



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Equalizing Constituency Support Issues Arising out of Uneven Population Growth in Some City Wards

Date:	April 12, 2010
To:	City Council
From:	City Manager and City Clerk
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The uneven population growth in certain parts of the City in the past 10 years has strained the ability of some Councillors to serve their constituents.

The purpose of this report is to provide data and analysis on the population and number of households for the City of Toronto's 44 wards, as well as information on resources which could be made available to Councillors whose wards are impacted by being 50% over the median in both the number of households and population. The report outlines potential interim and long term solutions to address these inequities.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager and the City Clerk recommend that Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Executive Committee 2010 Recommended Operating Budget for Council included a 5% reduction in the Office Expense Budget, making it \$50,445, subject to City Council approval.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of April 7, 2010, the Executive Committee directed the City Manager to submit a report directly to City Council for its Special Meeting on April 15, 2010 on:

1. the development of a mechanism for consideration, early in the next term of Council, to recognize the uneven population growth in some wards, together with any accompanying recommendations, for the appropriate allocation of resources in the new term of Council; and
2. a mechanism that will authorize the City Manager to provide up to one additional staff member for any ward which exceeds the median by more than 50% in both population and households, conditional upon this allocation being provided within the total Councillors' Office Budget approved by Council, until such time as Council deals with this issue in the next term of Council.

BACKGROUND

Population and Household Counts in City Wards

Appendix 'A' summarizes the population and household numbers for the 44 wards in the City of Toronto, together with the percentage deviation from the medians.

The latest census data available from Statistics Canada is based on the 2006 census. No more recent data is available directly from Statistics Canada.

The 2010 data is based on the baseline information from the 2006 Statistics Canada census data, supplemented by information provided by the Planning Division on new residential unit completions for the years 2006 to 2009. The population projection is based on a factor of 2.5 persons per household, the same average ratio as in the 2006 census.

As shown in Appendix A, the median number of households in a City of Toronto ward in 2010 is 23,252, while the median population is 58,776.

The major variations from the household and population medians are:

2010 Data	Median	Top 3 wards above median	Top 3 wards below median
Number of Households	23,252	Ward 27 (44,943 or 93.3%)	Ward 7 (16,133 or -30.6%)
		Ward 20 (37,425 or 61.0%)	Ward 9 (16,909 or - 27.3%)
		Ward 23 (37,177 or 59.9%)	Ward 39 (17,136 or -26.3%)
Population	58,776	Ward 23 (88,840 or 51.2%)	Ward 29 (44,488 or -24.3%)
		Ward 42 (77,464 or 31.8%)	Ward 18 (45,940 or -21.8%)
		Ward 27 (81,871 or 39.3%)	Ward 9 (46,946 or -20.1%)

One ward, Ward 23, exceeds the median by more than 50% in both the number of households and population.

Resources for Councillors

Office Expense Budget

At its meeting of June 3, 4 and 5, 1998, City Council approved a report from Corporate Services Committee titled "Office Administration and Expenses of Council", and approved a global budget of \$70,000 for each Councillor to cover the cost of general office requirements, communication and constituency office administration.

In the operating budget process in 1999, this amount was reduced to \$59,000 and in the operating budget process in 2001, this amount was further reduced to \$53,100.

The Executive Committee 2010 Recommended Operating Budget for Council included a 5% reduction in the Office Expense Budget, making it \$50,445, subject to City Council approval.

This office expense budget is allocated to each Councillor irrespective of the number of households or population in the ward.

There are other jurisdictions in which the allocation of office expenses is dependent on the size of the riding or ward. For example, for the House of Commons, each Member of Parliament receives a basic office budget with members who represent densely populated constituencies receiving an Elector Supplement. In the City of Hamilton, Councillors are allocated with slightly different ward budgets for office expenses, with the allocation dependent on population and whether the wards are inner city versus outer city wards.

Staff Salary Budget

In January 2, 6, 8 and 9, 1998, City Council adopted the recommendations from the Toronto Transition Team and approved that each Councillor be given the latitude to hire the equivalent of three full time staff from the classifications of Executive Assistant, Constituency Assistant, Administrative Assistant and Clerical Assistant. Each councillor is provided with a staff salary envelope equivalent to the top of the range of an Executive Assistant, Constituency Assistant and Administrative Assistant.

This staff salary envelope does not vary with the number of households or population in the ward.

Council Budget

The Council Budget incorporates five categories of expenditures:

- Councillors' salaries and benefits
- Councillor staff salaries and benefits
- Councillor office expense budget
- Council general expenses budget
- Council Travel

Traditionally, the Council Budget has had a surplus each year due to under-spending by some Councillors in their office expense budget or their staff salary budget. In 2009, the surplus was \$1.01 million.

Council has periodically directed additional expenditures from the Council budget in anticipation of the annual surplus, such as reimbursement of legal expenses for Councillors. In addition, during an election year, the Council budget would pay for the severance payments for departing Members of Council and their staff. As approved by City Council in the 2007 operating budget process, the Council budget each year since 2007 has included a contribution of \$175,000 towards a severance reserve fund. In the 2010 Council operating budget, \$700,000 is withdrawn from the severance reserve fund to provide for severance payments at the end of term.

COMMENTS

Inequities in Population and Household Counts in City Wards

As shown in Appendix A, during the past 10 years, development has occurred more rapidly in certain areas of the City, leading to the current situation where there are inequities in the population and household counts when compared to the medians. One ward exceeds more than 50% of the median in both the number of households and in population.

As neither the Councillor office expense budget nor the Councillor staff salary envelope are adjusted according to the population or households in the ward, certain Councillors face pressure and challenges in representing the constituents in their ward.

Interim Solution to Address the Inequities

The motion passed at Executive Committee calls for a mechanism to provide up to one additional staff member for any ward which exceeds the median by more than 50% in both population and households. Using the 2010 projected data, one ward – Ward 23 –meets this criteria.

A top of the range for a constituency assistant for a Councillor is \$79,310.90, including salaries and benefits. If Council decides to make available budget for an extra staff for a Councillor whose ward exceeds 50% of the median in number of households and population, the budget impact will be approximately \$60,000.00 for the remainder of 2010.

Since the requirement for severance payments varies from election year to election year, it is unknown whether the severance provision in the Council operating budget is sufficient, or whether anticipated surplus from the Council budget is needed to supplement the severance payouts.

The total severance requirements will determine whether the additional expenditure for enhanced resources for the Councillor whose ward exceeds by more than 50% the median in both number of households and population can be absorbed within the Council budget.

Long-Term Solution to Address the Inequities

The inequities in ward population and number of households place some Ward Councillors at a disadvantage in communicating with and representing a larger number of residents when compared to other Councillors. This could potentially raise the issue of whether certain constituents are fairly and adequately represented among all wards.

Staff will report back after the 2010 election on possible ways of dealing with the inequities. However, we would be remiss in not making Council aware that the benchmark for acceptable differences in electoral districts, as established by the Supreme Court of Canada case law and Ontario Municipal Board decisions on ward boundary appeals, is plus or minus 25 percent variance.

A number of wards in our current ward boundaries exceed this variance. After the October election, the new Council may wish to consider addressing this

issue. Pursuant to the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, any elector could submit a petition to request Council to address the issue.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 'A' – Comparison of Population and Households by Ward