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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Hagiwara, Rosemary" <rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca>
"City Leadership Team - DL"
Date: 6/28/2018 10:09:57 AM
Subject: Memo - Annual Council Correspondence Report 2017
Attachments: Memo -Annual Council Correspondence Report 2017.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

The attached memorandum presents the 2017 Annual Council Correspondence Report, which provides an evaluation of the Council correspondence process to date and summarizes annual correspondence data and response rates between January and December, 2017.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rosemary Hagiwara, Director, Business and Election Services, at 604-873-7177 or rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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MEMORANDUM

June 26, 2018

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu A. Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Communications Director
Kevin Quinlan, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Naveen Girn, Community Relations Director, Mayor's Office
Rosemary Hagiwara, Director, Business and Election Services
Janice Lowe, Election Manager

FROM: Katrina Leckovic
City Clerk

SUBJECT: 2017 Annual Council Correspondence Report

This memorandum presents the 2017 Annual Council Correspondence Report, attached, which provides an evaluation of the Council correspondence process and summarizes annual correspondence data and response rates between January and December, 2017.

Changes to Management of Council Correspondence in 2017

In 2017, City Clerk's Office implemented an updated Council correspondence process which included the following improvements:

- Review, tracking and categorization of all Council correspondence in a case management system
- Daily correspondence reports sent to Council, detailing correspondence received and all actions taken
- Bi-weekly correspondence summary reports sent to Council and the City Leadership Team including reports on volumes of correspondence, topical trends and response rates

The updated Council correspondence process has resulted in improved service to the public, Council members and staff. The following highlights the progress to date:

- Improved service to the public:
 - 1,543 responses to the public
 - 97% of correspondence cases are closed within the 10 day service delivery time

- Improved service to Councillors:
 - Greatly reduced internal email volume from the City Clerk's Office, specifically by providing daily reports of correspondence including details on actions taken
 - Assured correspondence is reviewed and responded to appropriately and efficiently
 - Provided bi-weekly reports summarizing overarching trends and analysis of correspondence received
- Improved service to staff:
 - Streamlined correspondence processes and established single point-of-contact for each department
 - Created a database of information used to inform responses thereby reducing the number of responses required from City staff on recurring topics
 - Provided the City Leadership Team bi-weekly reports summarizing overarching trends and providing analysis of correspondence received

2017 Annual Council Correspondence Report

The 2017 report provides a summary of the Council correspondence processes since implementation in 2017. The report further provides an analysis of data collected through 2017, summarizing the trends in correspondence volumes, topics, and locations, as well as internal data on intake method, response volumes, times and source. A full summary of correspondence data is provided within the 2017 Annual Correspondence Report. Key highlights from the report include:

- Total of 6,541 correspondence items sent to Mayor and Council in 2017 through the web form, mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca, 3-1-1 or letters to the City Clerk's Office
- Most popular topics from 'form emails' include:
 1. 1,686 aquarium emails related to cetacean ban
 2. 276 emails related to heritage homes
 3. 275 emails related to 105 Keefer Street
- Most popular local areas inquired about in the City include:
 1. 1,686 emails about Stanley Park
 2. 860 correspondence items from or about Downtown
 3. 267 emails from or about Mount Pleasant
- 1,543 responses were sent to the public in 2017 (this figure is likely higher as this information was not consistently tracked until April 2017)

Looking Ahead to 2018

The program goals for 2018 include increasing total responses to public correspondence to 50 percent and decreasing response times to ensure these are within the 10 day service level targets. A semi-annual report will also be produced in 2018 to further assess the process and determine where improvements can be realized.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rosemary Hagiwara, Director, Business and Election Services, at 604-873-7177 or rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Leckovic', written in a cursive style.

Katrina Leckovic
City Clerk

604.873.7998 | katrina.leckovic@vancouver.ca



2017 Council Correspondence Report

City Clerk's Office

June 19, 2018

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Background

The City Clerk's Office (CCO) has been designated the responsibility receiving, tracking and responding to general correspondence sent to the Mayor and Councillors. Since December 2016, the CCO has introduced changes to its process for managing Council correspondence in order to increase accountability and efficiency when responding to citizens, as well as provide valuable tracking and reporting to Council and staff. The changes have streamlined the process of coordinating responses from staff and Councillors, and removed substantial administrative inefficiencies when processing, tracking, reporting on, and responding to correspondence.

Timeline

- **January 2016** Councillors were interviewed to identify support needs and requirements for correspondence. Councillors identified that they were concerned with the management of Mayor and Council correspondence and identified that additional support in this area was needed. City Clerk's staff identified two primary issues:
 - Inadequate tracking – logging and closing of correspondence
 - Uncertainty of response or who is responding
- **November 2016** – Correspondence Coordinator is hired to implement and manage a new correspondence process.
- **December 2016** – All correspondence sent to the Mayor and Councillors through the CCO in the mail or through mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca is added into the case management system used by 3-1-1 called Lagan. 3-1-1 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) also create correspondence cases in Lagan for calls and correspondence directed at the Mayor and Council through their network.
 - Using Lagan, daily correspondence reports are easily produced and sent to Councillors containing all the correspondence received that day. This replaced the previous practice of forwarding each individual email to all the Councillors and often staff as well. Thus the new system saves staff and Councillors valuable time and Inbox space.
- **December 2017** - Correspondence Coordinator begins systematically categorizing all correspondence items in Lagan by subject areas.
- **February 2017** – Correspondence Coordinator begins responding to correspondence items in Lagan.

- **April 2017** – Directors of Operations and Strategic Priorities (DSOPs) are hired in each department and identified as the point-of-contact to streamline the process for coordinating responses that require departmental assistance.
- **April 2017** – Biweekly Correspondence Dashboard first sent to Council and City Leadership Team (CLT) providing a detailed overview of the trends in correspondence received over the past two weeks.
- **May 2017** – New web form launched which automatically integrates messages into Lagan, substantially reducing administrative time required to process correspondence.
 - Emails that are manually added into Lagan by staff taking up a significant amount of staff time resulting in major delay responding during times of high volume.
- **June 2017** – mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca was phased out and replaced with an auto notification directing the public to use the web form and advising that the email would soon be unavailable.
- **August, 2017** - mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca completely offline and bounce back to sender redirects them to the web form. This allowed more staff time and resources to be used to analyze incoming correspondence and provide meaningful and timely responses to the public.

What has the new correspondence process provided?

Improved Service to Citizens: *Providing timely and substantive responses.*

Prior to 2017, any comments, questions and concerns from citizens were received through email and forwarded to the relevant department. These emails were not tracked nor followed up on to ensure a response was ever provided. Now, under this new process, all correspondence from citizens are reviewed, tracked, categorized, and responded to in a timely manner. They are escalated when necessary to the appropriate DSOP in order to provide specific program information. A “ten business day” service level model was established to emphasize a timely response. Correspondence requiring departmental expertise is sent to the DSOP or designated departmental contact that are responsible for providing and confirming a response has been provided.

The implementation of the web form significantly increased the response time, as correspondence can be reviewed and responded to immediately. Correspondence received

through email caused significant administrative delays as it had to be manually added. The average response time to correspondence in 2017 was **<4 days**.

- Only **3%** of citizen received a response outside of the designated service level (more than 10 days after their case was created.)
- Total (tracked)* responses sent to citizens in 2017: **1,543**

**Departmental responses were not officially tracked until April 2017, therefore the total responses sent to citizens are greater than the number provided.*

Improved Service to Councillors: *Less emails, more data.*

Changes to the correspondence management process has greatly reduced the volume of internal emails from the CCO to Councillors, as well as provided them with more efficient reports including both in-depth and broad depictions of the correspondence sent to Council. Previously, Councillors were forwarded every correspondence item individually and were not advised on what action was taken. Now, rather than being sent multiple items a day from the CCO, Councillors receive a daily report once a day, and a biweekly report twice a month.

Councillors are sent a Daily Report detailing each correspondence received for the day three days previous in a simple (excel) table. In addition to each individual message from the public, the report also includes contact information of the sender, and any details on the latest action on that correspondence. Councillors may filter the correspondence items by category and by neighbourhood to allow for a quick indicator of each correspondence item's content.

Councillors are also sent a Biweekly Report representing a summary of the correspondence received within the two weeks prior to a Council meeting. The report includes a summary of the correspondence received in the form of tables depicting the volume, major topics, and feedback from citizens. The report delivers a comprehensible representation of what residents are talking about and their point of views on trending topics and policy items.

An additional benefit for Councillors is they are required to respond to less emails, as they can see the Correspondence Coordinator or Departmental staff have provided a meaningful response to the citizen and therefore correspondence items are rarely escalated for Councillors to respond under this new process. Councillors' personal emails are not tracked, however if they have any emails requiring a staff response, they have the option to forward the email to the Correspondence Coordinator to organize a response from the Departments, who are able to provide citizens with a specific program information from subject area experts.

Improved Service to the City: *Increased efficiency and accountability*

The use of Lagan allows for staff to easily create valuable reports and data used in the Daily and Biweekly reports. As well, switching over to the web form has saved considerable time in processing correspondence. An additional benefit includes establishing a single point-of-contact for each department. It has provided a clear process for escalating cases and following up with any issues or delays. As a result of these changes, all departments should see a reduction in the volume in emails received, especially emails forwarded from the CCO received through the mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca

The Correspondence Coordinator also provides a response to the majority of correspondence items, reducing the volume requiring staff response. The number requiring escalation should continue to decrease as the Correspondence Coordinator continues to expand the database of prepared responses over time.

Lastly, the City Leadership Team also receives the Biweekly Reports informing them of the trends in correspondence sent to Council. If requested, the tracking and reporting component allows for specialized reports to be easily created for staff; this area will be explored further in 2018.

Annual Data Report

Annual and Monthly Correspondence Totals

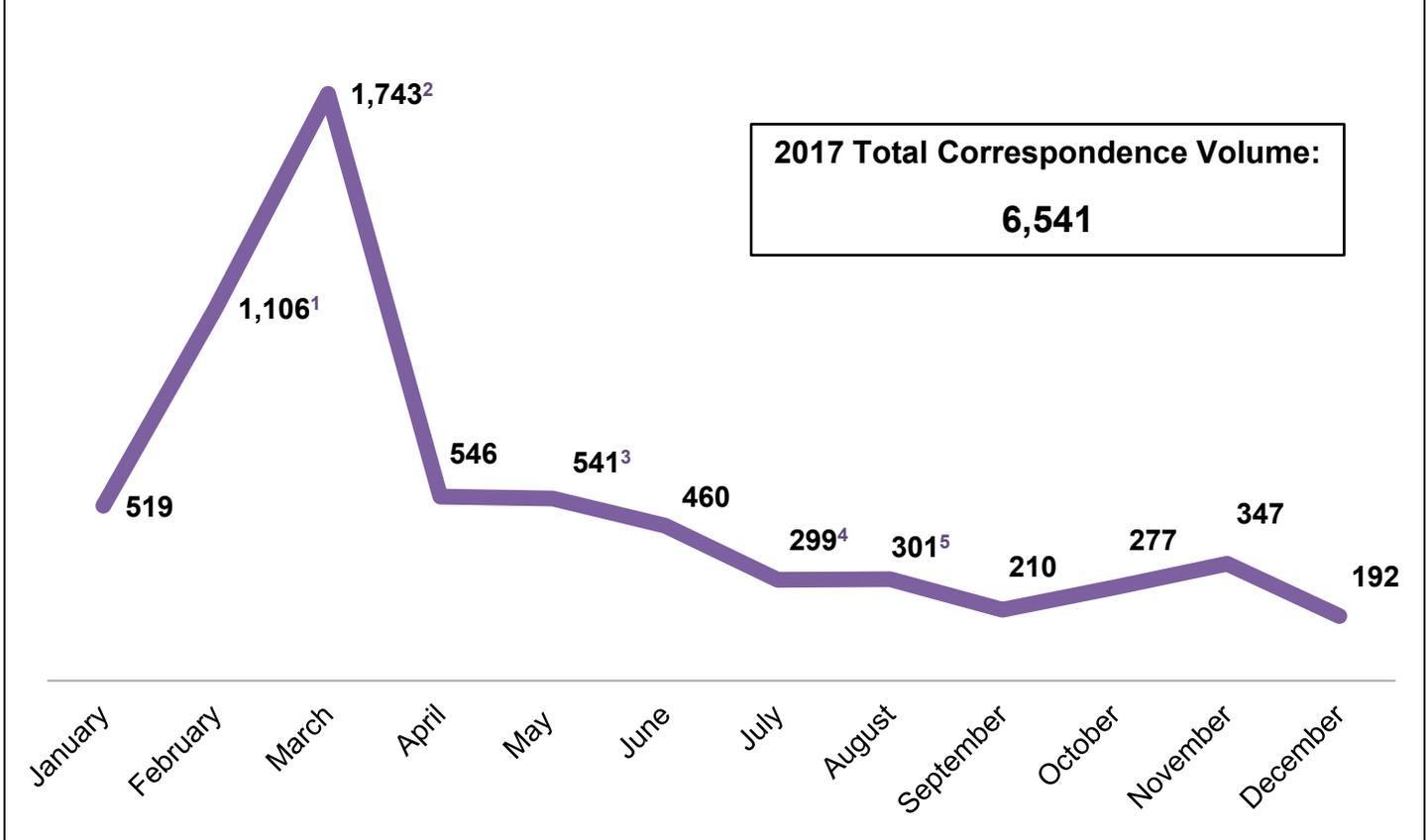
Council received **6,541** correspondence items in 2017. The correspondence items included in this number were received through the following:

- “mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca” (from January-July),
- “Contact Council [web form](#)” (May-December)
- 3-1-1
- Mail sent to the CCO
- Councillors’ personal emails that were escalated to staff to respond

The highest volumes of emails were received through mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca and were related to ‘form’ emails leading to very high volumes in February and March especially. Form email websites are where members of the public simply submit their email address and hundreds of identical emails would be sent to specific email addresses. This was prevalent in February with 264 nearly identical emails related to the cetacean ban at the Aquarium and 235 identical emails related to the rezoning of 105 Keefer; in March another 1,309 identical emails about the Aquarium, and in April with over 180 identical emails related to character home protections. These emails are valued the same in our system, however the administrative issue was the substantial time required to process each of these emails individually. Therefore, such emails can exaggerate the correspondence volumes throughout the year.

Although the volume decreased with the removal of the email in July/August, this can partially be interpreted as a result of successfully redirecting of citizens to the appropriate area. The web form provides a list of alternative areas to communicate with such as VanConnect, rezoning comments and public hearings. Prior to the implementation of the web form, a large portion of the emails received through mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca were related to Public hearing, feedback on rezoning applications, or service requests that should have been sent established areas to contact, rather than Mayor and Council. For example service request should be sent to VanConnect or 3-1-1, and Public hearing emails need to go to publichearing@vancouver.ca. Therefore, because the web form provides those appropriate links upfront, the lower correspondence volume may be an indicator of those links successfully redirecting people to the correct method of sending their inquiry. Additionally, with the removal of mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca, it is important to note the correspondence received did not include “form emails” but rather more independently written and personal from the sender.

Monthly Correspondence Volumes for 2017



¹ February: 264 identical form emails related to cetacean ban at the Aquarium, 235 identical form emails related to the rezoning of 105 Keefer emails

² March: 1,309 identical form emails related to cetacean ban at the Aquarium received.

³ May: Web form put online

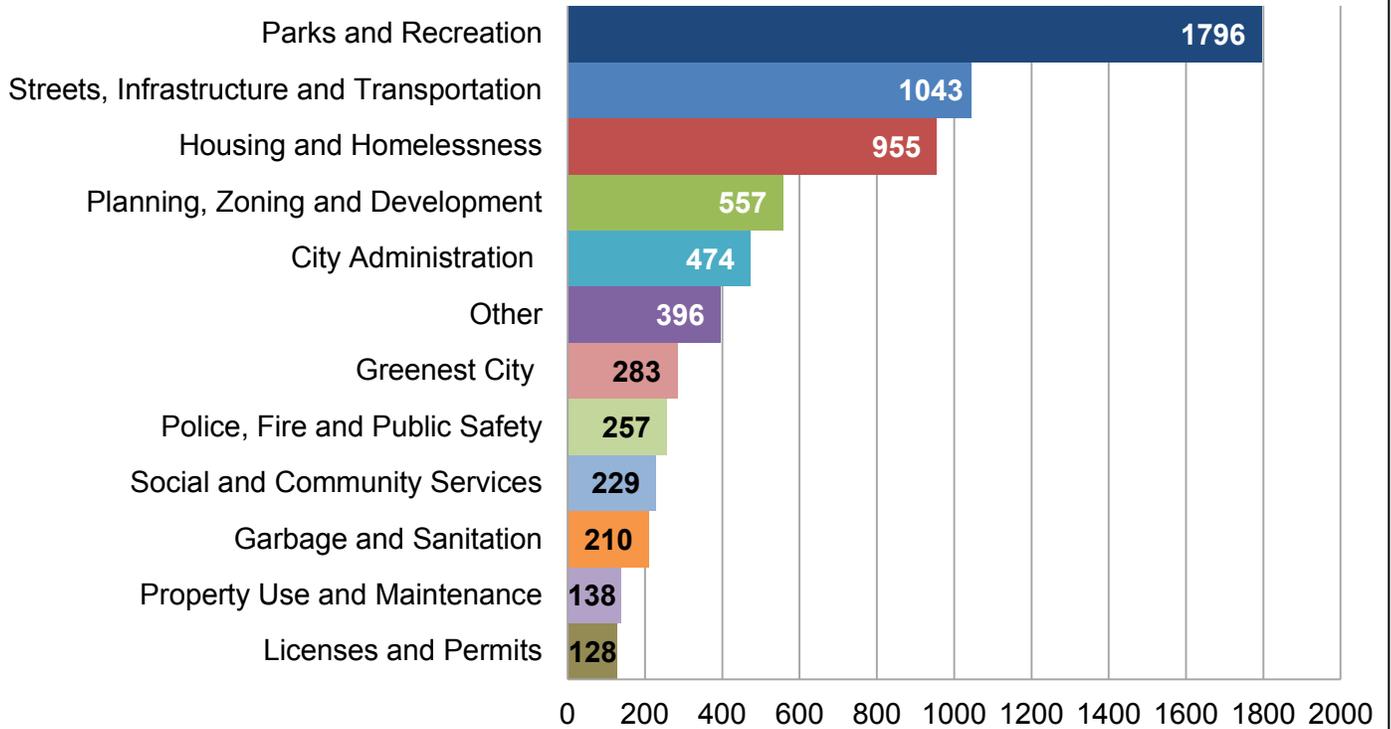
⁴ July: mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca removed from website and emails are monitored but no longer added to Lagan; the public is sent auto-response referring to web form.

⁵ August: mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca fully offline, emails not accepted or reviewed.

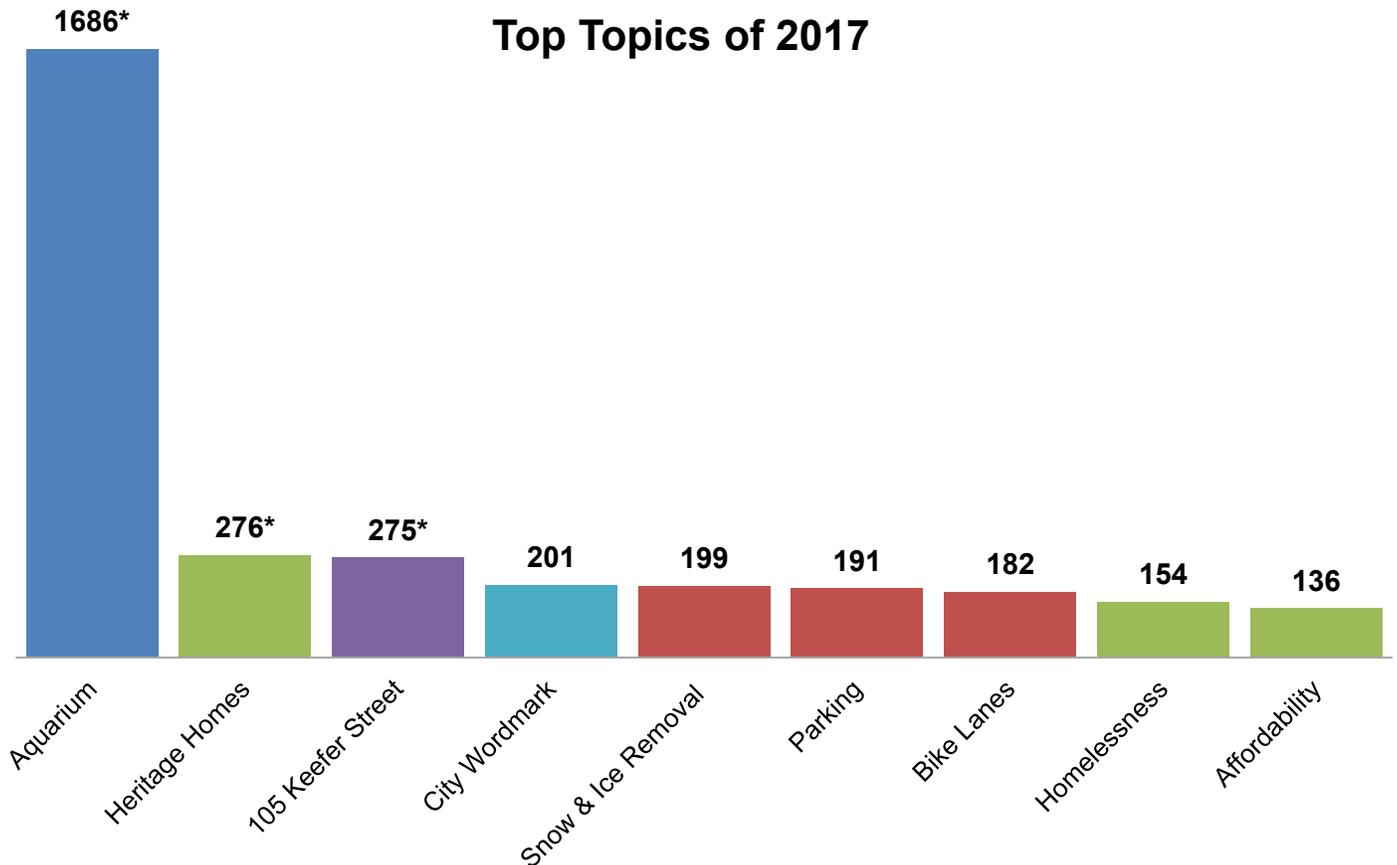
Annual Category and Specific Topic Totals

Each correspondence item is reviewed and categorized at a broad and more specific level. Similarly to the issue with monthly totals volume, the highest volume items were a result of form emails, those being the top 3 topic areas: cetacean ban at the Aquarium, heritage homes and the rezoning of 105 Keefer Street. The other top topics were all therefore from citizens individually expressing their personal feedback, concerns or questions independently.

Category Totals for 2017



Top Topics of 2017

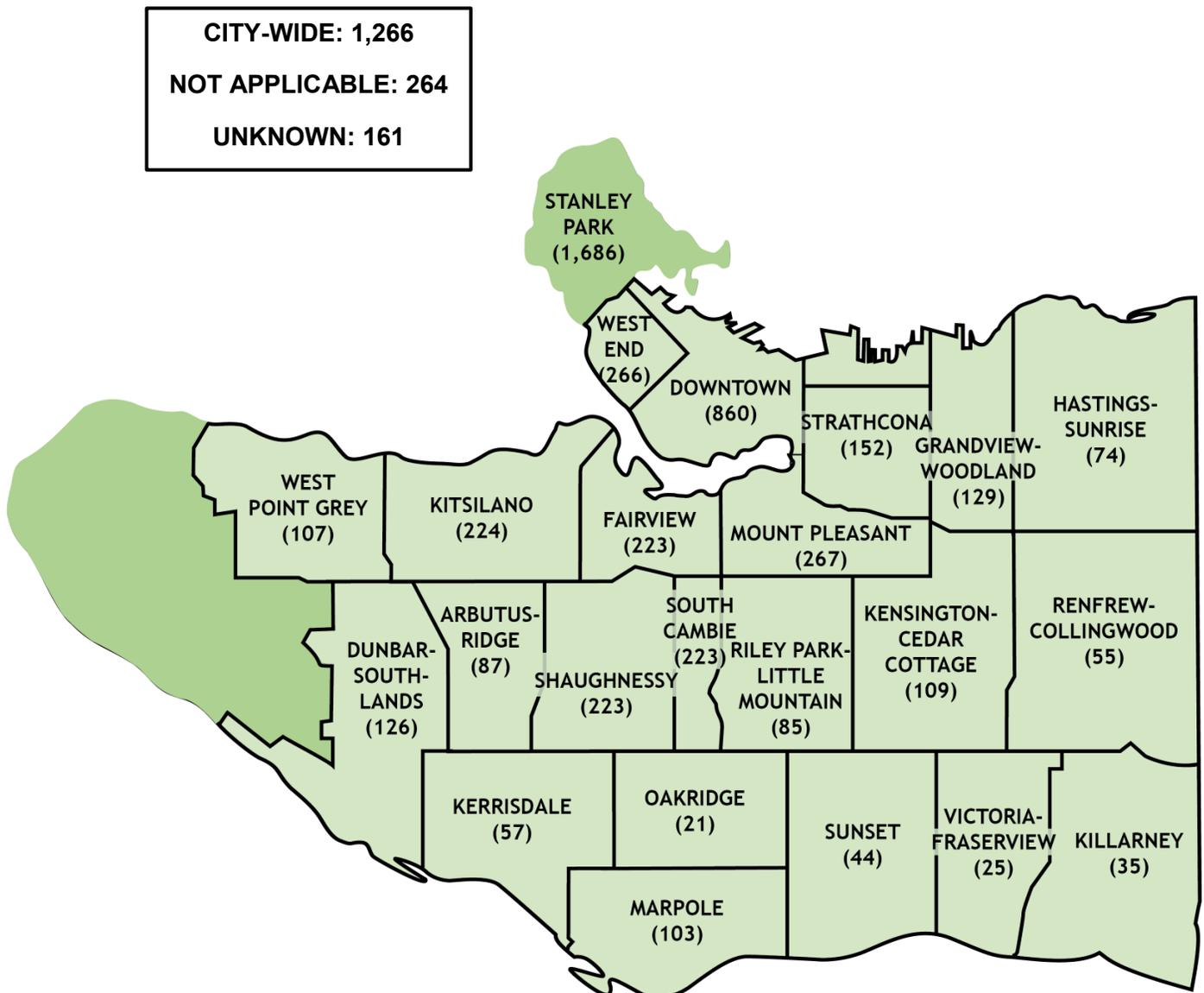


*Top 3 items all largely comprised of identical form emails

Annual Local Area (Neighbourhood) Totals

Each correspondence item is also categorized by local area (neighbourhood). The neighbourhood is determined based on the specific location of the incident/topic area, or the specific address of the resident depending which are available and/or applicable. For general comments or unspecified address is provided or applies, the correspondence is categorized as 'City-wide'. 'Unknown' is used when the incident related to a specific address but it is not provided, and 'Not Applicable' is used for comments unrelated to the City or Council.

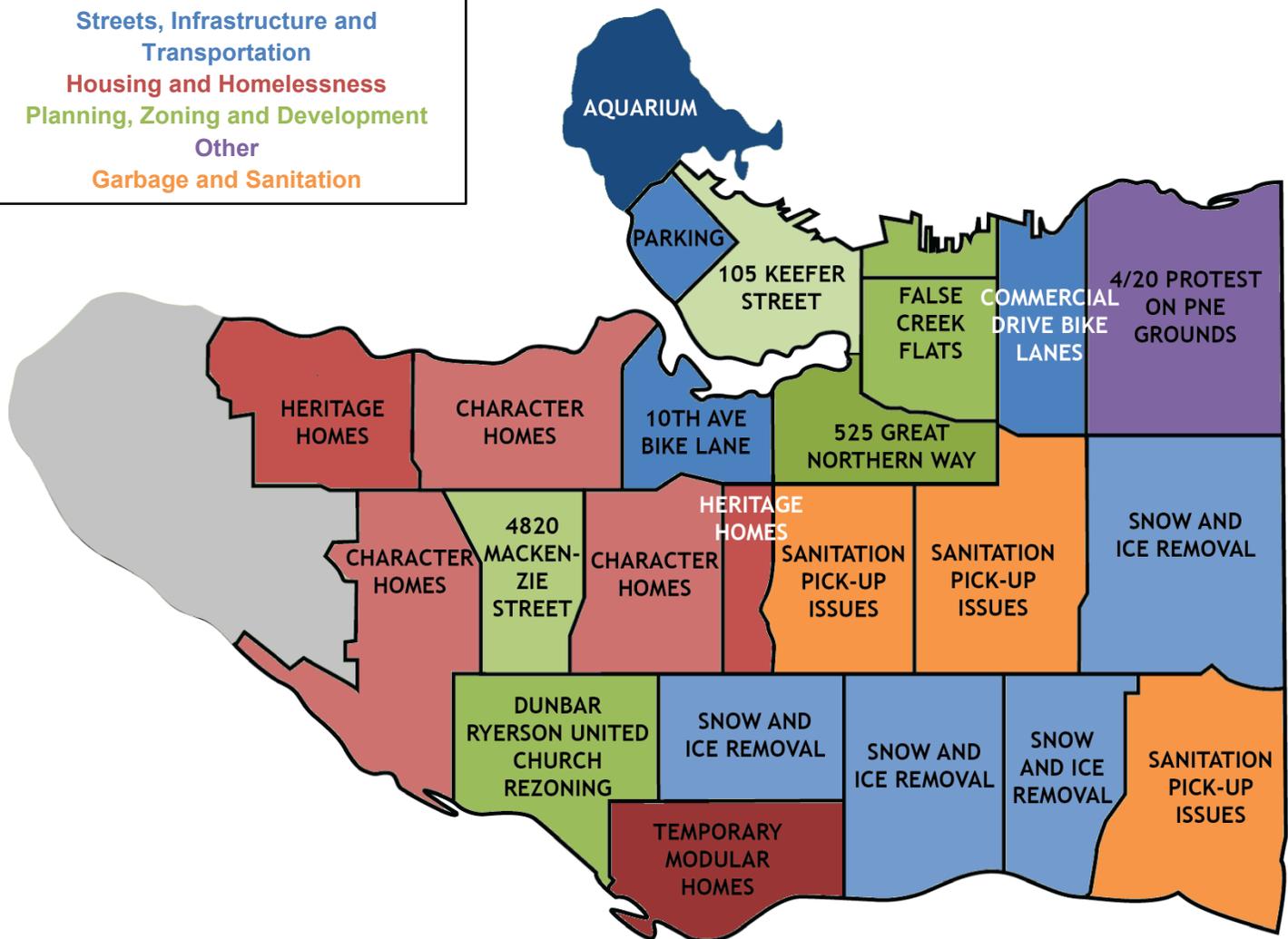
Total Correspondence Cases for Each Neighbourhood for 2017



#1 Correspondence Topic for Each Neighbourhood for 2017

Correspondence Category Colour:

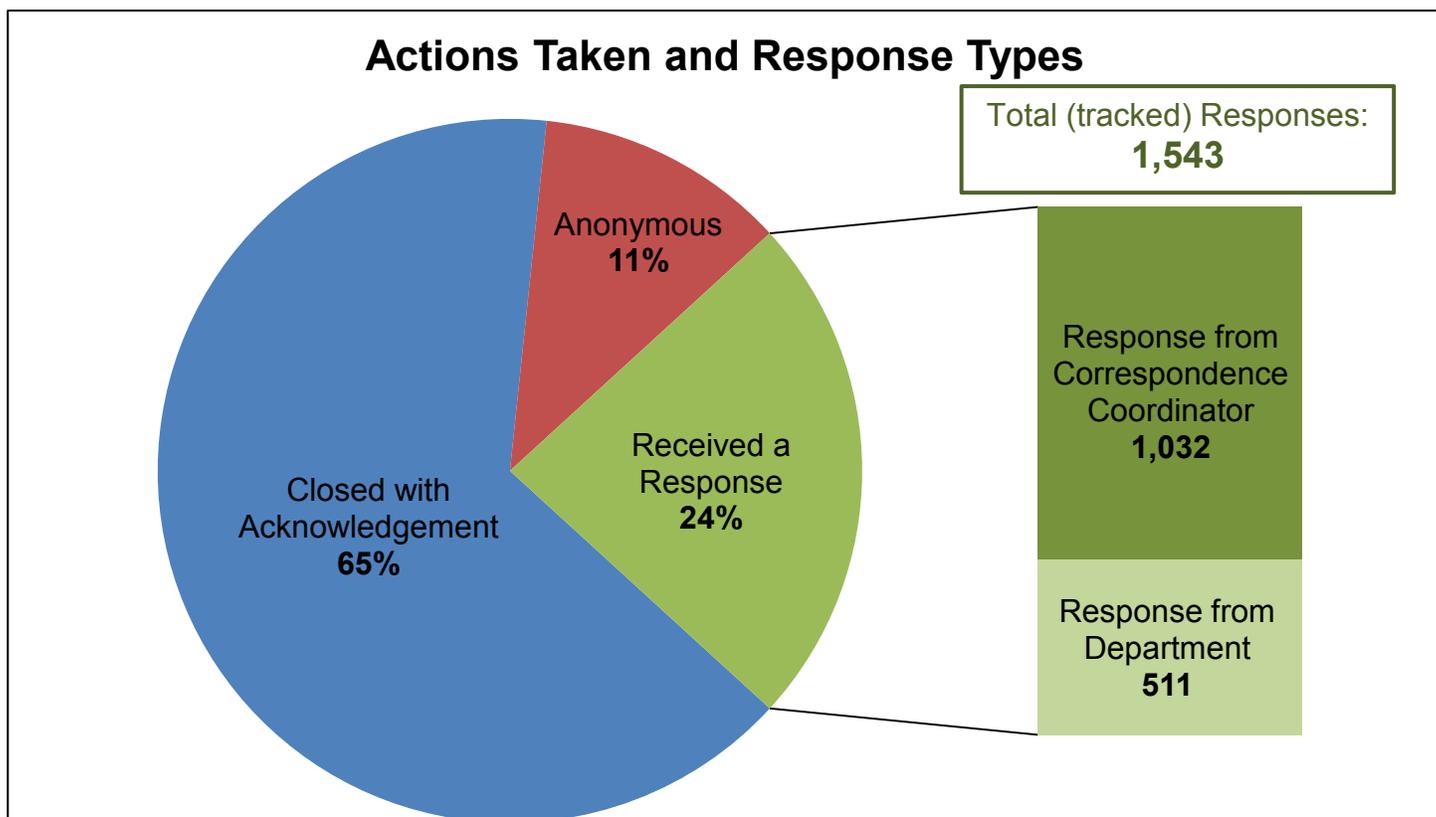
- Parks and Recreation
- Streets, Infrastructure and Transportation
- Housing and Homelessness
- Planning, Zoning and Development
- Other
- Garbage and Sanitation



Data Related to Responding to Correspondence

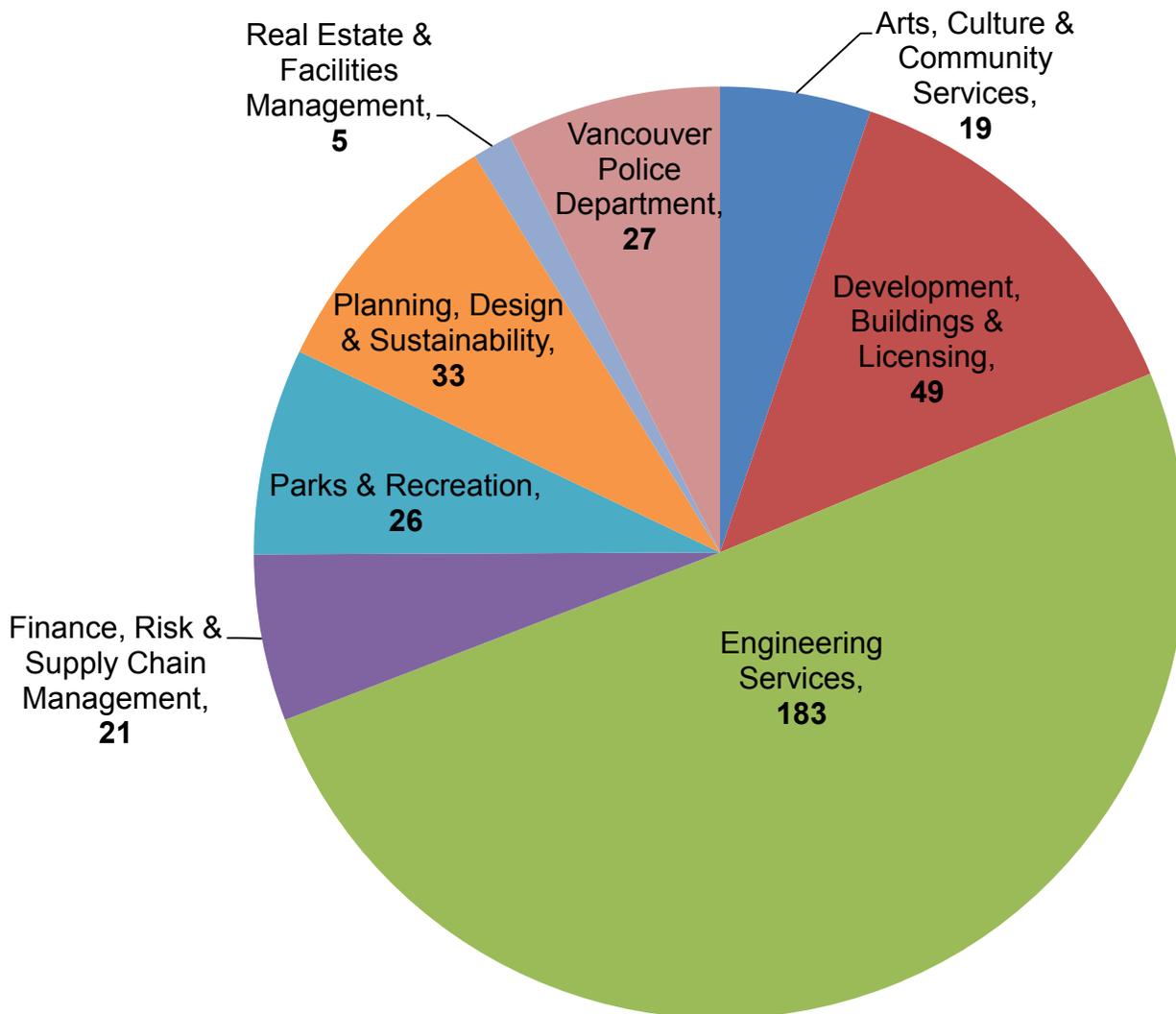
In 2017, a minimum of 1,543 responses were sent to the public from City staff replying to correspondence sent to Council. Two thirds of that was sent by the Correspondence Coordinator at the CCO, and the rest from other City departments. The Correspondence Coordinator aims to respond to all correspondence using official City communications, information gathered from the public website or internally from staff. If the correspondence requires more technical information and subject matter expertise it will be escalated to the DSOPs to respond. The full breakdown of the percent responded to by each department can be seen in the second chart below. More responses were likely sent to the public, but were not tracked. The Correspondence Coordinator did not begin responding to correspondence until late February 2017 and the Departmental responses were not officially tracked until April 2017. The response percent is expected to be much higher going forward as the Correspondence Coordinator continues to expand the database and development more program knowledge. In 2018, already 944 responses have been sent by the Correspondence Coordinator in 2018 as of March 31st alone.

'Closed with Acknowledgement' refers to cases that receives a basic or auto-response acknowledging the email has been received and will be shared with Council and applicable staff. These items are determined they do not require follow-up for a range of reasons, including content is not City related, vague or unspecific, aggressive complaints or are anonymous.



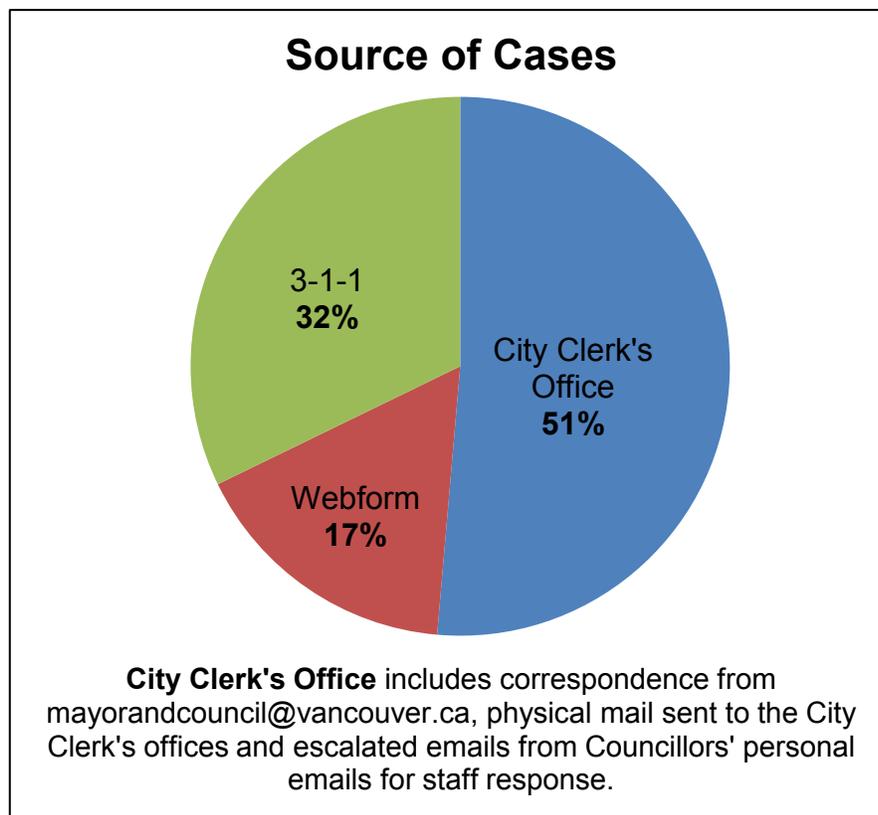
In April 2017 the DSOPs were established and required to be the point-of-contact for responding to Council correspondence. The Correspondence Coordinator forwards any correspondence requiring program specific information to the DSOP for the corresponding department and the DSOP would then coordinate internally a response. 50% of the correspondence requiring escalation was directed to Engineering, as it is such a large department and has very technical information.

Total Responses from Each Department



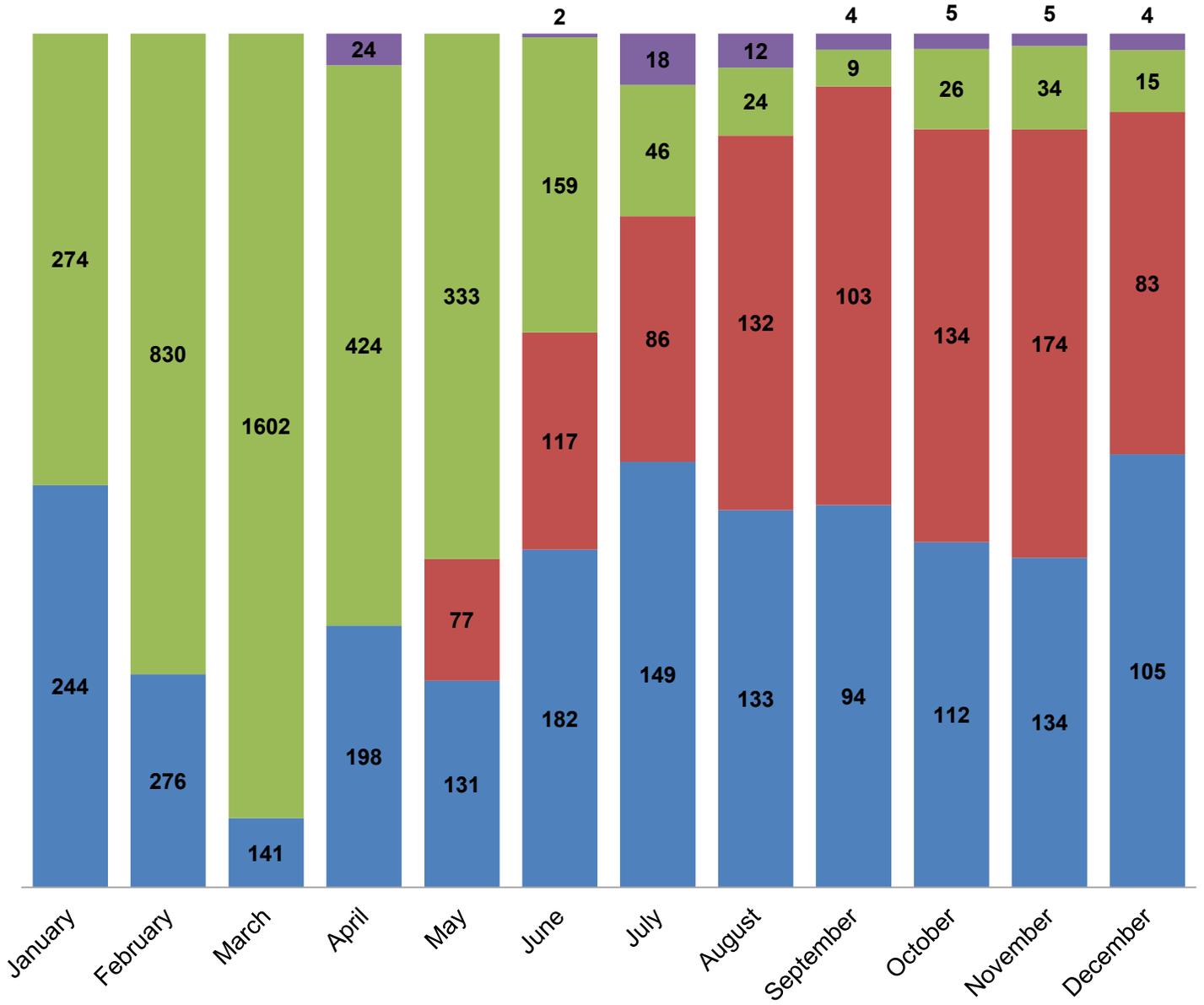
Correspondence Sources

Council correspondence managed by the CCO are or have been received through mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca (from January-July), the Contact Council [web form](#) (May-December), 3-1-1, physical mail sent to the CCO and any emails from the Councillors' personal emails that were escalated to staff to respond. As stated, major changes to the intake of correspondence took place in the middle of 2017 with the addition the web form and the removal of the email. As the second table depicts, the percent of correspondence being manually added by the CCO drastically reduces with the removal of the email and addition of the web form, allowing for more time and resources to be spent responding to citizens. Items added by the Councillor Assistants refers to emails originally sent to Councillors' personal emails that the Councillor has requested be responded to by staff.



Correspondence Source Change over Time (Totals):

■ 311 ■ Web Form ■ Correspondence Clerk ■ Councillor Assistants



Looking Ahead to 2018

The program is over a year old. This past year has been exploring, learning and implementing new changes to the Mayor and Council correspondence management system. One goal in 2018 is to practice consistency and increase efficiency within the current system. In addition, another goal set out for 2018 will be to increase the total responses closer to 50%. Already, within the first quarter of 2018, a total of 1523 correspondence items have been received, and 1,077 responses provided (944 from the Correspondence Coordinator), resulting in a response rate of 71%. Further improvement will include enhancing the content and assessing what additional information Councillors would like to have included in their report. Another goal is to increase internal knowledge of the process and available data for reports within the City through providing semi-annual report in 2018 for a more immediate update on progress.