

Corporate Services Department



REPORT TO:	Finance and Corporate Services Committee	
DATE OF MEETING:	January 29, 2024	
SUBMITTED BY:	Sophia Stanberry, Director, Equity, Anti-Racism & Reconciliation, 519- 741-2200 ext. 7049.	
PREPARED BY:	Mohammadali Aminaei Chatroudi, Research Associate, Equity, Anti- Racism & Reconciliation, 519-741-2200 ext. 7515.	
WARD(S) INVOLVED:	All Wards	
DATE OF REPORT:	January 15, 2024	
REPORT NO.:	COR-2024-049	
SUBJECT: Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of the Council		

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of Council, as outlined in Attachment A, to take effect in January, 2024;

That Council direct staff to develop a separate Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy and/or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC);

That as a part of the upcoming Community Engagement Policy review, staff be directed to consider the issue of honorarium and reimbursement as it relates to public participation and engagement.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of the Council, that is equitable and consistent, as outlined in Appendix A.
- This report recommends developing a separate Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy and/or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC).
- The report recommends reviewing honorarium and reimbursement as it relates to public participation in the upcoming Community Engagement Policy review.
- The projected annual budget required to implement the Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of the Council will be approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

• This report supports Fostering a Caring City Together: Focuses on welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds & experiences; residents working on decisions with a meaningful influence; healthy, thriving residents with easy access to diverse & inclusive programs & services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The recommended honorarium and reimbursement policy aims to enhance equity, diversity, and inclusion by recognizing and removing barriers that prevent public members from making a meaningful contribution to the City's decision-making process. This policy further sets out standardized guidelines for staff to allow for reimbursement to committee members that reduce barriers to civic participation. The intent is for this policy to evolve over time to ensure that all barriers to participation are eliminated for individuals.

The policy speaks to **honoraria**, which refers to payment provided to resident members of committees and other advisory groups for expertise rendered that is fundamental to the purpose of their committee; and **reimbursement**, which compensates members for out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs and childcare.

A comprehensive environmental scan that included data review from 30 municipalities demonstrated consistency in compensation for quasi-judicial committees and equity and accessibility committees. There was no data to demonstrate other Council advisory committees, working groups or other groups are consistently compensated for their contributions and public participation.

This report focuses, therefore, on implementing a policy to provide honorarium to quasi-judicial committees and the Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, and reimbursement to <u>all</u> committees. This would be a positive first step in creating a consistent and transparent approach to honorarium and reimbursement, while enabling ongoing research and understanding of municipal best practices in committee and working group compensation that support equitable public participation. Staff believe that this policy can evolve and expand over time to consider expanding honoraria to other advisory committees, and/or consider reimbursement for other expenses that create barriers to public participation.

It is noted in this report that the unique needs of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC), as GRAAC is an inter-municipal committee made up of seven municipalities in the region. Developing an honorarium policy for GRAAC requires coordination among regional municipalities and consistency across the board.

BACKGROUND:

On April 11, 2022, council approved a motion for staff to develop an honorarium policy specific to advisory and quasi-judicial committees. The motion recognizes that "the current practices related to honorariums have been applied and implemented inconsistently and have never been subject to a fulsome review." In addition, the motion directed staff "to complete a fulsome equity-informed corporate policy for compensation for members of all City of Kitchener advisory committees".

Staff have conducted a comprehensive research and engagement process that included and environmental scan of online data gathering, external engagement, and survey of over 30 municipalities around their honorarium and reimbursement practices. In addition, two surveys were conducted internally to engage committee liaisons and City staff to identify barriers to participation in City of Kitchener advisory committees and determining and equitable reimbursement policy. Finally, a governance review was conducted to ensure that the contextual knowledge of advisory committees informed the policy, and focus group consultations were facilitated to discuss financial, legal and administrative impacts associated with introducing an honoraria policy.

Collaboration also took part with regional municipalities in developing this policy through review and understanding of the Reconciliation Action Partnership Honorarium Compensation Practice Subcommittee.

REPORT:

The recommended honorarium and reimbursement policy aims to enhance equity, diversity, and inclusion by recognizing and removing barriers that prevent public members from making a meaningful contribution to the City's decision-making process. This policy further sets out standardized guidelines for staff to allow for reimbursement to committee members that reduce barriers to civic participation. The intent is for this policy to evolve and expand over time to ensure that all barriers to participation are eliminated for individuals.

This policy aligns with the City's commitment to developing and fostering an organization where equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are core principles that help shape the City's policies, programs, services, and procedures (GOV-COR-2025).

I. Policy Development Process

A comprehensive research and engagement process guided the development of the honorarium and reimbursement policy. A summary of this process is provided below:

• An environmental scan was conducted through online data gathering, external engagement, and surveying over 30 municipalities around their honorarium and reimbursement practices.

• Two honoraria surveys were conducted to engage committee liaisons and City staff. The insights gained from this survey were critical in identifying barriers to participation and determining an equitable reimbursement policy.

• A governance review has been conducted to ensure that the contextual knowledge of the advisory committees informed the honorarium policy. This review includes consideration of committee members' time commitment, workload, expertise, and experience.

• Focus group consultations were facilitated to discuss financial, legal, and administrative challenges and identify the best way to incorporate an honoraria policy within the City's administrative system. By engaging with staff across the City, we ensured that the policy was informed by the expertise and insights of the staff most tied to quasi-judiciary and advisory committees.

• Key informant interviews were conducted with several internal stakeholders across Legislative Services, Finance, Community Services and Communications Department.

• Collaboration with regional municipalities in developing honorarium policy through the Reconciliation Action Partnership Honorarium Compensation Practice Subcommittee.

II. Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy:

This policy distinguishes between honorarium and reimbursement. <u>Honorarium</u> refers to payment provided to resident members of committees and other advisory groups for expertise rendered that is fundamental to the purpose of their committee. <u>Reimbursement</u> compensates members for out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs and childcare.

In order to reduce barriers to participation and apply a needs-based model, the proposed policy provides <u>reimbursement</u> in the form of childcare, transit passes, and parking passes to <u>all</u> resident members of advisory, quasi-judicial committees and other advisory groups.

These committees/advisory groups are as follows:

Quasi-judicial Committees:

- Committee of Adjustment
- Property Standards Committee

Council Advisory Committees:

- Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee
- Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Climate Change and Environment Committee
- Downtown Action and Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
- Heritage Kitchener
- Active Transportation and Trails Advisory Committee
- Compass Kitchener

Advisory and Public Engagement Working Groups

This is a large category that includes councils, working groups, resident panels, focus groups etc. It is an expanding and evolving list that currently includes:

- Housing Lived Expertise Working Group
- Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)
- Kitchener Youth Action Council (KYAC)
- Kitchener Resident Panel
- Building Parks Together
- Community Grants Tier 2
- Urban Indigenous Community Focus Group

Meadowlane Park Community Resource Group

The proposed policy provides **honorarium** only to members of quasi-judicial committees as well as the Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee at this time, with a view to potentially expand honorarium to all committees in the future, following further evaluation of municipal practices. The municipal scan and research undertaken in development of this policy demonstrated significant data regarding compensation for quasi-judicial and equity committees, but no evidence regarding honorarium for other municipal advisory committees and working groups.

The municipal scan, research, and external and internal engagement results were used to determine the proposed honorarium scope, eligibility criteria and rates proposed:

	Honorarium & Reimbursement Policy			
#	Name of the Committee/Group	Honorarium (per meeting attended)	Reimbursement (Child Care, Parking Pass, Transit Pass)	
1	Committee of Adjustment	\$175 chair/ \$150 members	All resident members	
2	Property Standards Committee	\$125 chair/ \$100 members	All resident members	
3	Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee	\$150/all members	All resident members	
4	Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)	Will be provided under a policy specific to GRAAC	All resident members	
5	Housing Lived Expertise Working Group	Already Provided (based on the Purchase of Service Agreement)	All members (based on the Purchase of Service Agreement)	
6	Other Advisory Committees of Council*	No Honorarium	All resident members	
7	Other Advisory & Public Engagement Groups**	To be determined in the process of Community Engagement Policy review	All resident members	

The municipal scan data revealed that, of 30 municipalities canvassed, the City of Kitchener was the only municipality providing a higher honorarium for an equity advisory committee than for quasi-judicial committees. The proposed policy reflects an adjustment to current honorarium rates for the Committee of Adjustment and Property Standards Committee, while maintaining the current rate for the Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. This recognizes the significant time, effort and expertise required of quasi-judicial committees, whose authority is determined and outlined within the City's By-laws, pursuant to the *Provincial Planning Act* (Committee of Adjustment) and *Statutory Powers and Procedures Act* and the *Building Code Act*.

Future Considerations:

While the proposed reimbursements can help alleviate some barriers to participation, they cannot eliminate all obstacles to civic engagement. Consequently, staff recommend the progressive improvement of the reimbursement and honorarium policy based on the identified needs and feedback received from internal and external stakeholders.

To ensure that additional structural barriers are addressed, the policy should evolve over time, considering potential future reimbursements for eldercare, disability care, technology, support, mileage etc. Further, expanding the list of committees receiving honoraria to include all working groups, committees, task forces, and other circumstances where citizens are engaged, and honorarium/reimbursement should be considered.

I. The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC):

After conducting key informant interviews with staff associated with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) and discussions in focus groups, it was determined that GRAAC requires an independent administrative guideline and/or honorarium and reimbursement policy due to the following reasons:

• GRAAC is an inter-municipal committee made up of seven municipalities in the region. Developing an honorarium policy for GRAAC requires coordination among regional municipalities and consistency across the board.

• The reimbursement policy for people with disabilities requires greater flexibility and a customized approach to address barriers based on individual accommodation needs.

Due to this unique characteristic, it is recommended that Council approve an independent honorarium and reimbursement guideline or a policy for GRAAC. Staff responsible for GRAAC have already expressed their readiness to coordinate with other municipalities and develop this policy/guideline.

II. Public Engagement Honorarium Policy:

Although the original Council motion was specific to advisory committees, due to the overwhelming requests for support from City staff and the emerging best practices around public engagement, sighted in the City's Community Engagement Policy, which recognizes that "different stakeholder groups may have different needs" and that "engagement techniques must be considered to address barriers to participation for members of the community whose voices are rarely heard, including vulnerable populations" (Community Engagement policy - GOV-COU-2010, Section: 4.6 & 4.7); staff recommend formulating a separate corporate guideline or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for public engagement.

Conclusion:

The proposed Honorarium and Reimbursement policy is in line with municipal scan findings, which show that most municipalities provide honoraria only to quasi-judicial committees and equity, anti-racism, and accessibility committees. Other advisory committees of Council and public engagement groups usually do not receive honoraria.

In most municipalities, all quasi-judicial and advisory committees receive reimbursement for some of the expenses incurred, usually travel and parking expenses. This is consistent with a needs-based approach that focuses on tackling barriers to civic participation.

The proposed policy balances the financial impact of implementing honoraria and reimbursements to residents and equity considerations by continuing to provide honorarium to

quasi-judicial and equity advisory committees, as is consistent with numerous municipalities in Ontario.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports Fostering a Caring City Together: Focuses on welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds & experiences; residents working on decisions with a meaningful influence; healthy, thriving residents with easy access to diverse & inclusive programs & services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Operating Budget - The applied forecast model suggests that the total annual budget required to implement the Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of the Council will be approximately **\$20,000 to \$25,000** annually, which can be found in existing budgets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- Council Motion April 11, 2022
- The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- GOV-COU-005 Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Local Boards & Advisory Committees
- GOV-COU-2025 Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Policy
- Community Engagement policy GOV-COU-2010

APPROVED BY: Victoria Raab, General Manager, Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of Council

Attachment B – Current and Proposed Honorarium Rates

Attachment C – List of Committees and Advisory Groups

Attachment D – Highlights of Municipal Scan Findings

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Honorarium and Reimbursement Policy for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of the Council

KITCHENER		Policy No: Click here to enter text.
Policy Title:	Honorarium and Reimbursement for Advisory and Quasi-Judicial	Approval Date: Click here to enter a date.
	Committees of Council	Reviewed Date: Click here to enter text.
Policy Type:	ADMINISTRATIVE	Next Review Date: Click here to enter
Category:	Governance	text.
Sub-Category:	Board & Committee	Reviewed Date: Click here to enter text.
<u>Author</u> :	Mohammadali Aminaei Chatroudi, Research Associate, 519-741-2200 ext. 7515	Last Amended: Click here to enter a date.
<u>Dept/Div</u> :	Corporate Services/ Equity, Anti- Racism & Indigenous Initiatives	Replaces: Click here to enter text.
	Team	Repealed: Click here to enter a date.
		Replaced by: Click here to enter text.
Related Policies, Procedures and/or Guidelines:		

Related Policies, Procedures and/or Guidelines:

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

GOV-COU-005 Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Local Boards & Advisory Committees

GOV-COU-2025 Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Policy

1. <u>POLICY PURPOSE:</u>

The City of Kitchener values the contributions and inclusion of diverse voices, perspectives, experiences, and expertise on its advisory and quasi-judicial committees and is committed to reducing barriers to participation by citizens in all aspects of public participation.

This policy outlines honorariums to compensate and recognize the expertise and professional experiences of members of the public participating on quasi-judicial committees, and to recognize the expertise, professional experience, and lived experience of members of the City's Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee.

This policy further sets out standardized guidelines for staff to allow for reimbursement to committee members that reduce barriers to participation in the form of transportation and childcare. The intent is for this policy to evolve over time to ensure that all barriers to participation are eliminated for individuals. Although not exhaustive, future reimbursements may include dependent care (eldercare, disability care), technology, and mileage.

This policy aligns with the City's commitment to developing and fostering an organization where equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are core principles that help shape the City's policies, programs, services, and procedures (GOV-COR-2025).

POLICY APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING:		
□ All Employees		
□ All Full-Time Employees	All Union	
Management	C.U.P.E. 68 Civic	
Non Union	C.U.P.E. 68 Mechanics	
Temporary	□ C.U.P.E. 791	
Student	□ I.B.E.W. 636	
Part-Time Employees	□ K.P.F.F.A.	
Specified Positions only:	□ Other:	
	Local Boards & Advisory Committees	

2. <u>SCOPE</u>

• This policy is only applicable to council's advisory and quasi-judicial committees and does not apply to honoraria for public engagement.

- Honoraria will not be paid to members of City council who serve on committees.
- There is no honorarium and/or reimbursement for those who represent another committee or organization, or who are appointed to a committee by another organization.
- Advisory and quasi-judicial committee members/chairs will not receive honoraria and/or reimbursement for attendance at meetings or events of any subcommittees.
- This policy is not applicable to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, which is not a City of Kitchener specific committee and, therefore, may have different and distinct needs and approaches to compensation and honorarium.

3. POLICY CONTENT:

This policy section specifies the reimbursement and honoraria guidelines for all City of Kitchener advisory and quasi-judicial committees.

3.1 REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES:

For the purposes of this policy, reimbursement refers to payment and/or in-kind services provided to members of council advisory and quasi-judicial committees. Reimbursement of expenses is designed to remove barriers to participation and is distinct from the provision of honoraria or other forms of recognition. The reimbursement guideline follows a needs-based model to mitigate against barriers to participation so that members of all committees are not financially disadvantaged in any way as a result of their participation.

Volunteer members and chairs of all advisory and quasi-judicial committees are eligible for reimbursement in accordance with the following guidelines:

Childcare

The costs of childcare that committee members incur will be reimbursed on an as-needed basis. The maximum payable amount and additional information are provided in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and will be communicated to committee members.

Travel Costs

• **Public transit pass:**

Committee members will be eligible to have their bus or LRT expenses covered for travel to and from the committee meeting, on the date of the meeting, through the form of complimentary passes provided by the City.

• Parking:

Committee members will be eligible to park at the City facility where the meeting is held, on the day and time of the meeting, at no cost through the form of complimentary parking passes provided by the City. Committee members requiring a parking pass will be required to advise the Committee Administrator of this need and will be provided with the parking pass at the meeting.

The City will accommodate the needs of committee members under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

All reimbursement requests should be made directly to City staff responsible for supporting the advisory committee ("Committee Administrators").

The maximum payable amount and additional information are provided in the Standard Operating Procedure.

3.2 HONORARIUM GUIDELINES:

For the purposes of this policy, honorarium refers to payment provided to members of council advisory and quasi-judicial committees for expertise rendered that is fundamental to the purpose of the committees. This policy uses an equity-informed model whereby the focus is to prioritize the experiences of groups who have been historically underrepresented or excluded, harmed by

colonialism, systemic racism, systemic barriers, ablism and/or other forms of oppression. The City acknowledges that the honorarium is only a token of appreciation and that the rates are not reflective of the invaluable experience these individuals offer to the City.

Committee members outlined in **Schedule** "**A**" will receive an honorarium for each meeting they attend (in person or virtually) up to the maximum number of sessions mentioned in the respective terms of reference. The attendance list recorded in the minutes will determine the total honoraria for the year. The rates and payment conditions for eligible quasi-judicial and advisory committees are reflected in **Schedule** "**A**".

A T4A must be issued to an individual whose honoraria exceeds \$500 in a calendar year.

5. <u>SCHEDULE A.</u>

The following tables outline the rates and conditions for quasi-judicial and advisory committees eligible for an honorarium.¹

No.	Quasi-judicial Committees	Honorarium Rates	Payment Condition
1	Committee of Adjustment	Chair(s): \$175 Members: \$150	Per meeting attended/by cheque or EFT / Bi- annually
2	Property Standards Committee	Chair(s): \$125 Members: \$100	Per meeting attended/by cheque or EFT / Bi- annually
No.	Advisory Committee	Honorarium rates	Payment Condition
1	Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee	\$150 (all members)	Per meeting attended/by cheque or EFT / Monthly

¹ Honorarium rates were determined by analyzing several factors and through internal and external engagement (focus group, informant interviews, and consultation with CLT).

Attachment B – Current and Proposed Honorarium Rates

Current Honorarium Rates

Name of Committees	Honorarium Rates
Committee of Adjustment	\$125 Chair(s) & \$100 Members
Property Standards Committee	\$100 Chair(s) & \$75 Members
Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee	\$150 Chair(s) & Members
Other Advisory Committees of Council	No Honorarium

Proposed Honorarium Rates

Name of Committees	Honorarium Rates
Committee of Adjustment	\$175 Chair(s) & \$150 Members
Property Standards Committee	\$125 Chair(s) & \$100 Members
Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee	\$150 (all Members)

Attachment C: List of Committees and Advisory Groups

No.	Advisory Committees of Council
1	Active Transportation and Trails Advisory Committee
2	Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
3	Climate Change and Environment Committee
4	Compass Kitchener
5	Downtown Action and Advisory Committee
6	Economic Development Advisory Committee
7	Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee
8	Heritage Kitchener
9	Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)

No.	Quasi-judicial Committees of Council
1	Committee of Adjustment
2	Property Standards Committee

No.	Advisory and Public Engagement Groups (Working Groups, Panels, etc.)
1	Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)
2	Kitchener Youth Action Council (KYAC)
3	Building Parks Together
4	Housing Lived Experience Working Group*
5	Community Grants Tier 2
6	Urban Indigenous Community Focus Group
7	Kitchener Resident Panel

*Housing Lived Experience Working Group has a separate honorarium and reimbursement process based on a Purchase of Service Agreement.

Attachment D – Highlights of Municipal Scan Findings

This section provides a summary of our municipal scan findings. Our study suggests no consistent pattern in the provision of honoraria and reimbursement across our sample of Ontario municipalities. However, there were some noticeable trends, including:

• In most cases, advisory committees do not receive honoraria and only receive reimbursements that typically include parking, mileage, and childcare.

• Most municipalities in our dataset provide honoraria to quasi-judicial committees, particularly to the Committee of Adjustment.

• As an emerging practice, several municipalities are providing honoraria and reimbursements to equity, anti-racism, and accessibility committees.

• Honoraria rates for Equity Committees are mostly the same as those for the Committee of Adjustment.

• In our sample, we found that the average honorarium rate for the Committee of Adjustment is about 16% higher than the average rate for Equity Committees. Specifically, the average honorarium rate for the Committee of Adjustment is \$110, while the average rate for Equity Committees is \$94. However, it is worth noting that this gap is only present in a couple of municipalities. In most municipalities, honorarium rates for the Committee of Adjustment and Equity Committee are at the same level.

• Honorarium rates for Property Standard committees are usually lower than rates for Committee of Adjustment and Equity committees.