

## Common Council Needs Assessment

**Below are results of the needs assessment sent out to the Common Council. Eight out of a possible twenty surveys were returned. The comments highlight various themes written in the returned surveys.**

### **1. What do you feel is the main function of the Common Council office?**

Support function for alders was the most common theme, with mailings, meetings, responding to alders/staff/constituents and administrative/clerical support being the most frequently mentioned specifics. Training new alders on policies and procedures was also mentioned.

### **2. Does the current staff in the Common Council office meet your needs?**

Yes was the most frequent answer. Five out of eight expressed concern about tension between staff. Several expressed the need for more research capacity. Minor concerns regarding whether alders were asking too much time of staff and if information is as accurate, timely and confidential as it should be.

### **3. In what areas do you feel you are well served?**

Mailings (design, production and distribution), referral to appropriate city staff, responsiveness to emails and phone calls from alders and constituents, setting up meetings and researching city issues.

### **4. In what areas do you feel the office needs to improve?**

More in-depth policy research was needed per six of the alders. Timeliness and completeness of response was also an issue for several. Improved staff interaction (perceptions of staff tensions and poor communication.) Different office hours—two specifically, wanted info after 4:30. A weekly email digest of important commission/committee decisions was also a request. Equity of service levels between alders was an area of concern for two of the alders. The physical layout of the office space needs improvement.

### **5. Do you feel the current information technology (IT) is adequate?**

Generally, good responses were received. Would like improvements in learning Legistar, plus help sorting volumes of email and a more user-friendly email system.

### **6. What IT enhancements would make your work easier?**

Better wireless accessibility away from downtown was requested by three of the alders. More help/training with Legistar. Different laptop selections. City provided

phones. Constituent email system that allows alders more ways to share info and have citizen contact. Better spam filters.

**7. What would you say are the top three priorities you feel the Common Council Office should be working on?**

Providing support for alders. Implementation of on-line email system to constituents for all alders. More communication options with constituents. More research on district/city issues. Dealing with personnel issues. Assistance on policy, procedure and personality issues.

**8. What process or processes work best for you?**

Administrative support with mailers, meetings, responsive to questions was most often mentioned. Working directly with one person was also seen as a positive. Responsiveness of staff to voice and email is good.

**9. What process or processes work poorly?**

Three of the eight respondents did not like work flowing through one person. Personnel issues cause angst among alders. Would like more discussion on direction and strategy between alders and staff.

**10. If you could change any part of your interaction with the Common Council office, what would it be?**

General comments included: Management oversight is needed outside of Council President. Different hours so that alder and constituent issues could be addressed after 4:30 was raised by two respondents. Equal treatment for all alders should be stressed. Some comments were made regarding the need to improve confidentiality. Alders would like more contact with staff. Additional policy staff was also seen as important. Remove need to have work filter through one person.