



Ombudsman  
Toronto

*Listening. Investigating. Improving City Services.*

# 2017 Budget Recommendation Ombudsman Toronto

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Presented to Budget Committee  
December 20, 2016

# Budget Recommendation: Overview

## Operating

- Ombudsman Toronto recommends that its Operating Budget for 2017 be set at \$1,810.1 thousand.
- This represents a 1.3% reduction from its 2016 Operating Budget, and an effective reduction of 3.8% from its 2017 *pro forma* Operating Budget.

## Capital

- Ombudsman Toronto recommends that its 2017 -2026 Capital Budget and Plan at \$1.070 million, with 2016 carry forward cash flows of \$0.370 million in 2017 and \$0.700 million in 2023, be approved.



# Ombudsman's Role

- Legal mandate: *“to investigate any decision or recommendation made, or any act done or not done, in administration of the City...”* (City of Toronto Act, 2006, s.171), including all City divisions and almost all City agencies and corporations.
- Ombudsman Toronto helps the City administration to hold itself accountable, and humanizes it for people whose dealings with it have left them feeling mistreated or alienated. Its work leads to improvements in how the City serves people, and enhances public confidence and trust in Toronto's government.
- We reduce friction and even the playing field between people and the City when things have gone wrong. Our work provides access to justice for people who deal with the City administration, and helps the City avoid expensive litigation.



What We Do:



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# Listening

- We receive about 1600 complaints per year on average, by phone, in person, by email and on our website.
- We look into a complaint only after someone has exhausted complaint avenues at the City (except in limited circumstances where they are unable to do so).
- We seek responses from City staff.
- We gather information and consider it in a way that is open minded and impartial; our goal is for everyone we deal with to know they were heard.
- We remain completely impartial throughout.



# Investigating

- Where we are unable to help (if the matter is outside our jurisdiction), we refer the complainant to the appropriate place.
- We resolve every issue as quickly and as informally as possible through information gathering, dispute resolution including mediation, and recommendations for service improvements (“enquiries”).
- Where the issue is very complex or appears to reveal a systemic issue that would benefit from a close look and recommendations, we may launch a more structured Investigation.
- Our Investigations result in formal recommendations for improved City services.



# Improving City Services

- The work of Ombudsman Toronto leads to improvements large and small in City systems and services.
- This includes:
  - New policies and procedures
  - New by-laws
  - Staff training
  - New communication practices
- At its core, it's about helping the City serve people better.



# Improved City Services

- Since opening in 2009, Ombudsman Toronto has made over 340 recommendations to improve the way the City serves people.
- Examples of systemic changes in Toronto directly connected to our work include:
  - New option coming to dispute parking tickets online
  - Earlier hearings before the Licensing Tribunal
  - Stronger Human Rights Policy for TCHC tenants
  - Better psychological support for paramedics
  - Training for TCHC staff in working with vulnerable seniors
  - Policy to better serve people with diminished capacity
  - Fairer application of Wheel-Trans eligibility rules





- Clarified process to appeal child care subsidy denial
- Kosher meal options at City long-term care homes
- Enforcing responsible dog ownership
- Consistent process for dealing with tree bylaw infractions
- Water bill anomalies explained
- Enhanced TTC construction consultations
- Better information about City insurance claims
- Increased landlord accountability on health and safety issues
- Bylaw clearly sets out who pays for garbage bins
- Improved TCHC hiring policies
- Better training for City staff on conducting workplace investigations
- Toronto Public Service Bylaw setting out the roles and responsibilities of public servants
- Consistent and transparent process for banning someone from a City building or park
- Simplified process to apply for a sign variance

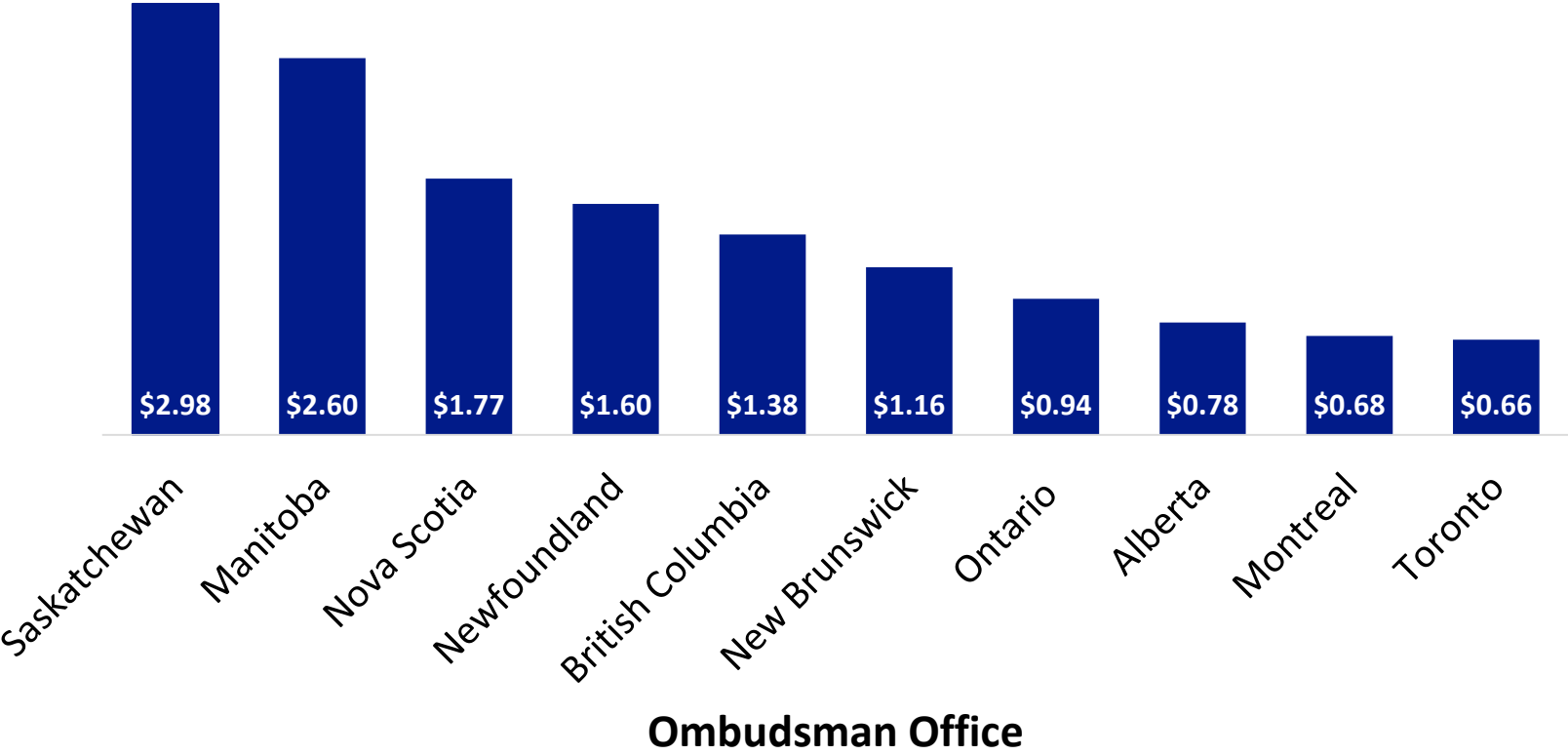


# Looking Forward: 2017

- Increased outreach to the community:
  - Emphasis on neighbourhoods with historically low complaint numbers
  - Proactive collaboration with City Councillors and community stakeholders
- Increased outreach to the City:
  - Public service information sessions on Ombudsman Toronto, how we work, and how to work effectively and collaboratively with us
  - Consultation to City Divisions, agencies and corporations to help them improve services
- Continue to solve individual problems raised by complaints, and recommend systemic service improvements.



# Spending on Ombudsman's Offices *per capita*



# 2017 Operating Budget Summary

(In \$000s)	2016	2017 Operating Budget Request				2017 Request vs. 2016 Budget Changes	
	Approved Budget	2017 Base	2017 Reduction	2017 New/Enh.	2017 Budget Request		
	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	%
Gross Expenditures	1,834.0	1,882.3	(72.2) *	0.0	1,810.1	(23.8)	(1.3%)
Revenue	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%
<b>Net Expenditures</b>	<b>1,834.0</b>	<b>1,882.3</b>	<b>(72.2) *</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1810.1</b>	<b>(23.8)</b>	<b>(1.3%)</b>
<b>Approved Positions</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

\*Reduction of 3.8% of the 2017 *pro-forma* operating budget



# 2017 Key Cost Drivers

(In \$000s)	Total Base Changes	
	\$	Position
<b>Gross Expenditure Changes</b>		
<b>Prior Year Impacts</b>		
Salary budget to actual adjustments	(1.4)	0.0
<b>Economic Factors</b>		
Non-payroll	4.5	0.0
<b>COLA and Progression Pay</b>		
COLA & Progression Pay	40.4	0.0
Benefit adjustments	4.7	0.0
<b>Total Gross Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Revenue Changes (Increase) / Decrease</b>		
<b>Total Revenue Changes</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>

\$48.3k budget pressure is 2.6% of 2016 Budget



# Proposed 2017 Operating Budget Reduction

- Reduction of \$72.2k in non-payroll items:
  - Legal services
  - Investigative expenses
  - Outreach-related expenses
- \$72.2k = 3.9% of 2016 Operating Budget
- Reduction brings 2017 Budget request to 1.3% below the 2016 Operating Budget
- Represents a 3.8% reduction to 2017 *pro forma* Operating Budget



# Budget Reduction Impact

- The proposed reduction represents a significant cut for Ombudsman Toronto, a small office with substantial cost pressures in the form of staff progression pay and COLA.
- The need for our services is steady, and growing. It is many respects unpredictable.
- This cut will present challenges for Ombudsman Toronto in ensuring its continued ability to meet its mandate in a flexible, agile, timely and effective manner, but we are determined to meet those challenges.



# 2017-2026 Capital Plan Highlights

- The Ombudsman Toronto Case Management System, its key tool for handling complaints and conducting enquiries and Investigations, needs to be upgraded to maintain it in a state of good repair.
- Cash flow requirements:
  - 2017: \$0.370 million in previously approved cash flow to be carried forward from 2016
  - 2023: \$0.700 million in future year cash flow





# Ombudsman Toronto

**Listening. Investigating. Improving City Services.**

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