



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: MARCH 7, 2023

FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL STAFFING REVIEW

ISSUE:

To review and provide direction on staffing options for the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council review and provide direction on changes to the Council staffing options.

BACKGROUND:

Beginning in FY 1994/95 and continuing through FY 2005/06, the City Council budgeted between three and five staff members annually to provide shared administrative support to the council. In FY 2006/07, the City Council opted to reduce their shared administrative support positions to one person and instead added the opportunity for each councilmember to have their own Legislative Field Representative (LFR) to facilitate active and timely communication between residents and their councilmember. At that time only four of the councilmembers (Wards 1, 3, 4, and 7) opted to hire their own LFRs; the LFRs were hired as contract employees and received no benefits. In FY 2007/08, an additional LFR was added at the request of the then newly elected Ward 5 Councilmember. In a review of these positions in 2010 by Human Resources it was determined that based on job duties being performed, there was a need to convert the LFRs from contract employees to full-time benefitted employees, which is how the council assistant classification was created. Seven full-time benefitted council assistant positions were authorized in December 2011, and subsequent budgets have continued to authorize and fund these positions.

In 2015, to clarify City Charter and Municipal Code interpretations on hiring and position reporting structure, the City Manager performed a classification study for the council assistant job classification per the direction of the Governmental Affairs Committee (Committee). Staff engaged a consultant to conduct the classification and analyze the following questions:

- Are the existing positions properly classified based on the scope of responsibility, and type of knowledge, skills and abilities, education, experience, certification, and special requirements needed to perform the essential job functions?
- Is the salary grade appropriate based on internal comparisons and market practices?
- Who do the positions report to and what is the term of the assignments?

The classification study incorporated widely accepted job analysis methods that included a job evaluation, a review of the position within the City's organizational structure and a market compensation analysis. Incumbents in the existing council assistant positions completed position description questionnaires and provided work samples related to essential job functions and to assess the qualifications associated with the position. In addition, the position's salary range was analyzed in relation to the City's designated labor market agencies to establish an appropriate pay grade.

Based on the results of the classification study, staff recommended to the Committee on May 6, 2015, that the current job description for the council assistant position be revised to accurately reflect the range and nature of work assignments and work conditions. In addition, it was also recommended that the salary range for this position be increased. On May 15, 2015, the City Council approved staff recommendations to:

1. Adopt a Resolution amending the Master Fringe Benefits and Salary Plan to reflect the proposed increased salary range for Council Assistants;
2. Review the job description to clarify that each council assistant works under the direct supervision of their respective councilmember and be afforded all rights, protections and privileges as set forth in relevant City rules, procedures, and policies; and,
3. Revise employment contracts to state that each council assistant serves at the will and pleasure of their respective councilmember.

DISCUSSION:

At the conclusion of council's deliberation on the FY 2022-2024 Biennial Budget, the City Council asked staff to return with information and data in support of additional staff to support each councilmember. City Council also requested that staff conduct additional research on council assistant duties and explore options of expanding personnel to closer align with comparable municipalities.

Since the reclassification of the council assistant position, demands on their time and workload has increased. In addition to their job assignments, council assistants often serve as a proxy for councilmembers at speaking engagements, special events, community events, etc. They are also responsible for councilmember's calendars and tracking/responding to constituent concerns.

Staff met with council assistants to receive feedback on job assignments and workload. Based on information received at these meetings, below is a summary of job duties, events, and assignments conducted by the council assistants with bolded items representing those tasks that consume a large majority of their time:

- **Case management**
- Neighborhood events
- **Service Request Reporting and Tracking**
- Grant Applications
- Fellows/Intern management
- **Constituent calls and e-mails**
- **Driving the ward**
- Resource management and public information
- Meet and greet events
- Research and analysis
- Marketing Liaison
- Translation
- Bridge the gap between community and government
- Newsletters
- Website information
- Engaging with homeless individuals
- Special events
- **Council calendar management**
- Social Media Account Management
- **Liaison for City Departments**
- Constituent concern response
- Community Outreach

To further put into context the volume of activity occurring throughout the City and specifically in each Ward, below is a breakdown of the amount of service requests called into 311 operations by Ward:

Service Requests (March 2021 - March 2022)

Ward	Total
Ward 1	19,630
Ward 2	12,027
Ward 3	18,612
Ward 4	12,239
Ward 5	15,067
Ward 6	12,357
Ward 7	10,579
	100,511

The City's 311 department adheres to a communication protocol that allows our elected officials and their respective assistants to reach the 311 group regarding new or existing service requests in two unique ways: by directly calling/emailing/mobile a service request themselves or calling in/emailing/mobile on behalf of a resident/citizen. Any other forms of communication used to address specific issues in a ward are not captured as part of this data set.

Staff also conducted market research to support the possibility of expanding personnel resources for the City Council. Additional information and a breakdown of classifications and FTE count (if available) for each market basket City can be found in Attachment 1.

CITY COUNCIL STAFFING SURVEY RESULTS

Market Basket City	Mayor / Vice-Mayor	Number of Councilmembers	Population	FTE
Anaheim	1	6	341,245	2
Burbank	2	3	104,966	3
Corona	2	3	156,778	0
Costa Mesa	1	6	112,780	3.5
Escondido	1	4	150,679	0
Fullerton	2	3	139,431	0
Glendale	1	4	193,116	2
Huntington Beach	2	5	198,039	1
Long Beach	1	9	462,081	50.71
Murrieta	1	4	117,683	0
Oceanside	2	3	173,048	5
Ontario	1	4	179,516	0
Pasadena	1	7	138,310	10
Riverside	1	7	317,847	7

To aid in the discussion of the financial feasibility for additional staffing, included below is the fully burdened cost for four positions available for council consideration. These options reflect the individual cost as well as total cost of hiring seven new positions and their budgetary impact. The assumption is that they will be hired in at step 1 in the salary scale.

CURRENT STAFFING – Council Assistant (Full-time with Fully Burdened Labor Costs)

Position	Step	Approx. Cost	FTE	# of Positions	Annual Total
Council Assistant (Non-classified)	N/A	\$ 95,424	1.00	7	\$ 667,968

OPTION A – Current staffing with one additional half-time Administrative Assistant (with Fully Burdened Labor Costs)

Position	Step	Cost	FTE	# of Positions	Annual Total
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$95,424	1	7	\$667,968
Administrative Assistant (Classified)	1	\$73,000	0.5	7	\$255,500
Total					\$923,468

OPTION B – Current staffing with one additional half-time Council Assistant (with Fully Burdened Labor Costs)

Position	Step	Cost	FTE	# of Positions	Annual Total
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$95,424	1	7	\$667,968
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$81,000	0.5	7	\$283,500
Total					\$951,468

OPTION C – Current staffing with one additional full-time Administrative Assistant (with Fully Burdened Labor Costs)

Position	Step	Cost	FTE	# of Positions	Annual Total
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$95,424	1	7	\$667,968
Administrative Assistant (Classified)	1	\$73,000	1	7	\$511,000
Total					\$1,178,968

OR OPTION D – Current staffing with one additional full-time Council Assistant (with Fully Burdened Labor Costs)

Position	Step	Cost	FTE	# of Positions	Annual Total
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$95,424	1	7	\$667,968
Council Assistant (Non-Classified)	1	\$81,000	1	7	\$567,000
Total					\$1,234,968

Characteristics and job descriptions for positions other than council assistant are as follows:

Administrative Assistant is distinguished from other administrative support classes by the higher degree of independent judgment required; a thorough knowledge of divisional, department, and City-wide procedures and policies; and the ability to choose among several alternatives in performing a variety of complex assignments without instruction and in scheduling and completing work. Incumbents routinely handle highly confidential and sensitive information; may serve as staff support on internal and external committees, may have budget preparation and administration responsibility; and may represent the City and/or City executive/elected officials as required.

Should the Administrative Assistant position be the selected option, next steps include a potential class and comp study, recruitment and onboarding, identification of workspace, and all pre-employment requirements for new employees.

It should be noted that the current council assistant position is an at-will non-classified position which means that upon councilmember turnover, the current council assistant could be replaced at the discretion of a newly elected councilmember. For the alternative positions, the City does not typically recruit for classifications designated as at-will non-classified. However, the appointed candidate must submit a non-classified application prior to the appointment. Should council determine that the Administrative Assistant option is sufficient for their needs, the Human Resources Department would be required to perform a classification and compensation study to ensure equity in the non-classified position. Additionally, a nominal amount of non-personnel budget will also be required to support the additional positions as well as one-time costs associated with office space configurations.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This action contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.1 – Attract, develop, engage and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce across the entire City organization.**

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Sufficient staff support enables the City to provide high-quality public services and increase community trust and engagement to meet the ever changing needs of residents.
2. **Equity** – This action is neutral towards this Cross-Cutting Thread.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – All fiscal impacts are carefully assessed by the City's Finance and City Manager's Departments.
4. **Innovation** – This action is neutral towards this Cross-Cutting Thread.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Riverside is committed to meeting the needs of its changing workforce to ensure that resources are used in a sustainable way without compromising future needs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this report. Should the council provide direction to increase staffing levels the full financial impact will be incorporated into the City's mid-cycle update process and will be presented to council later this fiscal year. Future budgets will reflect any changes authorized by council.

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Attachments:

1. Market Basket Information
2. Presentation