

### **Creation of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body**

**Date:** November 27, 2019  
**To:** Executive Committee  
**From:** Chief People Officer  
**Wards:** All

#### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to 2017 EX28.9 Developing Terms of Reference for a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body. It seeks approval of the proposed terms of reference and appointment process outlined in this report.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities experience higher levels of harassment, discrimination and violence. Research and consultations with the community has also identified that members of the community experience barriers in accessing City services. These trends support the creation of a mechanism for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Torontonians to inform Council and the City's decision-making processes.

After engaging Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) stakeholders, City staff are recommending the creation of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body. This advisory body will advise on identified priority issues to support the elimination of barriers and inequities experienced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities in accessing City of Toronto programs and services.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Chief People Officer recommends that:

1. City Council establish a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body, in accordance with the Terms of Reference in Attachment 1, for the term ending November 14, 2022 or until their mandate is completed within the 2018 to 2022 term.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

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The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities are comprised of some of the most marginalized and vulnerable populations in our city. As the national census does not specifically collect information on sexual orientation and gender identity there is no definitive number of people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) in Toronto.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) individuals and communities in Toronto experience a number of inequities related to health, employment status, income and social support. In 2018, 10.4 percent of hate crimes were identified as being motivated by sexual orientation<sup>1</sup>. In 2017, 74 percent of hate crimes targeting transgender or asexual people involved violence. Studies indicate that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) people are more likely to report unmet mental health needs and experience high rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and acts, and alcohol and drug dependence. One in four youth experiencing homelessness in Toronto identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+).<sup>2</sup> Among trans Ontarians, 13 percent have reported experiencing employment termination on the basis of being a trans person. An additional 15 percent of trans Ontarians believe their employment was terminated for the same reason.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, 22 percent of trans people of colour have been turned down for a job due to their race/ethnicity.

Recognizing the diversity and intersectionality within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities, these groups continue to face disproportionate and unique barriers when accessing and interacting with City programs and services. A dedicated mechanism is required to represent their interests and concerns and to inform the decision-making of City Council.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any staffing resource required to support the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body will be managed from within the City Manager's Office 2020 Operating Budget submissions.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed the financial impact statement and concurs with the financial impact statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. Police-reported date crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected police services). 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601>

<sup>2</sup> City of Toronto. Street Needs Assessment, 2018. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/99be-2018-SNA-Results-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Bauer G, Nussbaum N, Travers R, et al. We've got work to do: workplace discrimination and employment challenges for trans people in Ontario. Trans PULSE Project E-Bulletin 2011; 2(1). Available in English and French at <http://transpulseproject.ca/research/workplace-discrimination-and-employment-challenges-for-trans-people-in-ontario/>

## DECISION HISTORY

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At its July 17, 2018 meeting, the Executive Committee adopted the recommendation to continue to research and consult as required to develop recommendations on the appropriate advisory body to advise Council on equity related matters during the next term of Council. In addition, it adopted the recommendation to report to City Council with proposed terms of reference for an equity advisory committee structure in addition to the existing Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal Affairs Committee.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.EX36.5>

At its October 24, 2017 meeting, the Executive Committee requested the Acting Director, Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to undertake consultations with stakeholders, including a diverse range of leaders in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities, to develop terms of reference and a recruitment and appointment process for an Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit advisory body.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX28.9>

At its July 4, 2017 meeting, City Council requested the City Manager in consultation with the Director, Equity, Diversity and Human Rights and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to establish a new Community Advisory Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) issues and report back to the October 24, 2017 meeting of the Executive Committee with recommended terms of reference and a composition.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.MM31.14>

## COMMENTS

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### **Background on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Advisory Bodies**

In 1999, Council directed the creation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Committee as part of the recommendations by the Taskforce on Community Access and Equity. The mandate of this committee was to "advise City Council, its agencies, boards and commissions, and to advocate to external bodies on removing barriers that restrict human rights protected groups from participating in public life and achieving social, cultural, economic and political well-being." The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Committee first met in 2001 and was regularly active through 2001-2003.

Following a review of advisory bodies in 2004, it was recommended that different advisory groups working on access, equity and human rights issues be rolled into a single Council Advisory Body (CAB) called the Roundtable on Access, Equity and

Human Rights, which in 2006 was made into a Mayor's Advisory Body. The creation of this new roundtable incorporated the following Advisory Bodies from the previous Council term:

- Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues Committee
- Race and Ethnic Relations Committee
- Working Groups on access, equity and human rights issues (employment equity, hate activity elimination, immigration and refugee issues, and language equity and literacy.)

The mandate of the roundtable was "to advise the Mayor and City Council on the elimination of the barriers faced by human rights protected groups and to ensure that the contributions, interests and needs of all sectors of Toronto's diverse population was reflected in the City's mission, operations and service delivery."

The subsequent term of council from 2010-2014, did not include the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Advisory Committee or Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights. Since 2010, there has been no designated council body to address the needs and barriers faced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities.

### **What we heard from the community**

City staff worked with The 519 to conduct a number of community "check-ins". Among the participants were a wide range of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) community members with different intersecting identities and included community organizers, service providers and executive directors from various Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) organizations as well as corporate partners. Through this process, members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) community clearly indicated a need for a mechanism to identify barriers to accessing services and to have their voices represented and heard by City Council. Those consulted felt strongly about being included in decision-making on how to make City of Toronto services safer and more accessible for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities. As well, participants indicated they are seeking a mechanism by which the City can report back to these communities on its progress.

The community member participants emphasized the value of accountability to ensure issues are being addressed and actions are tracked and evaluated. The development and communication of success metrics and next steps were noted as vital to building trust with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities.

Feedback from the community consultations also highlighted the importance of improved inter-divisional communication to meet the diverse needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities and to develop a holistic and intersectional approach to address barriers. Those consulted felt it was important to have community partners at the table, specifically non-profit organizations

working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities, who are well positioned to identify community needs and provide advice to support the development of meaningful and sustainable solutions.

### **Building an approach for the community**

The creation of a Council Advisory Body aligns with the desired outcomes identified by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) stakeholders consulted. The open and structured approach of a CAB lends itself to a high degree of accountability where meetings are documented and items are tracked. The public forum of a CAB also empowers community members to engage in the discourse, either by attending meetings or reviewing minutes, to ensure the diverse and intersectional nuances of the issues are being captured and represented at the table. Moreover, the creation of a CAB meets the request of those consulted to have councillor involvement, while also engaging key stakeholders with lived experience and those working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities.

A number of community members that were consulted expressed concerns that the public nature of Council Advisory Bodies may not be conducive to creating a safe space and may increase exposure of marginalized members of the community who wish to participate anonymously. To address some of these concerns, the City is looking to engage organizations that work with diverse and marginalized voices in the community as part of the CAB. The City also remains committed to ongoing consultations with community, and the creation of safe spaces to foster dialogue and meaningful engagement of all relevant groups on priority issues.

The city recognizes the diversity that exists within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities. While important strides have been made in drawing attention to some of the barriers faced by many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) people, data indicates that particular groups within the community face unique vulnerabilities, particularly trans people as well as black, Indigenous and racialized individuals. These groups encounter distinct challenges resulting from their intersectional identities. Therefore, the City will prioritize diverse representation on the CAB and will take steps to ensure the interests and needs of these acutely marginalized communities are reflected in the work of the Committee.

The work of the CAB will be driven by key priorities identified by City staff through community consultations. The advisory body will bring their lived experience as well as policy and community expertise on key initiatives to: ensure the interests and needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities are reflected in programs and service delivery; advise on the elimination of barriers to City programs and services faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities; and identify emerging issues and trends of significance to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities as it relates to the City programs and services.

The City acknowledges that the elimination of barriers for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities will require collaboration between multiple stakeholders. By bringing government, policy and community leaders to the table, this committee will be well positioned to focus on both service level barriers as well as structural and systemic challenges facing the community. This, in turn, will help to embed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) equity considerations in City decision-making, while also fostering constructive dialogue and strengthening connections between the City and the broader Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities.

## **Conclusion**

The City recognises that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities have been without an advisory body for several years and, as such, needs a mechanism to inform City Council and the City's decision-making processes. To meet community needs and drive progress, City staff recommend that a Council Advisory Body be established as a dedicated channel to identify and address the unique challenges facing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) individuals and communities.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Omo Akintan  
Chief People Officer

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Terms of Reference for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body