

Table 1 - Potential Benefits/Drawbacks of Appointing a Municipal Ombudsman

Benefits of appointing a Municipal Ombudsman	Drawbacks of appointing a Municipal Ombudsman
<p>Bill 130 provided municipalities with the tools to demonstrate that they are responsible levels of government. The public has increasingly come to view Accountability Officers as a hallmark of accountability & transparency for municipal governments.</p>	<p>There may be a perceived conflict of interest because the municipality is paying for the Ombudsman’s services (in fact, this perception applies to all locally appointed Accountability Officers).</p>
<p>The Provincial Ombudsman’s Office has clearly stated they are an “Office of last resort” and are actively encouraging municipalities to appoint their own Municipal Ombudsman</p>	<p>The City will incur costs for each investigation.</p>
<p>The Region’s successful candidate is providing Ombudsman Services for the Region and other municipalities have expressed interest in appointing the same proponent. As such, the Ombudsman would have contextual knowledge of both the municipality and Region, resulting in a consistent approach to investigations.</p>	
<p>Under the cooperative purchasing arrangement, the Region will pay the annual retainer fee of \$12,000 for the first 5 years and it permits the City to cancel the contract (with 30 days notice), if the City is not satisfied with the service.</p>	
<p>If no investigations are conducted, there will be no costs to the City.</p>	
<p>All investigations are conducted in private & complainants are not identified without consent.</p>	
<p>A Municipal Ombudsman with municipal experience will have a better appreciation and understanding of the mechanics and responsibilities of municipal level governments, as opposed to provincial level agencies.</p>	
<p>A Municipal Ombudsman will likely provide local residents with a quicker response system as opposed to the Provincial Ombudsman which will have a mandate that covers all 444 municipalities in Ontario.</p>	

Table 2 – Benefits/Drawbacks of Relying on the Provincial Ombudsman

Benefits of relying on the Provincial Ombudsman	Drawbacks of relying on the Provincial Ombudsman
Currently, there is no fee payable for investigations conducted by the Provincial Ombudsman.	Bill 8 represents the Provincial Ombudsman’s jurisdiction and as such there are concerns with respect to resources at the Provincial level and in turn, providing timely responses to complaints.
There may be a greater public perception of neutrality.	There may not be extensive knowledge of the local context.
The Provincial Ombudsman’s Office has experience investigating complaints at the Provincial level.	The Provincial Ombudsman has limited experience in Ombudsman Services at the Municipal level.
All investigations are conducted in private & complainants are not identified without consent.	