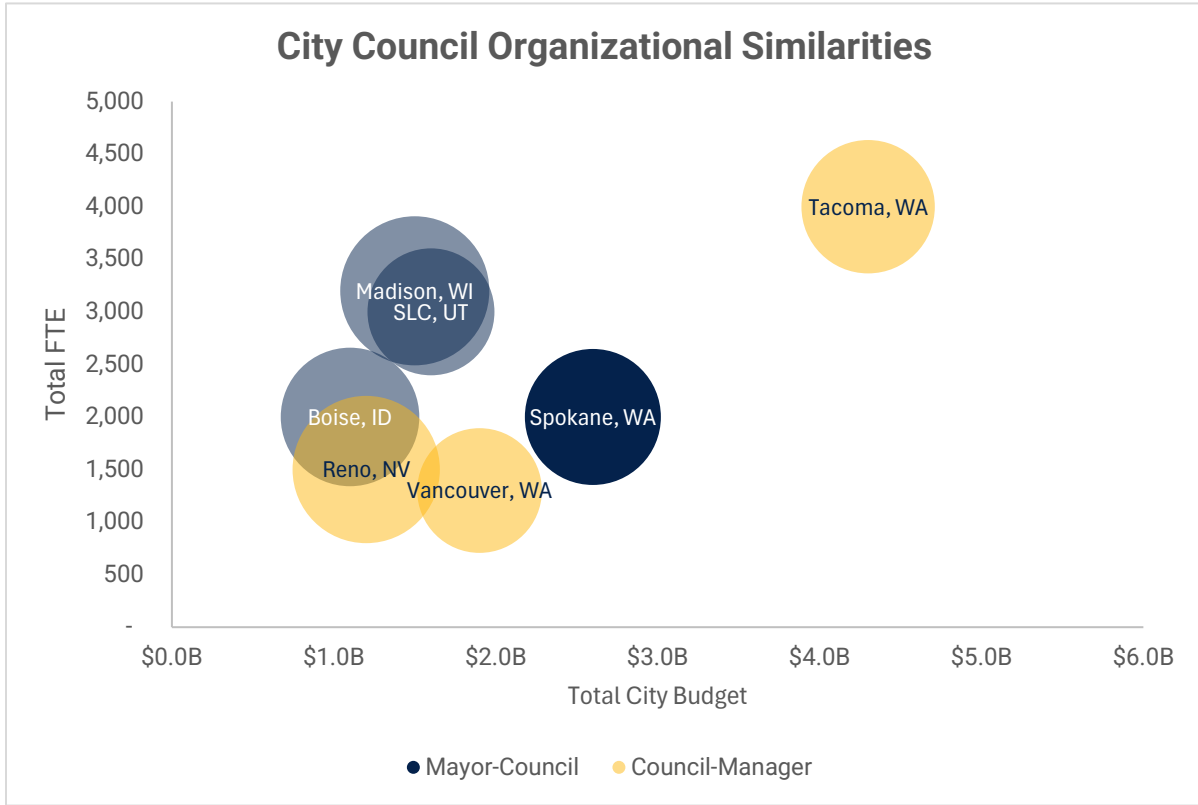
The comparators were selected based on their average similarity scores to the City of Spokane. A set of comparators was evaluated based on location, population, size, median household income, budget, staffing level, and governance model. Six cities with the highest average similarity scores were selected for comparison.

The table below shows basic information for all selected comparators.

City	Population	Area (sq mi)	Population Density (per sq mi)	Median Household Income	Total City Budget	Total FTE	City Government Model
Spokane, WA	229,228	68.76	3,333.74	\$65,745	\$2.6B	2,000	Mayor-Council
Madison, WI	275,568	83.09	3,316.57	\$76,983	\$1.5B	3,200	Mayor-Council
Boise, ID	237,963	83.70	2,843.05	\$81,102	\$1.1B	2,000	Mayor-Council
Reno, NV	268,959	108.99	2,467.68	\$78,448	\$1.2B	1,500	Council-Manager
Salt Lake City, UT	199,723	110.70	1,804.18	\$77,186	\$1.6B	3,000	Mayor-Council
Tacoma, WA	220,482	49.71	4,434.97	\$83,857	\$4.3B	4,000	Council-Manager
Vancouver, WA	192,696	48.75	3,952.88	\$78,156	\$1.9B	1,300	Council-Manager

The chart below visualizes organizational similarities by budgets, staff counts, and population. It compares the total number of employees in the city (Total FTE) on the y-axis, with the total city budget on the x-axis. The size of the bubbles represents population size, and the color represents the government model adopted by each city.

### CITY COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL SIMILARITIES BY POPULATION SIZE



This assessment does not analyze the relative merits of the different approaches taken by these peer communities. Findings will inform the analysis and recommendations in the final report.

## 2. COUNCIL WORKLOAD

Our analysis shows that Council workload varies greatly among the comparators, particularly in the number of agenda items and in committee involvement. We examined the number of Council meetings, the number of agenda items, Council involvement in committees, and community engagement through neighborhood councils. These factors illustrate some of the Council's core responsibilities and allow us to compare workloads across comparators.

### 2.1 COUNCIL MEETINGS

Spokane holds regular City Council meetings an average of 2.4 times per month. This is consistent with most comparator cities, which typically hold meetings 2 to 4 times per month, either weekly or biweekly.

The table below shows the number of regular Council meetings per month.

City	Number of Meetings per Month
<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>2.4</b>
Madison, WI	2
Boise, ID	4
Reno, NV	2
Salt Lake City, UT	2
Tacoma, WA	4
Vancouver, WA	4

The number of agenda items in each meeting differs significantly across meetings and comparators. This analysis covers agenda items in the regular Council meetings only and does not include other meetings, such as committee meetings or working groups. Each regular Council meeting contains a wide range of agenda items, from the consent agenda to resolutions and ordinances. The exact number of agenda items per year is usually not published. The figures in this analysis are derived from multiplying the average number of agenda items per meeting by the number of meetings per year.

The table below shows the approximate number of agenda items in regular Council meetings per year.

City	Number of Agenda Items per Year
<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>1,053</b>
Madison, WI	2,239
Boise, ID	1,700
Reno, NV	720
Salt Lake City, UT	417
Tacoma, WA	309
Vancouver, WA	250

Spokane has approximately 1,053 agenda items per year, placing it in the middle range among the comparators. Madison has the highest agenda items per year at 2,239, followed by Boise (1,700) and Reno (720). Conversely, in cities like Salt Lake City (417), Tacoma (309), and Vancouver (250), there are fewer agenda items, because they are typically limited to major policy decisions, contract awards, and public hearings.

One of the main drivers for Madison's high number of agenda items (2,239) is its span of control. In Madison, all alcohol licensing decisions, planning and zoning decisions (e.g. preliminary plats and zoning amendments), and claims actions individually go through the full city Council, which contributes to the lengthy agenda. Additionally, Madison publicly numbers every committee referral and future-referral item as a discrete agenda entry, meaning items not yet ready for a vote still appear as formal numbered items on the public record. Boise (1,700) follows a similar approach but to a lesser extent. Its Council maintains direct oversight over routine financial approvals and individual contracts and agreements, while keeping licensing, claims, and future referrals off the agenda.

## 2.2 NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Similar to Spokane, comparable cities were found to have established neighborhood councils. However, the level of Council member involvement varies. The table below shows the Council’s involvement with established neighborhood councils.

City	Neighborhood Council	Council Involvement
Spokane, WA	Yes	<b>Council members are actively involved and attend meetings regularly.</b>
Madison, WI	Yes	Members serve as primary liaisons and attend meetings.
Boise, ID	Yes	Council members are not directly involved.
Reno, NV	Yes	Council members attend meeting in an ex-officio capacity.
Salt Lake City, UT	Yes	Council members attend meetings regularly.
Tacoma, WA	Yes	Council members attend meetings regularly.
Vancouver, WA	Yes	Council members are not directly involved.

Spokane Council members are actively involved in neighborhood councils, attending meetings regularly. Madison, Salt Lake City, and Tacoma follow a similar model, where Council members serve as primary liaisons or attend regular meetings. Reno Council members also attend in an ex-officio capacity and play an active role, including helping set meeting agendas and maintaining standing reporting items at every meeting. By contrast, Boise and Vancouver do not have direct Council involvement in neighborhood councils, even where such councils exist and are formally recognized.

### 2.3 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMITTEE WORKLOAD

Council members across cities are involved in a variety of committees, city-specific and external. External committees include regional and/or intergovernmental committees, whose agendas are not set by the city. The table below summarizes the number of internal and external committees in which Council members are involved, as well as the number of committee meetings they attend per year. The number of meetings is approximate, based on the number of committees and their meeting frequency. The plus sign (+) indicates the possibility of more committee involvement that is not explicitly stated.

City	Number of City-Specific Committees	Number of External Committees	Total Number of Committees	Approx. Number of Meetings per Year	Average Annual Committee Meetings Per Council Member
<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>37</b>
Madison, WI	23	Unknown	23+	168+	8.4+
Boise, ID	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Reno, NV	7	3	10	30	4.3
Salt Lake City, UT	25	3+	28+	120+	17.1+
Tacoma, WA	14	34	48	240+	26.7+
Vancouver, WA	25+	15	40+	60+	5.5+

Spokane's total committee count is 28, which is in the upper range among the comparators. Tacoma has the highest total at 48 committees, followed closely by Vancouver (40+). Salt Lake City (28+) and Madison (23+) are in the middle range. The city with the lowest number of total committees is Reno at 10 committees.

Spokane has nine city-specific committees, placing it in the low-range among the comparators. Vancouver and Salt Lake City have the highest count at over 25, followed closely by Madison (23). Reno has the lowest at 7. Most city-specific committees are issue-focused, such as public safety, zoning and planning, and finance and budgeting, which are among the most common committees across the comparators.

In terms of external committee participation, Spokane falls in the midrange with 19 external committees. Tacoma has the highest number of external committees at 34, mostly intergovernmental committees, with a few partnerships with state-level agencies. The most common external committees across the comparators include the regional transit and transportation committee, the airport committee, and the public health committee. Often, these committees are hosted by the regional transportation authority or the county.

Spokane has the highest volume of committee meetings per year among the comparators at approximately 259 meetings. The second highest is Tacoma, at over 240 meetings per year, not including external committee meetings as information was unavailable. Internal committees in Tacoma meet, on average, once or twice per month. The data shows that the number of committee meetings does not

necessarily fluctuate in relation to the number of committees, which suggests that meeting frequency varies greatly across committees.

The volume of committee meetings is a better measure of the Council's workload, compared to the number of committees. The data demonstrates that the volume of meetings does not necessarily vary with the number of committees. For example, Vancouver has the second highest number of total committees but ranks the second lowest in the number of committee meetings per year. This suggests that each committee varies greatly in the frequency of meetings and, therefore, creates a different level of workload. Spokane has the highest number of average annual committee meetings per Council member at 37, which is much higher than the comparators.

### 3. STAFFING LEVELS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staffing levels and structures vary substantially across comparators. The factors that impact staff levels include the number of Council members and the organizational structure. Those factors also influence the roles and responsibilities of supporting staff.

#### 3.1 STAFFING LEVELS

Two major differences in staffing level and structure across the cities are support staff assigned to individual Council members and the level of support from the City Clerk’s Office. Central staff is defined as personnel within the City Council office who support all Council members and do not report to any single Council member. Staff assigned to Council members is defined as staff assigned to and primarily supporting one Council member. The staff level is measured in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), where one FTE equals a staff member working 40 hours per week.

The table below summarizes the number of central staff, the number of staff assigned to individual Council members, the total number of staff supporting the Council, and the level of City Clerk’s Office involvement. Extensive support from the City Clerk’s Office is defined as regular support with routine functions, such as agenda management, material compilation, and distribution. Limited support is defined as periodic support for Council functions from the City Clerk’s Office.

The level of support provided by the City Clerk’s Office is largely shaped by organizational norms, governance structure, and City Council preferences regarding process management and the degree of reliance on centralized administrative functions. In Spokane, reliance on the City Clerk’s Office appears more limited due to established process and functional preferences. However, the City Charter defines a clear service role for the City Clerk, indicating that the City Clerk’s Office may provide a broader range of support functions should the Council choose to expand its use.

City	Central Staff (FTE)	Staff Assigned to Individual Members (FTE per Member)	Total Staff (FTE)	City Clerk’s Office Support
<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Limited</b>
Madison, WI	5	-	5	Extensive
Boise, ID	3	-	3	Extensive
Reno, NV	4	-	4	Limited
Salt Lake City, UT	32	0.5	32	Limited
Tacoma, WA	7	0.5	7	Extensive
Vancouver, WA	9	-	9	Limited

Spokane is one of only two cities that assigns dedicated staff to individual Council members, at 1.0 FTE per member. Salt Lake City and Tacoma are the only other comparators, at 0.5 FTE per member. All other comparators rely solely on central staff shared across the full Council. Note that Salt Lake City does not

officially assign staff to individual members, but the policy manual states that each member can expect 0.5 FTE of support from the central staff.

In addition to organizational structure, the number of Council members may also directly influence the number of support staff. The purpose of this analysis is to illustrate the average level of staff support relative to the number of Council members; it does not suggest that each Council member should expect the level of support listed.

The table below summarizes the number of staff, in FTE, per Council member, based on the total number of staff (including central staff and staff assigned to individual Council member).

City	Number of Council Members	FTE per Member
Spokane, WA	7	2.1
Madison, WI	20	0.3
Boise, ID	6	0.5
Reno, NV	7	0.6
Salt Lake City, UT	7	4.5
Tacoma, WA	9	0.8
Vancouver, WA	11	0.8

At 2.1 FTE per Council member, Spokane has the second-highest staff-to-member ratio among the comparators. A key driver is the assignment of a full-time staff member to each individual Council member. Salt Lake City has the highest support staff FTE per member at 4.5. It is important to note that, in Salt Lake City, all legislative and expert support is internal to the Council office, which contributes to the large number of support staff. Most other comparators have significantly lower ratios, ranging from 0.3 to 0.8 FTE per member, because they draw policy and technical expertise from other city departments rather than maintaining it within the Council office.

### 3.2 STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To further understand the level of internal support in the City Council office, we analyzed the roles and responsibilities of support staff.

The table below summarizes the positions within the City Council office by expertise and function. Where the number of staff is available, it is specified in parentheses after the position.

City	Leadership	Policy & Research	Communications	Intergovernmental / Community Engagement	Budget / Finance	Administrative	Other Positions / Subject Matter Expert
Spokane, WA	Council Office Director	Policy Advisor	Director of Communications and Community Engagement	Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs	Budget Director	Legislative Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing &amp; Homelessness Initiatives</li> <li>Neighborhood Connectivity Initiatives</li> <li>Equity &amp; Inclusion Initiatives</li> </ul>
Madison, WI	Chief of Staff (Strategic)	Legislative Analyst	–	Community Engagement (PR/Equity)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Assistant (Admin)</li> <li>Legislative Process Liaison (Legistar/Records)</li> </ul>	–
Boise, ID	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Reno, NV	Director of Policy & Strategy (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda Manager (1)</li> </ul>	–	Community Liaison (1)	–	–	–

City	Leadership	Policy & Research	Communications	Intergovernmental / Community Engagement	Budget / Finance	Administrative	Other Positions / Subject Matter Expert
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda Coordinator (1)</li> </ul>					
Salt Lake City, UT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Executive Director</li> <li>• Deputy Director (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative &amp; Policy Manager (1)</li> <li>• Public Policy Analysts (5)</li> <li>• Liaison / Policy Specialists (8)</li> </ul>	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Engagement / Comm Specialists (8)</li> </ul>	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant to Council Executive Director (1)</li> <li>• Council Admin Assistant (5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations Coordinator (1)</li> </ul>
Tacoma, WA	–	Policy Analysts (3)	–	Constituent Relations Analyst (1)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Manager (1)</li> <li>• Office Administrators (2)</li> </ul>	–
Vancouver, WA	City Managers (4)	–	–	–	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Assistant (2)</li> <li>• Administrative Assistant (2)</li> <li>• Boards and Commissions Coordinator (1)</li> </ul>	–

Spokane has one of the most functionally diverse internal staffing structures among the comparators. In addition to leadership (Council Office Director), policy support (Policy Advisor), and administrative staff (Legislative Assistants), Spokane maintains dedicated roles in communications, intergovernmental affairs, budget and finance, and subject matter expert positions focused on housing and homelessness, neighborhood connectivity, and equity and inclusion. This variety reflects the Council's choice to house a wide range of legislative support functions internally rather than drawing on citywide departments.

Salt Lake City is the closest comparator to Spokane in terms of internal functional variety, with dedicated roles across leadership, policy analysis, communications, and constituent engagement. By contrast, most comparator cities maintain more generalist internal offices. Madison and Tacoma both include policy and community engagement roles, but their offices are smaller and rely more heavily on support from other city departments. Reno's office is tightly focused on agenda management and community liaison work, with policy and strategy housed in a single director-level role. Boise's internal structure is not publicly available, limiting direct comparison.

Vancouver's City Council office is primarily staffed by City Managers and administrative assistants, with a Boards and Commissions Coordinator, but does not maintain policy, communications, or subject matter expert roles internally. This likely reflects Vancouver's Council-Manager government model, in which policy expertise resides in the City Manager's office rather than with the Council itself.

### 3.3 STAFF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

#### PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Due to the variety of organizational structures within the City Council offices selected for comparison, their approaches to staff performance management also differ. We examined their approaches to performance evaluation, staff grievances, and disciplinary actions.

The table below summarizes each City Council office's approach to performance evaluation, including the reviewer and frequency of reviews.

City	Reviewer	Frequency
Spokane, WA	Collaborative approach between Council Members and employees	Inconsistent
Madison, WI	Unknown	Unknown
Boise, ID	Direct supervisor	Unknown
Reno, NV	Direct supervisor	Annually
Salt Lake City, UT	Executive Director	Annually
Tacoma, WA	Direct supervisor	Quarterly
Vancouver, WA	Direct supervisor	Annually

Spokane's approach to performance evaluation is relatively similar to that of its peers, as some employee performance is evaluated; this is especially true for Legislative Assistants, who meet regularly with Council Members, though these meetings are not always structured or definitive as a performance review. The Council has also done some performance analysis of Central Staff in recent months, but this practice is new and still under development.

Most comparator cities conduct annual reviews led by a single designated reviewer. In Reno, Tacoma, and Vancouver, formal reviews are conducted by the direct supervisor. Tacoma conducts its staff evaluation on a quarterly basis, using the “core conversations model” to evaluate skills and competencies. Salt Lake City centralizes the process under the Executive Director. Overall, the available data suggests that annual reviews by a direct supervisor or executive are common.

### GRIEVANCES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

In addition to performance evaluation, we also examined each City Council office's approach to grievances and disciplinary actions. The table below summarizes how grievances and disciplinary actions are handled.

City	Process
Spokane, WA	<b>Generally, apply Human Resources policy. Council Office Director acts as an HR point of contact. Incidents, whether grievances and disciplinary actions, are most often navigated within the Council Office through application of HR policies.</b>
Madison, WI	Formal Multi-Step Process. Uses a standard city-wide grievance procedure involving immediate supervisors, Department Heads, and ultimately the Mayor or Council for appeals.
Boise, ID	Unknown
Reno, NV	Follows centralized HR policy, involving immediate supervisors, Department Directors, and HR.
Salt Lake City, UT	Unknown
Tacoma, WA	Follows these steps of escalation: 1. Immediate supervisor 2. Department Director 3. HR Director 4. Civil Service Board
Vancouver, WA	Follows centralized human resources policy. Council is informed if there are any legal concerns.

Unlike most of its peers, Spokane's approach to grievances and disciplinary actions has primarily been done informally, with some direct coordination with Human Resources, but at times, there has been confusion between the Administrative and Legislative roles regarding Council-specific concerns.

Conversely, the comparators for which data is available follow centralized HR models. Madison uses a formal multi-step process aligned with the standard city-wide grievance procedure, escalating through immediate supervisors, department heads, and ultimately the Mayor or Council for appeals. Reno likewise follows centralized HR policy, routing grievances through immediate supervisors, department directors, and HR. Tacoma's process is the most explicitly structured among the comparators, with a defined four-step escalation: immediate supervisor, Department Director, HR Director, and ultimately the Civil Service Board for appeal. Vancouver follows a centralized HR policy and additionally involves the Council when legal concerns arise.

Data is unavailable for Boise and Salt Lake City, limiting full comparison across all cities. Overall, the available evidence suggests that Council offices across the peer group do not typically maintain independent and internal grievance or disciplinary processes but instead operate within their city's broader HR infrastructure.

## 4. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### 4.1 OPERATIONAL MANUALS

Salt Lake City is the only city, among the selected comparators, that maintains a City Council operational manual. The manual provides guidelines for the legislative branch's internal operations, covering staffing, budgeting, public engagement, and coordination with the city administration. Additionally, Seattle also maintains a similar functional office handbook that serves as an internal operational guideline for Seattle's City Council Office. Both models will inform the development of the Spokane City Council Operations and Legislative Services Guide.

Note that Reno, Vancouver, and Tacoma were not considered in this section of the analysis because their Council-Manager form of government results in operational structures that are significantly different from Spokane. Information was unavailable for Madison and Boise, as internal handbooks are typically not published externally.

### 4.2 TECHNOLOGY AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Where information is available, most cities use a traditional web-based form, phone calls, and a centralized email address to receive constituent requests and inquiries. The table below summarizes tools that each city employs to manage constituent requests and inquiries.

City	Constituent Inquiries Management Software
Spokane, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Web-based form</b></li> <li>• <b>Phone</b></li> <li>• <b>Individual Council Member email addresses</b></li> <li>• <b>Centralized email address</b></li> </ul>
Madison, WI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> </ul>
Boise, ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> </ul>
Reno, NV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ServiceNow</li> <li>• RenoDirect (311)</li> </ul>

City	Constituent Inquiries Management Software
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> </ul>
Salt Lake City, UT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> <li>• Online Comment form</li> </ul>
Tacoma, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• TacomaFIRST (311)</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> </ul>
Vancouver, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based form</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Centralized email address</li> </ul>

All cities still utilize a traditional channel such as a phone system and centralized email address to receive constituent requests and inquiries. They also use a web form on their website, where constituents can send a message directly to the City Council office. Spokane uses the same three-channel approach as most comparators: a web-based form, a phone number, and a centralized email address.

Reno and Tacoma operate beyond this baseline. In addition to the standard channels, both cities utilize a 311-style service. In Reno, incoming requests are routed through ServiceNow, a case-tracking platform that logs status and escalates items to the Council when relevant. Tacoma utilizes an in-house software solution, incorporating the ArcGIS software, to capture the address associated with each constituent request. This gives Reno and Tacoma a more structured and auditable intake process for tracking and records maintenance, compared to Spokane and the other comparators.

Vancouver, while using the same traditional channels as Spokane, handles requests more manually. A Council Assistant reviews and routes each inquiry without the support of a tracking system. Information on how requests are tracked and managed internally is unavailable for most other cities, limiting a fuller comparison of back-end processes.

### 4.3 LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The table below summarizes the legislative process for evaluating the fiscal impacts of an agenda item.

City	Legislative Process for Fiscal Impact
Spokane, WA	Party initiating the agenda must outline the fiscal impact on the legislative Agenda Sheet, which is then evaluated by Council staff, such as the Budget Director.
Madison, WI	Mandatory fiscal note submitted to the Finance Department for every ordinance.
Boise, ID	Unknown
Reno, NV	Mandatory fiscal evaluation conducted by the Finance Department and incorporated as part of the agenda.
Salt Lake City, UT	Unknown
Tacoma, WA	Fiscal impact analysis is required as part of the policy proposed to the City Council for consideration.
Vancouver, WA	No formal fiscal impact process.

Spokane requires the party initiating an agenda item to outline its fiscal impact on the Legislative Agenda Sheet, which is then reviewed by Council staff including the Budget Director. Among the comparators with available data, Madison and Reno take a more centralized departmental approach. Madison requires a mandatory fiscal note submitted to the Finance Department for every ordinance. Reno similarly mandates a fiscal evaluation conducted by the Finance Department, which is incorporated directly into the agenda. Both processes route fiscal review through an external city department rather than relying on internal Council staff.

Tacoma requires a fiscal impact analysis to be included as part of the policy proposal for City Council’s consideration. The fiscal impact analysis requires a detailed cost breakdown, identification of the funding source and budget alignment, assessment of long-term staffing and recurring impacts, and a contingency fund balance log. Conversely, Vancouver has no formal fiscal impact process for legislative items. Council meetings function primarily as an information-sharing forum, with the Council directing the City Manager to instruct staff on financial matters. This reflects Vancouver's Council-Manager model, in which financial analysis is handled administratively rather than through the legislative process.

#### 4.4 EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS

The table below outlines functions and services within the City Council offices that are performed by external contractors.

City	Function
Spokane, WA	Lobbying
Madison, WI	Unknown
Boise, ID	Unknown
Reno, NV	None

City	Function
Salt Lake City, UT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Counsel</li> <li>• Audits</li> <li>• Specialized policy research</li> </ul>
Tacoma, WA	None
Vancouver, WA	Lobbying

The use of external contractors varies across the comparators, and data is limited for several cities. Where information is available, the functions contracted out tend to fall into two categories: specialized expertise and advocacy.

Spokane engages external contractors for lobbying. Vancouver is the only other comparator that similarly contracts for lobbying. Salt Lake City has the broadest use of external contractors among the comparators. It contracts for legal counsel, audits, and specialized policy research. Reno and Tacoma reported no use of external contractors; they rely entirely on internal staff and city department resources for Council support functions.

## 5. EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS

As part of this comparative assessment, we surveyed the selected comparator cities to gather information about their City Council operations and practices. In addition to operational questions, the survey asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of their Council office's practices across key topic areas. Ratings were provided on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents ineffective and 5 represents highly effective.

Two cities responded with effectiveness ratings: Reno and Vancouver. They both rated their Council office practices as moderately to highly effective, with similar overall scores (3.8 and 3.6) and consistent views on workload and roles, indicating generally solid role clarity but only moderate effectiveness in workload management. The largest differences occur in staffing and policies, with Vancouver expressing greater confidence in its staffing model and Reno rating its policy and procedural framework particularly strong. As self-reported assessments, these results reflect individual perspectives and are best interpreted as supplemental context rather than objective measures of organizational performance.

## REPORT APPENDIX

### 1. EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS BY QUESTIONS

The table below shows the effectiveness ratings for each question included in the survey.

Ineffective				Highly Effective
1	2	3	4	5
Question			Reno, NV	Vancouver, WA
<b>Council Workload</b>				
How many Council meetings are held per month?			3	5
How many Council agenda items are scheduled per year?			3	4
Does your community have neighborhood councils? If so, how are Council members involved supporting these groups, attending meetings, etc.?			4	3
Please list all committees that are managed/staffed by the Council Office, including the Council's role (e.g., administrative support, agenda preparation, coordination, or advisory support).			4	4
Of these committees, please distinguish between city-specific committees and regional or intergovernmental committees (e.g., county boards, regional authorities, joint powers authorities), and identify the number of Council members who participate in each.			3	3
How many total committee meetings are held annually, by type (City-specific vs. regional/intergovernmental/community)?			4	2
<b>Staffing</b>				
How many total staff members support the City Council (excluding elected officials)?			3	4
How many staff work directly for the legislative branch, and serve all Council members (central staff)?			3	4
How many staff are assigned to individual Council Members?			3	4
<b>Roles / Responsibilities</b>				
What titles and subject matter expertise areas exist within the staff who serve all Council members (central staff)?			4	4
How are staff roles divided among staff?			4	4
<b>Policies / Procedures</b>				
Do you maintain a formal Council office operational manual to define and guide internal office policies and procedures? If so, please provide us a copy.			4	2
Do you use a software to manage constituent inquiries and requests? If so, what is the software?			5	2
Does the Council office use external contractors (legal, research, IT)? If so, for which functions?			N/A	4

How are staff performance evaluations conducted? Frequency, who conducts these, etc.	5	4
Do you use Council, Administrative, or a combination of processes for handling employee grievances or disciplinary actions?	5	4
Do you have a defined legislative process for identifying fiscal impacts of considerations (legislative, administrative proposals, etc.)? If so, please describe this process.	5	4
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>

## APPENDIX C – BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

This document presents an evaluation of the organizational and operational approaches for the City Council Office in Spokane, WA. This relates specifically to current practices, assessed against established best management practices in local government. The analysis is a key component of the broader study, which is designed to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement within the City Council’s structure and functional operations.

The findings outlined here will directly inform the development of targeted recommendations to enhance efficiency, consistency, and service delivery, in alignment with recognized public-sector standards. Conducting this type of evaluation provides value by offering an objective baseline of current operations, promoting transparency, and ensuring that City Council services remain responsive to community needs.

Furthermore, aligning with best practices supports continuous improvement, informed decision-making, and accountability, ultimately contributing to more effective governance and public trust.

## 2. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

This chapter provides a preliminary overall assessment of current operations and processes and identifies strengths, compliance with best management practices, and initial opportunities for operational improvements. The evaluation is presented as a checklist and indicates whether current practices meet the target.

### 2.1 DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

This Best Management Practices (BMPs) assessment represents an important step in reporting on initial key findings and opportunities related to the Spokane City Council office departmental operations and processes.

These BMPs are drawn from a combination of nationally recognized standards and professional guidance as well as historic data and evolving trends in legislative operations. Core sources include:

- National League of Cities (NLC)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA)
- International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC)

These sources reflect both statutory compliance requirements and broader principles of ethical, transparent, and effective management in public organizations. According to the statement description, BMPs and industry standards generally require a policy, procedure, or program to be documented to meet the standard. By comparing existing practices against these standards, the evaluation identifies strengths, potential gaps, and opportunities for improvement to guide future policy updates, workflow refinements, and strategic investments that strengthen legislative capacity.

An 'X' in the Meets column indicates that the practice does not meet the described operational target. A '~' indicates partial progress toward the operational target, but the best practices are still unmet. A '✓' indicates that the best practice is met.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
<b>GOVERNANCE, ROLES, AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY</b>			
Clear Separation of Powers	The City has clearly defined and maintains the separation between legislative (Council) and executive (Mayor) functions through ordinance, policy, and practice to ensure accountability, minimize overlap, and support effective governance.	✓	Foundational roles of the legislative and executive branches of government are defined within the Revised Code of Washington, the City Charter, and Spokane City Code.
Formalized Council Roles and Responsibilities	The City utilizes written role descriptions for Council Members, Council staff, and legislative leadership to ensure clarity of responsibilities and decision-making authority.	~	The City Code outlines the broad roles of the Council President and Council Members. However, it lacks clearly defined day-to-day roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
Council Rules of Procedure	The City Council maintains formal, periodically updated rules of procedure governing meetings, debate, voting, and legislative processes to ensure consistency and transparency.	✓	The Council has established Rules of Procedure and annually reviews and updates these based on needs.
Onboarding and Information Sharing	The City Council receives onboard training including an overview and access to Council Rules of Procedure and other vital internal documents.	X	There is no established onboarding process for new Council Members.
Legislative Authority Framework	The City clearly documents the scope of legislative authority, including ordinance adoption, budget approval, and oversight responsibilities, aligned with state law and municipal code.	✓	The scope and role of the legislative branch are clearly defined, understood, and consistently applied.
Emergency and Safety Training	Council Members and staff receive training in emergency procedures and operations, supported by formal policies that ensure all employees maintain current, job-related safety and health training.	✓	There are safety plans and trainings in place and provided proactively to Council Members and Staff.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Standardized Legislative and Agenda Development Processes	The City Council maintains a standardized, documented process for ordinance, resolution, and policy development from initiation through adoption, supported by formal agenda-setting procedures that include submission deadlines, review protocols, and prioritization criteria.	~	An electronic workflow is in place through the OnBase platform, and formal agenda-setting procedures exist, including submission deadlines and elements of the review process. However, process rules are applied inconsistently due to workload demands and clear, standardized criteria for scheduling, review, and prioritization of Council items are not fully developed or uniformly applied.
Legislative Tracking System	A centralized system is used to track legislation status, amendments, and key milestones to ensure transparency and continuity.	~	OnBase provides a centralized system for tracking legislative timelines and records. Inconsistent staff access and limited training reduce its effectiveness, resulting in gaps in awareness and underutilization of available functionality.
Policy Analysis Standards	The City Council requires consistent analytical frameworks for legislative items, including fiscal impact, operational implications, and policy alignment.	~	The Council currently requests fiscal notes and equity evaluations for proposed legislation, but the formal procedures for consistently implementing and analyzing these frameworks remain largely undefined. There is inconsistency in application standards being requisite across different proposals.
Equitable Access to Legislative Resources and Processes	The City Council Office has adopted a policy ensuring that all Council Members have equal and consistent access to legislative processes, staff support, information systems, and administrative resources through standardized protocols and centralized coordination.	<b>X</b>	The City Council Office has not adopted a formalized policy to ensure equal and consistent access to legislative processes, staff support, information systems, and administrative resources. As a result, internal feedback indicated that Central Staff and communications support is unevenly distributed for individual Council Members.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Council-Initiated Policy Framework	A structured process is in place for Council Members to introduce and advance policy initiatives independent of executive proposals.	✓	A structured legislative process enables Council Members to independently advance policy initiatives through assistance from their Legislative Assistant, committees, and greater standardization and resourcing, including clearer pathways for Central Staff support, dedicated drafting resources, and defined routing protocols.
<b>STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND PRIORITY SETTING</b>			
Annual Goal Setting Process	The City Council conducts annual goal-setting sessions to establish legislative priorities and performance expectations.	~	The Council releases a general legislative agenda in December, but the absence of formal goal-setting retreats limits cohesive strategic planning and results in less clearly defined performance expectations.
Council Strategic Work Plan	The City Council maintains a Council-driven strategic work plan that aligns legislative priorities with community needs and long-term objectives.	~	The City Council currently lacks a unified, long-term strategic work plan, resulting in the center focus of the Council being that each individual office pursuing their own priorities without also having a cohesive legislative vision and areas of mutual support. While policy direction is provided through the budget resolution, commission workplans, and annual legislative priorities, these elements do not form a comprehensive strategic framework.
<b>STAFFING STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</b>			
Defined Council Staff Functions	Staff roles are clearly defined to support research, drafting, and coordination functions.	~	Formal job descriptions outline research and coordination duties for central staff, the practice is only partially met because employees consistently report widespread role ambiguity, blurred lines of responsibility, and confusing service overlaps with executive branch departments.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Workload-Based Staffing Model	Staffing levels align with legislative workload, committee assignments, and constituent service demands.	~	The Council Office employs LAs to support individual Council Members. Central staff provide office management, policy and budget direction, and manage Council-specific initiatives. Current staff roles are not fully aligned with legislative functions, presenting an opportunity to more clearly define responsibilities and strengthen the Council Office’s focus on policy development and budget oversight.
Professional Development and Training	Ongoing training is provided for Council staff in policy analysis, legislative drafting, and municipal governance best practices.	~	A dedicated training budget exists. However, staff report limited onboarding and inconsistent position specific training opportunities and tools, relying largely self-directed professional development.
<b>LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b>			
Standardized Staff Reports	There are requirements for consistent staff report formats that include background, analysis, fiscal impact, and recommended action.	~	The Council uses an Agenda Sheet requiring background summaries, fiscal impacts, and equity evaluations. However, legislative analysis is limited to certain positions, and standardized templates are not consistently accessible as there is not a single repository for current staff documents.
Data-Driven Decision Support	Legislative decisions are supported by reliable data, benchmarking, and clearly defined performance metrics that measure service levels, outcomes, efficiency, and progress toward strategic goals.	~	Items presented to the Council don’t always contain a data analysis component, and there aren’t clear measurements for Legislative success.
Document Management System	The City maintains a centralized, accessible repository for legislative documents, records, and historical actions.	✓	The City Clerk’s Office serves as the official records officer for the Council, prepares meeting minutes and official records of meetings, and manages and maintains the Council’s historic files.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Knowledge Management Practices	Processes are implemented to capture institutional knowledge and ensure continuity across election cycles and staff turnover.	~	There are limited standard operating procedures, onboarding materials, process documentation, and standardized file-sharing practices, increasing the risk of lost institutional knowledge during staff transitions and election cycles.
<b>COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND LEGISLATIVE EFFICIENCY</b>			
Defined Committee Roles and Scope	The Council Office clearly defines the purpose, authority, and scope of Council committees.	~	The City Council has established four topical standing committees with generally defined roles and areas of oversight. However, some overlap in jurisdiction can occur with multifaceted items, at times creating uncertainty regarding initial placement and proper review of proposals.
Committee Work Planning	The City Council office uses annual or quarterly work plans for committees aligned with Council priorities.	~	Standing committees currently operate without formalized work plans, often limiting proactive, goal-driven policy development.
Efficient Meeting Management	Standards are in place to ensure scheduled meetings are well-structured, time-managed, and outcome-oriented.	X	Standards for meeting purpose, effectiveness, and efficiency are not well defined. This can result in Council Members and staff participating in meetings that are not an optimal use of time.
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION</b>			
Structured Department Coordination	Formal coordination protocols between Council staff and City departments are in place to support legislative analysis and implementation.	~	Central staff frequently engage with executive departments. There is an absence of standardized protocols for legislative analysis and post-passage handoffs which creates ambiguity in project ownership and can lead to inconsistent follow-through.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Intergovernmental Relations Strategy	A coordinated approach is used for regional, state, and federal engagement is maintained and aligned with legislative priorities.	✓	The City Council employs a Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs to manage annual legislative agendas and oversee the City's independent state and federal lobbyists.
Administrative – Legislative Communication Protocols	Structured coordination mechanisms and established communication channels with the City's Administrative branch of government are in place to support information sharing and collaboration on aligned legislative and administrative priorities, while maintaining Legislative independence.	~	Some coordination and communication channels with the City's Administrative branch of government exist, but the absence of formal, standardized processes and points of coordination results in reliance on individual relationships and ad hoc communication, creating variability and highlighting the need for consistent structures that extend beyond personalities.
<b>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY</b>			
Transparent Legislative Processes	The City Council Office ensures all legislative actions, agendas, and supporting materials are publicly accessible in a timely manner.	✓	Legislative actions, agendas, and supporting materials are publicly accessible and timely, supported by the Communications Director and formal public hearing processes. Opportunities remain to expand proactive communication and use of the Council's webpage to further accessibility and support earlier and more meaningful public engagement.
Public Participation Framework	Structured opportunities for public input are provided, including hearings, comment periods, and advisory bodies.	✓	The City successfully provides structured and consistent opportunities for public input through formal public hearings during the ordinance adoption process, as well as through established advisory bodies such as Boards, Commissions, Neighborhood Councils, and the Community Assembly.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Constituent Services Model	Standardized processes are established for managing and responding to constituent inquiries and service requests.	~	Council members, LAs, and Central Staff all consistently respond to constituent communications. The absence of a standardized protocol and centralized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system results in fragmented, ad hoc approaches that limit coordination, consistency, and the ability to maintain a shared record of inquiries and responses.
<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>			
Legislative Performance Metrics	Performance indicators are defined and monitored related to legislative efficiency, policy outcomes, and constituent responsiveness.	X	There are currently no formal performance indicators being monitored to evaluate the Council's overall effectiveness, legislative efficiency, or policy outcomes.
Council Self-Evaluation Process	The City Council conducts periodic self-assessments to evaluate Council effectiveness and governance practices.	X	There are no periodic self-assessment mechanisms in place to evaluate overall legislative and governance effectiveness.
Ethics and Accountability Standards	The City Council has clear ethics policies, conflict-of-interest requirements, and accountability mechanisms for elected officials and staff.	~	The City's Code of Ethics is referenced in staff job descriptions. However, conflict-of-interest disclosures are not consistently completed, and accountability measures and reporting mechanisms for workplace grievances are not clearly defined.
<b>TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION</b>			
Digital Public Engagement Tools	The Council uses digital platforms to expand access to meetings, materials, and public participation opportunities.	✓	The City Council uses hybrid meeting technology with livestreaming capabilities, broadcasting legislative sessions via City Cable 5, and maintaining an online presence to ensure public proceedings and materials remain highly accessible to the community.

TITLE	PRACTICE STATEMENT DESCRIPTION	MEETS	COMMENT
Data Integration and Reporting Tools	The Council Office leverages integrated data systems to support real-time reporting and informed legislative decision-making.	<b>X</b>	The absence of integrated data systems, centralized tracking tools, and dedicated analytical capacity limits the ability to support real-time reporting and consistently inform legislative decision-making.

## 2.2 KEY STRENGTHS

The diagnostic assessment is designed to identify and reinforce organizational strengths that are functioning effectively and should be retained, while also highlighting opportunities for enhancement. This approach ensures that the City Council builds upon established successes and preserves practices that contribute to consistent, efficient outcomes. Key strengths of the current approach include:

- A strong separation-of-powers framework is in place, with clear delineation between legislative and executive functions established in the City Charter and Code, thereby reinforcing accountability and minimizing overlap.
- The City Council demonstrates strong digital accessibility and transparency by using hybrid meeting technology, livestreaming, City Cable 5 broadcasts, and an active online presence to ensure broad public access to legislative proceedings and materials.
- An established public participation framework supports inclusive engagement through formal public hearings and a robust network of advisory bodies, including Boards, Commissions, Neighborhood Councils, and the Community Assembly, which furthers community engagement.
- The City maintains formal Rules of Procedure that are regularly reviewed and updated, promoting consistency, transparency, and adaptability in legislative processes.
- Existing use of committee structures and legislative tracking systems provides a foundational framework for agenda development and legislative workflow, supporting coordination and review of proposed actions.

These are just a few examples of the strengths of the current operations and where the City is currently meeting best practices.

## 2.3 KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The comparison of the City Council's current approach to best management practices also identified opportunities for improvement. Notable opportunities include:

- Strengthening ethics and compliance practices through comprehensive policies for Council members and staff, regular training, formal conflict-of-interest disclosures, and clear reporting and accountability mechanisms.

- Developing and consistently tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) across internal operations and constituent services to improve accountability and service delivery.
- Formalizing communication protocols and proactive engagement strategies to ensure early, consistent information sharing and transparency throughout the legislative process.
- Strengthening executive coordination and intergovernmental engagement through consistent reporting, structured collaboration with the Mayor's Office, and a clearly defined strategy would enhance alignment and regional effectiveness.
- Establishing a structured annual self-evaluation process with defined performance metrics to support ongoing assessment of operational efficiency, legislative effectiveness, and governance practices.

The project team will expand on these, including providing actionable recommendations and other identified issues in forthcoming analyses, drafts, and final reports.

## **APPENDIX D – LEGISLATIVE SERVICE & OPERATIONS GUIDE**

The following document presents a proposed legislative service and operations guide for the City of Spokane City Council Office.

# CITY OF SPOKANE

City Council Office

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## LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AND COUNCIL OPERATIONS GUIDE

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*Roles, Responsibilities, Protocols & Performance Standards*

Effective: 2026 | 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, WA 99201

Questions: contact the **Council Executive Director**

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## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Purpose

The Legislative Services and Council Operations Guide is the primary operational reference for all Council Office staff and newly elected Council Members. It documents roles, responsibilities, protocols, and performance expectations that govern how the City Council and its staff deliver legislative services to the residents of Spokane.

It serves four purposes:

- **Onboarding:** Orient newly elected officials and newly hired staff to office operations, expectations, and resources.
- **Consistency:** Establish shared standards for assigning, performing, and communicating work.
- **Accountability:** Define clear expectations to support performance management.
- **Continuity:** Preserve institutional knowledge through election cycles and staff transitions.

This guide supplements — and does not supersede — the City Charter, the Spokane Municipal Code (SMC), the Council Rules of Procedure, and applicable City administrative policies. Where conflicts arise, the formal legal authorities take precedence.

This is a living document. The Council is responsible for reviewing and, by resolution, adopting an updated version of this each year, ensuring that it continually reflects the Council's vision and desired legislative approach. The **Council Executive Director** is responsible for maintaining and distributing current versions of this Guide.

### 1.2 Mission & Values

The Council Office exists to support the City Council's mission as the City's legislative body.

*Mission: To provide professional, nonpartisan legislative support that enables the City Council to govern effectively, transparently, and in the public interest.*

The office is guided by these values:

- **Public Service:** The Council Office's primary obligation is to serve the residents of Spokane and uphold the public interest through effective, equitable, and accountable legislative support, responsive constituent services, and accessible policymaking processes.
- **Professionalism:** Council Members and staff are expected to maintain an atmosphere of professionalism grounded in respect, preparedness, accountability, and constructive communication. Staff is expected to provide accurate, timely, and solution-oriented work products that support informed decision-making and effective governance. Professionalism is demonstrated through respectful interactions, adherence to established policies and procedures, appropriate workplace conduct, and a commitment to effective legislative operations.
- **Integrity:** Council Members and staff are expected to conduct themselves with accountability, impartiality, mutual respect, and responsible stewardship of public resources. While Council Members appropriately advance policy priorities reflective of their elected roles, staff are expected to maintain objectivity, neutrality, and professional independence in performing their responsibilities.
- **Responsiveness:** Council Members and staff are expected to be responsive, accessible, and professional in their interactions with one another, constituents, partner agencies, and stakeholders. Responsiveness includes timely communication, reliable follow-up, and equitable access to staff support and organizational resources.
- **Continuity:** Institutional knowledge, operational practices, and legislative records are maintained and transferred to support organizational consistency, stability, and effective operations regardless of election outcomes or staff changes.

## 2. Governance Context & Organizational Overview

### 2.1 Form of Government

Spokane (population approximately 230,609) operates under a Council-Mayor form of government. The City Charter vests all ordinance-making and budget appropriations authority in the City Council while assigning executive and administrative authority to the Mayor. This structural separation means the Council requires independent professional capacity to effectively develop, evaluate, and implement policy.

### 2.2 Council Composition

The City Council is composed of seven elected members: one Council President, elected at large, who serves as presiding officer; and six Council Members, each representing one of three population-based geographic districts (two per district). All members serve four-year terms, limited to two consecutive terms. The Council President and each Council Member have equal voting rights.

### 2.3 Governing Authorities

Authority	Relevant Provisions
Spokane City Charter	Legislative authority of the Council (Article III); form of government (Article IV); ethics and conflicts of interest (Art. IV §36); neighborhood councils (Article VIII). Ordinances require two public title readings; the Mayor has 10 days to respond to a Council action with veto power; the Council may override a veto within 30 days by five affirmative votes.
Spokane Municipal Code (SMC)	SMC §02.005 defines Council composition, the Council President’s role as department head, and the Council Legislative Assistant structure. SMC §02.01 governs Rules of Procedure. SMC §01.04 establishes the City’s ethics code.
Council Rules of Procedure	Adopted by resolution (currently Resolution 2026-0009, adopted March 9, 2026). Governs meeting conduct, agenda processes, committee operations, public comment, voting, and parliamentary procedure. Reviewed and updated annually by February 28.
Washington State Law	Governs city authority and responsibilities, open public meetings (RCW 42.30), public records (RCW 42.56), the Washington Minimum Wage Act (WMWA) governing overtime, and other applicable requirements.

### 2.4 Staffing Model

The Council Office uses a hybrid model: centralized professional staff serving the full Council, and member-assigned Legislative Assistants supporting individual Council Members.

Position	Count	Service Type
Council President + Council Members	7 elected	Legislative Body

Council Executive/Office Director	1	Centralized
Policy Advisor	1	Centralized
Budget Director	1	Centralized
Director of Communications	1	Centralized
Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs	1	Centralized
Policy Analyst	0-1	Centralized
Budget Analyst	0-1	Centralized
Senior Executive Assistant	0-1	Centralized
Legislative Assistants	3-7	Member/District-Assigned

Centralized positions serve the Council as a whole. Member-assigned Legislative Assistants serve their individual Council Member/the Council members elected to their respective district.

## 2.5 Supervisory Structure

The Council President serves as department head and provides high-level oversight of the Council Office. The Council Executive Director manages day-to-day operations and has direct supervisory authority over all Central Staff. All Council Office employees serve in an at-will capacity. Each Council Member directly hires, supervises, and may discharge their assigned Legislative Assistant, with the Council Executive Director providing HR oversight. HR and administrative authority over Central Staff rests exclusively with the Council Executive Director; individual Council Members may not direct Central Staff assignments without coordinating through the Council Executive Director.

## 2.6 Office Budget

The Council Office budget is adopted annually as part of the City’s General Fund. The Council President serves as the primary signatory for Council Office budgetary expenditures. The Council President may approve budget expenditures of \$10,000 or less without a full council vote; expenditures above \$10,000 that differ from the adopted budget require approval by four Council Members at an open public meeting.

If there is a question about whether a proposed expenditure falls within or outside the \$10,000 threshold — including disputes about whether related purchases should be treated as a single transaction — the Council Executive Director makes an initial determination in consultation with the Budget Director. If the Council President disagrees with that determination, the matter is brought to the full Council for resolution at the next available open public meeting before the expenditure is authorized.

### 3. Roles & Responsibilities

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Role definitions below describe primary duties and scope. They supplement and should be read alongside official job classifications.

#### 3.1 Council President

In addition to all duties shared with Council Members, the Council President:

- Presides over all City Council meetings and ensures compliance with the Rules of Procedure.
- Represents the Council on intergovernmental boards and regional bodies (Airport Board, PFG Board, Community Assembly, etc.).
- Makes annual appointments of Council Members to standing committees, external boards, and commissions, subject to full Council confirmation.
- Serves as department head of the Council Office; delegates day-to-day management to the Council Executive Director.
- Approves travel, budget expenditures, and administrative matters on behalf of the Council Office.
- Serves as Mayor Pro Tem in the Mayor's absence or incapacity, at which time legislative responsibilities are temporarily suspended.
- Participates in recurring, weekly one-on-one meetings with the Mayor.
- Receives some administrative support from the **Senior Executive Assistant**.

#### 3.2 Council Members

Council Members carry out the following legislative, policy, and community responsibilities:

- Research, evaluate, deliberate, and vote on ordinances, resolutions, budgets, and policy measures.
- Develop, sponsor, and advance policy initiatives that reflect district priorities, community needs, and broader interests of the City.
- Chair or serve on standing committees: Public Safety & Community Health; Public Infrastructure, Environment & Sustainability (PIES); Urban Experience; and Finance & Administration.
- Represent the City's legislative interests on assigned regional boards, commissions, intergovernmental committees, and community partnerships.
- Maintain accessible, responsive, and professional constituent services.
- Participate in public communication efforts, including media interviews, public meetings, community outreach, and dissemination of legislative information.
- Engage regularly with Neighborhood Councils, community organizations, and partner agencies to support collaboration, transparency, and public involvement in local governance.
- Participate in recurring coordination meetings with the Mayor, Council leadership, staff, and other governmental partners to support intergovernmental communication and organizational alignment.
- Hire, supervise, direct, and may discharge assigned Legislative Assistant staff.
- Attend and actively participate in required legislative functions, including agenda review sessions, legislative meetings, standing committee meetings, study sessions, regional assignments, and district-related community meetings and events.

#### 3.3 Council Executive Director

The Council Executive Director is the chief administrative officer of the Council Office, providing strategic leadership, operational oversight, and day-to-day management support to the City Council and Central Staff. Reporting to the Council President and Council Members, the position oversees legislative support operations, Central Staff supervision, workflow coordination, agenda management, personnel and budget administration, and the development of standardized procedures to ensure consistent, effective, and equitable support services aligned with Council priorities and legislative responsibilities.

### 3.4 Policy Advisor

The Policy Advisor serves as the lead for procedural and policy development and analysis, supporting the City Council by conducting research on initiatives and reviewing ordinances, resolutions, and legislative proposals. The position coordinates with the City Attorney's Office on Council-related legal matters, provides guidance on legislative procedures and compliance with Council Rules of Procedure, supports legislative workflow coordination and operational consistency, and assists in the supervision of **Policy Analyst**.

### 3.5 Budget Director

The Budget Director provides fiscal oversight, budget analysis, and financial policy support to the City Council, including review of the Mayor's proposed budget, preparation of budget amendments, coordination of fiscal notes, and analysis of legislative and financial impacts. The position serves as the Council's primary resource for budget development, financial forecasting, labor and contract-related fiscal analysis, and oversight of the Council Office budget, while supervising budget analyst and supporting Council decision-making throughout the annual budget process.

### 3.6 Director of Communications

The Director of Communications provides the Council with an independent voice through communications, media relations, and public information support separate from the executive branch. The position oversees Council communications strategies, public outreach, media coordination, digital communications, and Council meeting broadcast content, while supporting consistent messaging across Council offices and maintaining a Council-approved communications strategic plan to guide communication priorities, protocols, and resource allocation.

### 3.7 Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs provides the City Council with legislative advocacy, government relations, and regional coordination support, including monitoring federal, state, and regional legislative activity; coordinating lobbying and legislative agenda efforts; and facilitating partnerships with government agencies, regional organizations, and community stakeholders. The position also supports policy analysis and strategic coordination related to intergovernmental relations, nonprofit and community partnerships, grant and funding opportunities, and other regional policy initiatives affecting Council priorities and legislative interests.

### 3.8 Policy Analyst

The Policy Analyst(s) provide the City Council and Central Staff with dedicated legislative, policy, and analytical support within assigned subject-matter portfolios aligned with Council priorities and major areas of City operations, and coordination with the appropriate Administrative departments. Responsibilities include conducting policy research and analysis, supporting ordinance and resolution development, preparing legislative briefings and presentations, assisting with committee operations and agenda review, monitoring legislative and regional developments, and providing research and background materials to support Council decision-making. One Analyst position is assigned, in whole or in part, to fiscal analysis functions in coordination with the Budget Director. These positions are structured to provide focused legislative and policy support aligned with the Council's core legislative mission.

### 3.9 Senior Executive Assistant

The Senior Executive Assistant provides centralized administrative coordination and executive-level support to the City Council and Central Staff under the direction of the Council Executive Director, including scheduling and communications support for the Council President, constituent inquiry coordination, public records request tracking, purchasing and expense administration, and logistical

support for Council meetings and events. The position also maintains centralized calendars, standardized office procedures, and administrative workflows, including preparation of committee agendas in coordination with Policy Analysts.

### **3.10 Legislative Assistants**

Legislative Assistants provide primarily administrative and constituent support to their assigned Council Member, including calendar management, scheduling, constituent communications, meeting and event coordination, correspondence preparation, district outreach coordination, and assistance with communications and community engagement activities. The position serves as the primary day-to-day administrative support resource for Council Members and facilitates coordination between Council Members, constituents, community organizations, and City departments.

Legislative Assistants are assigned to support specific Council Member offices and are expected to coordinate cross-office workload requests through the Senior Executive Assistant. Communications on legislative matters where the Council has not formally taken a position must be clearly identified as representing the views of the individual Council Member rather than the full Council.

## 4. Core Services & Work Products

### 4.1 Primary Services

Primary services most directly advance the Council's legislative mission and receive priority in workload planning. This is a coordinated effort between the Council and Administration, with roles outlined below:

- **Legislative Research & Analysis:** Objective, independent research and analysis on policy issues, ordinances, resolutions, and legislative proposals.
- **Policy & Ordinance Development:** Translating Council initiatives and ideas into enforceable policy and law through research, stakeholder engagement, drafting, and legal review.
- **Budget Review & Fiscal Oversight:** Developing Council goals and priorities, independently analyzing the Mayor's proposed budget, developing budget amendments, and evaluating fiscal impacts of legislation.
- **Agenda & Legislative Process Management:** Managing the legislative workflow from item submission through committee review, agenda placement, public hearing, and final Council action.
- **Constituent Services:** Primary contact for city residents, including navigating district-specific needs and requests, responding to inquiries, coordinating issue resolution with City departments, and managing public records requests.
- **Public Communications:** Council communications, media relations, legislative summaries, and community outreach and education.
- **Committee & Meeting Coordination:** Organizing committee work programs, agendas, and facilitating public deliberation.
- **Intergovernmental Affairs:** Advancing the City's federal and state legislative agenda and coordinating with regional bodies.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitating community input and public participation processes.
- **Performance & Oversight Support:** Monitoring implementation and effectiveness of adopted legislation and budget allocations.

### 4.2 Legislative Development Materials

#### Legislative Initiatives

- **Legislative Intake Forms:** Capture the purpose, sponsor, requested timeline, desired outcome, and known fiscal, legal, operational, or stakeholder considerations.
- **Initiative Screening Summaries:** Determine the appropriate level of staff analysis, coordination needs, work product type, and readiness for further development.
- **Policy and Analytical Memos:** Evaluate the initiative's background, policy tradeoffs, legal considerations, fiscal impacts, implementation risks, and Council options.
- **Fiscal and Implementation Summaries:** Identify budgetary impacts, staffing needs, departmental responsibilities, timeline considerations, and operational barriers.
- **Vetting and Prioritization Reviews:** Assess larger or more complex initiatives to determine organizational readiness, resource requirements, sequencing, and whether sufficient staff, fiscal, or policy support exists to advance the item.
- **Draft Legislative and Referral Materials:** Translate Council direction into draft ordinances, resolutions, amendments, policy language, budget action items, or committee/Council referral materials.

#### Policy & Legislative Analysis

- **Descriptive Briefings:** Summarize what a proposed action is intended to accomplish, with background and relevant considerations. Used for routine or ministerial items.

- **Analytical Memos:** Provide descriptive content plus independent analysis of policy tradeoffs, implementation risks, legal considerations, and options for Council action.
- **Policy Strategy Memos:** Frame a policy problem, map the legal and fiscal landscape, and present a range of legislative options and timelines.

### Budget & Fiscal Products

- **Fiscal Notes:** Required for all significant legislation, including proposals that create or modify City programs or services, add or reduce staffing, establish new service levels, amend fees or revenues, require new appropriations or budget amendments, affect capital or operating costs, create ongoing financial obligations, or shift work responsibilities across departments. Fiscal notes evaluate the short and long-term financial impact of proposed legislation on city resources, including anticipated costs, savings, revenue impacts, funding sources, implementation needs, and staffing implications.
- **Budget Overview Papers:** Solidify the Council's annual budget priorities and provide these to the Mayor's office for consideration in budget development. Summarize the Mayor's proposed budget by area, identify issues for Council consideration, and present options for amendment.
- **Budget Amendments:** Formal legislative modifications to the proposed budget, drafted by the Budget Director.

### Legislative Drafts

- **Ordinances:** Formal legal enactments. Drafted by the Policy Advisor or **Policy Analysts** in coordination with the City Attorney's Office.
- **Resolutions:** Formal expressions of Council policy or direction. May be drafted by Central Staff or Legislative Assistants, depending on subject matter.

### Board, Commission, Committee Appointments

- **Board & Commission Appointments:** **Policy Analysts** coordinate the application, review, and presentation process for Board, Commission, and Committee appointments in their assigned areas, producing materials for routine appointment or reappointment actions.
- **Director Confirmation Processes:** **Policy Analysts** lead the confirmation process for Mayoral appointments subject to Council confirmation in their assigned areas.

### Circumstances Not Requiring a Central Staff Deliverable

Not every item before the Council requires Central Staff analysis. For the following categories, Legislative Assistants lead the process. Central Staff members are available to answer process questions and review draft materials for accuracy, but do not prepare formal memos or presentations:

- **Resolutions on Matters Outside the City's Direct Authority:** For resolutions making statements related to federal or state policies (e.g., positions on national legislation), Legislative Assistants lead drafting. Central Staff ensures City Attorney review occurs and the resolution is procedurally ready for introduction and may draft amendments.
- **Routine Items:** Items that are ministerial, non-controversial, and have been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office may proceed without a Central Staff memo when the **Council Executive Director** determines that the Executive's transmittal materials provide sufficient information for Council decision-making.

In all cases, the **Council Executive Director** makes the final determination on whether a Central Staff work product is required, based on available capacity, the complexity of the item, and the Council's information needs.

## 4.3 Staff Assignment & Request Protocols

### Request Thresholds

The following thresholds govern how requests are routed and tracked:

- Requests with a completion timeline of less than four hours (half day) may be communicated directly by a Council Member to the relevant staff member. All such direct assignments must be reported to the **Council Executive Director**.
- Requests with a completion timeline of more than four hours (half day) are to be directed to the **Council Executive Director**, who coordinates the assignment.
- Requests with a completion timeline of 20 or more hours require notification to the full Council so all members are aware in advance of the staff commitment.
- Timeline adjustments and reclassification: level of effort may be unclear at intake, and as such, requests may be reclassified as work begins based on simplicity, complexity, research need, coordination requirements, or emerging staff capacity considerations. When a request is moved into a different review or routing category, the requesting Council Member is notified of this change.

### **Equitable Access**

All Council Members have equitable access to Central Staff services. The **Council Executive Director** is responsible for managing competing priorities in a fair and balanced manner to ensure that no individual Council Member's requests regularly or disproportionately limit another Council Member's access to analytical, policy, or legislative support.

### **Prioritization**

When competing requests arise, staff apply the following principles:

- Time-sensitive legislative matters (statutory deadlines, emergency ordinances, pending votes) take priority over long-range projects.
- Staff must proactively communicate timeline constraints and workload conflicts to requesting offices as soon as they are identified.

### **Confidentiality on Legislative Projects**

- When Central Staff works confidentially with a Council Member on draft legislation prior to introduction, that work product is not shared with others until introduction, unless the legislation requires at least 20 hours of Central Staff time, in which case notification to the full Council is required. The **Council Executive Director** must be aware of all active projects.

### **Communication Standards: Transparent Review Process**

Central Staff analysts must maintain clear communication with legislative sponsors and the relevant committee chair regarding issues identified through their analysis and how those issues will be presented in work products. A Council Member may not always agree with the analysis but should not be surprised by it when it is published or presented.

- When an analyst identifies a significant policy concern, legal issue, or fiscal impact in a piece of legislation, they must communicate that finding to the sponsoring office before the work product is finalized — not for approval, but so the sponsor is aware of what the analysis will say.
- Staff must proactively raise emerging workload conflicts, timeline changes, and scope adjustments to requesting offices and to the **Council Executive Director** as soon as they are identified.
- Central Staff may share draft analysis with the Executive branch when needed to verify factual accuracy. When this occurs, the period of shared review must be brief, and the purpose must be disclosed to the sponsoring Council Member.

### **Analyst Independence**

The **Council Executive Director** retains final authority over the level of research or analysis that can be produced, the production timeline, and the assignment of staff to a project. Within those parameters, individual analysts have final authority over the content of the memos, fiscal notes, budget overview papers, presentations, and budget amendments they produce. Council Members are welcome to provide

feedback and raise factual errors, but the analyst's independent judgment governs the substance of their work product.

- The **Council Executive Director** and direct supervisors of Policy Analysts retain the authority to guide the scope, structure, content, and analytical approach of work products, including determining what information should be included, refined, condensed, or further developed.
- No analyst may be directed by a Council Member, Legislative Assistant, or any other party to change their findings or omit material information from a work product.
- If an analyst believes they are being pressured to compromise the objectivity or completeness of their work, they must notify the **Council Executive Director** immediately. The **Council Executive Director** is responsible for resolving the situation and, if necessary, escalating to the Council President.

**Escalation When the Concern Involves the Director:** When the concern about improper influence involves the **Council Executive Director** themselves, the staff member should report directly to the Council President, bypassing the **Council Executive Director** entirely. If the concern involves both the **Council Executive Director** and the Council President, the staff member may report directly to the City's Human Resources Department, the City Attorney's Office, or through the process established under Washington State's Local Government Whistleblower Protection Act (RCW 42.41). No staff member shall face retaliation for making a good-faith report through any of these channels.

- This independence serves as a structural safeguard for the Council as a whole, rather than an individual prerogative of the analyst. It helps ensure that all seven Council Members can rely on the accuracy, completeness, and objectivity of the analysis they receive, regardless of who requested it.
- If a Council Member has concerns regarding the quality, completeness, tone, or character of an individual analyst's work product, those concerns should be raised with the **Council Executive Director** for review and, where appropriate, addressed as a supervisory or performance management matter.

#### 4.4 Outside Legal Counsel

The City Attorney's Office provides legal counsel to the City Council and its staff and reviews all Council-generated legislation before introduction. All legal inquiries are coordinated through the Policy Advisor, and all legal advice remains confidential unless waived by five affirmative Council votes.

## 5. Legislative Processes & Workflows

### 5.1 Ordinance & Resolution Lifecycle

Stage	Owner	Description
1. Idea / Proposal	Council Member / Policy Advisor	Council Member identifies a policy goal. Policy Advisor or Analyst assists in scoping into a policy framework. Legislation must be sponsored by at least two Council Members.
2. Drafting	Policy Advisor / City Attorney	Legislation drafted by Central Staff or City Attorney’s Office. All items must be in final or close-to-final form before committee placement.
3. Committee Introduction	Council Executive Director	Director coordinates placement on the appropriate standing committee. Items submitted to OnBase by 5:00 p.m. Wednesday; all OnBase approvals by 9:00 a.m. Thursday.
4. Committee Review	Committee Chair / Policy Analyst	Committee discusses the proposal. Public testimony accepted. Legislation must be sponsored by at least two Council Members.
5. Full Council – First Reading	Council President / City Clerk	Item placed on the full Council legislative agenda. Includes opportunity for public comment. Must have been on file with City Clerk at least three business days.
6. Full Council – Final Reading & Vote	Full Council	Typically, two or more weeks after First Reading. Council deliberates, makes final amendments, and votes. Four or more affirmative votes required for passage.
7. Mayoral Action	Mayor’s Office	Non-emergency ordinances transmitted to the Mayor within five days. Mayor has 10 days to sign, veto, or take no action. Council may override a veto within 30 days by five affirmative votes.

### 5.2 Council Initiative Process

A Council Member may initiate new legislation or a policy change through the process below. The table shows both the Central Staff role and the Council Member role at each stage. This parallel structure is intended to make clear who is responsible for what within the varying office roles.

## Legislative Change Request

Stage	Central Staff Role	Council Office Role
1. Initiation	Policy Advisor or relevant <b>Policy Analyst</b> meets with the sponsoring office to scope the issue: problem being addressed, desired outcome, legal and fiscal landscape, and preferred timeline. For projects likely to require more than 20 hours of staff time, Central Staff prepares a brief written scope summary (see below) before major resources are committed.	Sponsoring Council Member engages Central Staff early. Provides direction on policy intent. Legislation must be sponsored by at least one Council Member to get on Committee and two are required to move out of Committee.
2. Research	Leads research: reviews legal constraints, comparable city approaches, fiscal implications, and operational considerations. Presents findings to the sponsoring office.	Provides direction on how to proceed based on research presented. Leads external stakeholder engagement. Clarifies Central Staff's role to stakeholders.
3. Drafting	Leads drafting of legislation in coordination with the City Attorney's Office. Seeks input from executive subject-matter experts as deemed appropriate. Drafts fiscal note. Coordinates legal review prior to introduction.	Reviews drafts to ensure policy intent is reflected. Provides recitals language. Decides on policy choices presented by Central Staff.
4. Committee Introduction	Coordinates upload to OnBase and placement on committee agenda by the <b>Senior Executive Assistant</b> . <b>Policy Analyst</b> then prepares a descriptive memo for the first committee discussion.	Coordinates with the Council President's office on committee assignment and introduction timing.
5. Committee Discussion	Prepares analytical memo identifying policy issues for deliberation. A second analyst may be assigned to provide independent issue identification. Drafts amendments as directed by Council Members. Director of Communication becomes engaged as this fits within the Council's strategic communications plan.	Sponsor presents the merits of the legislation and engages other Council Members, stakeholders, and media. Sets committee discussion schedule and amendment timeline in coordination with Central Staff.

6. Full Council Action	Prepares the legislation, as amended, for final consideration. Updates fiscal note as needed. <b>Policy Analyst</b> provides an analysis of the proposal.	Sponsor speaks to the merits at the legislative session. Manages stakeholder engagement through final vote.
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### Scoping Summary for Large Projects

For any Council-initiated project estimated to require more than 20 hours of Central Staff time, the **Council Executive Director** prepares a brief written scope summary before substantive work begins. This document is shared with the sponsoring Council Member and the full Council for awareness. It covers:

- The policy issue or goal the project is intended to address.
- The anticipated Central Staff work product and role (research, drafting, analysis, or a combination).
- An estimated timeline for key milestones.
- Any known dependencies, legal constraints, or capacity considerations.

The scope summary is not a formal agreement, rather this is a shared understanding that reduces miscommunication and helps the **Council Executive Director** manage workload across competing requests. The scope summary may be updated as the project develops.

### 5.3 Agenda Development Workflow

The **Council Executive Director** manages the legislative workflow, while the **Senior Executive Assistant** manages agenda creation, development, and finalization in OnBase.

Key standards for agenda development workflow include:

- **OnBase Submission Deadline:** Items must be uploaded to OnBase by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the desired committee meeting date.
- **OnBase Approvals:** All OnBase approvals must be completed by 9:00 a.m. on the Thursday preceding the desired meeting date. Items that do not clear by this deadline may be added at the committee chair’s discretion.
- **Required Agenda Sheet:** Each submission must include a fully completed agenda sheet, including a plain-language summary, fiscal impact information, and identification of the Council sponsors. Items with incomplete fiscal information may be excluded by the committee chair or referred to the Finance & Administration Committee for additional review.
- **Committee Agenda Circulated:** Staff will circulate the final committee agenda by the close of business on the Friday preceding the meeting.
- **Fiscal Note Requirement:** Any ordinance or resolution that would impact the City’s fiscal condition, based on fiscal note defined standards and requirements, must note that fact on the agenda sheet and include a brief fiscal impact description.
- **Legislative Agenda Distribution:** Final agendas are published and distributed in compliance with the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) notice requirements.
- **Amendment Deadline:** Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the City Clerk and all Council Members and staff in accordance with the Council’s rules. Each amendment must include a purpose statement and be provided in both clean and redline format. Late amendments, if adopted at the next agenda review session, will automatically defer the item to the next legislative agenda.

### 5.4 Meeting Schedule

The Council holds three types of regular meetings each week:

- **Agenda Review:** Held Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. (effective 2026). Agenda Review is used to review the final and draft agendas for the next two legislative meetings and to approve the draft agenda as final. Any Council Member may move to defer, refer, amend, or withdraw an item.

- **Committee Meetings:** Held monthly on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. (effective 2026). Each standing committee meets during its designated week: Public Safety & Community Health in the first week, PIES in the second week, Urban Experience in the third week, and Finance & Administration in the fourth week.
- **Legislative Sessions:** Held on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. (effective 2026). Legislative Sessions are the Council's formal public meetings. Open forum follows the conclusion of all legislative business.

## 5.5 Public Records Compliance

The Council Office operates under Washington State's Public Records Act (RCW 42.56).

- All correspondence, documents, emails, text messages, and records created in the performance of official duties are subject to public records requests, including communications on personal devices.
- Requests received by any Council Office staff member must be immediately forwarded to the **Senior Executive Assistant** who coordinates responses with the City Clerk's Office.
- Records must be retained per the Washington State Records Retention Schedule. Staff may not delete any official record without the Director's authorization.

## 5.6 Post-Adoption Tracking and Oversight

Following the adoption of legislation or policy initiatives, designated Central Staff analysts should maintain ongoing implementation tracking and oversight to preserve institutional knowledge, monitor progress toward intended outcomes, and evaluate operational impacts, amendments, and implementation challenges over time. The Policy Advisor is responsible for coordinating with departments to collect and maintain relevant implementation data, including performance measures, financial impacts, workload indicators, service levels, compliance with legislative intent, community feedback, and milestone completion status, as applicable to the adopted initiative.

As part of this process, the Council or a designated committee should periodically conduct post-adoption reviews to evaluate program effectiveness, administrative implementation, operational efficiency, fiscal impacts, and progress toward established goals and policy objectives. Findings should be summarized through periodic written updates, briefing memoranda, dashboard reporting, or committee presentations to ensure the Council receives consistent information regarding implementation status, emerging issues, measurable outcomes, and any recommended policy, budgetary, operational, or programmatic adjustments.

## 5.7 Strategic Planning and Annual Priority Alignment

The Council conducts an annual strategic retreat to establish legislative, operational, and budgetary priorities for the upcoming year; evaluate emerging community and organizational issues; review the status of major initiatives; and assess the effectiveness of internal Council operations and processes. As part of this retreat, the Council will also conduct an annual self-evaluation to assess its overall effectiveness as a legislative body, including communication and collaboration among Council Members, alignment on strategic priorities, legislative productivity, committee structure and effectiveness, meeting efficiency, constituent engagement, policy implementation follow-through, intergovernmental coordination, and the effectiveness of Council support operations and staffing resources. The retreat serves as an opportunity to strengthen alignment among Council Members, establish shared expectations, and review long-term organizational and operational needs.

The Council will identify policy objectives, desired service outcomes, and funding priorities to be communicated to the Mayor's Office in advance of preparation of the proposed budget. The annual budget process is one of the Council's most significant policy-making and strategic planning tools. The budget functions not only as a financial operating plan, but also as a mechanism to communicate organizational priorities, establish service expectations, allocate resources, and measure performance outcomes. Through the budget process, the Council aligns financial decisions with adopted strategic

goals, legislative initiatives, infrastructure needs, and long-term community priorities while balancing fiscal sustainability and operational capacity.

To support medium- and long-term policy development, Central Staff will facilitate periodic planning workshops and strategy sessions for Council Members focused on one- to five-year planning horizons. These workshops assist the Council in defining measurable objectives, identifying emerging issues and opportunities, evaluating operational constraints, assessing organizational and staffing capacity, and developing potential legislative or policy approaches. Central Staff will also provide research, benchmarking, implementation considerations, and policy analysis to support informed decision-making and help ensure that adopted initiatives are achievable, sustainable, and aligned with the Council's broader strategic direction.

## 6. Council Office Operations

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### 6.1 Constituent Services Standards

The following standards apply to all constituent-facing work across the office:

- **Response Time:** Staff should provide an initial acknowledgment within two business days and a full resolution or status update within five business days, where feasible.
- **Intake & Tracking:** Constituent contacts should be logged and tracked consistently. Contacts should be documented in a consistent format coordinated by the **Senior Executive Assistant**, using available office tools until a formal tracking system is established.
- **Professional Communication:** All constituent and interdepartmental communications must be courteous, clear, and professional. Staff should use plain language, acknowledge the constituent's concern, avoid overly technical or defensive wording, and provide helpful information or next steps when available. Communications should remain respectful and neutral, even when responding to complaints, disagreements, or emotionally charged issues, and should always reflect the professionalism of the Council Office.
- **Multi-District Inquiries:** Issues affecting multiple districts should be coordinated among the relevant Legislative Assistants and escalated to the **Council Executive Director** when needed.
- **Escalation:** Matters involving legal questions, safety concerns, media attention, or significant public controversy must be elevated to the Council Member and/or **Council Executive Director**.
- **Confidentiality:** Information gathered, received, or overheard in the Council Office may be privileged, sensitive, or incomplete. Staff must not disclose confidential or sensitive information outside the office. If there are questions about confidentiality, these should be vetted and addressed in coordination with the **Council Executive Director**.

### 6.2 Information Integrity, Confidentiality, and Protected Reporting

This standard is intended to balance the Council Office's obligation to protect sensitive, preliminary, privileged, and personnel-related information with the equally important need to preserve lawful reporting channels for concerns involving misconduct, legal violations, safety risks, misuse of public resources, or other improper governmental action.

- **Confidentiality and Discretion:** Council Members, Central Staff, and Legislative Assistants may receive, prepare, or overhear information that is privileged, sensitive, preliminary, personnel-related, legally protected, or incomplete. Such information should be handled with discretion and not disclosed outside appropriate City channels unless authorized, legally required, or made through an appropriate protected reporting process.
- **Preliminary, Legal, and Personnel-Related Information:** Draft materials, internal recommendations, legal communications, personnel matters, complaints, investigations, labor matters, and executive session information should be handled with heightened care. Washington law recognizes protections for certain preliminary drafts and intra-agency memoranda, attorney-client privileged communications, and executive session discussions within defined statutory limits.
- **Protected Reporting:** Confidentiality expectations do not prohibit good-faith reporting of improper governmental action through appropriate channels. Council Members and Council staff should use established City procedures, supervisory channels, Human Resources, the City Attorney's Office, or other legally appropriate reporting avenues when raising concerns involving misconduct, retaliation, safety risks, legal violations, or misuse of public resources.
- **Appropriate Disclosure and Review:** Informal disclosure, rumor, unauthorized distribution, or personal social media should not be used as a substitute for legally appropriate reporting or disclosure. When there is uncertainty regarding confidentiality, privilege, public disclosure, or protected reporting, the matter should be reviewed with the **Council Executive Director** and, where

appropriate, the City Attorney's Office, Human Resources, or the City Clerk's Office before information is shared.

- **Governing Authority:** These standards are subject to and should be applied consistently with the City Charter, City Code, Council Rules, applicable City policies, and Washington State law, including requirements under the Public Records Act, Open Public Meetings Act, and Local Government Whistleblower Protection Act.

### 6.3 Timekeeping, Accountability, & Overtime

All Council Office staff are responsible for accurately documenting hours worked, regardless of position, assignment, work location, or schedule. Timekeeping is an essential accountability practice that supports compliance with wage and hour laws, provides transparency regarding staff workload, documents after-hours and off-site work, and helps supervisors manage capacity, overtime, and equitable distribution of work across the office.

Time spent in the Council Office during regular business hours should be used for City-related work, with personal tasks limited to authorized breaks or meal periods. Work on behalf of outside organizations, campaigns, advocacy groups, community groups, or other third-party entities may not be conducted using City time, equipment, technology, office space, email accounts, supplies, or other City resources. Any participation in a public meeting on behalf of an outside group or third-party interest must occur outside paid staff hours, without City resources, and with clear disclosure of the individual's role, purpose, and capacity.

To promote consistent reporting, basic timecards are required for all Central Staff and Legislative Assistants. Timecards must be completed for each workweek and reviewed and signed by the employee's direct supervisor. These records are intended to supplement formal payroll entries and provide a clear record of regular hours, after-hours work, off-site work, leave usage, and overtime-eligible activity.

- **Timekeeping Requirement:** All Central Staff and Legislative Assistants must submit a weekly timecard documenting hours worked. Timecards must reflect actual hours worked, including regular work hours, leave, overtime, after-hours work, and off-site work performed during regular business hours.
- **Work Outside Regular Business Hours:** Any employee who performs work outside the standard 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. timeframe must document those hours on their timecard. This includes evening meetings, community events, legislative sessions, committee meetings, constituent work, email or voicemail responses, research, drafting, or other work performed before or after regular business hours.
- **Off-site Work:** Employees must document all off-site work on their timecard, whether performed during regular business hours or outside the standard 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule. Timecards should note the applicable time and general nature of the work performed to support accurate reporting, accountability, and consistent tracking of work completed outside the Council Office.
- **Payroll System:** All payroll-related entries are recorded in PeopleSoft, including regular time, overtime, vacation, and sick leave. Submissions and timecards must reflect actual hours worked.
- **Workweek:** The workweek runs from Sunday at 12:00 a.m. through Saturday at 11:59 p.m. Hours may not be averaged across multiple workweeks for purposes of determining overtime eligibility.
- **Overtime Eligibility and Approval:** The Council Office operates under the Washington State Minimum Wage Act. Non-exempt employees must be paid at 1.5 times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 in a single workweek; paid leave and holidays do not count as hours worked for overtime purposes. All overtime must be approved in writing by the **Council Executive Director** or Council President, in consultation with the Council Budget Director, before the work is performed. Unauthorized overtime may result in corrective or disciplinary action. Overtime-eligible employees must report and be compensated for all hours worked.

- **Compensable After-Hours Work:** Non-exempt employees must report all compensable work performed outside scheduled hours, including attendance at evening legislative sessions, committee meetings, community events, checking or responding to email or voicemail, performing research or drafting assignments, or working through an unpaid meal period.
- **Telework Documentation:** Employees must document all telework hours on their timecard, including regularly scheduled remote work and any approved ad hoc remote work. Telework must be consistent with an approved Work from Home Agreement or advance email authorization, and staff remain subject to in-person attendance requirements for Council meetings, committee meetings, public hearings, community events, and other operational needs.
- **Supervisor Review:** Direct supervisors are responsible for reviewing and signing weekly timecards, confirming that hours are complete and reasonably documented, and identifying workload, scheduling, or overtime concerns that may require follow-up with the **Council Executive Director**.

## 6.4 Telework Policy

The Council Office supports a structured hybrid telework model that balances operational flexibility with the in-person presence required for effective legislative service. The following standards apply to all Central Staff. Legislative Assistants' schedules are determined by their assigned Council Member in consultation with the **Council Executive Director**.

### In-Office Requirements

**Minimum On-Site Requirement:** Central Staff are expected to work on-site at City Hall a minimum of three (3) days per week. The remaining days may be performed remotely from an approved location, subject to a completed and approved Work from Home Agreement (Appendix C).

**Mandatory In-Person Events:** Staff are required to be on-site for: all Council and committee meetings; public hearings; agenda review sessions; community events and public-facing functions; and any operational situation requiring in-person staff presence as determined by the **Council Executive Director**.

**Director Discretion:** The **Council Executive Director** may adjust in-office requirements for individual staff members or for the full office based on legislative calendar demands, meeting load, or other operational needs. Adjustments are communicated in advance where possible.

### Work from Home Agreement

**Agreement Required:** Any staff member requesting a regular remote schedule must complete a Work from Home Agreement specifying scheduled work hours and location for each day of the week. The agreement is signed by both the employee and the Council President and remains in effect until amended.

**Ad Hoc Remote Requests:** Requests to work remotely on a day not covered by an existing WFH Agreement must be submitted by email to both the **Council Executive Director** and the Council President in advance of the remote day.

### Remote Work Expectations

**Availability:** Staff working remotely must remain fully available by phone, email, and Teams during all scheduled work hours. Response times should be equivalent to in-office standards.

**Performance Standards Apply:** Telework is a schedule accommodation, not a change in work duties. All performance expectations, timekeeping requirements, and confidentiality obligations apply regardless of work location.

**Work Location:** Staff may not conduct City work from locations outside Washington State without prior written authorization from the **Council Executive Director**, due to potential tax and employment law implications.

## 6.4 Ethics, Conflicts of Interest, & Conduct

The Council Office holds itself to high ethical standards and expects proactive disclosure of actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. Clear ethical parameters are essential to maintaining public

trust, supporting transparent governance, protecting the integrity of Council decision-making, and ensuring that public office, staff roles, and City resources are used only for appropriate public purposes. All Council Office staff are subject to SMC Chapter 01.04A, Code of Ethics, and elected officials are also subject to ethical parameters in the City Charter and Council Rules of Procedure.

- **Core obligation:** Uphold the highest standards of responsibility, trustworthiness, integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness. Never use City position, authority, or resources for personal gain.
- **Annual disclosures:** Conflict-of-interest disclosure forms must be completed annually by all Council Members and Council Office staff. The **Council Executive Director** administers this process.
- **Council Member Conflicts:** Council Members must promptly disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest. A Council Member with a personal interest in a matter before the Council must disclose that interest and abstain from deliberation and voting (per Spokane City Charter § 36).
- **Grievances:** Grievances and disciplinary actions are handled in coordination with the City's Human Resources Department, with the **Council Executive Director** serving as the HR point of contact for the Council Office.

## 6.5 Conduct During Elections

Council Members must maintain a clear separation between official City business and campaign or election-related activities. During an election period, Council Members may continue to perform official duties and respond to constituent concerns; however, campaign-related communications, scheduling, materials, events, and requests should be handled outside City processes and through campaign-designated channels.

To ensure this separation, the following standards apply:

- **Use of City Resources and Platforms:** City facilities, staff time, public resources, City equipment, official email accounts, Council Chambers, newsletters, or other City resources may not be used to support or oppose any candidate, campaign, or ballot proposition.
  - *Social Media & Websites:* Official Council websites and social media platforms may not be used in support of or opposition to a ballot measure or political campaign. Furthermore, official social media pages must maintain an objective stance and will not "like," share, or otherwise engage with content related to the personal campaigns of Council Members.
  - *Meeting Agendas:* Council meeting agendas and public comment opportunities shall not be used as a political platform or forum by political candidates, nor by organizations supporting or opposing political campaigns or ballot measures.
- **Separation of Official and Candidate Roles:** When representing the Council in an official capacity (e.g., serving as a spokesperson at public events or in the media) during an election period, Council Members must maintain a clear distinction between their role as an elected official and their role as a candidate.
- **Solicitation of Contributions:** No person shall solicit or receive monetary contributions or services for political purposes in any room or building occupied for the discharge of official City duties.
- **Communication Budgets and Newsletters:** To avoid the perception of taxpayer dollars funding political materials, Council Members should adhere to designated communication blackout periods, such as suspending the use of district communication funds 60 days prior to an election or withholding the mailing of official newsletters between primary and general elections. During an election year, official newsletters should avoid articles that attack or criticize other officials, address integral campaign platform issues, or discuss issues actively being debated by opposing candidates.
- **Transitioning & Fiscal Oversight:** The City should ensure appropriate fiscal policies are in place during election years, including the timely disabling of purchase and travel cards for outgoing Council Members to prevent inadvertent overspending that may impact incoming members' budgets.
- **Use of Employee Images:** Council Members should avoid using images of City employees in uniform or at work in campaign materials. During the active candidacy period, Council Members must

refrain from highlighting or adding images of on-duty city employees to personal or re-election websites and social media platforms.

Council staff must remain neutral and strictly separate from municipal election or re-election activities in their official City capacity. However, as private citizens, staff members retain their rights to engage in the political process outside of work hours. Constituent inquiries received during an election period should continue to be handled through the standard constituent service process, with care to ensure that City resources are used only for official City business.

To ensure a clear separation between official duties and personal political activities, the following standards apply:

- **Personal Political Participation (Off-Duty):** Staff members are permitted to participate in campaign activities, volunteer for candidates, and express their personal political opinions outside of their regular working hours and while off duty. Nothing shall be construed as prohibiting any staff member from exercising their First Amendment right to privately express an opinion, engage in political activities on their own time, or cast a vote.
- **Prohibition on City Resources and Time:** Staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in any political campaign activity during work hours or while on duty. Staff may not use any City resources—including office equipment, City facilities, official email accounts, or staff time—to support or oppose a candidate for public office.
- **Clear Separation of Roles:** When engaging in off-duty campaign activities, staff must do so strictly in their personal capacity. Staff must not use their official Council title or position to imply City endorsement, nor wear City-issued uniforms or badges while engaging in personal political advocacy.
- **Monetary Contributions:** Staff may make personal monetary contributions to campaigns; however, no person shall solicit or receive any contribution for political purposes in any room or building occupied for the discharge of official City duties.
- **Prohibited Official Campaign Support Tasks:** While serving in their Council Office role and during work hours, staff may not draft, type, edit, copy, print, email, post, distribute, coordinate, schedule, or otherwise support campaign-related materials, candidate statements, or campaign communications. Specific prohibitions while on duty include drafting campaign press releases, conducting opposition research, or scheduling campaign appearances.
- **Handling Campaign Inquiries & Favors:** Campaign-related calls, emails, correspondence, or requests received during work hours should be referred directly to the Council Member or their designated external campaign contact. Additionally, staff must not work outside the standard constituent complaint resolution process to secure a quick response as a "campaign favor" for an incumbent or candidate.

## 6.6 Travel & Purchasing

The Council office adheres to the City's administrative travel and purchasing policies. Key requirements specific to the Council office in applying these include:

- **Travel Approval:** All travel must be approved in advance by the Council President.
- **Travel Authorization Form:** This form must be submitted prior to travel, including the event agenda, estimated costs, and applicable federal GSA per diem rates ([gsa.gov/travel](https://gsa.gov/travel)).
- **Unallowable Expenses:** Any charges that are inconsistent with approved travel expenses and any undocumented charges are the personal financial responsibility of the Council Member or staff.
- **Office Purchasing:** General supplies are coordinated through the **Senior Executive Assistant** and charged to the Council Office budget. Special supply requests or items that exceed the standard

budget allocation require approval from the **Council Executive Director**. All purchasing card transactions must be supported by valid receipts submitted for timely reconciliation.

### 6.7 Technology Systems

System	Primary Use	Key Notes
OnBase	Legislative document management	System of record for all formal legislative items. All agenda submissions go through OnBase. Contact IT Help Desk for access issues.
PeopleSoft	Timekeeping & HR	Submit all hours worked, including overtime and leave. Must reflect actual hours. Contact Payroll for corrections.
Microsoft Outlook	Email, calendar, room booking	Primary email and scheduling system. Book conference rooms through Outlook’s room finder.
Microsoft Teams & Planner	Staff collaboration	Used for internal communication, file sharing, task tracking, and virtual meetings. Follow office-wide protocols from the <b>Council Executive Director</b> .
SharePoint	Document repository	Shared location for templates, letterhead, procedures, and reference documents. Use the approved file naming convention.

### 6.8 Document & Records Management

Consistent document management practices are essential for legal compliance, operational continuity, and efficient knowledge sharing. All Council Office staff must follow these standards:

- **Templates and Forms:** Council Office templates and standardized forms are maintained in a centralized SharePoint location to ensure staff have access to current, consistent materials. The **Senior Executive Assistant** conducts quarterly document maintenance, including reviewing materials for accuracy, removing outdated versions, confirming formatting consistency, and maintaining version control and an update log. At a minimum, this includes standard forms for:
  - Legislative requests.
  - Committee referrals
  - Policy analysis requests
  - Agenda templates
  - Staff memo templates
  - Staff reports and agenda sheets
  - Transmittal and request templates for Council Member or Administration-initiated legislative or budget proposals
  - Other forms needed to support Council Office operations, legislative review, agenda preparation, and internal office processes
- **File Naming:** All documents saved to shared drives or SharePoint must follow: [Date\_YYYY-MM-DD]\_[Type]\_[Subject]\_[Version]. Example: 2026-09-15\_Memo\_BudgetAmendment\_v2.
- **Folder Structure:** Files must be saved in the designated SharePoint folder structure. Do not create personal or parallel filing systems on shared drives.

- **Retention:** Retain all records per the Washington State Records Retention Schedule. Council Members and staff must not delete any official record without **Council Executive Director** authorization and confirmation of the applicable retention period.
- **Letterhead & Brand:** All external communications must use the approved City of Spokane letterhead. Business cards and signature stamps are coordinated through the **Council Executive Director**.

## 6.9 Conference Rooms & Facilities

City Hall conference rooms are available for Council Office use and must be reserved through the Outlook calendar system. The Council Chambers and an adjoining conference room are the primary spaces for Council meetings and hearings. The Council Office operates in an open-plan environment within City Hall; use the available conference rooms for confidential conversations and focused work.

## 6.10 Interdepartmental Coordination and Communication Protocols

To support effective governance, the Council Office has formal protocols governing interactions between the legislative and executive branches, including standards for departmental coordination, information requests, and intergovernmental collaboration.

- **Legislative vs. Administrative Boundaries:** Council Members and Council staff must respect the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. While the Council maintains policy oversight and legislative authority, it should not interfere with the day-to-day administration of City operations, direct the work of executive staff, or issue orders to employees subordinate to the Mayor or Chief Administrative Officer.
- **Routing Requests:** When a request for information or action is minor in nature and requires minimal staff time, the Council Member or Council staff may coordinate directly with the applicable department head. Requests involving significant staff resources, operational impacts, policy considerations, or sensitive matters should be submitted in writing and routed through the Council President to the Mayor or City Administrator to ensure appropriate coordination, accountability, and workload management.
- **Intergovernmental Relations:** The Council may use a designated committee structure or dedicated intergovernmental affairs staff to coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal agencies and to advance the City's legislative, policy, and partnership priorities in a consistent, organized manner.

## 6.11 Media Relations and Spokesperson Guidelines

- **Official Council Communications:** The City Council President serves as the City Council's official spokesperson and is responsible for communicating adopted Council positions and actions to the media and the public. When appropriate, the Council may designate another spokesperson with subject-matter expertise or project sponsorship to communicate on its behalf regarding a specific issue or initiative.
- **Individual Council Member Communications:** Council Members may communicate independently with the media and public regarding their personal positions, district priorities, and policy views. When doing so, Council Members must clearly indicate that they are speaking as an individual elected official and not on behalf of the full Council. Council Members should avoid making statements that could be construed as representing an adopted Council position on matters where the Council has not yet taken formal action. Legislative Assistants may support individual Council Member communications, including media coordination, press releases, and social media, provided that any materials distributed through City channels or using City resources are factual, nonpartisan, and consistent with adopted Council policies. When a Council Member is uncertain whether a communication crosses into official Council spokesperson territory, they should consult with the Council President or the Director of Communications before proceeding.
- **Council Staff Communications:** Central Council Staff and Legislative Assistants are responsible for providing accurate, professional, and nonpartisan communications in support of the legislative body

and individual Council offices. Staff communications must align with adopted Council policies, maintain confidentiality when required, and clearly distinguish between official Council actions, administrative information, and individual Council Member positions. When expressing personal opinions or engaging in communications outside their official capacity, staff must clearly communicate that such views are their own and do not represent the position of the City Council or the Council Office.

- **Council Communications Plan:** The Director of Communications is responsible for developing, maintaining, and implementing a Council-approved communications plan establishing consistent standards for messaging, media coordination, branding, public information procedures, communication priorities, and stakeholder engagement to support transparent, accurate, and coordinated public communications.

## 7. Performance Expectations & Professional Standards

### 7.1 Core Professional Standards

*Ethics Standard (SMC 1.04A): "It is the policy of the City of Spokane to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all of its employees who shall maintain the utmost standards of responsibility, trustworthiness, integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid any improprieties in their roles as a public servant including the appearance of impropriety, and never use their City position, authority or resources for personal gain."*

The following standards apply to all Council Office staff regardless of position:

- **Quality:** All work products meet standards of accuracy and thoroughness and are professionally presented. Staff review their work before submission.
- **Responsiveness:** Staff respond to Council Members, constituents, and colleagues promptly. Delays are communicated proactively.
- **Objectivity:** Analysis and advice are provided honestly by staff, without personal or political bias.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Disclose any personal financial interest or relationship that could create a conflict with official duties.
- **Collaboration:** Work cooperatively across the office; avoid creating information silos.
- **Professionalism in Public:** Conduct in meetings, community events, media appearances, and online must reflect positively on the institution.

Additionally, the Council Office is committed to applying established City human resources standards and procedures to its employees, including hiring, discipline, performance management, leave administration, and other personnel matters. These processes should be followed to promote consistency, fairness, and administrative accountability, while recognizing that Council Office personnel practices must also remain consistent with the Council’s independent authority, separation-of-powers responsibilities, and any applicable Charter, Code, rule, or legal requirement governing the legislative branch.

### 7.2 Annual Performance Management Cycle

Each Central Staff and Legislative Assistant employee will participate in an annual performance evaluation conducted by their direct supervisor. These evaluations provide a structured opportunity to review job performance, clarify expectations, recognize accomplishments, identify training or professional development needs, and align individual work priorities with the Council Office's broader goals and service expectations.

#### Rating Scale

Rating	Label	Description
1	Unsatisfactory	Performance does not meet minimum expectations. Immediate improvement required.
2	Needs Improvement	Performance partially meets expectations. A development plan is recommended.
3	Meets Expectations	Performance consistently meets position requirements. Solid, reliable contribution.
4	Exceeds Expectations	Performance regularly exceeds position requirements. Demonstrates initiative.

5	Outstanding	Performance is exemplary. Serves as a model for others.
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### Evaluation Dimensions

All staff are evaluated on: Quality of Work; Prioritization; Time Management; Meeting the Needs of Multiple Council Members; Teamwork; Quantity of Work; Initiative; and Reliability.

### Review Cycle

The annual cycle has three checkpoints:

- **Goal-Setting (January–February):** Each staff member establishes 3–5 performance goals with their direct supervisor. Staff hired or reassigned after February must complete a goal-setting meeting within 30 days of their start date or reassignment.
- **Mid-Year Check-In (June–July):** A documented meeting to review goal progress and adjust priorities as needed.
- **Annual Review (December):** Formal written review using the eight-dimension framework, conducted by each staff member's direct supervisor.
- **Legislative Assistant Reviews:** Conducted by the assigned Council Member with input from the Senior Executive Assistant on office-wide standards. The Director retains a copy of all completed reviews.
- **Mid-Cycle and Post-Election Reviews:** Staff who have been in their current role or under their current supervisor for fewer than six months at the time of the December review receive a structured interim check-in in place of a formal annual review; their first full annual review occurs the following December. Following a November election, Legislative Assistants assigned to an incoming Council Member must complete a goal-setting meeting with that Council Member within 30 days of them taking office. If the new working relationship began fewer than six months before the December review, the interim check-in provision above applies.

### 7.3 Council Self-Evaluation

The Council conducts an annual self-evaluation to review how effectively its goals, priorities, and initiatives are being supported through Council Office operations and staff resources. The Council President facilitates this brief, structured check-in with Council Members to assess legislative priorities, constituent service needs, and overall workflow. This discussion is intended to be practical and forward-looking rather than a formal or burdensome evaluation process.

The annual check-in includes discussion of:

- Council priorities and major initiatives for the coming year.
- Legislative workload, agenda flow, and staff support needs.
- Responsiveness to constituent service requests and Council Member inquiries.
- Communication practices between Council Members, Central Staff, Legislative Assistants, and the Administration.
- Opportunities to improve templates, procedures, timelines, or staff coordination.
- Training, technology, or resource needs that would improve Council Office effectiveness.

The purpose of the discussion is to identify what is working well, where minor adjustments may be needed, and whether any updates should be made to Council Office procedures or this guide.

### 7.4 Professional Development

The Council Office is committed to supporting the professional growth of all staff. Development is a shared responsibility between staff and their supervisors.

- **Annual Development Planning:** Each staff member identifies at least one professional development priority for the coming year as part of the performance review cycle.
- **Cross-Training:** The **Council Executive Director** maintains a cross-training plan ensuring at least one other staff member has working familiarity with each critical function.
- **Professional Associations:** Staff are encouraged to participate in the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), National League of Cities (NLC), and relevant subject-matter networks.
- **Council Member Training:** Council staff provide training to Council Members on various topics during study sessions, including annual ethics training and training on the Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act.

## 7.5 Onboarding Standards

### New Staff (First 30 Days)

- Technology access setup: OnBase, PeopleSoft, Outlook, Teams, SharePoint.
- Overview of Council Rules of Procedure and the legislative process lifecycle.
- Overview of administrative purchasing and personnel policies, staff requirements, and expected operational approach and levels of professionalism as outlined in this document.
- Review of Washington State OPMA and Public Records Act obligations.
- Ethics training and review of the City's Ethics Code and conflict-of-interest requirements.
- Introduction to office systems, document naming conventions, and file structure.
- Meeting with the **Council Executive Director** to review role expectations and first-month priorities.

### Newly Elected Council Member (Within 30 Days)

- City Charter, SMC, and Council Rules of Procedure overview.
- Overview of the City's budget process and statutory budget requirements.
- Council rules, meeting process, and public testimony sign-up procedures.
- Summary of often-cited parliamentary process (motions, decorum, etc.).
- Overview of all standing and outside boards and commissions.
- Overview of administrative purchasing and personnel policies, Council Member requirements, and expected operational approach and levels of professionalism as outlined in this document.
- Introduction to Central Staff, Legislative Assistants, and key City department contacts.
- Policies and procedures relating to the publication of Council materials and the use of social media.
- Completion of open government training per Administrative Policy No. 0520-17-06 and RCW 42.30.205.
- Technology access and setup: email, cell phone, OnBase, PeopleSoft.
- Transition period (8 weeks after November elections): Council Members-elect invited to attend regular meetings and work sessions, provided agenda packets, and supported by Council staff in scheduling orientation meetings with City departments.

## 7.6 Succession Planning & Knowledge Continuity

The Council Office carries significant institutional knowledge in a small number of positions. The following practices manage continuity risk:

- The **Council Executive Director** maintains documented procedures for critical functions, updated at least annually.
- Cross-training ensures at least one other staff member has working familiarity with each critical function.
- This guide, legislative procedures documentation, and key contact directories are maintained on SharePoint and reviewed at each annual update.

- When a key staff member transitions out, the **Council Executive Director** coordinates a structured knowledge transfer period.

## 7.7 Code of Conduct

The Spokane City Council Office Code of Conduct establishes clear, accessible behavioral expectations for all Council Members and Council Office staff. It reflects the Council's commitment to nonpartisan, equitable, and professional public service. This Code supplements the City's Ethics Code (SMC §01.04A), the City Charter, and the Council Rules of Procedure; where those authorities are more specific, they govern.

### Behavioral Expectations

The following standards apply to Council Members and all Council Office staff:

**Respectful Conduct:** Treat every colleague, constituent, partner agency representative, and member of the public with courtesy and respect, regardless of political position, district, or personal views. Personal attacks, intimidation, and demeaning conduct have no place in the Council Office.

**Honesty and Transparency:** Maintain an atmosphere of honesty and transparency in all official actions. Do not misrepresent facts, withhold material information, or take actions designed to mislead colleagues, the public, or governing bodies.

**Use of Public Resources:** Use City time, facilities, equipment, staff, and other resources only for official City purposes. Personal use of City resources must be incidental and must not interfere with official duties or create costs for the City.

**Nonpartisan Standards:** Staff must maintain objectivity and professional independence in performing their duties. While Council Members appropriately advance policy priorities as elected officials, staff are expected to remain nonpartisan and neutral in the performance of their work.

**Confidentiality:** Maintain strict confidentiality regarding privileged communications, draft work products, personnel matters, and executive session discussions. Do not share sensitive information with unauthorized parties.

**Conflicts of Interest:** Council Members and staff must proactively disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest before participating in any related decision or action. When in doubt, disclose.

**No Retaliation:** No Council Member, supervisor, or colleague may retaliate against a staff member for making a good-faith disclosure of a conflict of interest, reporting a concern about misconduct, or exercising a legally protected right.

### Equal Service Obligations

Central Staff serve the City Council as a whole — not individual Council Members, political factions, or campaign interests. The following obligations apply:

**Equity of Service:** Central Staff provide equivalent quality of research, analysis, and legislative support to all seven Council Members. Workload prioritization is managed by the **Council Executive Director** to ensure no Council Member consistently receives less access to staff support than others.

**Scope of Service:** Council Members may not direct Central Staff to produce work products that benefit only their individual office to the detriment of the Council as a legislative body, or that serve personal or campaign purposes.

**Sharing of Work Products:** Work products produced by Central Staff — including research memos, fiscal notes, and legislative analyses — are shared with all Council Members upon completion or introduction, consistent with the confidentiality protocols in Section 4.3.

**Legislative Assistants:** Legislative Assistants serve their assigned Council Member. However, they must treat all constituents equally and may not use City resources to advance the political interests of their Council Member over others.

### Reporting Procedures

Council Members and staff who observe or experience conduct that may violate this Code, the City's Ethics Code, or other applicable standards have multiple reporting options depending on the nature and severity of the concern:

**Supervisory Channels:** For most workplace conduct concerns, staff should raise the matter with their direct supervisor or the **Council Executive Director**. Council Members with concerns about staff conduct should raise them with the **Council Executive Director**.

**Director or President Involvement:** When the concern involves the **Council Executive Director**, staff should report directly to the Council President. When the concern involves both the Director and the Council President, report to the City's Human Resources Department.

**Ethics Commission:** Ethics concerns involving potential violations of SMC §01.04A or the City Charter may be reported to the City's Ethics Commission, which can investigate complaints, interpret the code, and initiate enforcement.

**Whistleblower Protections:** Concerns about improper governmental action — including waste of public funds, gross mismanagement, abuse of authority, or violations of law — may be reported through the Local Government Whistleblower Protection Act process (RCW 42.41). Staff making good-faith reports under this Act are protected from retaliation.

**City Attorney's Office:** Staff may also contact the City Attorney's Office for guidance on legal obligations, public records requirements, or ethical questions in the performance of their duties. All reports made in good faith through the above channels are protected. No Council Member, supervisor, or colleague may discipline, demote, reassign, or otherwise retaliate against any person for raising a concern in good faith, even if the concern is later determined to be unfounded.

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*This guide is a living document. Questions regarding its content should be directed to the **Council Executive Director**.*