

COUNCIL REMUNERATION REVIEW

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

FINAL REPORT

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Submitted by:

Elizabeth Hill
Chief Executive Officer
ehill@pesceassociates.com

Corporate Address:

16 Belgate Place
Toronto, Ontario M9C 3Y4
Phone: 416-491-1501
Website: www.pesceassociates.com



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I. Introduction

Pesce & Associates was engaged by Middlesex County to complete a Council Remuneration Review.

The objective of the project was to conduct a review of all elements of the Council Compensation structure at Middlesex County and provide recommendations on a compensation framework and policy based on a market review against similar municipal organizations.

In the Project Kick-Off meeting the following key components of the project were confirmed.

Project Mission:

- To partner with Middlesex County to undertake a review of Middlesex County Council's remuneration package against comparator municipalities and provide recommendations on a remuneration package that is in line with the market.

In Project Scope:

- Completion of a market survey of comparator municipalities providing data and analysis on all components of Council remuneration.
- Evaluation of alternative remuneration models or structures used by comparable municipalities.
- Recommendations for the full remuneration package for Council, including options and financial recommendations.
- Implementation plan including recommended timing, indexing, and adjustment mechanisms.
- Development of a Council Remuneration Policy or framework.

II. Market Survey Comparators and Survey Process

A key deliverable of the project was to issue a market survey to comparator municipalities to gather information on all components of their Councils' compensation packages, including salary, benefits, per diems, expenses, etc.

The survey was distributed to the following municipalities:

- Bruce County
- Dufferin County
- Elgin County
- Essex County
- Grey County
- Huron County
- Lambton County

- Simcoe County
- Wellington County

The following municipalities participated in the survey:

- Bruce County
- Dufferin County
- Elgin County
- Essex County
- Huron County
- Lambton County
- Simcoe County

The data gathered was sufficient to conduct a full analysis of the compensation packages of the comparator municipalities.

The survey posed questions related to estimated time commitment and compensation for participation on external agencies, boards and committees, annual council compensation, benefits (e.g., drug coverage, dental, etc.), reimbursement of council-related expenses, council composition (i.e., size and general make-up), OMERS contribution, mileage reimbursement, other compensation/reimbursement (e.g., per diems). The full survey has been included as Appendix A.

The survey was uploaded onto Survey Monkey, and each comparator was sent a request to participate including a link to the survey with the understanding that for their participation they would receive a summary report of the data.

The data analysis included calculating the 50th, 60th, and 75th percentiles for the base salary. Percentiles are used to show an organization's position to the market in terms of salary. It is a statistical measure that indicates the value below which a given percentage of observations in a dataset fall. For example, the 60th percentile means that 60% of the data points are below this value, and 40% are above it. The 50th percentile would be the median, or the value that separates the higher half from the lower half of salary distribution within the market data.

III. Market Survey Findings

A. Compensation

The following tables show the comparator data and analysis for the Warden and Councillor positions. It is important to note that generally there are three (3) pay structures as follows:

- Salary includes all Council and external meetings (3 comparators)
- Salary includes Council meetings with per diem for external meetings (1 comparator)
- Salary is the base and there is a per diem for all meetings (3 comparators)

One of the comparators included above provides a per diem for external meetings for Councillors only and not the Warden.

Currently Middlesex County provides a base salary that includes Council meetings with additional per diems for external meetings.

The following provides the details on the compensation for each comparator:

Warden:

Organization	Annual Salary: Warden	
Middlesex County	\$ 92,106.96	Paid additional for external meetings*
County A	\$ 23,826.13	Paid additional for all meetings
County B	\$ 40,991.76	Paid additional for all meetings
County C	\$ 81,195.72	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County D	\$ 89,752.56	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County E	\$ 91,190.00	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County F	\$ 92,987.00	Paid additional for external meetings*
County G	\$ 99,504.00	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
50th Percentile	\$ 89,752.56	
60th Percentile	\$ 91,190.00	
75th Percentile	\$ 92,537.75	
* Meeting per diem is not paid if the person receives a payment from the external Board		

Councillor:

Organization	Annual Salary: Councillors	
Middlesex County	\$ 30,776.52	Paid additional for external meetings*
County A	\$ 6,528.23	Paid additional for all meetings
County B	\$ 22,709.97	Paid additional for all meetings
County C	\$ 24,611.40	Paid additional for all meetings
County D	\$ 27,741.60	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County E	\$ 29,737.32	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County F	\$ 30,270.00	All inclusive - Do not receive additional pay per external meeting
County G	\$ 31,302.00	Paid additional for external meetings*
50th Percentile	\$ 27,741.60	
60th Percentile	\$ 29,737.32	
75th Percentile	\$ 30,136.83	
* Meeting per diem is not paid if the person receives a payment from the external Board		

Based on the data, the Middlesex County Warden and Councillor pay is at the 75th percentile.

We also conducted an analysis of the Middlesex County salaries against the municipalities that provide an all-inclusive salary (i.e. no additional payments for external meetings), and again the County is at or slightly above the 75th percentile.

For those that provide additional compensation to attend meetings and conferences, the per diem rates vary as follows. Note that at Middlesex County the by-law for per diems states that for meetings of less than 30 minutes reimbursement is up to 25% of the per diem; for meetings of 30 minutes to 1½ hours reimbursement is 50% of the per diem; for meetings of more than 1½ hours is 100% of the per diem. This is an administratively cumbersome practice, and in reality, the length of meetings is rarely submitted and the full per diem is paid per meeting.

Municipality	Per Diem Rates
Middlesex County	\$188.59 per meeting
County A	1/2 day (under 2-1/2 Hours) \$218.57 Full Day (over 2-1/2 hours) \$382.52
County B	Full day Meeting Per Diem - \$192.00 Half Day Meeting Per Diem - \$96.00
County C	Per meeting attended Member Participant - \$110.77 Chair - \$166.16
County D	\$300 per meeting

We analyzed the additional cost of paying for the external meetings and conferences at Middlesex County. We found the following averages over the last three (3) years.

Councillor

2023 Average per Council Member	2024 Average per Council Member	2025 Average per Council Member
\$1,998.66	\$3,474.60	\$2,987.86
Average last 3 years =		\$2,820.37

Warden

Total 2023 Amount for Warden	Total 2024 Amount for Warden	Total 2025 Amount for Warden
\$3,435.20	\$ 5,333.10	\$3,112.70
Average last 3 years =		\$3,960.33

It is also important to note that none of the comparators pay stipends for participation as a Committee Chair nor for being in an Acting role (i.e. Acting Warden, Acting Chair). Middlesex does not provide a stipend either in these circumstances.

We also asked whether the comparators continue to pay the base salary for Council members on a leave of absence. This appears to be an area without any established practice as only two comparators answered the question. One said they do not, and one said they do because there is no established policy. Middlesex County also does not have an established policy or practice in this area.

B. Remuneration Review Process

At Middlesex County, Council full remuneration package is reviewed on an ad hoc basis. The majority of comparators who participated in the survey review Council remuneration once per term.

At Middlesex County, Council base salary/compensation is increased on an annual basis in line with the CPI increases given to non-union management positions at the County. The survey found that the majority of participants also provide increases based on what is received by their non-union management staff each year. Generally, they indicated that these increases are automatic, though one comparator noted that Council could vote not to implement the increase.

C. Benefits

Middlesex County does not offer health benefits members of Council.

The majority of comparators do not offer health and dental benefits to Council. One comparator indicated that they do, though it is not mandatory to join. One other comparator noted that it is offered to the Warden, only if they have no other coverage.

Middlesex County does not offer life insurance, LTD or AD&D to Council members.

Only one comparator indicated that they provide this coverage to Council members and the premiums are 100% paid by the County. The coverage at this one County is 2 times annual earnings to a max of \$250,000 up to age 65 for life insurance, at which time coverage reduces to 1 time annual salary. At age 70, life insurance reduces to a flat \$10,000. Dependent life is \$10,000 for spouse and \$5,000 for children.

None of the comparators offer Health Care Spending Accounts.

D. OMERS and Retirement

Middlesex County's Council members are not offered enrollment in OMERS. None of the comparators surveyed offer OMERS enrollment to Council members.

Also, none of the comparators offer any sort of retirement allowance or severance/transition payments at the end of their term.

E. Mileage

All but one of the comparators provides mileage to Council members. In all cases mileage is reimbursed for all County business related travel including attending Council meetings, committee meetings, conferences, etc.

Middlesex County provides the CRA rate each year for mileage reimbursement. Below are the mileage amounts for those comparators that provided this information:

- Four (4) comparators follow the CRA rate each year
- \$0.58/km
- \$0.61/km.

F. Professional Development and Conferences

Four (4) of the comparators provided details on the amount that is budgeted for each Council member for professional development and conferences. At Middlesex County, the Warden has an annual max of \$8,000 (no limit on number of conferences) with Councillors having a max of \$5000 (and a max of 2 conferences) per annum. The Warden is not paid per diems for conferences but the Councillors are. The current maximum is inclusive of the per diem, travel and meals. It is exclusive of registration.

The comparators that provided the information outlined the following:

- Warden is unlimited. Councillor \$4,411.60.
- Total conference amount spent annually is \$5,000 per member, unless the travel is out of province, then the \$5K does not apply (out of province only permitted 2x per term) Limit also does not apply to Warden.
- Each Councillor is allotted \$12,000 (\$3,000 per year) for the term that they can spend on any professional development. This would include travel (excluding mileage), accommodation, and meals. The Warden has additional budget.

We also surveyed the reimbursement amounts for meals. At Middlesex County, upon submission of a receipt, reimbursement will be made for reasonable and normal meal expenses. If no receipts are provided, they receive \$75 per day for meals while at conferences.

The comparators that provided the information outlined the following:

- Based on receipts and travel guideline policy.
- Breakfast \$20.00; Lunch \$25.00; Dinner \$55.00.
- Per Revenue Canada rates.
- With receipts it is fully refunded. Without receipts it is: Breakfast \$22.00; Lunch \$33.00; Dinner \$55.00.

G. Technology

At Middlesex County, each member of Council is provided a tablet or laptop and a cell phone at the beginning of the term (some Council members choose not to get a second cell phone and use

their personal phone for County business). Monthly cell phone bills are paid for all Councillors through the County regardless of whether it is for a County or personal device.

The majority of comparators do not provide cell phones to Council members. Two provide one to the Warden if requested. The majority of the comparators provide a tablet or laptop to all Council members.

Only one comparator provides an allowance for internet usage. Specifically, it is provided where a Council member attends a Council or Committee meeting virtually, they are able to claim \$5/hour for internet.

IV. Recommendations

The following section outlines our recommendations in all the areas detailed in the findings section.

A. Compensation and Review Process

The base salary at Middlesex County is at the higher end of the comparators positioned at the 75th percentile of the market. When the per diem amounts are added in for external committees, meetings and conferences, the total salary is above the comparators. Therefore, no increase is required to the base salary for any Council positions.

It is also important to note that the current system of tracking every external meeting, conference, etc. for the purpose of payment to participating Council members is administratively cumbersome, inefficient and inequitable. In our experience with Council remuneration, and as seen in this survey, many municipalities are moving away from the per diem approach and moving to an all-inclusive base salary.

There are three (3) options for moving forward with a compensation structure for Council positions as follows:

1. Maintain the status quo.
2. Move to an all-inclusive base salary by eliminating all per diems and keeping the current base salary. This means an overall reduction in compensation.
3. Move to an all-inclusive base salary by eliminating all per diems and increasing the base salary by the average per diem reimbursements from the last three years. This option means there will be no reduction in compensation.

For option #3, the new base compensation would be as follows:

Council Position	Current Base	Average Per Diem Per Annum	Total – New Base Compensation
Warden	\$92,106.96	\$3,960.33	\$96,067.29
Councillor	\$30,776.52	\$2,820.37	\$33,596.89

We recommend that Middlesex County adopt the second or third option and move to an all-inclusive annual salary. This will ease the administrative burden and provide equitable and fair compensation. As well, it will keep the base compensation in line with the market.

Implementation is recommended to be at the start of the new Council.

We also recommend the following recommendations with regards to the review process:

- Conduct an overall review of Council compensation once per term (preferably in the last year of the term) with any adjustments to be implemented at the beginning of the term for the next Council.
- Continue with annual adjustments based on the increases given to the non-union management staff.
- Continue not to provide acting pay.

With regards to compensation for alternates, there are two circumstances outlined in the *Municipal Act* regarding the use of alternates.

- Section 267 allows local councils to appoint an alternate to attend meetings of County Council where the regular member is **unable to act** as a member of Council for a period **exceeding one month**.
- Section 268 allows local councils to appoint an alternate to attend meetings of County Council where the regular member is **temporarily unavailable** (as opposed to unable to act). Only one such alternate can be appointed for the duration of term and could, in theory, attend County Council at any time if the regular member is unavailable.

We recommend that for Section 267 circumstances, the alternate should receive base compensation (pro-rated to the length of time they are in the position) as well as mileage. For Section 268 circumstances, we recommend that the alternate only receive mileage for any County participation.

With regards to leaves of absence, we recommend that the County develop a specific policy on how to address these circumstances. For any statutory type of leave such as maternity/parental leave, medical leave or caregiver leave, we recommend continuing payment of base compensation. We would recommend setting a maximum timeframe for ongoing compensation for medical and caregiver leaves of two (2) months.

We recommend that there be no continued compensation for any other personal leave of absence (for instance a leave to pursue a political position at the provincial or federal level).

B. Benefits

We recommend maintaining the status quo of not providing benefits to Council members.

C. OMERS and Retirement

We recommend maintaining the status quo of not providing OMERS or retirement allowances to Council members.

D. Mileage

We recommend maintaining the status quo of providing mileage in line with the CRA rates for all County related travel.

E. Professional Development and Conferences

The current practice for professional development and conferences requires administrative tracking of each Council members participation and can be limiting if there are important conferences that do not fit within the individual Council members’ budget. Therefore, we recommend adopting the policy that each Council member can attend two (2) conferences per year. There would be no dollar limit attached other than it being subject to budgetary limits. The total paid each year to the full Council for conferences would have to be within the established budget.

We recommend maintaining the current practice with regards to reimbursement for meals while at conferences.

F. Technology

We recommend that Middlesex County retain the current practice of providing a device (laptop or tablet) to each Council member at the beginning of their term. No internet reimbursement should be provided.

With regards to cell phones, no other comparators provide these or reimburse Council members for use of their personal cell phone. The only exception is that two provide a cell phone to the Warden if requested. We suggest that there is no reason for Middlesex County to continue the practice of providing or reimbursing for a cell phone.

VI. Conclusion

The following table summarizes the recommendations in the report to be implemented for the new Council.

Item	Recommendation
Base salary/compensation	Move to all inclusive salary. No additional per diems for meetings and conferences. Council to determine whether to increase base salary to incorporate in average per diem pays.

Compensation review	Conduct a review once during the term of Council in the final year to be implemented for the next Council.
Annual increases	Maintain status quo.
Alternate compensation – Section 267	Alternate receives base salary (pro-rated) and mileage.
Alternate compensation – Section 268	Alternate receives mileage only.
Pay while on leave of absence	Pay continues for maternity/parental leave. Pay continues up to two (2) months for medical or caregiver leave. Without pay for personal leave of absence.
Benefits	Maintain status quo.
OMERS and retirement	Maintain status quo.
Mileage	Maintain status quo.
Conferences	Change to maximum two (2) conferences per year per Council member. Total conferences for Council to be within established budget. Maintain status quo on reimbursements for meals.
Technology	Maintain status quo regarding provision of tablet or laptop. Eliminate the practice of providing or reimbursing for cell phones.

Once Council has finalized their decision on changes to Council remuneration, we will develop a Council Remuneration Policy.

We appreciated the opportunity to work with Middlesex County on this project. If you have any questions regarding the report, please contact Elizabeth Hill, CEO, at 416-491-1501 ext. 23 or ehill@pesceassociates.com.

APPENDIX A – MARKET SURVEY

Middlesex County Council Market Survey 2025

Pesce & Associates is a full-service consulting firm. Services include - Compensation and Job Evaluation, Policy Development, Labour Relations, Performance Management, Organizational Effectiveness, Recruitment and Retention, Management Team and Staff Training.

We are conducting a Council remuneration survey on behalf of our client, Middlesex County, and welcome your participation. The purpose of this survey is to gather information regarding compensation and benefits for Council positions. The survey is being sent to you as a similar organization to the sponsoring organization; your participation is most appreciated.

Summarized survey results will be sent to all participating organizations by e-mail. Please complete the information as thoroughly as possible and submit your response by March 20, 2026.

Contact Information: Racquel Dalling, Senior Associate
 16 Belgate Place, Toronto, ON M9C 3Y4
 Tel: 416 491 1501 ext. 126
 Email: rdalling@pesceassociates.com



Name: _____

Organization: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Please attach your bylaws, policies, reports related to Council compensation, benefits, and expenses. If you have multiple documents, please send in a separate email to rdalling@pesceassociates.com.
2. What is the size of your Council? Please outline the make-up of your Council.
3. Please provide the annual salary for your Council members:
 - a. Warden:
 - b. Deputy Warden:
 - c. Councillors:
4. Please describe Council members' estimated time commitment for external (not internal) agencies, boards and commissions or committees. Include number of agencies, boards and commissions or committees they are expected to, or on average, participate in.
 - a. What compensation do they receive for this participation?
5. Please provide details on the following additional pay & stipends.
 - Committee Chair stipends
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Board/agency appointment pay
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Acting premiums (i.e. Acting Warden, Acting Committee Chair)



- Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Per diem payments
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, for what do they receive the payments?
 - If yes, how much?
 - Special project compensation
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, for what do they receive the payments?
 - If yes, how much?
 - Technology or home office allowances
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, for what do they receive the payments?
 - If yes, how much?
 - Cell phone/internet allowances
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, for what do they receive the payments?
 - If yes, how much?
 - Vehicle allowance or mileage reimbursement
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, for what do they receive the payments?
 - If yes, how much?
6. Please provide details on the following benefits and what is available to Council members.
- Health and dental coverage



- Yes
 - No
 - If yes, is it mandatory to join?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much of the premiums do they pay? Give a space for this response (don't lump in with one below)
 - If yes, provide details on the coverage.
- Life insurance
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, is it mandatory to join?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much of the premiums do they pay? Give a space for this response (don't lump in with one below)
 - If yes, provide details on the coverage.
- Disability coverage
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, is it mandatory to join?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much of the premiums do they pay? Give a space for this response (don't lump in with one below)
 - If yes, provide details on the coverage.
- Access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - Yes
 - No
- Health Spending Account
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much is the HSA?



7. Do Council members have the option of contributing to OMERS?
 - Yes
 - No

 8. Do Council members receive any sort of retirement allowance or severance/transition payments at the end of term?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please provide details.

 9. Please provide details regarding expense reimbursements for the following areas.
 - Travel reimbursement
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Conference and professional development funding
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Annual expense caps?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?
 - Meal/per diem limits
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much?

 10. Please provide details regarding professional development for the following areas.
 - What is the annual professional development budget per member?
 - Are Conferences covered?
 - Yes
 - No
-



- If yes, how many per year?
 - Do Council members receive reimbursement for training?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, how much per year?
11. Please provide information on the following compensation review practices.
- When was compensation last reviewed for your Council?
 - What is the frequency for your formal reviews (every term, every 4 years, ad hoc, etc.)?
 - Do you provide automatic indexing of Council compensation to CPI or another metric?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please provide details.
 - Are annual increases automatic?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what is the increase linked to (i.e. CPI, staff increases, etc.)?
12. If a Council member is on a leave of absence (i.e. medical leave) do they continue to be paid?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Please provide details.
13. Please provide any additional important information or context that has not been asked for as it relates to Council compensation.

