



## CITY COUNCIL REPORT

**TITLE:**

**COUNCIL COMPENSATION REVIEW**

**PRESENTER:**

Renee Sigurdson

**DEPARTMENT:**

Legislative Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**DATE:**

3/6/2026

**CLEARANCE / APPROVALS:**

Dave Wardrop      General Manager

Dave Wardrop      City Manager

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. That the presentation and Council Compensation Review report conducted by administration to provide an analysis and recommendations on compensation, other remuneration and council structure be received;
2. That Council approves the Council Compensation Review recommendations as presented; and
3. That Council direct Administration to draft a new Council Compensation By-law, Council Expense Policy, and repeal the Ward By-law in accordance with the approved recommendations.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Brandon Indemnity By-law No. 7220 requires a review of Council compensation each term. Administration conducted a comprehensive review of base salaries, per diems, expenses, benefits, and council structure. With the next general municipal election scheduled for October 28, 2026, any by-law amendments regarding council size or ward boundaries must receive third reading by May 1, 2026. The recommendations to council compensation, if approved, will establish the compensation rates for Council members for the upcoming term (2026-2030).

**ANALYSIS:**

The analysis concludes that Brandon's current Council compensation structure is significantly below that of comparable municipalities across the prairie provinces, resulting in misalignment with market expectations and the evolving responsibilities of elected officials. Review findings support adjustments to base indemnities, per diems, personal vehicle allowances, and related policies to ensure compensation is fair, transparent, and sustainable. The analysis also recommends maintaining part-time Councillor status, reducing the size of Council for improved effectiveness, and transitioning to an at-large electoral system supported by designated City Districts. Together, these changes modernize the compensation framework, strengthen governance and position the City for long term stability and competitiveness.

The attached report provides the research using comparator municipalities, analysis and basis for recommendations. Administration has provided alternative options below for Council's consideration:

**Alternative Compensation Option(s):**

- Adopt Prince Albert's method of compensation by setting the Mayor's salary at 67% of a Manitoba Cabinet Minister as approved on April 1st of the previous year;
- Set the the Mayor's personal vehicle allowance to \$500 without adding a personal vehicle allowance to to the Deputy Mayor and Councillors; and
- Set the total per diem and expense allowance for the Deputy Mayor and Councillors to \$4,000 annually.

**LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:**

*The Municipal Act* provides that a council may by by-law, set the types, rates and conditions of compensation for performing work or service as a council member. Additional legislative requirements and timelines for consideration are detailed on page 25 of the report.

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:**

The recommendations align with Council's strategic priority of community well-being and affordability (fiscal responsibility).

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

It is recommended that any changes with a budgetary impact take effect on January 1, 2027 and be included in the 2027 operating budget. The financial impact of the proposed recommendations is summarized on page 25 of the report.

**RISK ASSESSMENT:**

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:**

Any recommended changes to by-laws over and above council compensation must meet public notice requirements under *The Municipal Act*.

**CONCLUSION:**

Administration conducted a comprehensive review and assessment using data from comparator municipalities. Administration recommends that Council accept this report and direct Administration to draft the required amendments for Council's consideration.



COUNCIL  
COMPENSATION REVIEW  
Brandon City Council

February  
2026

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# Executive Summary

The role of a council member is unique, requiring recognition of the significant time and effort involved while balancing the understanding that it is fundamentally a service to the community and the well-being of residents.

The review included an overview of current compensation models and remuneration structures for mid-size cities across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The findings and analysis directly inform the recommendations presented for Council's consideration. This report outlines the results of the compensation review, including recommended changes to establish alignment with comparable municipalities.

*The Municipal Act*, C.C.S.M. c. M225 (Municipal Act) authorizes compensation under Division 6; Section 124(2) explicitly states a council may, by by-law, set the types, rates, and conditions of payment to be made to members of council. The City of Brandon adopted the current Indemnity By-law No. 7220 in 2018, which authorizes and regulates pay and expense benefits for members of Council.

The recommendations in this report, if adopted, will enhance the current compensation model to attract interested and dedicated candidates to serve as elected officials.

The City of Brandon does not have an approved compensation philosophy or benchmark to guide periodic compensation reviews. The following principles were identified and applied to the recommendations of the report:

- Compensation should attract a diverse range of candidates to the roles of Mayor and Councillor;
- Compensation should consider the responsibilities, accountabilities, and time commitment required of the Mayor and Councillors;
- Compensation should align with other comparable municipalities; and
- Compensation must be transparent, fiscally responsible and easily understood.

The review determined that City of Brandon Council compensation is significantly below that of peer comparator groups. A correction to base compensation, per diems, expenses, and allowances is warranted, and a staggered approach is recommended to mitigate budget impacts. Following a review of the status of members and electoral system, recommendations include maintain Councillors as "part-time", and reducing to Council to nine members elected at-large. A summary of all recommendations is provided on the next page.

# Summary of Recommendations

1. Effective January 1, 2027 and every January 1<sup>st</sup> until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2030, the Mayor's salary be increased by 3%;
2. Effective January 1, 2027, Councillor annual base compensation for the council term 2026-2023 be calculated at 30% of the Mayor's annual base indemnity.
3. Effective January 1, 2027, Deputy Mayor annual base compensation for the council term 2026-2023 be calculated at 33% of the Mayor's annual base indemnity.
4. Effective January 1, 2027 per diem rates increase to \$200 for full day (more than 3.5 hours) and \$100 for half-day (less than 3.5 hours) and be provided an expense budget of a combined maximum of \$3,000 per calendar year. During election years, the maximum amount will be prorated accordingly.
5. Effective January 1, 2027, Personal Vehicle Allowance for the Mayor be increased to \$500 per month. The Deputy Mayor shall receive the allowance at 33% of the Mayor's rate, and Councillors shall receive the allowance at 30% of the Mayor's rate.
6. That the current benefit package available to Council members be maintained pending the City of Brandon's benefit review.
7. That the position of Mayor remain "full time" and position of Councillors remain "part-time."
8. That the number of councillor positions be reduced from eleven (11) to nine (9) by amending the Organizational By-law to insert that Council shall be the Mayor and eight (8) council members.
9. That Council directs Administration to draft a by-law to repeal Ward Boundaries By-law No. 7332 in advance of May 1, 2026.
10. That Council directs Administration to amend Organizational By-law No. 6550 to identify four equitable City Districts for the purpose of appointing two (2) Council representatives.
11. Council directs Administration to draft a Council Expense Policy with consideration given to attendance at conferences, conventions and professional development sessions, eligible per diems and expenses, and claim procedures to be considered by Council in advance of the next general municipal election.
12. That Council base compensation, per diems, expenses and allowances continue to be adjusted annually based on the average monthly Manitoba Consumer Price Index for the previous twelve-month period ending September 30.

# Background

A compensation review is a structured, objective process used to assess the appropriateness of council member compensation. City of Brandon Council members receive annual base pay in three tiers: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors. For all other compensation components, the Deputy Mayor is treated the same as Councillors.

The City of Brandon Indemnity By-law No. 7220 requires Council to review salaries and benefits each term. In addition to the by-law requirement, a review is warranted as Brandon has experienced significant growth and change since the last review in 2018. The 2021 Statistics Canada census recorded a population of 51,313, a 5% increase from 2016. Between 2022 and 2024, Statistics Canada estimates indicate a further 8% increase, largely driven by immigration, with 2025 population estimates between 59,000 and 60,000.

The last compensation review in 2018 was triggered by federal tax changes that eliminated the tax exemption for municipal officeholders effective in 2019, resulting in an estimated 10–15% reduction in net pay. All indemnities and allowances are taxable, while reimbursed expenses remain non-taxable.

The market comparison to similar-sized municipalities in Western Canada and Ontario showed that Brandon's 2018 compensation levels were approximately 10.5% below the average. To address the federal tax changes, Council approved a 13% increase to indemnity rates, which took effect on January 1, 2019, through Indemnity By-law No. 7220. Annual inflation adjustments are applied each January 1 to prevent compensation from falling behind. For the 2023–2026 council term, adjustments to annual indemnities, per diems, expenses, and allowances were 6.9%, 3.1%, 1.1%, and 3.0% respectively. Annual indemnities are paid on a bi-weekly basis; per diem claims up to the maximum may be submitted at the discretion of the Councillor. All Council compensation must be disclosed in accordance with [The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act, C. C. S. M. c. P265](#).

In response to emerging challenges and the need for updated compensation practices, Council directed Administration to undertake a comprehensive review of the Indemnity By-law. At the Regular Meeting of Council held on November 17, 2025, the following resolution was adopted:

(G) INDEMNITY BY-LAW REVIEW

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Considered was a report from the Legislative Services Department dated November 12, 2025, with respect to the above.

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That Administration undertake a comprehensive review of the Indemnity By-law and provide a Council Remuneration Review Report back to City Council reviewing the current compensation structure, market analysis on comparable municipalities, size and structure of council, whether designating council members as full-time is warranted, and any proposed changes to the pay, benefits, and expenses for council members. CARRIED.

# Legislative and Policy Framework

The Manitoba *Municipal Act* Part 3, Division 6 provides authorities that councils may set the types, rates, and conditions of compensation by by-law. Part 3, Division 1 of the legislation provides municipalities with broad autonomy on council composition, requiring one head of council and not fewer than four and not more than 10 councillors.

Sections 82 & 83 of the *Municipal Act* outlines the role of council members; S. 83(1) is copied below:

## **General duties of members**

**83(1)** Each member of a council has the following duties:

- (a) to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to the council's attention anything that would promote the well-being or interests of the municipality;
- (b) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (c) to participate in meetings of the council and of council committees and other bodies to which the member is appointed by the council;
- (d) to keep in confidence a matter that is discussed at a meeting closed to the public under subsection 152(3) and that the committee decides to keep confidential until the matter is discussed at a meeting of the council or of a committee conducted in public;
- (d.1) to comply with the code of conduct for members of council;
- (e) to perform any other duty or function imposed on the member by the council or this or any other Act.

The City of Brandon's Organizational By-law No. 6650 establishes the duties and responsibilities of Council, while the Indemnity By-law sets the annual indemnities and allowable expenses. The research and recommendations in this review rely on the following provincial legislation and City by-laws:

- [\*The Municipal Act, C.C.S.M. c. M225 \(Municipal Act\)\*](#)
- [\*Brandon Charter, S. M. 1989-90, c. 71 \(Brandon Charter\)\*](#)
- [\*Municipal Councils and School Board Election Act, C.C.S.M. c. M257\*](#)
- [\*Indemnity By-law No. 7220\*](#)
- [\*Organizational By-law No. 6650\*](#)
- [\*Ward Boundaries By-law No. 7332\*](#)

# Research & Methodology

A market assessment was conducted to identify comparator municipalities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000 residents across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. While each municipality operates within its own legislative framework, governance structure, economic factors, and community needs, reviewing compensation practices across similar sized communities provides a transparent peer comparator group to support objective recommendations.

The comparative analysis is intended to identify trends and ranges in council remuneration while recognizing that a direct “apples to apples” comparison is not possible. Administration selected municipalities with the most comparable governance structures, many of which are also used as comparators for other City of Brandon administrative purposes.

Administration researched small cities (population 10,000 – 100,000) across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and determined the following five municipalities to be the most appropriate comparator group:

- City of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
- City of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
- City of St. Albert, Alberta
- City of Medicine Hat, Alberta
- City of Spruce Grove, Alberta

These cities were selected based on similar population size and shared characteristics as part of the prairie provinces. While Ontario and British Columbia have communities of comparable size, differences in geography, economic focus, and urban density limit their suitability for this purpose. The selected comparators, including Brandon, are governed by similar provincial legislation, elect a full-time mayor, and have a four-year council term.

Best practice is for Council to approve compensation changes for the next council term. Alberta conducted its most recent general municipal elections in fall 2025. As a result, Medicine Hat indemnities increased from the 2025 figures referenced in this report to \$60,236 in 2026, and Spruce Grove increased councillor compensation by 32% to reflect a shift to “full-time” status.

Research for this review was conducted using publicly available information. Compensation by-laws and council-approved policies served as the primary sources for the recommendations contained in this report. Compensation amounts from 2025 were used as the most recent and reliable data available.

City of Brandon Council members were also invited to complete an anonymous questionnaire. The survey included questions related to current compensation amounts, time spent on Council business, and preferred comparator approaches. Six of eleven members responded, and a summary of the results is included as Attachment A.

# Analysis and Recommendations

The comparative analysis concluded that Brandon City Council compensation is below the average of the peer comparator group.

The following sections provide detailed analysis of the current compensation framework, a comparison to peer municipalities, and the resulting recommendations. Each topic is examined individually to highlight key findings and rationale:

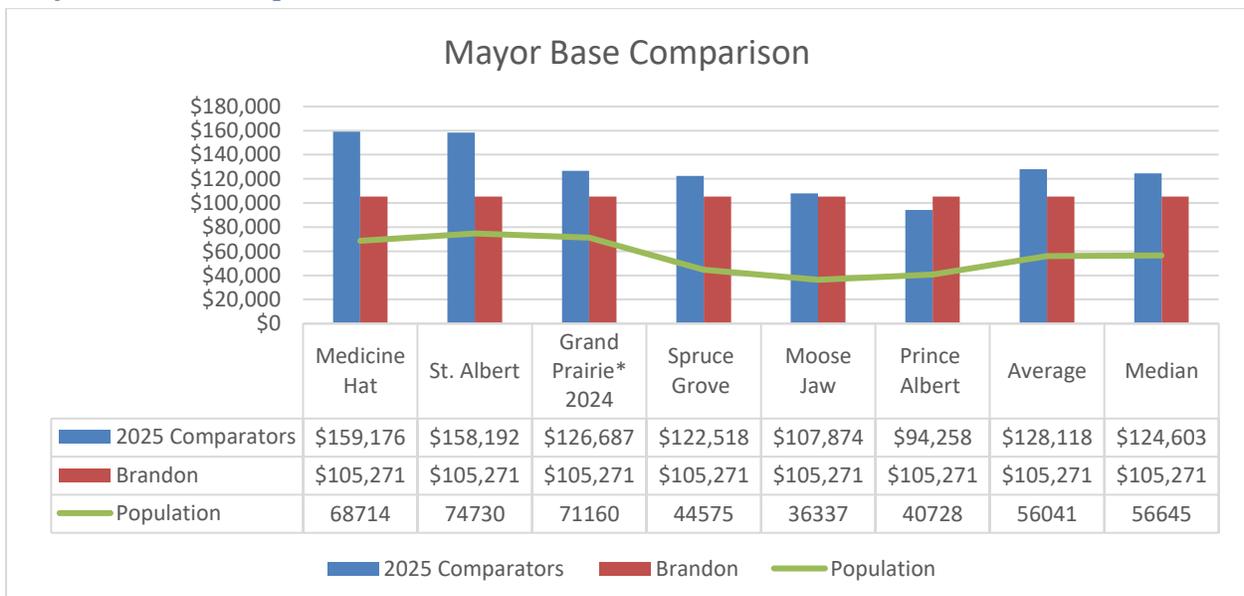
- Base Compensation for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors
- Per Diem Rates & Expenses
- Personal Vehicle Allowance
- Benefits
- Status of Councillors
- Size of Council
- Electoral System

## Base Indemnity Rates for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors

Base compensation represents the core, regular pay Councillors receive for attending Council meetings and carrying out their duties. All comparator municipalities apply annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) to base salaries, using different methodologies that produce generally similar outcomes. Brandon applies the Manitoba Consumer Price Index (CPI) based on a twelve-month period; Saskatchewan comparators use the provincial CPI with a 3% cap and a 0% floor, while Alberta municipalities use an average of various benchmarks, including CPI and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) increases.

Population benchmarks are included in the comparative chart to provide context. Population size is generally correlated with workload and responsibility. Brandon’s estimated population of 59,444 is slightly higher than the peer group average of 56,527.

### Mayor Base Compensation



At \$105,271, the Mayor's base salary is significantly below the peer group average of \$128,118. Brandon's rate is comparable to Moose Jaw, slightly higher than Prince Albert, and substantially lower than Medicine Hat, St. Albert, Grande Prairie, and Spruce Grove. Overall, the Mayor's compensation is 11.7% above the lowest comparator, 51.2% below the highest, and 21.7% below the average for the peer group.

### Recommendation:

1. Effective January 1, 2027 and every January 1<sup>st</sup> until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2030, the Mayor's salary be increased by 3%;

### Rationale:

Mayor base compensation is not competitive with the peer comparator group and is no longer reflective of the requirements of the role. Municipalities are experiencing an increasing scope of responsibilities being downloaded from provincial governments, more complex societal issues, the evolution of social media, and growing demands associated with modern municipal leadership. Expectations of the Mayor are extensive; the role is highly visible at the local and provincial level and represents the City of Brandon at national and, at times, international functions. It should be recognized that this is a high-stress position requiring a professional skill set. The Mayor fulfills all responsibilities of a Councillor, maintains full-time office hours at City Hall, participates actively on assigned boards and committees, and may serve as an ex officio member on any board or committee.

The proposed adjustment to the Mayor's salary for the 2026–2030 Council term is intended to better align compensation with comparable municipalities and provide a structured, predictable approach going forward. The adjustment of 3% effective January 1, 2027 represents a 6.06% increase and serves as a modest initial step toward improving alignment with the peer comparator group. It is recommended that annual Manitoba Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments (outlined in Recommendation 12 on page 23) continue status quo to reflect inflationary changes, the need for any further significant adjustments and to mitigate budget impact.

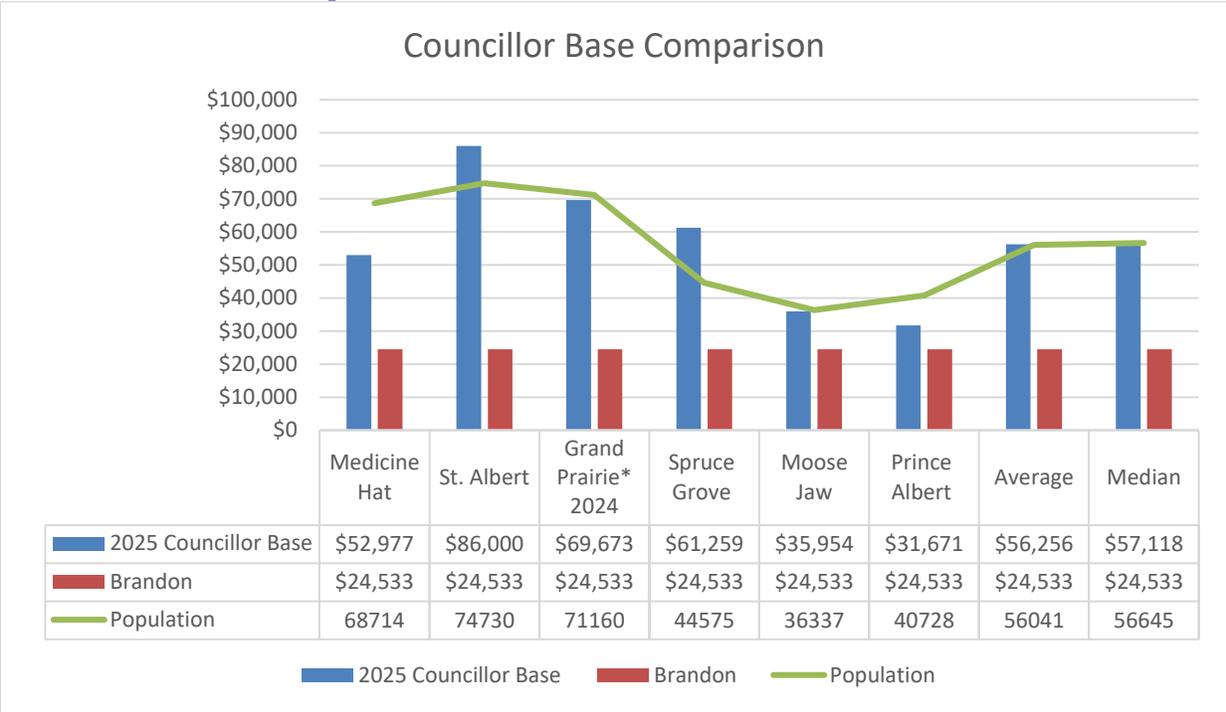
For the next council term, a 3% increase and the annual Manitoba CPI adjustment provides:

- A transparent and consistent method for annual adjustments
- Protection against erosion of compensation due to inflation
- Predictability for long-term financial planning
- Reduced likelihood of significant market corrections in future terms

The staggered structure distributes adjustments across the full council term rather than concentrating them in a single year. This approach enhances stability and reduces the need for substantial future corrections. Budget impacts for 2027 and future terms are detailed in the Financial Implications section on page 24.

Based on current comparator data, the recommended adjustments would position the City of Brandon within the mid-range of comparable municipalities rather than near the lowest end.

# Councillor Base Compensation



All peer comparator municipalities consider the Councillor role to be part-time, except for St. Albert, which transitioned its Councillors from part-time to full-time status effective October 2026 at the start of their new council term.

Across the comparator group, Councillor base rates are established as a fixed percentage of the Mayor’s base salary. The average Councillor rate is 44% of the Mayor’s base rate. When implemented in 2018, the City of Brandon Councillor rate was set at 25% of the Mayor’s salary; however, it has since declined to 23% because annual CPI adjustments were applied to the individual rates rather than as a fixed percentage of the Mayor’s compensation.

The current Councillor base compensation of \$24,533 is significantly lower than all peer comparators, ranking as the lowest among the group and sitting 43.6% below the average Councillor compensation of \$56,256.

**Recommendation:**

- 2. Effective January 1, 2027, Councillor annual base compensation for the council term 2026-2030 be calculated at 30% of the Mayor’s annual base compensation.

**Rationale:**

Like the Mayor base compensation analysis, Councillor base compensation is not competitive with the peer municipal comparator group and does not adequately reflect the commitment required for the role. While there is general recognition of the demands faced by Councillors, the position requires balancing preparation for regular meetings, engaging with constituents, fulfilling committee obligations, and remaining informed on emerging municipal issues. To attract

and retain dedicated, community-minded elected officials, a fair and sustainable compensation model is recommended for the next Council term.

The survey indicated that City of Brandon Councillor compensation should be above average to the comparison group, however balancing fiscal responsibility was considered in determining that 30% of the mayor’s rate is fair and equitable. The recommended initial adjustment to \$37,950 is still well below the average of \$56,256 but is a considerable improvement to current rates. It is intended that the general annual increase applied to the Mayor’s formula will reduce the gap and bring the Councillor base rate closer, though not above, the average compensation rate. This fixed percentage model also reinforces a compensation system that is consistent, easy to understand, and is sustainable for future budget cycles.

**Deputy Mayor Additional Compensation**

City	2025 Additional Compensation	Method
<b>Brandon</b>	\$6,070	Established as 25% greater than councillors 2019 indemnity. Adjusted annually based on the CPI on October 31 of the previous year.
<b>Moose Jaw</b>	\$5,676	\$473/month. Adjusted annually based on same % for Saskatchewan Cabinet Ministers.
<b>Prince Albert</b>	\$600	\$600 per year and paid as \$100 bi-weekly for the first three months of the year.
<b>St. Albert</b>	\$0	Same as councillors.
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	\$0	Same as councillors.
<b>Spruce Grove</b>	\$9,000	\$750/month for a total of \$9,000 per year.
<b>Grand Prairie*</b>	\$0	Same as councillors.
<b>2024</b>		
<b>Average</b>	\$3,049	
<b>Median</b>	\$600	

Compensation methods for the Deputy Mayor varied significantly across the peer comparator group. Three municipalities provide a monthly stipend, while the remaining three offer no additional compensation for the Deputy Mayor role. The City of Brandon is the only municipality that sets Deputy Mayor compensation as a fixed percentage of the Councillor base rate. Overall, Brandon’s Deputy Mayor base compensation is the second highest among the comparator group and is 50.2% higher than the average.

**Recommendation:**

- 3. Effective January 1, 2027, Deputy Mayor annual base compensation for the council term 2026-2030 be calculated at 33% of the Mayor’s annual base indemnity.

**Rationale:**

The Deputy Mayor is appointed annually at Council’s organizational meeting for the following twelve months. Section 15 of the Organizational By-law requires the Deputy Mayor to preside over all meetings and perform all necessary duties in the absence of the Mayor.

Compensation for the Deputy Mayor varies widely across the comparator group, with some municipalities offering no additional pay and others providing a modest stipend more accurately described as an allowance. Aligning with the Councillor base model, the recommended percentage-based formula supports sustainability, transparency, and ease of administration, while remaining straightforward for the public to understand.

Because additional Deputy Mayor compensation is discretionary among comparators, the peer group average is influenced by municipalities that do not offer any supplementary pay. It is recommended that Brandon City Council maintain a modest increase above the Councillor base rate to provide a clear, transparent, and consistent method of recognizing the additional leadership responsibilities assigned to the Deputy Mayor when acting on behalf of the Mayor.

## Per Diems & Expenses

The Mayor’s base rate is all-inclusive while Councillors are eligible for per diems. Per diems compensate councillors for additional time spent performing work or service on behalf of the municipality. Across the comparator group, per diem structures vary considerably, with different budgets and approaches to per diems and expenses.

The analysis concludes that the City of Brandon 2025 per diem rates of \$94.71 per half day and \$189.42 per full day are below average for the peer comparator group. Moose Jaw is the only city with lower per diem rate of \$167 per full day and is pro-rated for less time accordingly. Two municipalities set rates for full and half days at \$200 and \$100 respectively while two others set rates for full and half days at \$300 and \$150 respectively. St. Albert’s full-time councillors do not receive additional per diems to their base rate. The City of Brandon’s per diem rate is lower than the average rate of \$233 per full day and \$125 per half day.

Both Brandon and Moose Jaw establish maximum annual per diem amounts; however, Brandon’s maximum is significantly lower—approximately 90% lower—than Moose Jaw’s. Moose Jaw’s higher maximum also includes a designated travel and expense allowance, whereas Brandon uses a hybrid model consisting of a smaller discretionary expense allowance combined with Councillor travel and expenses budgeted annually through the operating budget.

City	Per Diem Max	Full Day	Half Day
<b>Brandon</b>	<b>\$1,515.40</b>	<b>\$189.42</b>	<b>\$94.71</b>
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	No set value in policy	\$200	\$100
<b>St. Albert</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Grand Prairie* 2024</b>	No set value for attendance at Mandatory Events.	\$300	\$150
<b>Spruce Grove</b>	No set value in policy	\$300	\$150
<b>Moose Jaw</b>	\$15,791	\$167	
<b>Prince Albert</b>	No set value in policy	\$200	\$100
<b>Average</b>		\$233	\$125
<b>Median</b>		\$200	\$125

### Recommendation:

- Effective January 1, 2027, per diem rates increase to \$200 per full day (more than 3.5 hours) and \$100 per half-day (less than 3.5 hours) and Councillors be eligible to claim a maximum of \$3,000 per calendar year for per diems and expenses. During election years, the maximum amount will be prorated to the council term accordingly.

	Current (2026)	Proposed
<b>Maximum Per Diem</b>	\$1,515.40	\$3,000
- Full Day	\$195.11	\$200
-Half Day	\$97.55	\$100
<b>Expense Allowance</b>	\$923.63	
<b>Total</b>	\$2,439.03	\$3,000

Rationale:

It is common practice for Councillors to receive compensation for attending Council business. It is recommended that the City of Brandon continue using a fixed per diem structure with a conservative increase. Councillors typically reach the current maximum claim threshold within the first six months of the year. The proposed increase will position Brandon’s per diem rates slightly below the peer group averages of \$233 for a full day and \$125 for a half day.

Under the current By-law, Councillors may apply any unclaimed portion of their per diem budget toward reimbursable expenses but cannot use unclaimed expenses for per diem claims. It is recommended that Council adopt a combined per diem and expense allowance to be used at the discretion of each Councillor. This approach provides greater flexibility and allows members to respond to changing priorities over the Council term.

Four of the six comparator municipalities do not appear to set a maximum per diem amount, which risks financial uncertainty. By contrast, Brandon’s existing maximum may restrict participation later in the year once the limit is reached. Maintaining a capped structure continues to provide predictable costs and budget stability. Business and travel expenses will continue to be budgeted annually through the operating budget, ensuring transparency and Council oversight.

Moose Jaw provides a higher inclusive budget for expenses whereby any amounts above this must be approved by council. The Recommendation adopts a hybrid method of budgeting business and travel expenses annually in operating budget in addition to a small discretionary budget. Moving to a fully discretionary model for expenses may be reviewed in next compensation review prior to 2030 municipal election.

Per diems are intended to reimburse or offset costs incurred, including potential loss of wages, for attending approved meetings, conferences, training sessions, and other City business conducted outside regular Council and committee meetings. The proposed increases represent a modest adjustment to reflect current market conditions and inflationary pressures.

## Personal Vehicle Allowance

The City of Brandon currently provides the Mayor with a monthly allowance of \$430.38 for personal vehicle use for all business travel within the city. No other members of council are eligible for the allowance.

CITY	Mayor	Councillor
<b>Brandon</b>	<b>\$430.38</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	Reimbursed km rate per city policy	Reimbursed km rate per city policy
<b>St. Albert</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Grand Prairie* 2024</b>	\$600	55% of mayor's allowance
<b>Spruce Grove</b>	\$120	\$60
<b>Moose Jaw</b>	\$500	None
<b>Prince Albert</b>	\$650	\$200
<b>Average</b>		

Notes: St. Albert is all-inclusive and approves per/kilometer expenses for out-of-city travel.

Compensation practices for personal vehicle use vary across the comparator municipalities. The City of Brandon falls within the mid-range of these approaches, although most comparators do provide Councillors with a personal vehicle allowance.

### Recommendation:

5. Effective January 1 2027, Personal Vehicle Allowance for the Mayor be increased to \$500 per month. The Deputy Mayor shall receive a monthly allowance at 33% of the Mayor's rate, and Councillors shall receive a monthly allowance at 30% of the Mayor's rate.

### Rationale:

The proposed Personal Vehicle Allowance provides a structured and consistent approach to reimbursing elected officials for the use of personal vehicles while conducting Council business. The increase to the Mayor's allowance from \$430.38 to \$500 per month represents a modest adjustment and reflects the high frequency of external meetings, regional travel, and community representation associated with the role.

Extending the allowance to the Deputy Mayor and Councillors recognizes that they also attend meetings and events throughout the community and often incur out-of-pocket costs when using their personal vehicles. The allowance is not intended to increase base compensation, but rather to offset some of the expenses associated with performing Council duties. Establishing proportional vehicle allowances for the Deputy Mayor and Councillors also ensures internal consistency within the overall compensation framework. For 2027, the proportional rates result in a monthly allowance of \$180 for the Deputy Mayor and \$165 for each Councillor. Expenses for out-of-town travel will be addressed in the forthcoming Council Expense Policy.

## Benefits

The Indemnity By-law outlines the benefits offered to the Mayor in Section 1. B) and Councillors in Section 2. B), with all costs shared equally between the City and elected officials.

Administration is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the City's overall benefits program, which is expected to be completed in the fall of 2026.

<b>CITY</b>	<b>Mayor</b>	<b>Councillor</b>
<b>Brandon</b>	<b>Mayor is eligible for additional dental insurance coverage and RRSP contribution up to 7% matching.</b>	<b>Life insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and long term disability.</b>
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	Mayor eligible for all benefit programs as Out of Scope staff.	Councillors eligible for Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage only.
<b>Prince Albert</b>	Eligible for City benefits program with certain exceptions. Also eligible for EAP program and newly added Active Living Program benefit. Eligible to receive 9% to invest in savings plan or a matched contribution to the City's RRSP group plan.	Same as Mayor.
<b>St. Albert</b>	Workers Compensation, Group Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Dependent Life Insurance, Dental Care, Extended Health Care, Vision Care, Employee and Family Assistance Program. Employer contribution of 3% for RRSP.	Same as Mayor.
<b>Spruce Grove</b>	Eligible for City benefits program including but not limited to: (a) extended health benefits; (b) dental benefits; (c) life Insurance; (d) health and wellness benefit; (e) self-directed Registered Retirement Savings Plan contributions; (f) Tax Free Savings Account contributions; and (g) Employee Family Assistance Program. Voluntary (RRSP) (TFSA) with an annual matching contribution of up to 4% of a member of Council's annual salary.	Same as Mayor.
<b>Moose Jaw</b>	Mayor eligible for all benefit programs as Out of Scope staff.	Accidental Death & Dismemberment only.
<b>Grand Prairie</b>	Available to mayor and councillors: 100% individual funded: Group life insurance. 100% City funded: Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Dependent Insurance, Extended Health and Dental Care, Employee & Family Assistance Plan, Health Care Spending Account (\$500)	Same as Mayor.

As with most employers, benefit packages vary by municipality and by individual eligibility. Most peer comparator municipalities offer the same benefits package to all members of Council. The City of Brandon provides additional benefits to the Mayor, including dental insurance, brief illness or injury coverage, and optional matched retirement savings.

The City of Brandon does not offer Councillors the opportunity to participate in a registered savings plan. Three of the six comparator municipalities provide all members of Council with matched registered contributions ranging from 3% to 9%.

### Recommendation:

6. That the current benefit package available to Council members be maintained pending the City of Brandon's benefit review.

### Rationale:

All comparator municipalities, including the City of Brandon, provide members of council with some level of benefits. Since benefits are typically tied to the coverage plan negotiated by administrators of the municipality, it is recommended that Council consider offering the same benefit packages to all council members depending on coverage options and costs.

All comparator municipalities, including the City of Brandon, provide members of Council with some level of benefits. Because benefit programs are typically tied to the coverage plans negotiated for municipal employees, it is recommended that Council consider offering the same benefit package to all members of Council where coverage options and costs allow.

Once the City's broader benefit review is complete, Council may wish to further explore the feasibility of introducing a retirement savings contribution for Councillors. Currently, however, maintaining the current approach is recommended.

## Status of Councillor

The Municipal Act and related provincial legislation, including the Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act, do not define or distinguish Councillor positions as “full-time” or “part-time.” Instead, legislation provides Councils with the autonomy to determine how these roles are structured to best meet the needs of the municipality and determines how the position is functionally treated. In practice, “full-time” versus “part-time” status is generally defined by the time commitments required and the level of compensation provided.

Though not always explicitly defined, status is often implied through compensation levels and role responsibilities. All comparator municipalities consider the position of Mayor to be “full-time” and Councillors to be “part-time.” The City of St. Albert is the exception in this group; following the October 2025 general municipal election, its Councillors transitioned to “full-time” status and received a 32% salary increase to reflect this change.

The trends of municipalities on the prairie provinces do not indicate that a substantial shift to “full time” councillors; “part time” status remains the leading practice, with St. Albert being an exception. Preliminary research shows that only Winnipeg (MB), Calgary (AB), Edmonton (AB), St. Albert (AB), the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (AB), and Strathcona County (AB) designate their Councillors as full-time. This suggests that full-time Councillor status in the prairie provinces is generally limited to major cities and a small number of large or specialized municipalities. Notably, both Regina and Saskatoon continue to consider their Councillors part-time.

### Recommendation:

7. That the position of Mayor remain “full time” and position of Councillors remain “part-time.”

### Rationale:

The hours of work for members of Council are not regulated, nor are they defined in the Organizational By-law. Based on function and compensation, the City of Brandon considers the position of Mayor to be “full-time,” while Councillor positions are considered “part-time.” All data reviewed supports maintaining the Mayor as a full-time position, which is consistent with the peer comparator group.

The analysis also confirms that Brandon aligns with its municipal comparators in treating and compensating Councillors as part-time. A “full-time” position implies that the role would be an individual’s primary occupation. Most City of Brandon Councillors are working Councillors, meaning they serve in addition to holding primary employment. Requiring Councillors to leave full-time employment for a four-year term would create a significant barrier and could discourage many qualified individuals from seeking office.

Transitioning Councillors to full-time status would require a comprehensive review of compensation as a primary income source, additional office space at City Hall, increased Council support staff, and consideration of offering Workers’ Compensation, expanded benefit packages,

and retirement contributions. These operational and financial impacts further support maintaining the current “part-time” designation for Councillors for the 2026-2030 term.

## Size of Council

Section 7 of the Brandon Charter previously required the City of Brandon to be divided into ten wards with a Mayor and a Councillor to be elected from each ward. This section was repealed in 2021, and no replacement provision has been established in City of Brandon by-laws. As a result, City Council must determine the total number of Councillors by by-law. Section 80 of the *Municipal Act* requires councils to have no fewer than five and no more than eleven members, inclusive of the Head of Council.

City	Council Members	Population	Ratio
<b>Brandon</b>	11	59,444	5404.00
<b>Moose Jaw</b>	7	36,337	5191.00
<b>Prince Albert</b>	9	40,728	4525.33
<b>St. Albert</b>	7	74,730	10675.71
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	9	68,714	7634.89
<b>Spruce Grove</b>	7	44,575	6367.86
<b>Grand Prairie*</b>	9	71,160	7906.67
<b>2024</b>			
<b>Average</b>		56,527	6815.07

The City of Brandon is at the maximum allowable number of Councillors under the Municipal Act and has the highest number of Councillors among the peer comparator group. Brandon has a lower councillor-to-resident ratio than Moose Jaw and Prince Albert, while the remaining four municipalities have higher ratios than Brandon. Overall, the comparison indicates that Councillors in the peer group serve, on average, 20.7% more constituents than Councillors in the City of Brandon.

### Recommendation:

8. The councillor positions be reduced from eleven (11) to nine (9) by amending the Organizational By-law to insert that Council shall be the Mayor and eight (8) council members.

### Rationale:

The City of Brandon currently elects eleven members to City Council. This is the highest number among the comparator group, where councils are evenly split between having seven or nine members. While workload and community expectations have evolved, a reduction in the number of Council members is not anticipated to significantly alter the responsibilities of individual Councillors. Reducing Council from eleven to nine members would create a councillor-to-resident ratio of 6,605, which remains approximately 3% lower than the peer group average.

In practice, smaller councils often experience more efficient deliberations and strategic planning, streamlined committee structures, and clearer debate with reduced duplication of viewpoints. While maintaining a diversity of perspectives is important, research in municipal governance commonly indicates that councils of seven to nine members are effective for small to mid-sized

municipalities. It is anticipated that Council meetings may become shorter and that the upcoming committee review will contribute further to streamlining processes to support a reduction.

Councils typically consist of an odd number of members to avoid tie votes. A nine-member council would maintain broad representation while improving overall efficiency. A seven-member council would offer an even more streamlined governance model and aligns with the City of Brandon's general approach to operating lean. While a nine-member council is recommended, a reduction to seven may also be considered. Right-sizing Council is a strategic step forward that strengthens governance and supports the City's long-term outlook.

While governance effectiveness should be the primary consideration over cost savings, a smaller council would result in modest reductions in expenditures related to indemnities, benefits, professional development, and associated administrative support. A full cost comparison is included in the Financial Implications section on page 24 of this report.

## Electoral System

Like the size of Council, the electoral division into ten wards was previously mandated under Section 7 of the Brandon Charter, which has since been repealed. The current ward boundaries are established through Ward Boundaries By-law No. 7332, enacted in 2022 prior to the general municipal election. This by-law adjusted boundaries to reflect population changes and replaced ward names with ward numbers.

Following the 2022 general election, election feedback indicated the replacement of ward names and the boundary adjustments resulted in considerable voter confusion, with many residents unsure of their ward or their correct voting location. Approximately 6,356 residents out of a population exceeding 50,000 cast a vote, and four of the ten ward positions were filled by acclamation. There is no requirement for candidates to reside in, or have a designated interest in, to run in a specific ward. Any changes or repeal of the Ward Boundaries By-law No. 7332 must receive third reading 180 days prior to the election. If requested in writing by at least 25 voters of the municipality, the by-law will be subject to review by the Municipal Board.

### Recommendations:

9. That Council directs Administration to draft a by-law to repeal Ward Boundaries By-law No. 7332 in advance of May 1, 2026.

10. That Council directs Administration to amend Organizational By-law No. 6550 to identify four equitable City Districts for the purpose of appointing two (2) Council representatives.

### Rationale:

Under a ward system, a larger council size is often necessary to ensure geographic representation across defined areas. In an at-large system, all members are elected by and accountable to the entire municipality. As a result, the structural need for a higher number of members to represent distinct geographic areas is reduced.

A review of comparator municipalities shows that five of the six comparators utilize at-large electoral systems, with only Brandon and Prince Albert operating under ward systems. If Council wishes to align with comparator municipalities, consideration should be given to transitioning to an at-large electoral model.

At-large systems may offer the following advantages:

- **City-Wide Accountability:** Councillors are elected by, and accountable to, the entire community rather than a specific ward. This can reinforce a broader, more strategic municipality-wide perspective in decision-making.
- **Administrative Simplicity:** Eliminates the need for ward boundary reviews and adjustments, which can be resource-intensive and may require periodic realignment due to population shifts.
- **Flexibility in Governance:** Reduces the risk of uneven representation caused by demographic changes between wards over time or during councillor vacancies/absences.

It also removes the perception that some wards require higher time commitments than others.

- Alignment with Peers: Reflects governance structure among similar sized municipalities.
- Alignment with the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees: The City of Brandon facilitates the general election for Councils and Trustees; the latter being elected at-large.
- Election Simplicity: Removes the confusion for voters regarding which ward they are eligible to vote in and where they may vote. The top eight candidates will be elected; ward acclamations tend to lead to low voter turnout in those wards.

Repealing the ward system requires consideration to:

- The loss of direct representation for defined areas, such as the Downtown.
- The need to monitor Council workload to ensure it remains fairly distributed.
- The potential for residents to be uncertain about which Councillor to contact with their concerns.

To address these concerns, it is recommended that Council identify four City Districts within the Organizational By-law. At the inaugural organizational meeting following the election, two Councillors would be appointed to each City District. These Districts would function as four administrative wards, providing designated representation while maintaining the efficiencies of an at-large electoral system.

## Additional Recommendations

The Indemnity By-law references a Council Expense Policy, which was never completed. It is recommended that a policy be drafted and presented to Council outlining all procedures related council compensation, including per diems, expenses and claim processes.

11. Council directs Administration to draft a Council Expense Policy with consideration given to attendance at conferences, conventions and professional development sessions, eligible per diems and expenses, and claim procedures to be considered by Council in advance of the next general municipal election.

The Indemnity By-law applies annual compensation adjustments in accordance with the provincial CPI to ensure that base compensation, per diems, and allowances do not fall behind. It is recommended that this clause remain status quo however that the CPI period be based on September 30 rather than October 31 to better align with the City's budget cycle.

12. That Council base compensation, per diems, expenses and allowances be adjusted annually based on the average monthly Manitoba Consumer Price Index for the previous twelve-month period ending September 30.

## Financial Implications

Indemnity	Current Rates	2026 Budget - 11 Council Members	2027 Proposed Rates	9 Council Members	11 Council Members
<b>Mayor Base</b>	\$108,429.43	\$108,429.43	\$111,682	\$111,682	\$111,682
<b>Deputy Mayor Base</b>	\$31,520.69	\$31,520.69	\$36,855	\$36,855	\$36,855
<b>Councillor Base</b>	\$25,268.47	\$227,416.23	\$33,505	\$234,533	\$301,542
<b>Per Diems*</b>	\$1,560.86	\$15,608.60	\$2,000	\$16,000	\$20,000
<b>Expense Allowance*</b>	\$923.63	\$9,236.30	\$1,000	\$8,000.00	\$10,000.00
<b>Mayor PVA**</b>	\$430.00	\$5,164.56	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
<b>Deputy Mayor PVA</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,980	\$1,980	\$1,980
<b>Councillor PVA</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,800	\$12,600	\$16,200
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>\$397,375.81</b>		<b>\$427,650</b>	<b>\$504,260</b>
<b>*Mayor excluded from per diem claims</b>					
<b>** PVA = Personal Vehicle Allowance</b>					

It is recommended that there be no immediate budget impact and that all rates become effective January 1, 2027, shortly after the start of the new council term. The above rates, if adopted, will be used for budgeting purposes and presented to Council during the City of Brandon's annual budget process.

## Legislative Requirements & Timelines

The next municipal election is scheduled for October 28, 2026. The following must be completed at least 180 days (May 1, 2026) in advance of the election date:

- Any changes to ward boundaries via the Ward Boundaries By-law
- Identification of the number of councillors (recommended via the Organizational By-law)

The *Municipal Act* requires that public notice be given when considering changes to wards or council numbers. Council may consider implementing the required by-law amendments as follows:

- March 16, 2026 - Regular Council Meeting: Receive report and direct Administration to bring forward any corresponding by-law amendments
- March 17 – March 31, 2026: Public notice advising of upcoming by-law amendments
- April 7, 2026 - Regular Meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of amending by-laws
- April 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting – Consideration of 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Readings

Changes to the Indemnity By-law are not bound by the same timelines and may be considered at a later date or in line with the above dates.

A proposed Council Expense Policy will be presented to Council prior to the next council term.

# Attachment A – Council Survey Summary

## Responses Overview Active

Responses

6



Average Time

12:39



Duration

20 Days



1. How long have you served on Council?

- 1-3 years 2
- 4-7 years 1
- 8+ years 3



2. In addition to regular Council meetings, how many committees or boards do you currently serve on a council member?

- 0 0
- 1-2 0
- 3-4 4
- 5+ 2



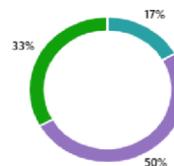
3. On average, how many hours per month do you spend on Council-related work (including meetings, preparations, emails, and community events)?

- Less than 10 0
- 10-20 1
- 21-30 0
- 31-40 3
- More than 40 2



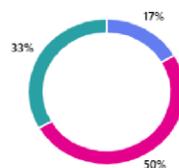
4. Overall, how fair do you believe current Council compensation is?

- Very fair 0
- Somewhat fair 0
- Neither fair nor unfair 1
- Somewhat unfair 3
- Very unfair 2



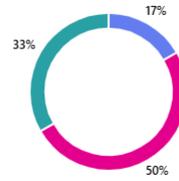
5. To what extent does your current compensation reflect the responsibilities of a City of Brandon Councillor?

- Not at all 1
- Slightly 3
- Moderately 2
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



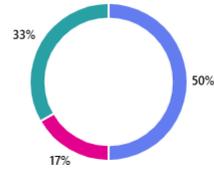
6. Do you feel the compensation adequately recognizes Time commitment

Not at all	1
Slightly	3
Moderately	2
Mostly	0
Fully	0



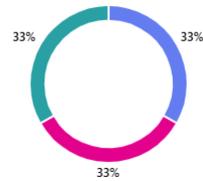
7. Do you feel the compensation adequately recognizes Decision-making responsibility

Not at all	3
Slightly	1
Moderately	2
Mostly	0
Fully	0



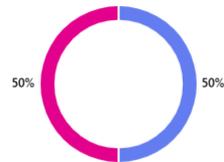
8. Do you feel the compensation adequately recognizes Ethical and strategic leadership

Not at all	2
Slightly	2
Moderately	2
Mostly	0
Fully	0



9. Do you feel the compensation adequately recognizes Public scrutiny and expectations

Not at all	3
Slightly	3
Moderately	0
Mostly	0
Fully	0



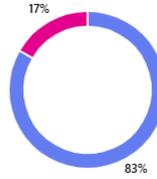
10. Compared to your first year as a council member, your time commitment is:

Much lower	0
Somewhat lower	0
About the same	2
Somewhat higher	1
Much higher	3



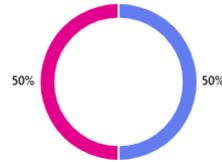
11. How appropriate is the indemnity amount (bi-weekly \$972, annual \$25,268 - 2026 rates) for council member roles?

- Much too low 5
- Slightly too low 1
- Appropriate 0
- Slightly too high 0
- Much too high 0



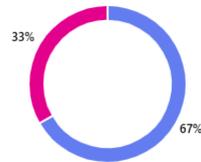
12. How appropriate is the indemnity (bi-weekly \$1,212, annual \$3,121 - 2026 rates ) for the deputy mayor role?

- Much too low 3
- Slightly too low 3
- Appropriate 0
- Slightly too high 0
- Much too high 0



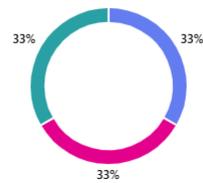
13. How appropriate is the indemnity (bi-weekly \$4,170, annual \$108,429 - 2026 rates) for the mayor role?

- Much too low 4
- Slightly too low 2
- Appropriate 0
- Slightly too high 0
- Much too high 0



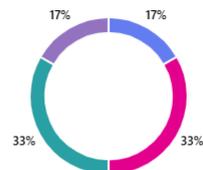
14. Does the bi-weekly indemnity adequately compensate for Meeting preparation

- Not at all 2
- Slightly 2
- Moderately 2
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



15. Does the bi-weekly indemnity adequately compensate for Correspondence and constituent issues

- Not at all 1
- Slightly 2
- Moderately 2
- Mostly 1
- Fully 0



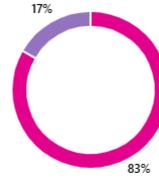
16. Does the bi-weekly indemnity adequately compensate for Ongoing governance responsibilities outside formal meetings

- Not at all 1
- Slightly 4
- Moderately 1
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



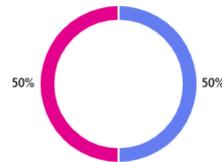
17. In your view, should the bi-weekly indemnity:

- Remain the same 0
- Be adjusted upward 5
- Be adjusted downward 0
- Be restructured entirely 1



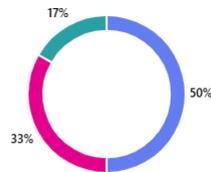
18. Is the annual maximum per diem of \$1,560 (2026 rate) reasonable?

- Much too low 3
- Slightly too low 3
- Appropriate 0
- Slightly too high 0
- Much too high 0



19. Does the current additional per diems adequately compensate for Committee workload

- Not at all 3
- Slightly 2
- Moderately 1
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



20. Does the current additional per diems adequately compensate for Level of responsibility

- Not at all 3
- Slightly 3
- Moderately 0
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



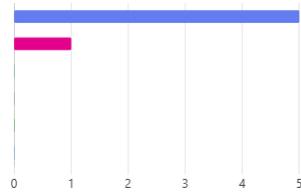
21. Have you ever limited your participation in committees due to per diem limits?

- Yes 0
- No 6



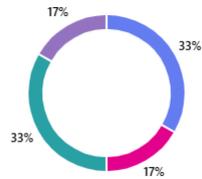
22. Based on your knowledge, how does Council compensation compare to similar municipalities?

- Much lower 5
- Somewhat lower 1
- About the same 0
- Somewhat higher 0
- Much higher 0
- Not sure 0



23. How important is it that Council compensation be benchmarked regularly against comparable municipalities?

- Essential 2
- Very important 1
- Moderately important 2
- Slightly important 1
- Not important 0



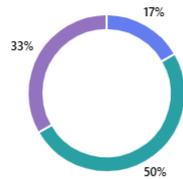
24. How should council compensation align with comparator municipalities?

- Below the average 0
- Average 6
- Above the average 0
- Significantly more than the average 0



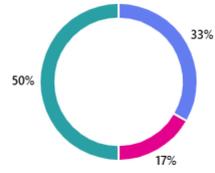
25. Do you believe the current compensation structure is a barrier in recruiting diverse candidates?

- Not at all 1
- Slightly 0
- Moderately 3
- Mostly 2
- Fully 0



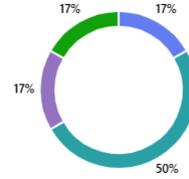
26. Do you believe the current compensation structure supports Retention of experienced members?

- Not at all 2
- Slightly 1
- Moderately 3
- Mostly 0
- Fully 0



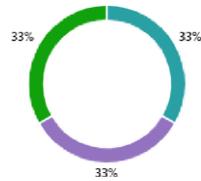
27. Do you believe the current compensation structure supports Equity (fairness) among Council members?

- Not at all 1
- Slightly 0
- Moderately 3
- Mostly 1
- Fully 1



28. The current ward structure is transparent and easy for the public to understand:

- Strongly disagree 0
- Disagree 0
- Neutral 2
- Agree 2
- Strongly agree 2





Brandon  
Municipal  
Airport

Hamilton  
Heights  
**Ward 1**  
Heather Karrouze  
Pop. 5674

Highland Park  
1st St N  
**Ward 2**  
Kris Desjarlais  
Pop. 6729

Ward 3  
Barry Cullen  
Pop. 5107

**Ward 4**  
Shaun Cameron  
Pop. 6408

**Ward 9**  
Glen Parker  
Pop. 5026

Central Area  
**Ward 5**  
Greg Hildebrand  
Pop. 5342

**Ward 6**  
Bruce Luebke  
Pop. 7379

Ward 7  
Shawn Berry  
Pop. 6707

Richmond  
Heights

**Ward 8**  
Jason Splett  
Pop. 4603

**Ward 10**  
Tyson Tame  
Pop. 5494

Chater

457

457

Green Acres