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**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**CC:** ["City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 4/6/2021 3:03:41 PM  
**Subject:** 2020 Annual Council Correspondence Report  
**Attachments:** 2020 Annual Council Correspondence Report.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached for your information is the 2020 Annual Council Correspondence Report, which summarizes the correspondence data received between January and December 2020.

The correspondence data covered in the report includes feedback on Council agenda items, service requests, enquiries, complaints, comments, and petitions. In addition to Council correspondence, the City Clerk's Office also processes Public Hearing correspondence, speaker requests, legal documents, risk management claims, and event invitations. Other services also include City Hall tours/official visits, the City Hall Illumination Program, half-mastings, events, and ceremonies.

A full summary of the correspondence data is provided within the 2020 Annual Correspondence Report and key highlights from the report include:

- ☐ A total of **11,331** correspondence items received by Mayor and Council in 2020 through the [Contact Council web form](#), 3-1-1, City Clerk's Office, and the councillors' individual emails (when councillors requested for them to be tracked)
- ☐ Popular topics:
  1. **2020 Cultural Grants:** 1,909 correspondence items
  2. **COVID-19 Pandemic:** 751 correspondence items
  3. **Climate Emergency Action Plan:** 535 correspondence items
  4. **Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts:** 514 correspondence items
  5. **Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives:** 424 correspondence items
- ☐ Top neighbourhoods (by number correspondence received):
  1. **Downtown:** 1,614 correspondence items
  2. **Kitsilano:** 1,033 correspondence items
  3. **Mount Pleasant:** 796 correspondence items
  4. **West End:** 741 correspondence items
  5. **Grandview-Woodland:** 632 correspondence items

☐ Response rates:

- 90% of correspondence received personalized responses
  - ⊙ A total of 10,189 responses were sent, 9,234 from the Council Correspondence Coordinator and 955 from departmental staff
- Cases were closed within an average of 8 business days

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary Hagiwara, Deputy City Clerk, at 604-873-7177 or [Rosemary.Hagiwara@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rosemary.Hagiwara@vancouver.ca).

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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City of Vancouver  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməŋəm (Musqueam), lóóvú 7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



# **2020 Annual City Clerk's Correspondence Report**

City Clerk's Office

March 19, 2021

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual review of the correspondence received in the City Clerk's Office by the Election and Business Services, Mayor's Office, Legislative Operations, and External Relations and Protocol groups in 2020. This excludes correspondence by other branches such as Access to Information and Archives as they report their own metrics annually, and Board of Variance as their correspondence data is not currently tracked. The data provided in this report also excludes correspondence that were sent directly to the Mayor and Councillors' unique email addresses unless they were requested to be entered into the case management system.

The majority of correspondence covered in this report relates to Mayor and Council correspondence, which includes feedback on Council agenda items, service requests, enquiries, complaints, comments, and petitions. In addition to Council correspondence, the City Clerk's Office also processes Public Hearing correspondence, speaker requests, legal documents, risk management claims, and event invitations. Other services also include City Hall tours/official visits, the City Hall Illumination Program, half-mastings, events, and ceremonies. Data from 2020 has been collected for these services and will be discussed in further sections. Comparisons with data collected in previous years will also be provided if the information is available.

## 2. Summary of 2020 Correspondence Trends

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, this unprecedented situation became a central topic of concern throughout the majority of the year. This significantly increased Mayor and Council correspondence volumes as well as decreased the amount of events as in-person gatherings were limited to ensure the safety of the public and City staff. A high-level summary of the data collected in 2020 is displayed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 - 2020 Correspondence Data Summary**

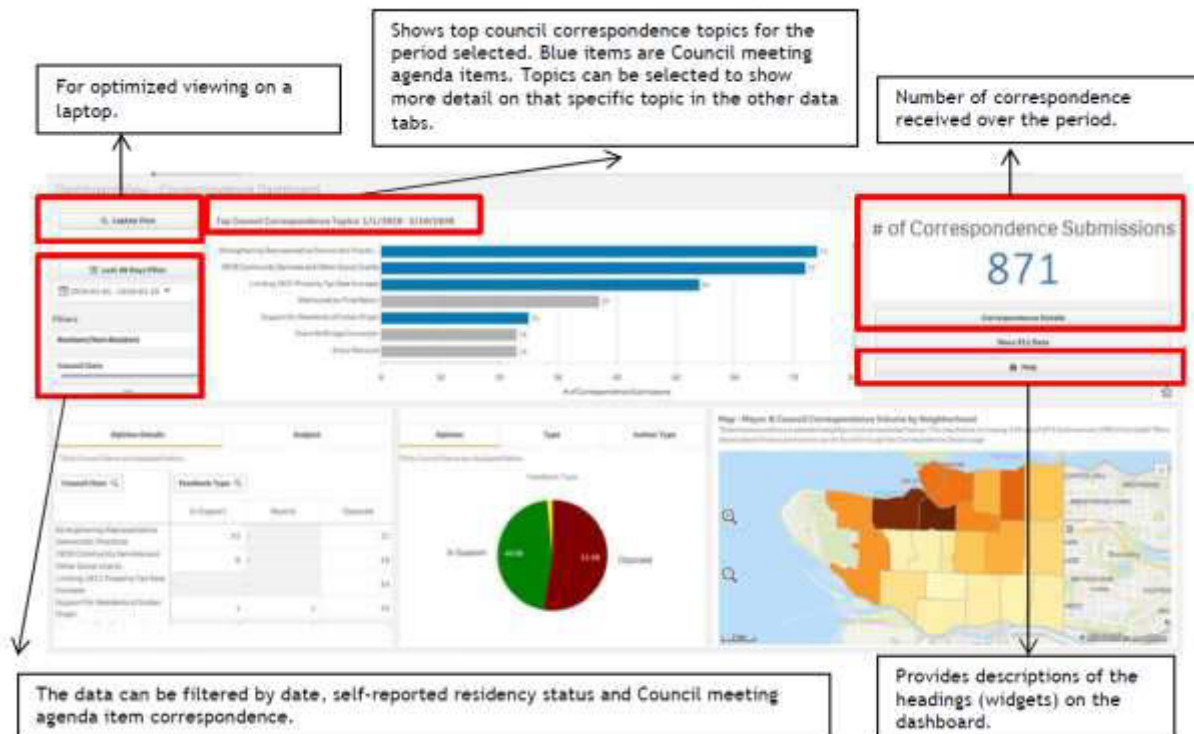
Mayor and Council Correspondence	Volumes and Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>11,331</b> correspondence items received in total (75% increase from 2019)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 9,481 submitted on the Contact Council web form</li><li>○ 1,080 received from 3-1-1</li><li>○ 422 received individually from councillors*</li><li>○ 348 received by the City Clerk's Office</li></ul><i>*These emails are only tracked when a councillor requests for them to be entered into the case management system.</i></li></ul>
	Popular Topics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>2020 Cultural Grants:</b> 1,909</li><li>2. <b>COVID-19 Pandemic:</b> 751</li><li>3. <b>Climate Emergency Action Plan:</b> 535</li><li>4. <b>Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts:</b> 514</li><li>5. <b>Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives:</b> 424</li></ol>

<b>Mayor and Council Correspondence</b>	<b>Top Neighbourhoods (by number of correspondence received)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Downtown:</b> 1,614</li> <li><b>Kitsilano:</b> 1,033</li> <li><b>Mount Pleasant:</b> 796</li> <li><b>West End:</b> 741</li> <li><b>Grandview-Woodland:</b> 632</li> </ol>
	<b>Response Rates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>90% of correspondence received personalized responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>10,189</b> responses were sent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9,234 from the Correspondence Coordinator</li> <li>955 from department staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li><b>1,142</b> cases were closed with acknowledgement</li> <li>Cases were closed within an average of <b>8 business days</b></li> </ul>
<b>Mayor's Office Correspondence</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>8,101</b> correspondence items (received through 3-1-1 and the Mayor's web form)</li> </ul>
<b>Public Hearing Correspondence</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3,253</b> public hearing correspondence items</li> <li><b>4</b> petitions with <b>6,107</b> signatures in total</li> <li><b>522</b> speakers registered</li> <li><b>458</b> speakers heard</li> </ul>
<b>Council and Standing Committee Meeting Speakers</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>233</b> speakers registered for Council meetings</li> <li><b>147</b> speakers heard during Council meetings</li> <li><b>1,040</b> speakers registered for Standing Committee meetings</li> <li><b>502</b> speakers heard during Standing Committee meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Legals, Risk Claims, Event Invitations, and Tours</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>103</b> legal documents</li> <li><b>814</b> risk management claims</li> <li><b>109</b> event invitations</li> <li><b>4</b> City Hall tours attended by <b>65</b> people in total</li> </ul>
<b>External Relations and Protocol</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5</b> official visits</li> <li><b>11</b> events, ceremonies, and recognitions</li> <li><b>60</b> micro-weddings</li> <li><b>61</b> City Hall Illuminations</li> <li><b>10</b> half-mastings</li> </ul>

### 3. Correspondence Improvements in 2020

In 2020, the City Clerk's Office implemented the following improvements to the correspondence process:

- **New Council Correspondence Dashboard**
  - A new [interactive dashboard](#) was created to display high-level correspondence data to help Mayor and Council with their decision making process. A screenshot of the dashboard is below:



- **New Public Hearing Web Form**
  - A new Public Hearing web form was launched to replace the [publichearing@vancouver.ca](mailto:publichearing@vancouver.ca) email. This reduced the amount of resources previously required to review emails and prepare them for distribution.
- **Website Improvements**
  - The rezoning and Public Hearing web pages on the City's website were updated to clarify the feedback submission process and to provide more education on the rezoning process.

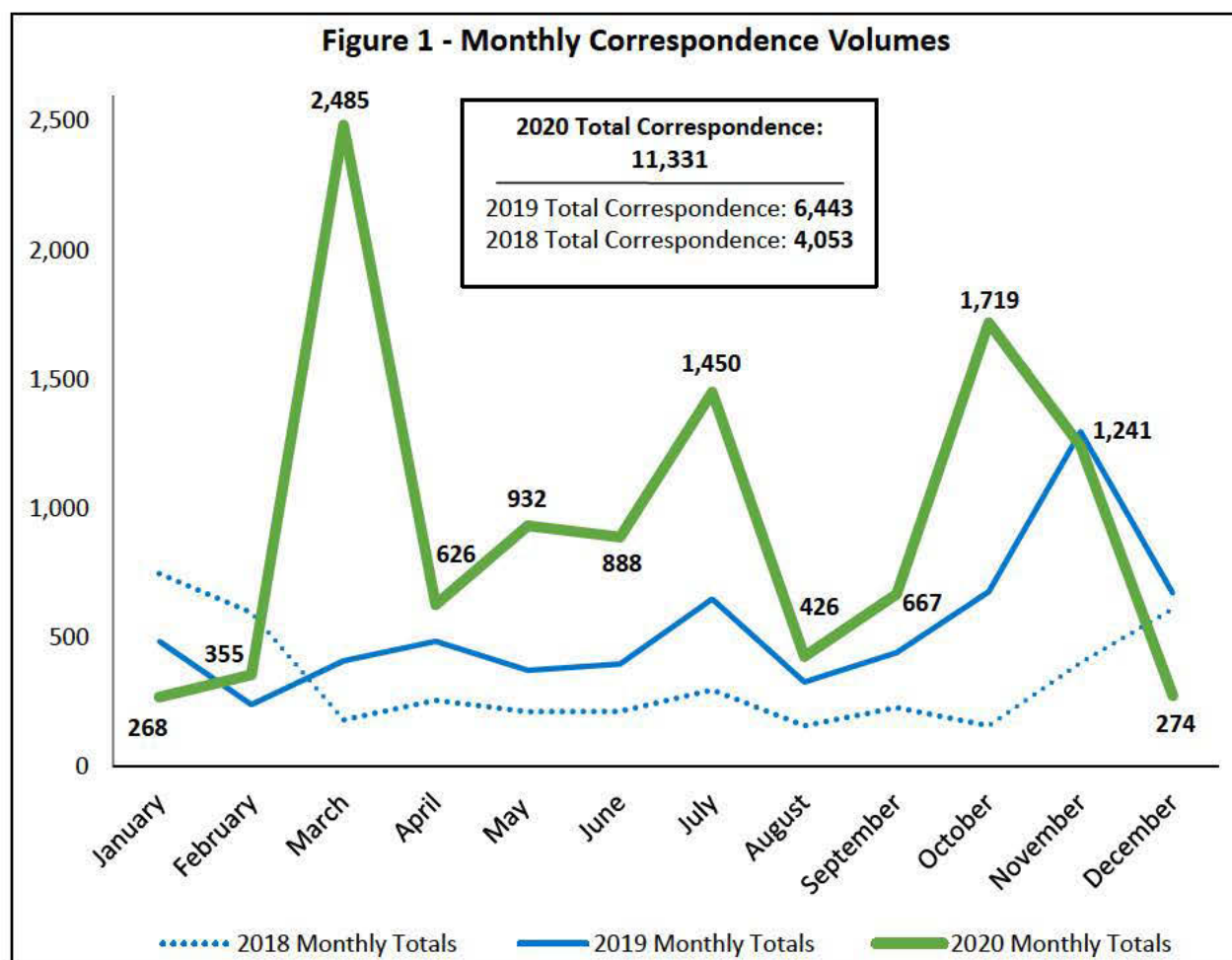
## 4. 2020 Mayor and Council Correspondence

Mayor and Council correspondence is managed by the Council Correspondence Coordinator from the Business and Election Services group (more information is provided in Appendix A). **In 2020, Council received a total of 11,331 correspondence items, which was a 75% increase from the 6,443 correspondence items received in 2019.** Correspondence volumes typically increase during the weeks Council meetings are held and when there are specific topics of interest. As shown in Figure 1, volumes usually decrease during Council breaks in August and between December and January. Correspondence volume trends in recent years have been similar, where the volumes typically increase in July before the summer break in August as well as from September to November.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Council received an unprecedented amount of correspondence and increased volumes throughout the rest of the year. Most of the comments in



March were related to COVID-19 and approximately 1,900 comments were received over a one-week period through an organized campaign regarding the 2020 Cultural Grants.



#### 4.1 Categories and Topic Trends

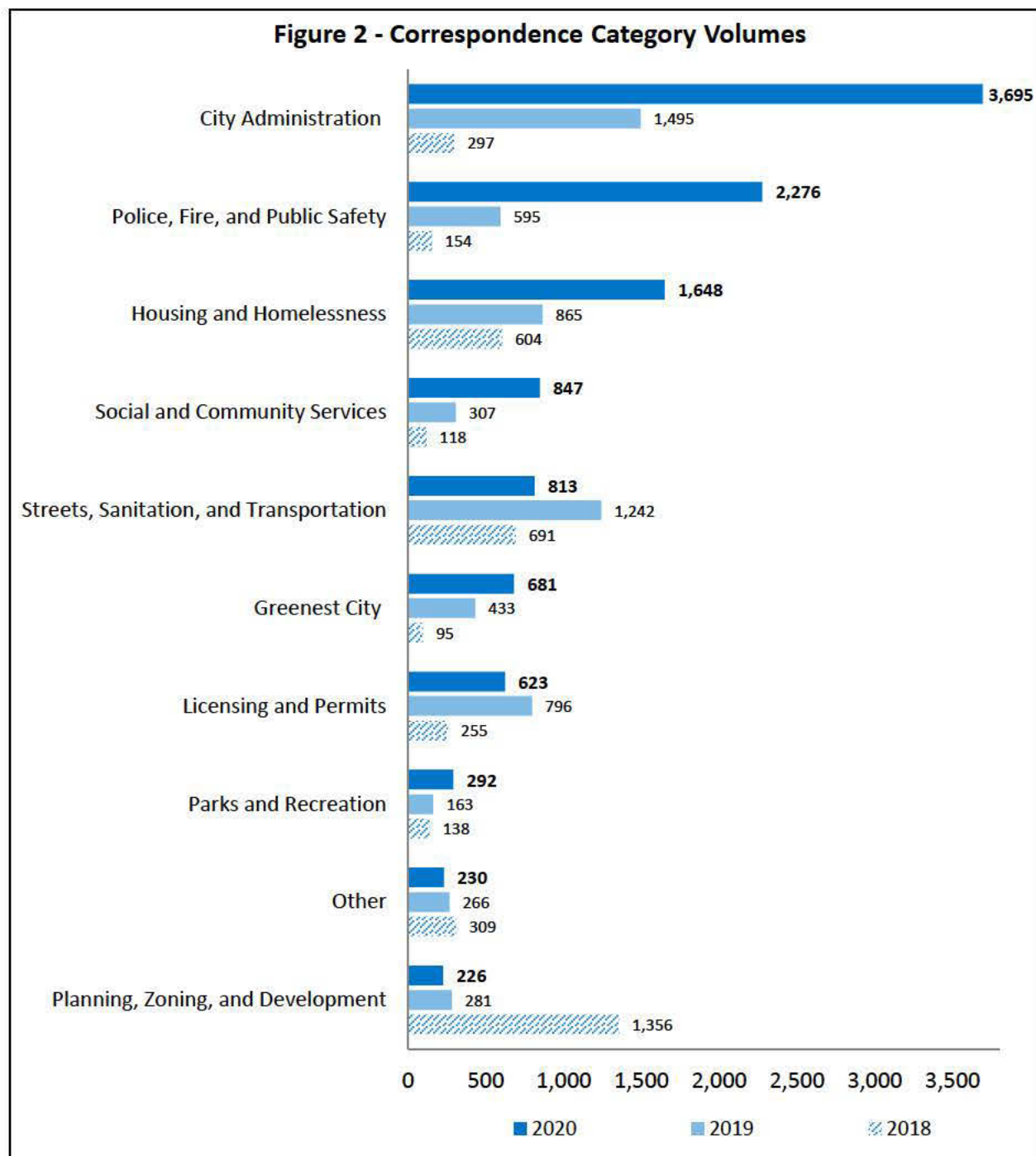
Similar to previous years, the highest volume of correspondence in 2020 fell under the City Administration category (as shown in Figure 2), which includes correspondence related to the 2020 Cultural Grants, lease for an overdose prevention site at 1101 Seymour St, and 2021 Capital and Operating Budget. At the end of March, approximately 1,900 comments regarding the 2020 Cultural Grants were received through the Contact Council web form within a one-week period. The majority of these comments were part of a campaign from BC Alliance for Arts + Culture, whose members submitted template letters urging Council to approve the grants.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City had to adjust its services to adhere to public health orders and ensure the safety of its residents. As this became a significant issue in Vancouver and across the world, there were a variety of concerns related to service/industry closures, physical distancing enforcement, housing/homelessness support, and financial relief. Comments relating to COVID-19 fell under the Police, Fire, and Public Safety category, which was the second most popular category for 2020.

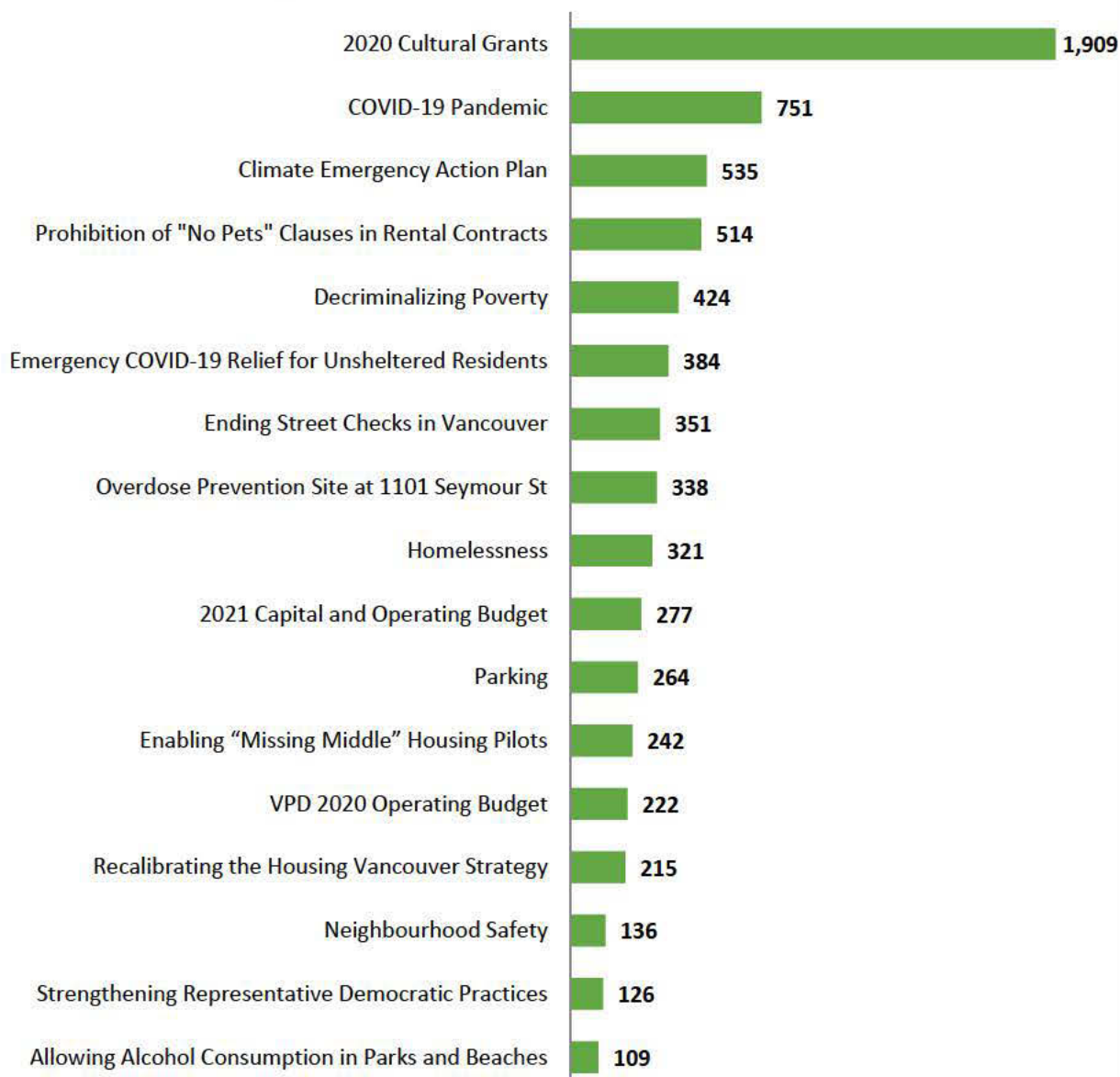


In 2020, the Defund the Police movement was a significant event, which led to the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) receiving increased scrutiny by the public. As a result, Council received a high volume of comments relating to the Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives motion, Ending Street Checks in Vancouver motion, and the VPD's 2020 Operating Budget.

Other important topics received were related to the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts motion. A complete list of the popular topics from 2020 is provided in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 - 2020 Correspondence Topics Trends**



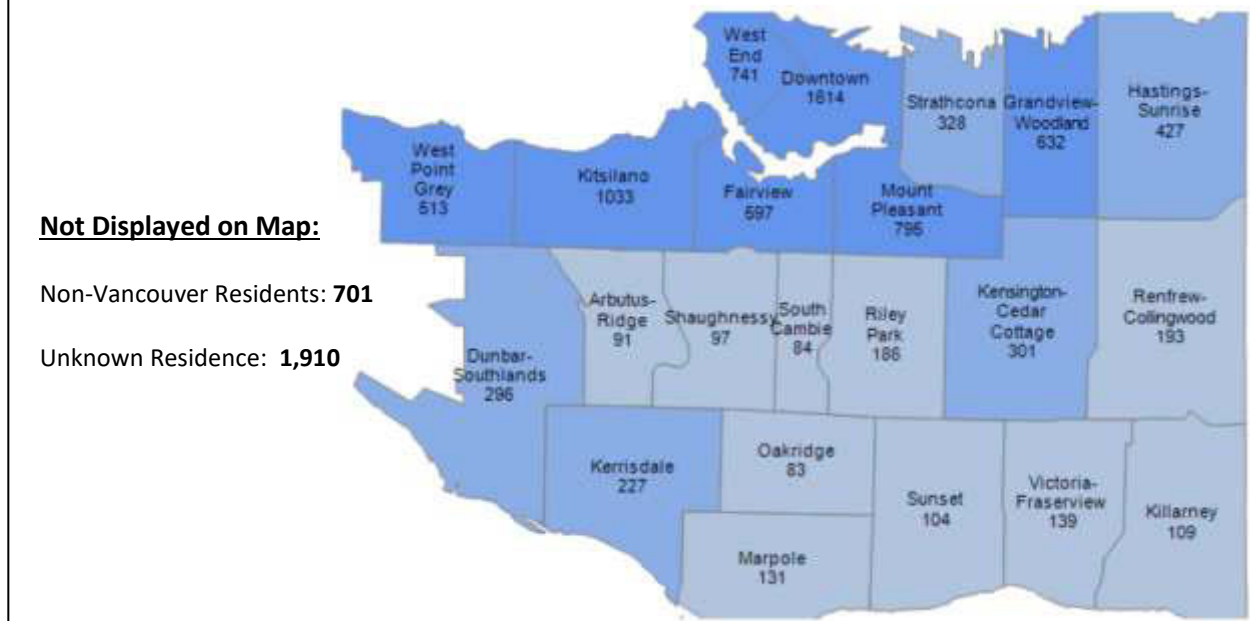
## 4.2 Local Area (Neighbourhood) Volumes and Trends

Local areas (neighbourhoods) are identified by the constituent's residence as well as two other classifications below:

- *Non-Vancouver Residents*: Residents who do not live in Vancouver.
- *Unknown*: No address or neighbourhood provided.

Similar to 2019, the neighbourhoods with the highest volume of correspondence in 2020 were Downtown, Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant, West End, and Grandview-Woodland (Figure 4).

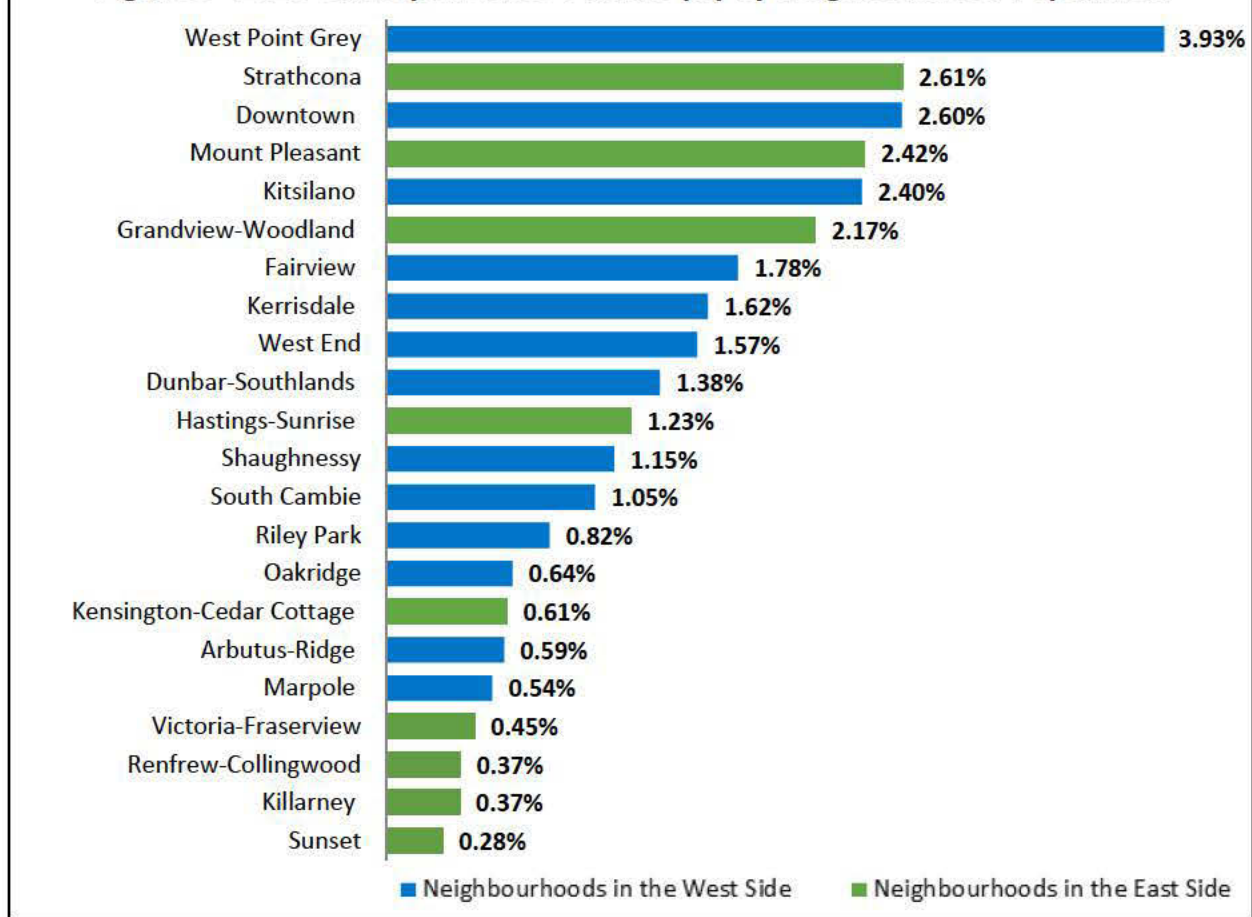
**Figure 4 - 2020 Neighbourhood Volumes**



The neighbourhoods that had the most correspondence based on their population size, however, were West Point Grey, Strathcona, Downtown, Mount Pleasant, and Kitsilano. As displayed in Figure 5, 3.93% of West Point Grey residents wrote to Mayor and Council in comparison to 2.60% of Downtown residents (which had the highest number of actual correspondence received).

With a few exceptions, Figure 5 also illustrates that those residing in the north-western neighbourhoods of Vancouver generally write to Mayor and Council more often than residents of the south-eastern neighbourhoods.

**Figure 5 - 2020 Correspondence Volume (%) by Neighbourhood Population**



The most popular topic across the majority of the neighbourhoods was the 2020 Cultural Grants. However, Table 2 shows the other most popular topic was usually local to the neighbourhood. For example, West Point Grey residents were most concerned about the use of the Jericho Hostel to house unsheltered residents; Strathcona residents were most concerned about the homeless encampment at Strathcona Park; and Downtown residents were most concerned about the lease for an overdose prevention site at 1101 Seymour Street.

**Table 2 - 2020 Top Correspondence Topics by Neighbourhood**

Neighbourhoods	Most Popular Topic	Second Most Popular Topic
West Point Grey	Jericho Hostel (172)	2020 Cultural Grants (65)
Strathcona	Strathcona Park Encampment (69)	2020 Cultural Grants (64)
Downtown	Lease for Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street (141)	2020 Cultural Grants (46)
Mount Pleasant	2020 Cultural Grants (185)	Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives (55)
Kitsilano	2020 Cultural Grants (160)	Recalibrating the Housing Vancouver Strategy post COVID-19 (63)
Grandview-Woodland	2020 Cultural Grants (151)	Ending Street Checks in Vancouver (43)



Fairview	2020 Cultural Grants (97)	Climate Emergency Action Plan (58)
Kerrisdale	2020 Cultural Grants (38)	Recalibrating the Housing Vancouver Strategy post COVID-19 (20)
West End	2020 Cultural Grants (136)	COVID-19 Closures and Enforcement (64)
Dunbar-Southlands	2020 Cultural Grants (49)	Climate Emergency Action Plan (19)
Hastings-Sunrise	2020 Cultural Grants (81)	Ending Street Checks in Vancouver (35)
Shaughnessy	2020 Cultural Grants (24)	COVID-19 Closures and Enforcement (9)
South Cambie	2020 Cultural Grants (23)	Ending Street Checks in Vancouver (8)
Riley Park	2020 Cultural Grants (52)	Ending Street Checks in Vancouver (14)
Oakridge	2020 Cultural Grants (11)	Climate Emergency Action Plan (6)
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	2020 Cultural Grants (54)	Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives (31)
Arbutus-Ridge	2020 Cultural Grants (20)	Recalibrating the Housing Vancouver Strategy post COVID-19 (14)
Marpole	2020 Cultural Grants (17)	Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts (13)
Victoria-Fraserview	2020 Cultural Grants (21)	Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts (11)
Renfrew-Collingwood	2020 Cultural Grants (33)	Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives (17)
Killarney	2020 Cultural Grants (19)	Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts (15)
Sunset	Climate Emergency Action Plan (16)	2020 Cultural Grants (11) / Prohibition of "No Pets" Clauses in Rental Contracts (11)

### 4.3 Correspondence Sources

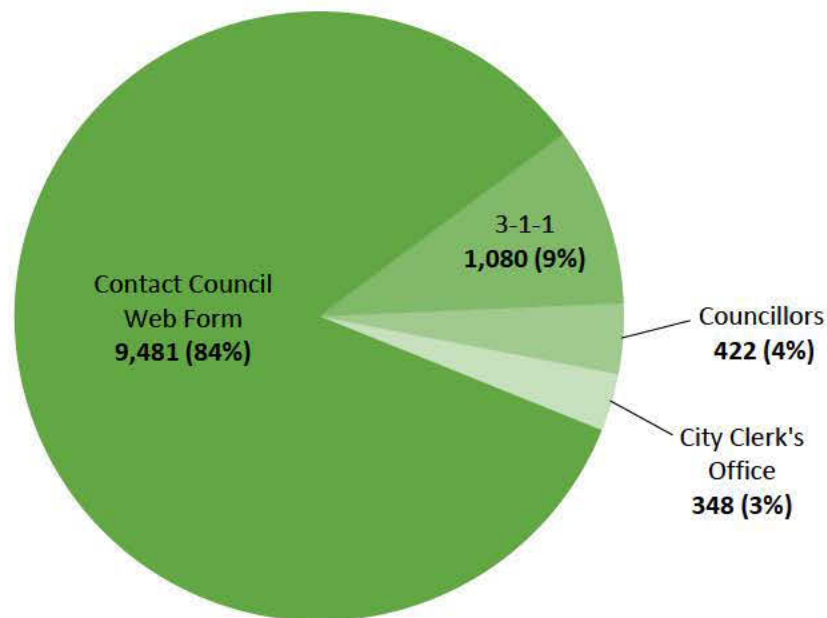
Mayor and Council correspondence is received through the following channels:

- [Contact Council Web Form](#)
- **3-1-1**
  - Phone calls
  - Live chat
  - [Tell Us Online web form](#)
  - Social media
- **City Clerk's Office**
  - Physical mail
  - Phone calls
  - In-person inquiries
- **Councillors (only tracked when requested by the Councillor)**
  - Individual emails
  - Phone calls
  - Physical mail



As displayed in Figure 6, **84% (9,481)** of correspondence items were received through the Contact Council web form in 2020. As 2020 is the third year the web form has replaced the [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca) email, constituents are becoming more familiar with the web form and email campaigns have also begun using it as well. The City Clerk's [correspondenceclerk@vancouver.ca](mailto:correspondenceclerk@vancouver.ca) email also stopped receiving Council Correspondence in April 2020, and began redirecting constituents to use the web form, contributing to the higher use of the web form.

**Figure 6 - 2020 Correspondence Sources**

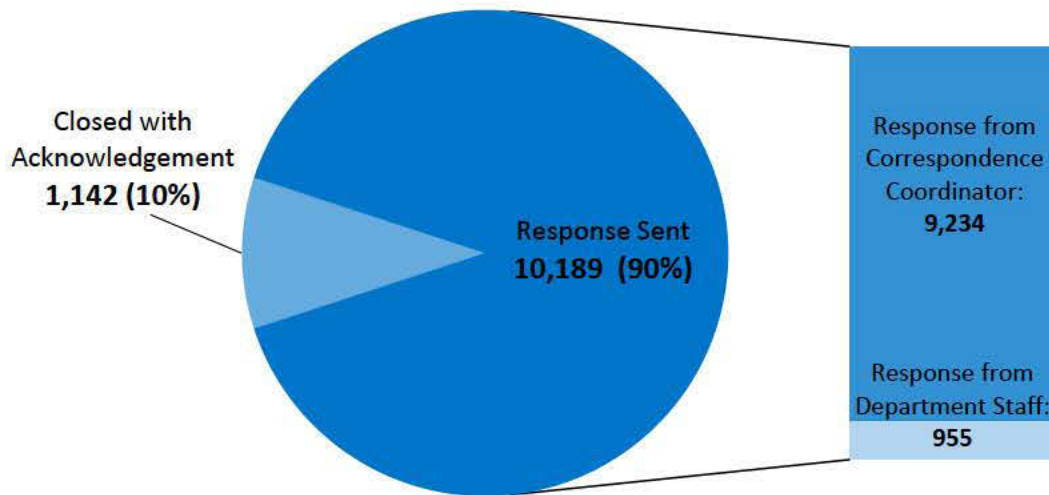


#### 4.4 Correspondence Response Rates

All constituents receive an acknowledgement confirming receipt of their feedback when they use the Contact Council web form or call 3-1-1. However, not all constituents provide their contact information or may provide invalid/incorrect contact information. Some constituents also prefer not to be contacted and want their identity to be anonymous. Therefore, it is impossible to respond to 100% of all comments received.

In 2020, **90% (10,189 correspondence items)** received a personalized response addressing the topic of concern, some including links for more information and additional contacts. This exceeded the goal set for 2020 to respond to at least 80% of correspondence, and is also a 15% increase to the 75% response rate in 2019.

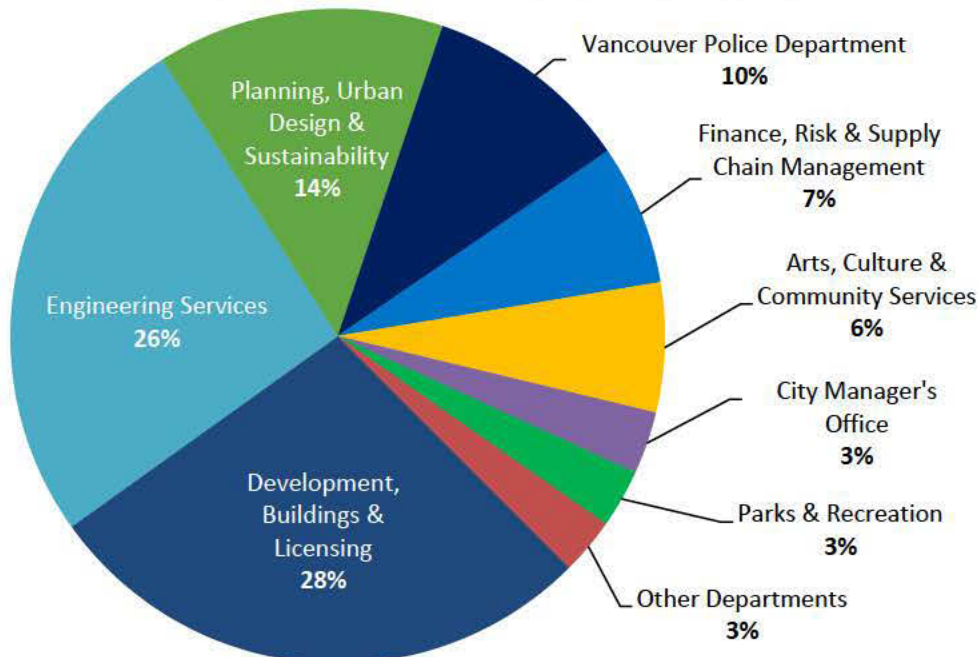
**Figure 7 - 2020 Response Rates**



The majority of responses are provided by the Council Correspondence Coordinator, unless information is required from department staff, typically when the topic is of a complex or specific nature. Since 2017, the Correspondence Coordinator has developed a response repository consisting of information collected from the Civic Engagement & Communications department, City's website, past staff responses, information bulletins, news releases, and daily media summaries. These response templates are used to respond to common or hot topic items.

Similar to previous years, the majority of correspondence that required staff response fell under the Development, Buildings & Licensing (28%), Engineering Services (26%), and Planning, Urban Design, & Sustainability (14%) departments as the correspondence specified certain projects, sites, and locations.

**Figure 8 - 2020 Staff Responses by Department**



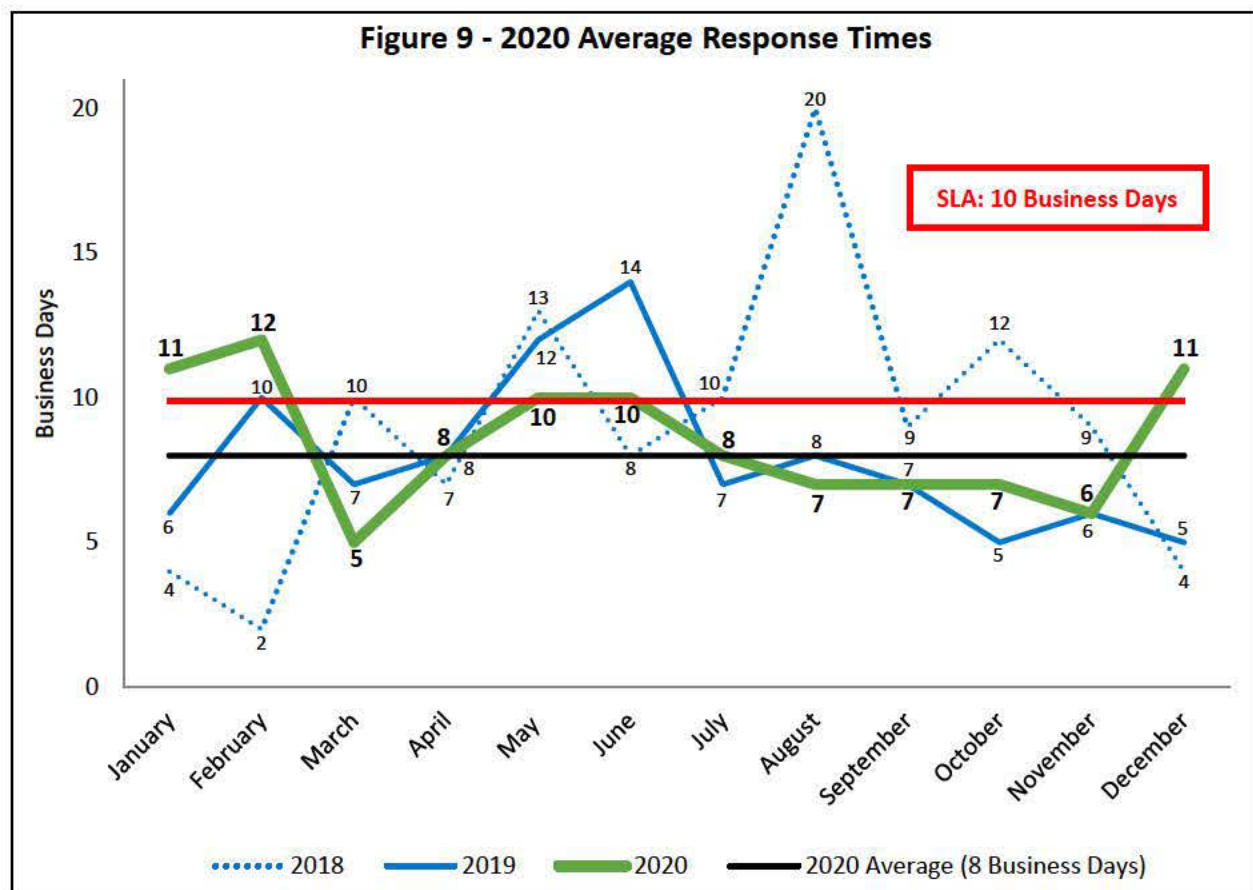


Similar to 2019, the average correspondence case response time was eight business days in 2020, which is within the 10 business day Service Level Agreement (SLA).

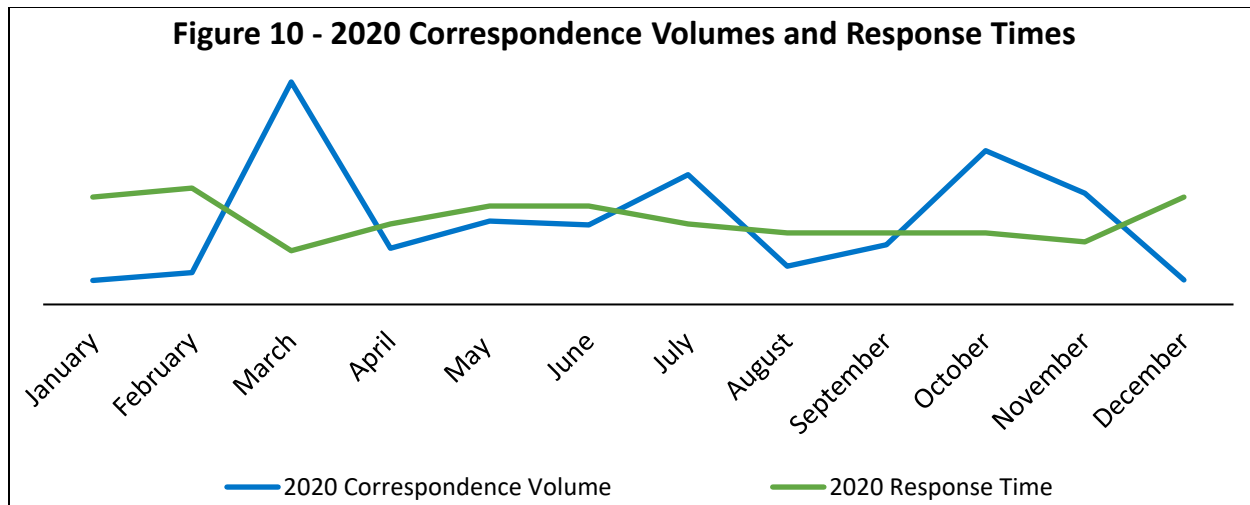
As shown in Figure 9, response times were the shortest in March and from August to November 2020 as most correspondence received were regarding the Council agenda items that had email response templates already prepared by the Correspondence Coordinator.

The response times were highest in February 2020 as Council received a high volume of correspondence related to the Wet'suwet'en protests. Information was requested from the VPD's Emergency Operations and Planning Section (EOPS) to create a response template on this topic. However, since the EOPS was busy managing the protests as they were happening, which took place over several weeks, the information to prepare the response was received after the SLA had already passed.

Response times also exceeded the SLA in January and December 2020 as more staff were away during the winter break and the correspondence was responded to following their return.



As displayed in Figure 10, the response times and correspondence volumes in 2020 had an inverse relationship where response times decreased when volumes increased. When correspondence volumes increased, they were mostly related to hot topics or Council agenda times, which had response templates already prepared. Therefore, responses were sent out quicker when Council received high volumes on the same topic as opposed to when volumes were lower and more specific responses had to be prepared.



## 5. Mayor's Office Correspondence

The Mayor's Office manages correspondence received through 3-1-1 and the [Mayor's online contact form](#). In 2020, a total of 8,101 correspondence items were received, 56% (4,501 correspondence items) of which were from the same resident. The Mayor also receives correspondence from the public through the [Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca](mailto:Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca) email and by physical mail, but the volumes and topics are not tracked. The correspondence topics received by the Mayor's Office tend to be similar to the correspondence received by Mayor and Council.

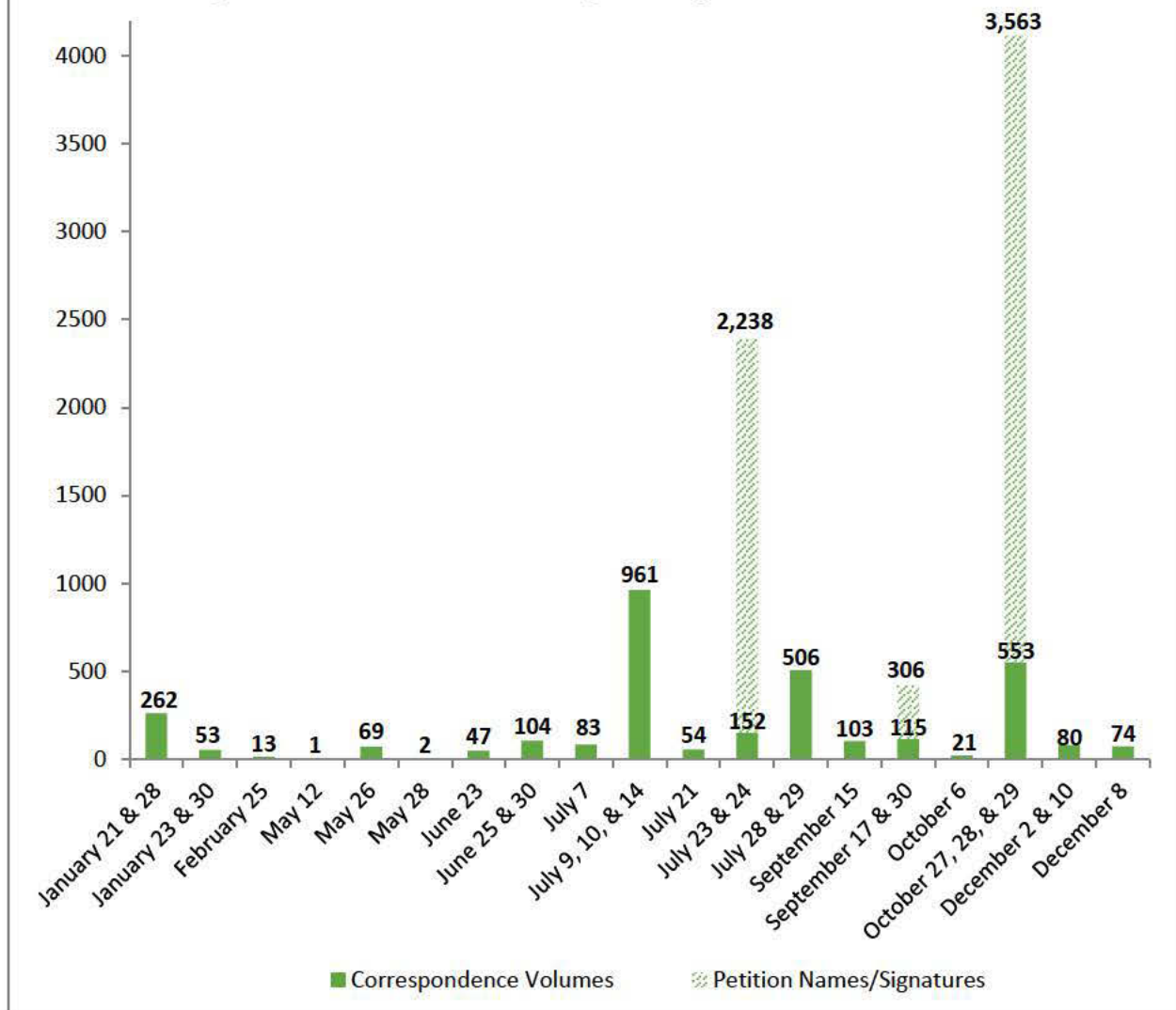
## 6. Public Hearing Correspondence

Public Hearing correspondence is managed by the Meeting Coordinators from the Legislative Operations group. Public Hearing correspondence is processed differently than other Mayor and Council correspondence as the constituent's full name and comments are made publicly available on the City's website.

In March 2020, the new [Public Hearing correspondence web form](#) launched to replace the [publichearing@vancouver.ca](mailto:publichearing@vancouver.ca) email, which was fully discontinued in September. Prior to the web form, processing emails (especially for high profile items) was challenging for the Meeting Coordinators to distribute to Council in a timely manner. The web form was created to reduce the amount of resources required to review emails and prepare them for distribution.

**In 2020, 3,253 Public Hearing correspondence items and 4 petitions with 6,107 signatures were received by the City Clerk's Office.** The volumes of correspondence usually vary in each Public Hearing, but increase for rezoning applications that are of interest to residents. The correspondence volumes based on the Public Hearings scheduled in 2020 are displayed in Figure 11 and the most popular Public Hearing items are listed by date in Table 3 below. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Public Hearings were cancelled at the end of February to April. When Public Hearings resumed in May, they were convened electronically.

**Figure 11 - 2020 Public Hearing Correspondence Volumes**



**Table 3 - 2020 Top Public Hearing Items**

Public Hearing Date & Item	Support	Opposed	Other
January 21 & 28 – REZONING: 3600 East Hastings Street	56	14	3
January 21 & 28 – REZONING: 3680 East Hastings Street	60	71	3
July 7 – CD-1 REZONING: 1111-1123 Kingsway	37	13	1
July 9, 10, & 14 – CD-1 AMENDMENT: 2538 Birch Street (formerly 1296 West Broadway)	542	417	2
July 23 & 24 – Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to Increase Rental Housing in the C-2, C-2B, C-2C, and C-2C1 Commercial Districts	30	86 + 1 Petition (2,238 Signatures)	1

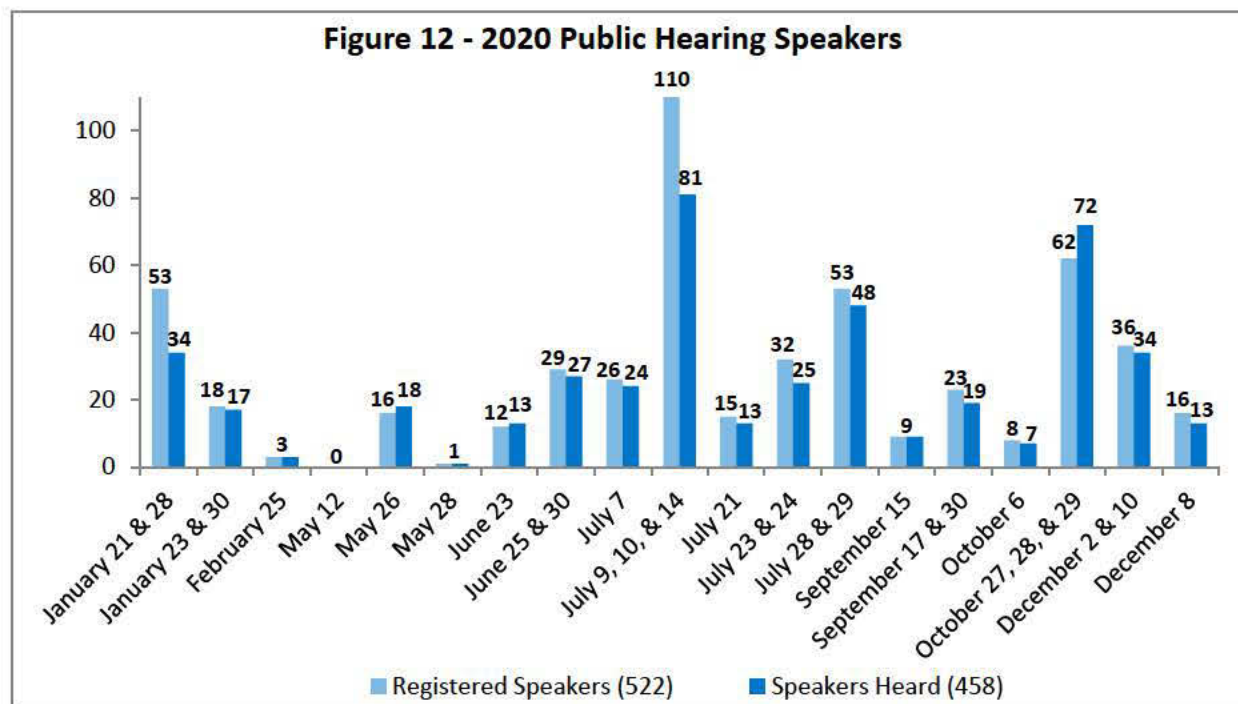


July 28 & 29 – CD-1 REZONING: 4750 Granville Street & 1494 West 32nd Avenue	236	229	4
September 15 – CD-1 Rezoning: 2336-2366 Charles Street	57	33	4
September 17 & 30 – CD-1 Rezoning: 601 Beach Crescent	39	68 + 2 Petitions (306 Names)	4
October 27, 28, & 29 – CD-1 Rezoning: 3701-3743 West Broadway	236	276 + 1 Petition (139 Comments & 3,563 Names)	2
December 2 & 10 – CD-1 Rezoning: 349 East 6th Avenue	43	24	2

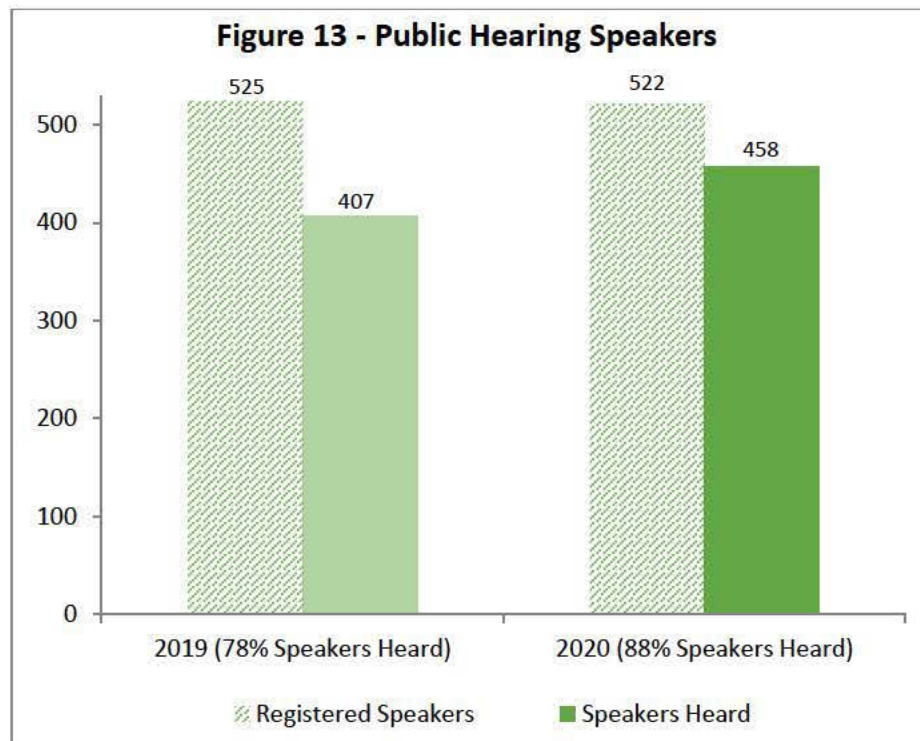
Speakers are also accepted for Public Hearings and the volume of speakers typically correlate with the volume of correspondence as there were more speakers during the Public Hearings in January, July, September, and October. In 2020, 522 speakers were registered and 458 speakers were heard.

After registered speakers have been heard, the Mayor or Chair of the meeting calls for additional speakers. If there are additional speakers, the number of speakers heard may exceed the number of registered speakers. As shown in Figure 12, the number of speakers heard exceeded the number of speakers registered during some Public Hearings in May, June, and October.

Typically, the number of speakers heard are lower than the number of registered speakers as some speakers do not end up attending. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, speakers attended Public Hearings in person. However, when Public Hearings convened electronically beginning in May 2020, a new phone-in option using Telus Portal was introduced which enabled speakers to participate remotely.



As displayed in Figure 13, there was a 10% increase in the number of speakers heard in 2020 in comparison to 2019. This may be due to the introduction of the phone option as speakers did not have to commute to City Hall and could phone in from a location convenient to them.

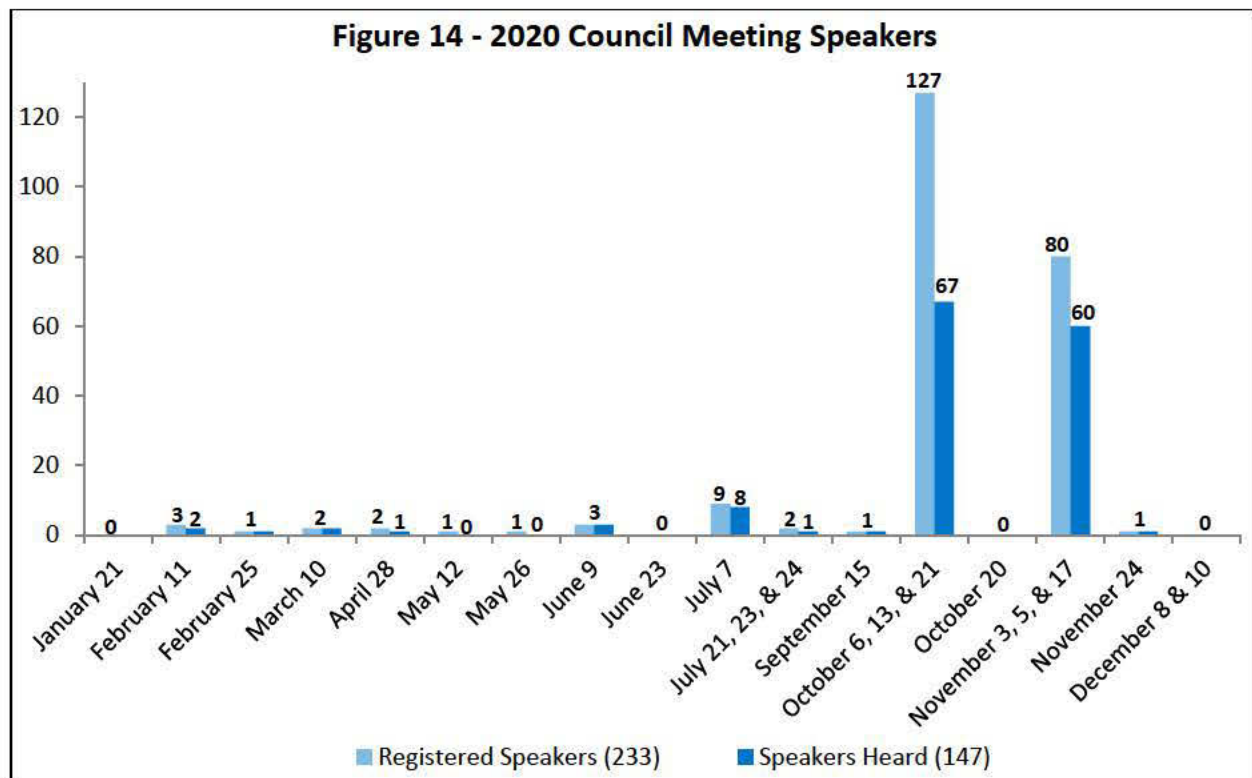


## 7. Council and Standing Committee Meeting Speakers

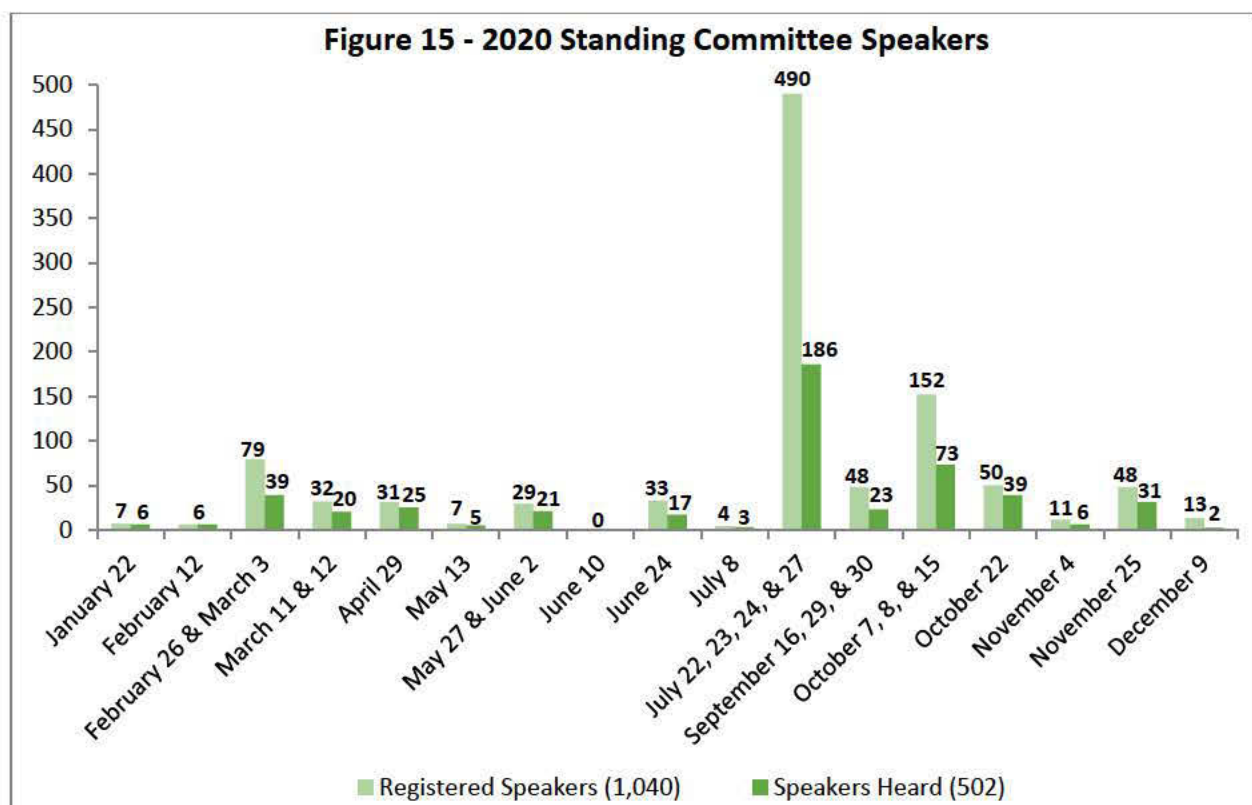
Speaker requests for Council and Standing Committee meetings are managed by the Meeting Coordinators from the Legislative Operations group. The public can register to speak up until one hour before the meeting is scheduled to begin.

Similar to Public Hearings, the number of speakers vary depending on the topic. Council and Standing Committee meetings are normally held in-person; but due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the meetings were convened electronically from April to December and speakers attended by phone.

In 2020, 233 speakers were registered and 147 speakers were heard during Council meetings (Figure 14).



In 2020, there were 1,040 registered speakers and 502 speakers heard during Standing Committee meetings (Figure 15).



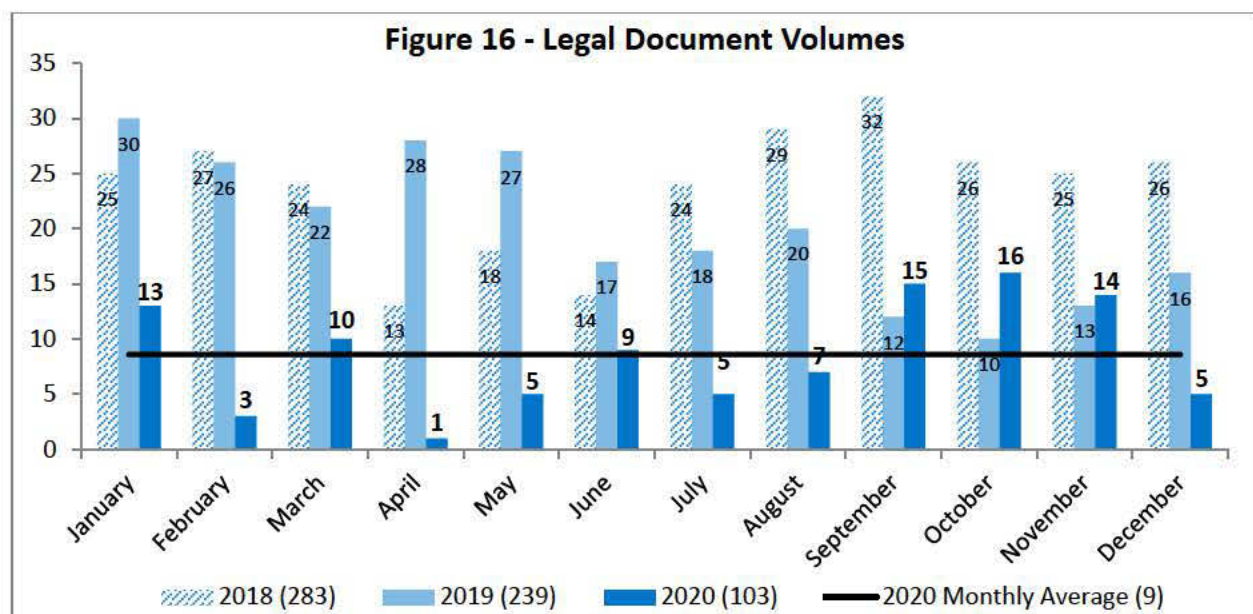


In February 2020, Council directed staff to implement a pilot initiative that would allow registered speakers who missed their speaking time to have an opportunity to speak after the registered speaker's list concluded. During the pilot project, 51% of speakers were heard at Council and Standing Committee meetings. Out of the 649 speakers heard, 94% (611) spoke during their turn and 6% (38) missed their turn, but were able to speak when the Chair of the meeting went over the registered speaker's list again. Whether the speakers accidentally missed their turn or chose to speak at the second opportunity, the pilot made it more convenient for speakers to participate in the meeting.

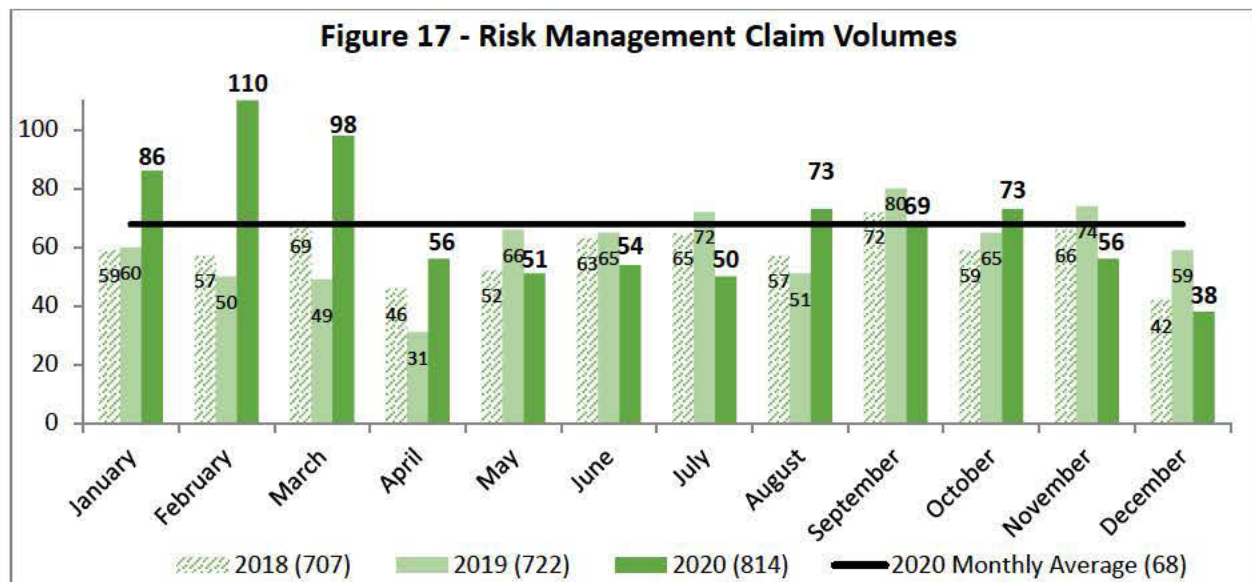
## 8. Legals, Risk Claims, Invitations, and Tours

The City Clerk's Office receives a variety of other documents unrelated to the correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council. These include legal documents, risk management claims, and event invitations, which are managed by the administrative staff from the Business and Election Services group.

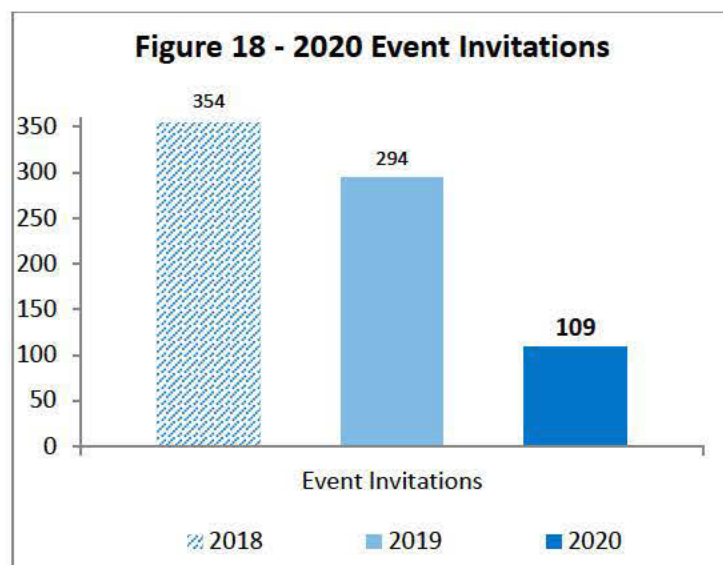
In 2020, the City Clerk's Office received 103 legal documents, which is a 57% decrease from the 239 legal documents received in 2019 (Figure 16).



The City Clerk's Office receives two types of claims: Charter Notices and ICBC claims. In 2020, 814 risk management claims were received, which is a 13% increase from the 722 risk claims received in 2019 (Figure 17).



In 2020, **109 event invitations** were received by the City Clerk's Office, which is a 63% decrease from the 294 invitations received in 2019 (Figure 18). The volume of event invitations decreased significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic as public health orders limited in-person social gatherings and large events.



City Hall campus tours are normally provided to new City of Vancouver employees, school groups, and community organizations by the administrative staff. In 2020, **65 attendees participated in four tours** between January and February, which was significantly less than the 46 tours attended by 1,211 people in 2019. Two of the tours were for new employee onboarding and the other two tours were for post-secondary school groups. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all tours were cancelled from March to December as public access to City Hall was restricted and social gatherings were limited.



## 9. External Relations and Protocol

External Relations and Protocol (ERP) is responsible for arranging official visits, managing international relationships, managing the City Hall Illumination Program and half-mastings, as well as organizing Council awards, honours, events and ceremonies.

With COVID-19, ERP's work changed significantly in 2020 and the following data demonstrates ERP's accomplishments for the year.

- Arranged **five official visits** including a visit by the Governor General of Canada, the Government of Sweden, Ambassadors, and Consuls General. Typically, between 15 and 20 official visits are organized per year; however, visits were discontinued in March 2020 when the COVID-19 global pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization.
- Organized **11 events, ceremonies, and recognitions** to honour the City's Official Celebrations and Observances: 3 in-person events including Lunar New Year, Black History Month, International Women's Day, 3 hybrid events including Italian Heritage Month, Remembrance Day and Pride Launch, and 5 online recognitions for World Refugee Day, National Indigenous Day, Eid, Diwali, and International Day for Persons with Disabilities. ERP normally organizes in-person events; however, all in-person events were cancelled in March due to restrictions on public gatherings and physical distancing measures. ERP quickly transitioned to hybrid events and virtual acknowledgements.
- Organized **60 micro-wedding ceremonies** as part of the City Hall pilot wedding program.
- Organized **61 City Hall Illuminations** for a wide range of significant days, and directed the **Canadian flag be lowered for 10 Council approved observances**.

## 10. Looking Ahead to 2021

Building on the improvements made in 2020, staff will work towards implementing the following goals in 2021:

- Successfully migrate from the current case management system for Mayor and Council correspondence (Lagan) to the new Engagement Management Professional (EM Pro). With the launch of EM Pro, there will also be opportunities to improve the current reporting system. EM Pro is scheduled to launch in October 2021, and City Clerk's staff will be working on the new system with 3-1-1 and the Digital Team over the summer.
- Work with Intergovernmental Relations Office to streamline the Mayor and Council enquiry response process. Council enquiries originating from constituents are tracked by the City Clerk's Office and Council enquiries to staff are tracked by Intergovernmental Relations.
- Continue to improve the average response times for Council correspondence, ensuring all months fall within the 10 business day SLA.

## Appendix A. Mayor and Council Correspondence Project Background

Prior to 2016, correspondence directed to Vancouver Mayor and Council was primarily received through the [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca) email account and all emails were forwarded directly to all members of Council. Under this model, however, responses to constituents could not be tracked and there was no clarity as to who would be responding. Members of the public could also receive different responses if members of Council requested different staff to respond, resulting in a duplication of work and inconsistencies.

In order to remedy these issues identified by members of Council and the City Manager, City Clerk's staff introduced a new, more centralized model for receiving, tracking, and responding to Council correspondence.

In 2016, the City Clerk's Office hired a Council Correspondence Coordinator who would be responsible for receiving, preparing, responding to, and reporting out on all correspondence received to Council. Shortly thereafter, a new case management system, Lagan (the same system as used by the 3-1-1 Contact Centre), was implemented to track and report out on correspondence.

The role and responsibilities of the Correspondence Coordinator include:

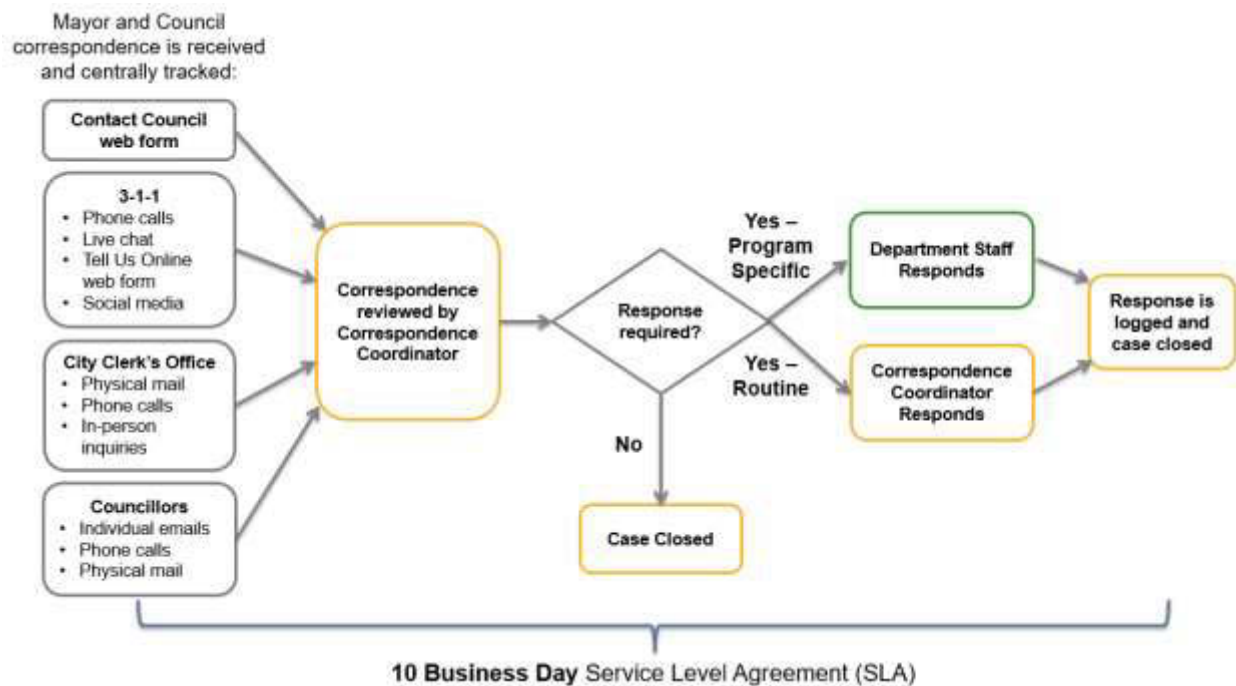
- Reviewing all correspondence and setting standard classifications for categories and topics
- Responding to correspondence and coordinating responses from department staff, while ensuring the 10 business day service level agreement (SLA) is met
  - Work with Civic Engagement and Communications as well as other City departments to develop hot topic response templates to respond to in-the-moment issues
- Reviewing, preparing, and sending out reports:
  - *Daily Feedback Report* – Details of feedback received from the previous day
  - *Council Item Report* – Provided just before council meetings (includes correspondence relating to items on the agenda, which were received after the last Daily Feedback Report was sent, as well as a tally for how much correspondence are in support, neutral, or opposed to the Council items)
  - *Biweekly Dashboard* – High level report outlining trends prior to a Council meeting
  - *Monthly Report* – Internal report with an overview of correspondence trends, sources, response rates, and department volumes/response times
  - *Annual Report* – Summary of correspondence from the previous year

In mid-2017, the [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca) email was replaced by the '[Contact Council](#)' web form, which directly integrated with Lagan. All correspondence directed to Council have been tracked in Lagan since then. A single point of contact from each department was also identified to funnel cases requiring a response from staff. These department leads coordinate responses with staff within their department and ensure that the Correspondence Coordinator is made aware when a response has been provided so that the response can be captured and the case can be closed. Staff also implemented a service level standard, which is to respond back to all correspondence received by Council within 10 business days.

This new process allowed for:

- Increased accountability and efficiency when responding to citizens;
- Valuable data trends that can be reported out to help Council with decision-making;
- Streamlining the process for coordinating responses from staff; and
- Improvements to the administrative process for managing, tracking, reporting on, and responding to correspondence.

As a result of these new processes and the classification work that the Correspondence Coordinator does, staff can now provide more detailed reports on Council correspondence volumes, trends, and issues. Below is an overview of the current Council correspondence process:



Note: Correspondence items from Councillors are only tracked when requested by the Councillor.