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## 2020 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Response to EX8.22 – Proposed Budget Changes to Remove Systemic Barriers to Hiring People with Disabilities

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#### Issue/Background:

- On October 2 and 3, 2019 City Council adopted the recommendations in item EX8.22 "Proposed Budget Process Changes to Remove Systemic Barriers to Hiring People with Disabilities" (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX8.22>). The recommendations respond to the following concerns and advice articulated in Decision Letter DI3.4 of the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee:
  - City Divisions are responsible for allocating the costs of AODA compliance and accessibility within their individual budgets. The Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee is concerned that divisions may be less motivated to hire employees with disabilities or to provide service to individuals requiring accommodations for fear that related costs, whether real or perceived, will exceed their allotted budget. In addition, the Committee expressed a concern that for divisions with smaller budgets, this disincentive is greater.
  - A special or separate centralized fund for AODA compliance and accessibility-related expenses would ensure that accessibility measures are implemented across all divisions in a non-discriminatory manner. Pooling costs removes or reduces systemic barriers and biases against implementing accessibility measures or hiring individuals with disabilities.
- On January 17, 2020 Budget Committee adopted Motion 5q that reiterates the request for response to the recommendations in EX8.22 "Proposed Budget Process Changes to Remove Systemic Barriers to Hiring People with Disabilities".

#### Key Points:

On the feasibility of exempting all operating and capital costs related to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliance and accessibility initiatives from any proposed 2020 efficiency savings:

- In 2017, for the 2018 Budget Process, the City of Toronto's Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division (now within People & Equity) and Financial Planning Division led an initiative whereby City Divisions and Agencies were required to identify the budget necessary to meet AODA requirements for training, and to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers. The financial implications, both Operating and Capital, were summarized in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report EX32.9 "Multi-Year Service Plans and

Strategies" under AODA Compliance that was adopted by Executive Committee on March 19, 2018 (<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-113075.pdf>). Since then all City Divisions and Agencies have been expected to include related budget requirements in their annual budgets.

- The City remains strongly committed to accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Changes to the 2020 Budget Process do not threaten the City's commitment to removal of accessibility barriers. Specifically,
  - Divisions/'Agencies' Operating Budgets reflect the costs necessary to meet legislative obligations and deliver existing levels of service.
  - Any incremental Budget asks, either Operating or Capital, necessary for AODA compliance and accessibility are included in the Staff Recommended Budget as priority consistent with City Budgeting practices ensuring legislative requirements are considered a funding priority.
- Operating and capital costs related to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliance and accessibility initiatives are required to meet legislation and therefore, are exempt from any savings review that will impact the City's ability to comply with legislated requirements.

On centralized funding for all accessibility-related accommodations and initiatives:

- Beginning in 2020, \$0.150 million has been included in the Operating Budget of the City Manager's Office (People and Equity) to provide funds to address accessibility-related accommodations and initiatives should Divisions be unable to find funding within their Approved Budgets. Accommodation and initiatives may include, but are not limited to, employee accommodation costs, American Sign Language interpretation, note-taking services and captioning services.
- The City remains committed to the removal of accessibility barriers and Financial Planning will work with People and Equity to monitor use of the \$0.150 million and address funding should a shortfall situation arise.

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