

City Council Staffing – OSAC Approach

Purpose

Design a Council staffing model that meets the administrative, legislative, and policy needs of the full Council — in alignment with the Council's values of equity, transparency, and effective governance — while operating within budget constraints and responding to community expectations.

Intended Outcomes

- A proposed staffing structure that defines roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships.
 - A funding and implementation strategy aligned with the biennial budget cycle, including phasing or timing considerations.
 - A plan for the integration of Council staff into existing workflows, including any necessary adjustments to ensure clarity, efficiency, and accountability.
 - A strategy to minimize duplication and clarify boundaries between Council staff, the City Manager's Office, and other departments.
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Proposed Approach

1. **Conduct Interviews with Council Members**
Gather individual input on current gaps, support needs, and structural preferences using a standard interview guide.
 2. **Synthesize Input into Key Themes and Design Principles**
Identify common priorities and values to guide model development (e.g., independence, responsiveness, specialization, fiscal impact).
 3. **Research Peer Jurisdictions**
Identify and summarize staffing models from comparable cities that address the priorities expressed by Council Members.
 4. **Develop Draft Models with Cost Estimates and Timeline**
Provide options for structure, scope, and scale — including rough costs and a proposed implementation timeline.
 5. **Facilitate Committee Deliberation on Options**
Guide OSAC discussion of draft models using the shared principles and tradeoffs to refine toward a preferred approach.
 6. **Finalize Recommendation and Prepare for Full Council Review**
Draft a recommendation memo or presentation for Council feedback and next steps.
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Interview Questions

- a) What are the most critical support functions the Council needs from staff (e.g., policy analysis, legislative drafting, admin support, constituent response, communications, CBC coordination, agenda prep, research, or community engagement)?
 - Are there any functions the Council currently lacks that would improve its capacity to lead and legislate?
- b) What would it look like for the Council to have more autonomous policy and administrative support, and how might that coexist with the City Manager's formal authority over staff?
- c) How should staff support be structured to meet the distinct needs of individual Council Members versus the collective needs of the full Council?
 - How should staff be organized to ensure coordination, avoid duplication of effort, and maintain shared understanding across the Council's work?
 - Are there models (inside or outside Tacoma) that you think provide a useful example for how Council staff could be organized or resourced?
- d) Can you share examples of times when you felt well-supported by Council staff — or times when additional capacity would have made a difference?
- e) How should management and accountability for Council staff be structured? For example, who should be responsible for hiring/terminating, supervision, performance reviews, approving timecards, and day-to-day direction?