



Independent Salary Commission

September 11, 2025

Council Pay Models

Stipend-Only Model	A "stipend-only" model refers to a situation where compensation is provided as a fixed sum for a specific purpose, such as covering living expenses or professional development costs, rather than a traditional salary tied to hours worked or performance. A stipend is typically a per-meeting or per-diem payment, while a salary is a fixed annual amount. For local elected officials, a stipend is treated as extra compensation and is taxable.
Part-Time Salary Model	Part-time employees' pay depends on the same minimum wage and overtime laws as full-time employees, with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requiring time-and-a-half for work over 40 hours a week. Pay can be hourly or prorated salary-based, but the wage rate should be equivalent to what a full-time worker would earn for the same responsibilities. Employers must pay for all hours worked, provide workers' compensation, and clearly outline benefits in an employee handbook to avoid confusion.
Full-Time Salary Model	To pay full-time employees, employers must meet the federal minimum wage and pay overtime at a rate of at least one and one-half times their regular rate for hours over 40 in a workweek, unless the employee qualifies for an exemption. Employers must determine the employee's regular rate by dividing total weekly compensation (including non-hourly pay) by total hours worked and then use this rate to calculate any overtime due. Employers also need to account for federal and state payroll taxes and, for some, a higher state or local minimum wage, in addition to providing statutory benefits and potentially comprehensive health and retirement plans.
Tiered Compensation Model	A tiered compensation model is a compensation structure where the payout rate, such as a commission rate, increases as an individual achieves predefined sales or performance thresholds. Unlike a flat-rate model, this "tiering" provides progressively higher rates for greater achievement, which motivates employees to work harder, exceed goals, and drive increased revenue for the company.
Pay + Per Diem Model	A pay-plus-per-diem model is a compensation structure where an employee or contractor receives a regular wage or salary in addition to a daily allowance (per diem) to cover expenses incurred while traveling for business. This model is common for traveling employees, contract workers on temporary assignments, and industries with fluctuating project-based workflows. How the model works: In the pay-plus-per-diem model, the two parts of compensation are treated differently for tax purposes. Pay: The regular salary or hourly wage is taxable income and includes benefits. Per Diem: The daily allowance is typically non-taxable as long as the employer follows an "accountable plan" that requires employees to submit expense reports. This allowance is for specific, business-related costs like: Lodging, Meals, Incidentals
Living Wage Alignment Model	A living wage alignment model refers to the various frameworks, methodologies, and accounting practices that aim to establish a consistent and globally comparable standard for determining a living wage, ensuring it meets a decent standard of living for workers and their families. These models, such as the Anker Methodology, define a benchmark based on local costs for essential goods and services, like food, housing, and healthcare, and can be used by companies and governments to assess and report on progress toward providing living wages and reduce wage gaps within supply chains.
Volunteer Model	A volunteer pay model isn't one-size-fits-all; it can refer to reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses (like travel and meals), stipends (which must be nominal and carefully managed to avoid creating an employer-employee relationship), or paid Volunteer Time Off (VTO) benefits offered by employers. Organizations must adhere to strict regulations when providing compensation to volunteers, and the value of volunteer time can also be calculated using the federal volunteer rate, which was \$34.79 per hour in 2024.
Thurston County Commissioner Model	No set hours expected, Commissioners paid as full-time employees. 2025 - 6% Increase, \$147,936 a year

Salary Schedule History

	Mayor		Mayor Pro-Tem		Councilmember	
2017 Salary Schedule 25% COLA To bring Council up to city employee COLAS received since 2008.	Compensation	\$ 25,034.87	Compensation	\$22,948.56	Compensation	\$20,862.37
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,300.00</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,300.00</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,300.00</u>
	Total	\$28,334.87	Total	\$26,248.56	Total	\$24,248.37
2019 Salary Schedule 5% COLA Independent COLA 2%	Compensation	\$ 26,301.77	Compensation	\$ 24,109.76	Compensation	\$21,918.12
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,807.84</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,807.84</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 3,807.84</u>
	Total	\$30,109.61	Total	\$27,917.60	Total	\$25,725.96
2021 Salary Schedule 3.09% COLA Independent COLA 1%	Compensation	\$ 27,114.92	Compensation	\$ 24,855.17	Compensation	\$22,595.42
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>
	Total	\$32,661.70	Total	\$30,401.95	Total	\$28,142.20
2022 Salary Schedule 4% COLA Independent COLA 4%	Compensation	\$ 28,199.62	Compensation	\$ 25,849.44	Compensation	\$23,499.26
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>
	Total	\$33,746.40	Total	\$31,396.22	Total	\$29,046.04
2023 Salary Schedule 5% COLA Independent COLA 5%	Compensation	\$ 29,609.60	Compensation	\$ 27,141.91	Compensation	\$24,674.22
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 5,546.78</u>
	Total	\$35,156.38	Total	\$32,688.69	Total	\$30,221.00
2024 Salary Schedule 4.14% COLA Independent COLA 4.14%	Compensation	\$ 30,835.44	Compensation	\$ 28,265.59	Compensation	\$25,695.73
	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 6,195.71</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 6,195.71</u>	Benefit Stipend	<u>\$ 6,195.71</u>
	Total	\$37,031.15	Total	\$34,461.30	Total	\$31,891.44
2025 Salary Schedule Independent COLA 3.8%						

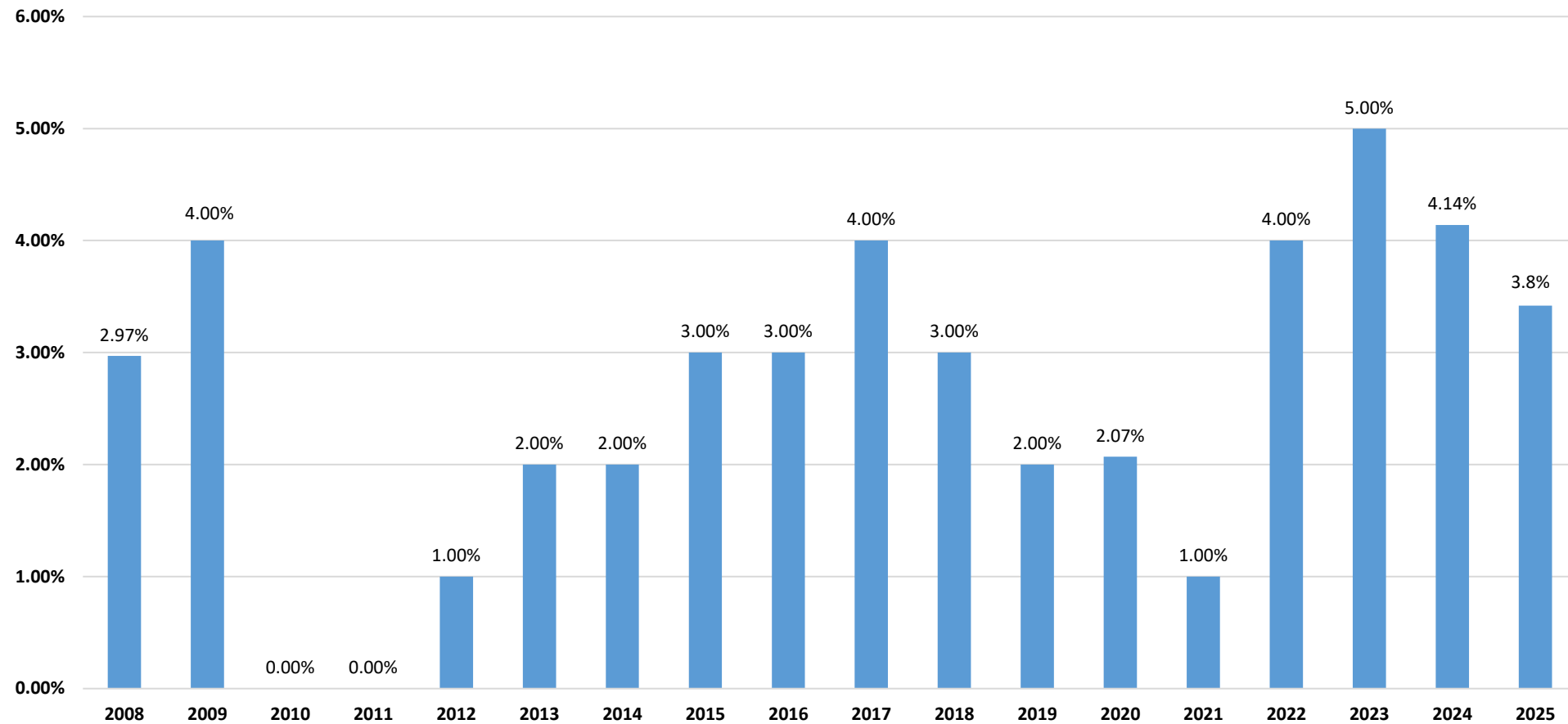
Council Work Hours Estimate and Salary Comparison

Task	Hours per month	Prep	Travel	Totals
Council meetings	15	6	2	
Council committees	8	4	0.5	
Council dinner meetings	3	0.5		
Community meetings	4	0.5	0.5	
Transportation Policy Board	3	1.5		
Intercity Transit	4	2	1	
EDC	2	1	0.5	
Constituent calls	4.5	0.5		
Constituent and Council emails	6.5	0.5		
Periodic sub committees of assignments	1	1		
2 x month meet City Manager	3	0.5	0.5	
Conferences	2		0.5	
Subtotal	56	18	5.5	
Total				79.5
Percent Time at Average 173.33 Work Hours Per month - 16 Paid Leave Hours (157.33)				50.53%
Annual Department Director Compensation	\$149,472 - \$224,208			
Annual Compensation at Council Part Time Percent (50.53%) at Department Director Compensation Rate	\$75,528 - \$113,292			
Department Director Hourly Rate at 50.53% Time	\$72.62 - \$108.93			
				4
Hourly Rate at Current Council Compensation	\$24.71 - \$29.65			

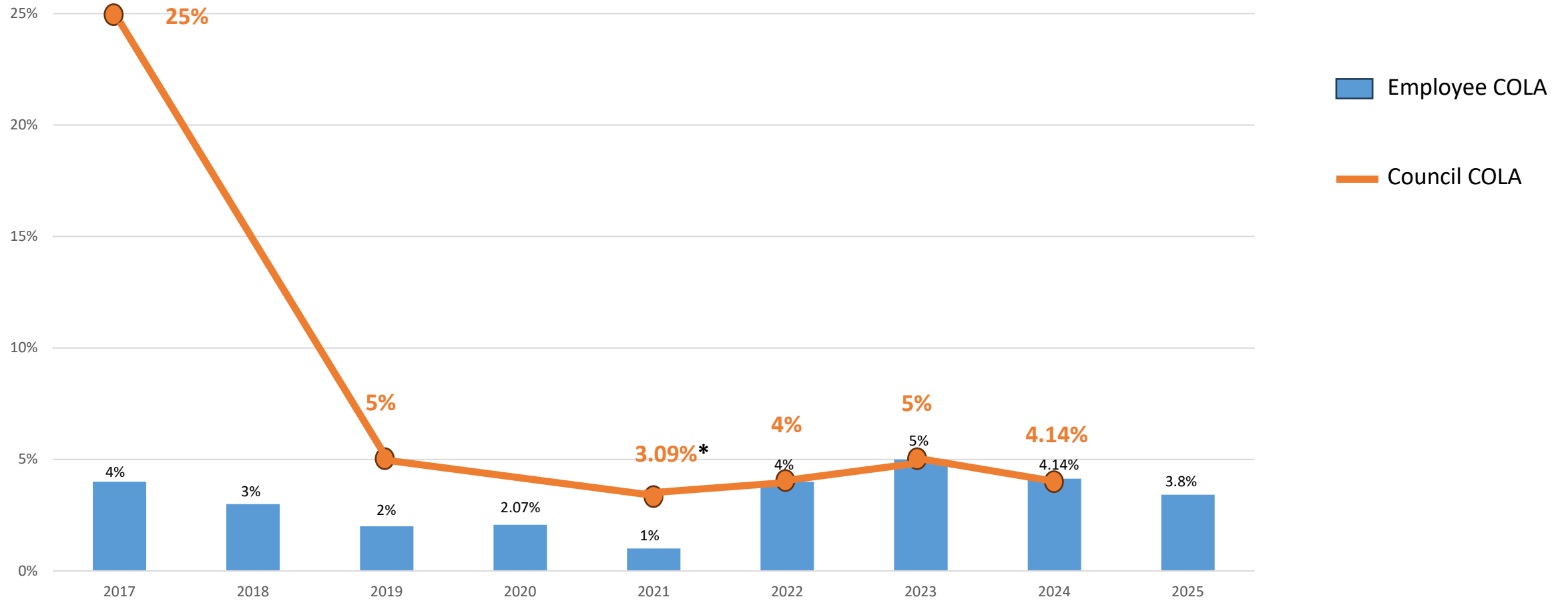
Council/Staff Salary Comparison

Position	Pay Grade	Hourly Compensation
City Councilmember - 1040 hours annually		\$24.71 - \$29.65
Office Specialist I	1	\$20.96 - \$25.48
Seasonal Parks Maintenance Worker	S5	\$22.73 - \$25.01
Accounting Technician I	2	\$26.95 - \$32.76
Clean Team Worker	440	\$29.13 - \$35.41
Public Service Representative	3	\$32.94 - \$40.03
Transportation Data and Requests Coordinator	4	\$37.43 - \$45.49
Assistant to City Council - New Position	8	\$57.89 - \$70.36
Finance Manager	8	\$57.89 - \$70.36
Chief Prosecutor	10	\$61.88 - 92.82
Director of Climate Programs	11	\$65.87 - \$98.81
Director of Community Planning and Economic Development	12	\$71.86 - \$107.79
Director of Public Works	13	\$77.85 - \$116.78
Assistant City Manager	14	\$81.84 - \$122.76
City Manager	14	\$81.84 - \$122.76
Fire Chief	14	\$81.84 - \$122.76
Police Chief	14	\$81.84 - \$122.76

Independent COLAs 2008-2025

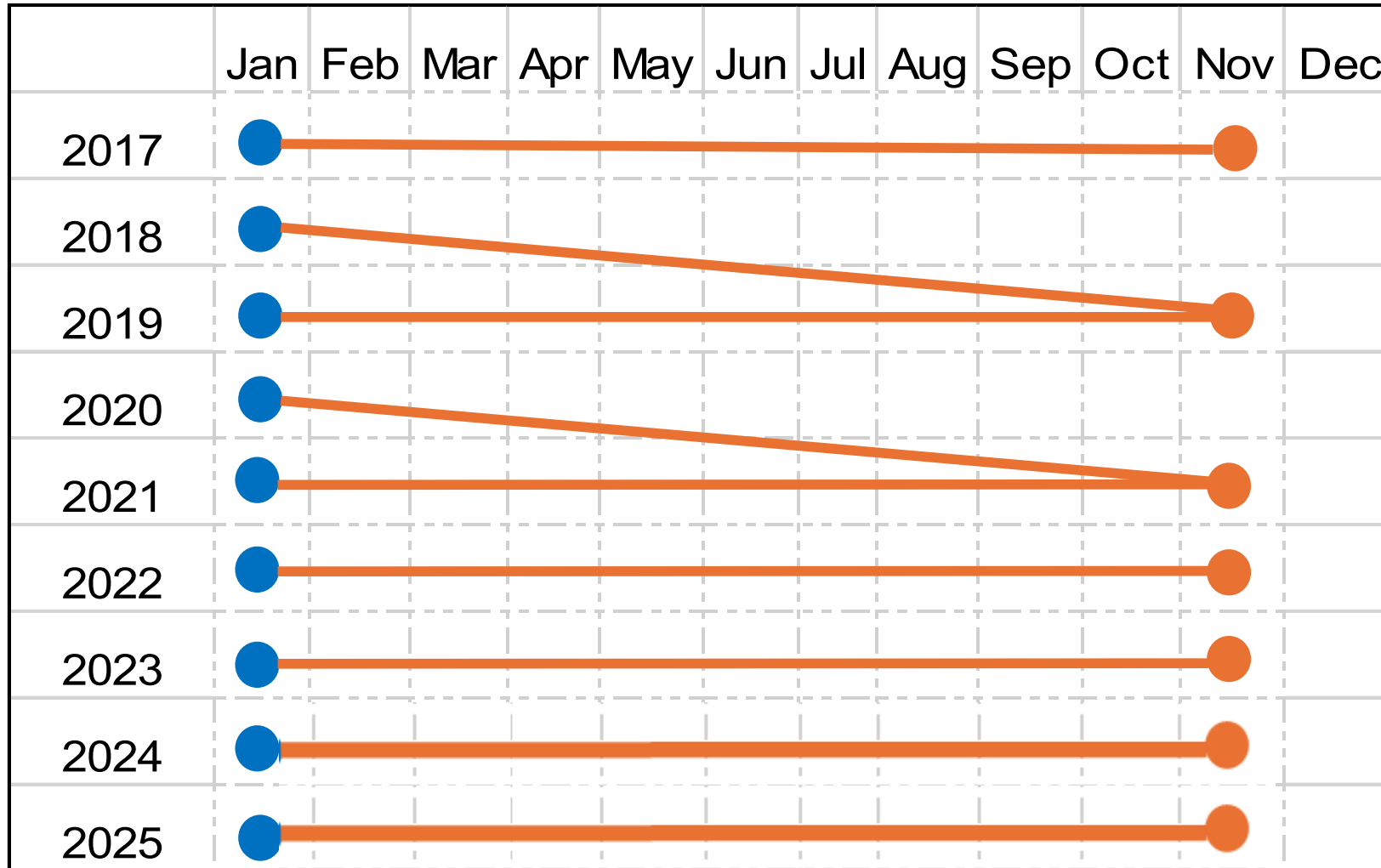


Independent VS Council COLAs



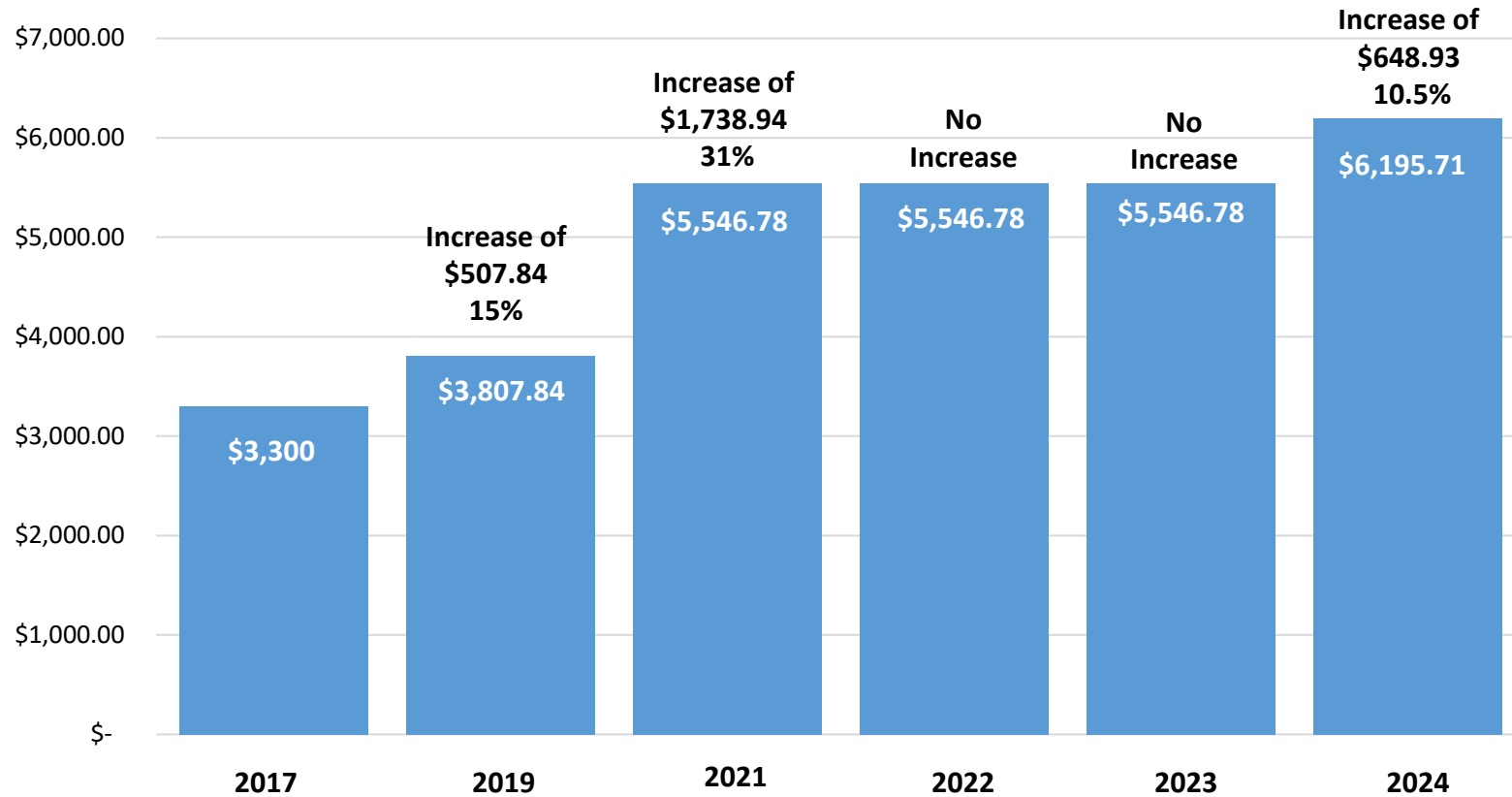
* 2020 COLA (2.07%) plus 2021 COLA (1%) plus interest

COLA Effective Dates



● Employees
● Council

Council Stipend Increases



Year	Stipend Amount	\$ Increase	% Increase
Nov. 2017	\$3,300	\$3,300	NA
Nov. 2019	\$3,807.84	\$507.84	15%
Nov. 2021	\$5,546.78	\$1,738.94	31%
Nov. 2022	\$5,546.78	\$0	0%
Nov. 2023	\$5,546.78	\$0	0%
Nov. 2024	\$6,195.71	\$648.93	10.5%

Health Insurance 2025 Rates

	WA HealthPlan Finder Regence GOLD	WA HealthPlan Finder Kaiser Permanente GOLD	City Regence Plan Health First 250 plan	City Kaiser Permanente Plan
Monthly Premium	\$935.85 (\$11,230/yr)	\$703.40 (\$8,440/yr)	\$974.10 (\$11,688/yr)	\$870.58 (\$10,447/yr)
Annual Deductible	\$600 Individual / \$1200 Family	\$600 Individual / \$1200 Family	\$250 Individual / \$750 family	\$200 Individual / \$400 Family
Office Visit	\$15	\$15	No cost preventative care, 10% coinsurance	No cost preventative care, \$20, then 10% coinsurance
Specialist Visit	\$40	\$40	10% coinsurance	\$20 then 10% coinsurance
Urgent Care Visit	\$35	\$35	10% coinsurance	\$20 then 10% coinsurance
Generic RX	\$10	\$10	\$5/\$10 copay	\$10
Preferred Brand RX	\$60	\$60	\$25/\$50 copay	\$20/\$40

Stipend Assumptions

Assumes using the same stipend calculation as used in 2021

- The group recommended an increase commensurate to the City-paid portion of staff premiums.
- The City pays 90% of premiums

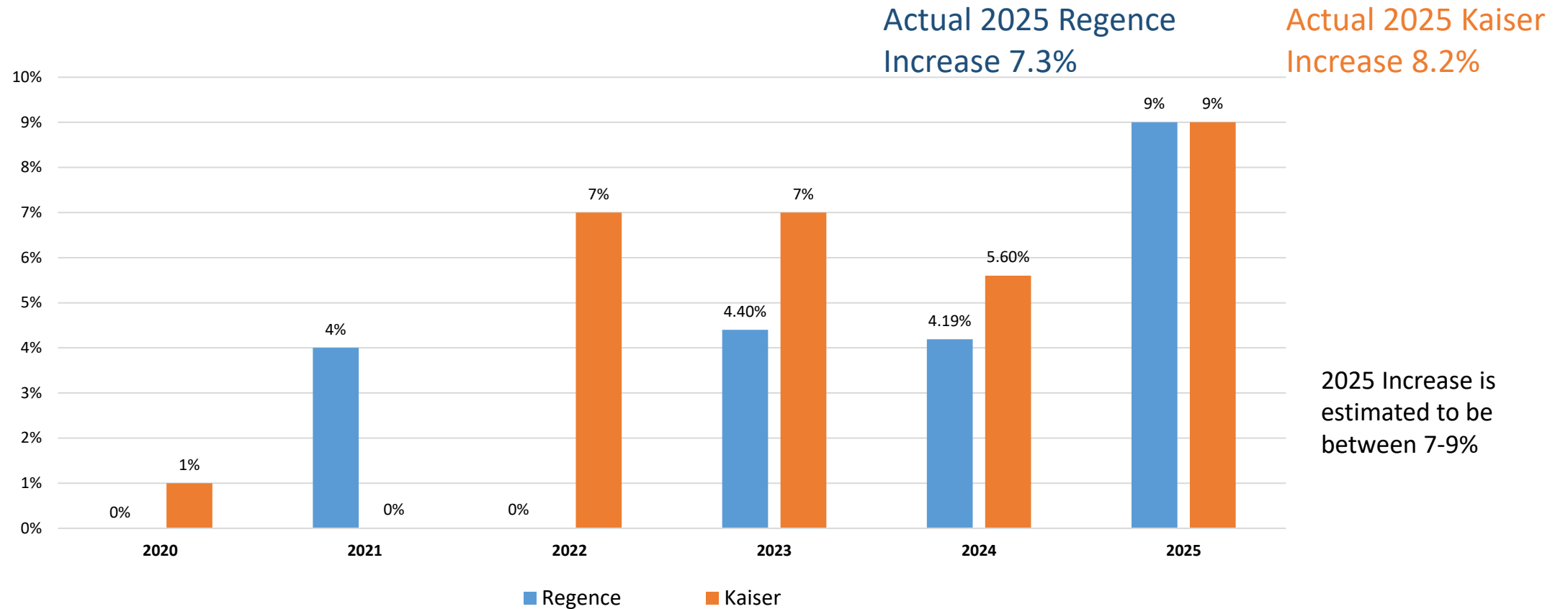
Assumes 8-14% increase in insurance premium rates

- Regence estimated to increase 8-11%, Used 11% in calculations
- Kaiser estimated to increase 10-14%, Used 14% in calculations
- Dental estimated to increase 3-6%, Used 6% in calculations

Assumes no increase in vision premiums

<https://wacities.org/services/employee-benefit-trust/article/2025/07/09/2026-rate-projections>

Health Insurance Rate Increases



Premiums with Dental & Vision

Single Employee at 2025 Rates

	WA HealthPlan Finder Regence	WA HealthPlan Finder Kaiser Permanente	City Regence Plan	City Kaiser Permanente Plan
Monthly Premium	\$944.63 (\$11,336/yr)	\$705.92 (\$8,471/yr)	\$907.82 (\$10,984/yr)	\$804.80 (\$9,658/yr)
Highest Rate	\$11,336		\$10,894	

Dental	Vision	Combined Annual Cost
\$459.96	\$93	\$522.96

	Regence	Kaiser
Annual Cost with dental and Vison	\$12,411.92	\$11,416.96
Prorated by 50% for Part Time	\$6,205.96	\$5,708.48

Possible New Stipend

	Annual Cost of WA HealthPlan Finder Regence	Annual Cost of Dental	Annual Cost of Vision
Monthly Premium	\$11,336	\$459.96	\$93
TOTAL	\$12,411.96		

Single Employee at 2025 Rates

	Annual Cost of WA HealthPlan Finder Regence	11% Increase Regence	Annual Cost of Dental	6% Increase Dental	Annual Cost of Vision	No Increase Vision
Monthly Premium	\$11,336	\$1,246.96	\$459.96	27.60	\$93	0
Totals with Projected Increases	\$12,582.96		\$487.56		\$93	
TOTAL	\$13,163.52					
50% Prorated for PT	\$6,581.76 Total Annual Stipend					

Stipend Calculation

Potential New Stipend **\$6,581.76**

Current Stipend **\$6,195.71**

Potential Stipend Increase per Councilmember **\$386.05**

Total Potential Annual Stipend Increase for all Seven Councilmembers **\$2,702.35**

