

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: February 27, 2023

From: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer
File:

Item #: 2023-143

Subject: Staff Workplan Considerations - Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report as additional context to staff workplan considerations.

PURPOSE

As part of Council's deliberation regarding a staff report on Notice of Motions, it was requested that the CAO provide additional information where departments are needing to adjust, delay or temporarily halt certain work due to staff vacancies and leave of absences. This report is written in response to this request.

BACKGROUND

At the December 12, 2022 Regular Council meeting, Council was advised that departments continue to face staffing challenges: the City is currently operating at 15% below normal capacity. There are a high number of vacancies (currently at 71 positions or approximately 10% of total staff complement) and departments are also faced with gaps due to having a number of employees on leaves of absence (currently at 34 employees or approximately 5% of staff complement).

Moreover, the attrition rate for 2022 is 11% (note that this rate does not include temporary and auxiliary positions). This is also unprecedented, as the City's attrition rate has typically remained at 5-8% annually from 2017 to 2021. This increasing rate of attrition year over year, presents considerable service delivery challenges for a medium-sized organization such as the City of New Westminster.

DISCUSSION

Department heads are currently updating workplans. This task is particularly important at this time given the pending new Strategic Plan for the 2022 to 2026 Council term. Departments will be asked to realign workplans based on Council's Strategic Priorities. The CAO asked SMT and Managers to identify immediate workplan challenges and corresponding strategies and tools.

Attached with this covering report are two Department memos – one from the Climate Action, Planning and Development (CAPD) Department, the other from the Office of the CAO. Many of the functions in these two departments affect the organization on a corporate-wide basis; namely:

1. Vacancies in Legislative Services affect the efficiency of Council and Advisory Committees including managing agendas, expediting minutes and resolutions, effective records management and timely responses to FOIs. Moreover, the trickle-down effect of staff vacancies in other departments hinders corporate-wide training in Public Engagement.
2. Vacancies in CAPD affect several interdepartmental processes including public policy development, housing policy and advocacy, the development approval process, building permit and business license inspections and bylaw enforcement.

Several other departments are also facing challenges; they will be providing updated workplan reports to Council at a future Council meeting.

OPTIONS

There are two options presented for Council's consideration:

Option 1 - Council receive this report as additional context to staff workplan considerations.

Option 2 – Council provide alternate direction.

Staff recommends Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Report from the Office of the CAO

Attachment 2 – Report from the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department

APPROVAL

This report was written by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer