



Ombudsman  
Toronto

*Listening. Investigating. Improving City Services.*

# 2018 Budget Recommendation Ombudsman Toronto

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Presentation to the City of Toronto Budget Committee  
December 14, 2017

# Budget Recommendation: Overview

## Operating

- Ombudsman Toronto recommends that its Operating Budget for 2018 be set at \$1,985.2 thousand.
- This represents a 9.7% increase from its 2017 Approved Operating Budget, and an effective increase of 3.8% from its 2018 *pro forma* Operating Budget.

## Capital

- Ombudsman Toronto recommends that its 2018 -2027 Capital Budget and Plan be approved. The plan includes a requirement of \$0.700 million in 2023 for state of good repair replacement of the case management system.



# 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, corporations and local boards.
- Ombudsman Toronto:
  - **Listens to the public.** We humanize the City for people whose dealings with it have left them feeling mistreated or alienated.
  - **Investigates complaints and concerns.** We help the City administration to hold itself accountable.
  - **Improves City services.** We reduce friction by levelling the playing field between people and the City when things have gone wrong. We make recommendations to improve the way the City serves people.
- The work of Ombudsman Toronto enhances public confidence and trust in Toronto's local government. It also saves the City money.



# What We Do



# Ombudsman Toronto

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# Listening

- For 2017, we are on track to deal with 1650 complaints. Members of the public may complain in person, by phone, fax or 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 broadly and with an open mind; our goal is for everyone we deal with to know they were heard.
- We remain completely impartial throughout. We do not take sides.



# Investigating

- Where we are unable to help (if the matter is outside our jurisdiction) or premature, we refer the complainant to the appropriate place.
- We resolve every case as quickly and as informally as possible through information gathering, dispute resolution including mediation, and recommendations for systemic service improvements. We call this process conducting an Enquiry.
- Where the issue is very complex and/or appears to reveal a broad systemic issue that requires in depth study and structured recommendations, we may launch an Investigation.
- Our Investigations result in formal recommendations for improved City services. Ombudsman Toronto follows up on all the recommendations we make in our Enquiry and Investigation Reports.



# Improving City Services

- The work of Ombudsman Toronto leads to improvements large and small in City systems and services.
- These improvements include:
  - New policies and procedures
  - New bylaws
  - Staff training
  - New communication practices
  - Broad culture change leading to better public service
- At its core, our work is about holding the City accountable in its duty to serve all people fairly.



# City-Wide Improvements

- Since opening in 2009, Ombudsman Toronto has made more than 400 recommendations to improve the way the City serves people.
- Recent examples of broad systemic changes in Toronto directly connected to our work include:
  - The new Administrative Monetary Penalty System for Parking Ticket Disputes
  - Improved oversight of the TTC's Transit Enforcement Unit
  - Expanded, more transparent winter drop-in (respite) services for people experiencing homelessness



# Ensuring Fairness

- Besides our systemic work improving City services for all, we resolve hundreds of individual problems between members of the public and the City each year.

- A striking example in 2017:

A vulnerable elderly homeowner had lost his house in a tax sale.

When he came to us, he was destitute.

The City refused his late claim to the surplus proceeds (over \$450,000).

Ombudsman Toronto conducted an Enquiry.

We determined that fairness demanded that the City pay the homeowner his money.

Our Enquiry Report recommended that Council direct this payment.

Council accepted our recommendation and he was paid.



“Through the assistance of the Office of the Ombudsman, where the case was taken as a clear issue of access to justice...the funds were paid to my client and he now has the ability to maintain his life with dignity.

Without the involvement of the Ombudsman’s office, whose representatives took very direct action to right an otherwise devastating impact to my client, this result could not have been achieved.”

*Lawyer for the Complainant*

“Thank you, from the top, bottom and sides of my heart.”

*Complainant*

“I extend my thanks to the Ombudsman's office for their leadership, advice and guidance in this matter and for achieving a fair resolution to a very difficult situation.”

*Senior City Staff*



# Ombudsman Toronto's Impact

- Ombudsman Toronto **provides access to justice for the public.**
- It **makes sure the City employs best practices** in administrative fairness.
- Money spent on our work **enhances public trust** and improves City services.
- It also **saves the City money** by:
  - Resolving disputes before they become expensive litigation
  - Recommending improvements that help avoid complaints



# Casework: Highlights of 2017

- 1652 complaints \*
- 3 Public Investigation Reports:
  - *Investigation into the TTC's Oversight of its Transit Enforcement Unit*
  - *Investigation into the City's Process for Handling Development Charge Complaints*
  - *Investigation into the City's handling of a Park Permit*
- 4 Public Enquiry Reports:
  - *Cold Weather Drop-In Services, 2016-17 Winter Season*
  - *A Complaint about Committee of Adjustment Notice Procedures*
  - *A Noise Complaint at MLS*
  - *The City's Process for Out-of-Province Licence Plate Owners to Challenge Parking Tickets*

\* Projected from 2017 Q3 data



# Beyond Casework: Highlights of 2017

- We adopted new ways of using our resources more effectively by tightening systems and working in a more nimble and streamlined way:
  - Shorter, more focused Enquiry Reports that are posted directly to the OT website, without the need to take each one to a City Council meeting
  - New case management system
- 79 Stakeholder Outreach Meetings:
  - Increased outreach to the community includes
    - Emphasis on neighbourhoods with historically low complaint numbers
    - Proactive collaboration with community organizations and City Councillors, and
    - Expanded use of internet and social media (20,000 website visits; 202,000 social media impressions).
  - Increased outreach to the public service includes
    - 18 information sessions on Ombudsman Toronto, how we work, and how to work effectively with us, and
    - 17 Consultations to help City divisions and organizations improve services (e.g., the City Manager's Office project on providing fair service to the public in challenging circumstances).

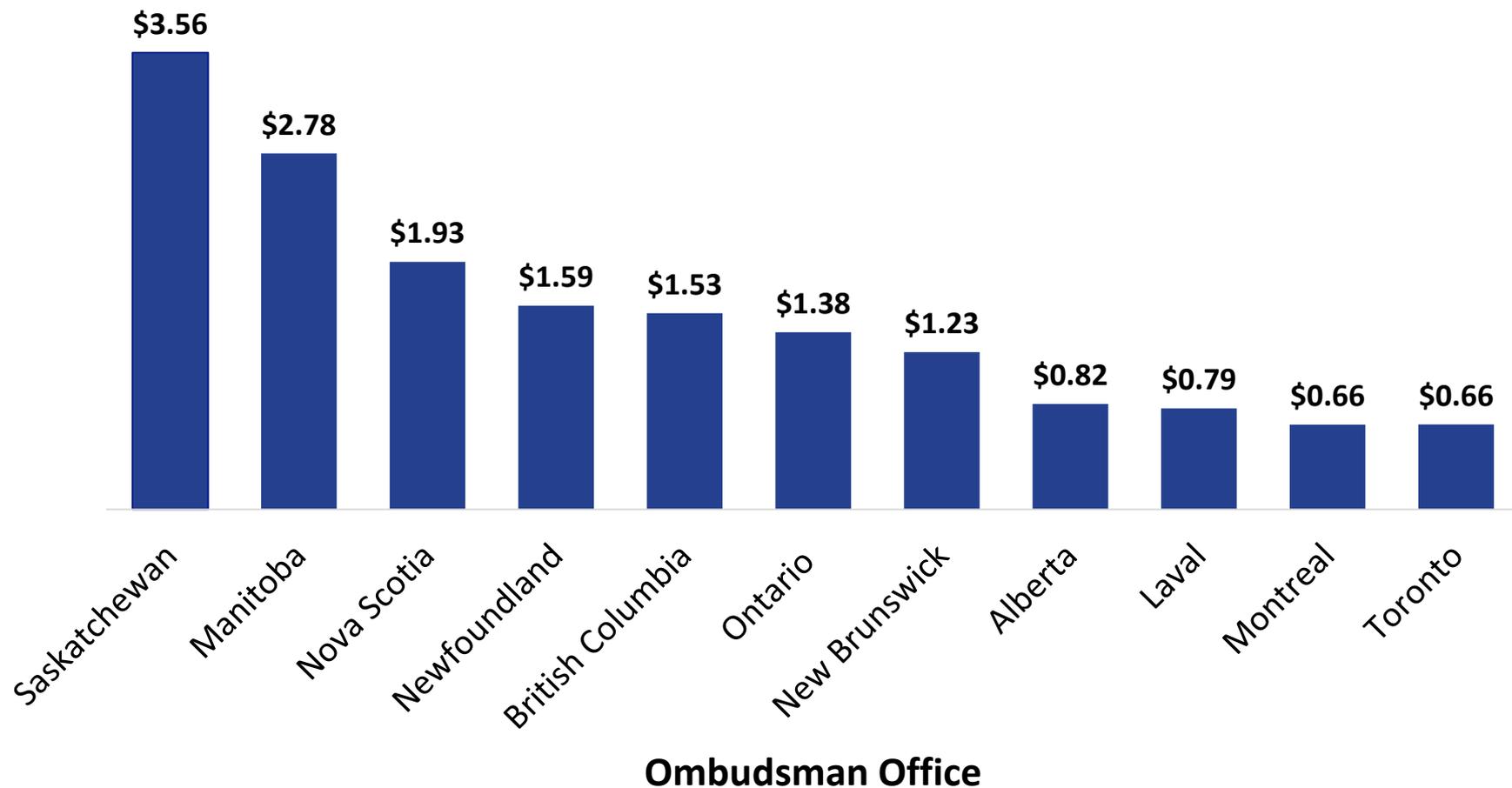


# Other Ombudsman Office Budgets

Ombudsman Office	Population (M)	Budget (M)
Laval	0.4	\$0.33
Newfoundland	0.5	\$0.83
New Brunswick	0.7	\$0.92
Nova Scotia	0.9	\$1.78
Saskatchewan	1.1	\$3.91
Manitoba	1.3	\$3.55
Montreal	1.7	\$1.12
Toronto	2.7	\$1.83
Alberta	4.1	\$3.35
British Columbia	4.6	\$7.11
Ontario	13.4	\$18.58



# Spending on Ombudsman's Offices *per capita*



# 2018 Operating Budget Recommendation

in \$000s	2017 Approved Budget	2018			2018 Budget Request vs 2017 Approved Budget	
		Base Budget	New/Enhanced Request	Total Budget	\$	%
Gross Expenditure	\$1,810.3	\$1,912.3	\$72.9	\$1,985.2	\$175.0	9.7%
Revenue	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	N/A
Net Expenditure	\$1,810.3	\$1,912.3	\$72.9	\$1,985.2	\$175	9.7%



# Key Cost Drivers 2018

<b>Gross Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>\$000s</b>
<b>Prior Year Impacts</b>	
Reversal of one-time non-payroll reduction	72.2
Salary Budget to Actual adjustment	(7.5)
<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	
Salary and benefits changes	26.7
<b>Economic Factors</b>	
Non-salary economic factors	3.8
<b>Other Base Changes</b>	
Software maintenance costs	6.9
<b>Total Gross Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>102.1</b>
<b>Total Revenue Changes</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>102.1</b>



# Recent Budget History

in \$000s	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>New/ Enhancements Requested</b>	\$0.0	\$160.8	\$440.0	\$89.2
<b>New/ Enhancements Approved</b>	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$84.6	\$0.0
<b>Reductions</b>	\$(72.2)	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0

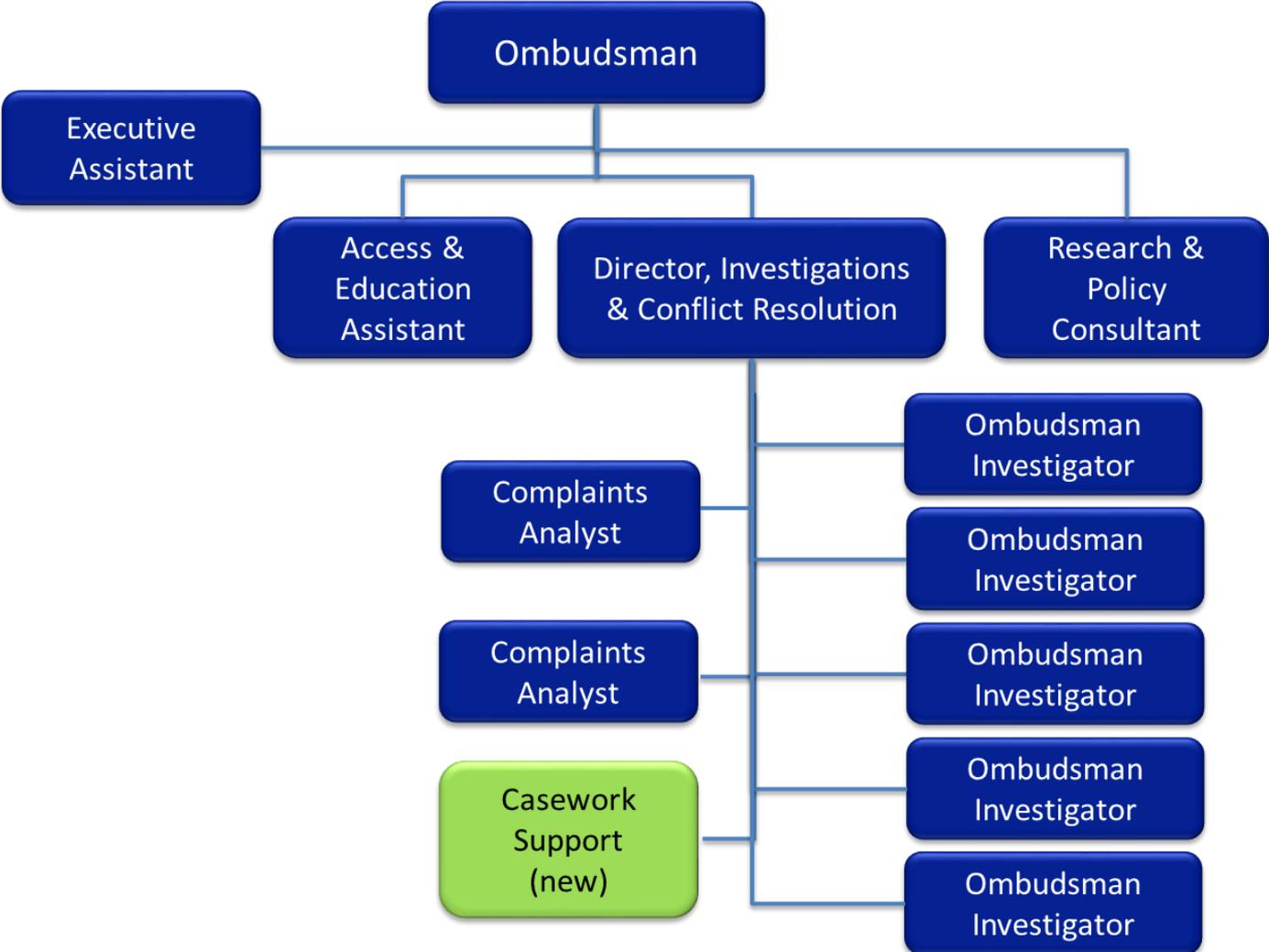


# Recommended 2018 Operating Budget

- Restores \$72.2 thousand cut in 2017 from:
  - Legal services
  - Investigative expenses
  - Outreach-related expenses
- Requests a modest enhancement of \$72.9 thousand net for one full time Casework Support position urgently needed to support the Investigation, Enquiry and Complaints Analysis functions of the office.



# Ombudsman Toronto Organizational Chart



# Operating Budget Recommendation Impact

- **Ombudsman Toronto's current lack of resources hampers its ability to fulfill its legal mandate:**
  - Heavy staff workload extends the time it takes to address public complaints.
  - Our ability to conduct in-depth systemic Investigations is severely restricted. These Investigations result in the most far-reaching improvements to public service and City administration. They help vulnerable people who are less likely to complain. They also yield the most cost savings for the City.
  - We are limited in our capacity to help the City understand and adopt best practices in administrative fairness.
- **The requested enhancement for urgently-needed casework support represents the least costly way possible of addressing these issues.**



# 2018-2027 Capital Plan

- The Ombudsman Toronto case management system, its key tool for handling complaints and conducting Enquiries and Investigations, needs periodic upgrading to maintain it in a state of good repair.
- Cash flow requirement:
  - \$0.700 million in 2023



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