

**Interim Report  
of the  
Task Force  
on  
Community Access and Equity**

***“A WORK IN PROGRESS”***

October 1998





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# 1. Introduction

In January, 1998, in response to recommendations of the Toronto Transition Team, Toronto City Council established a Task Force on Community Access and Equity.

The Task Force was mandated by City Council to:

*“develop recommendations on the best way to support communities concerned about access and equity, and to integrate the principles of access and equity into the fabric of the City’s roles as policy maker, advocate, provider and regulator of services, contractor and employer.”*

The Terms of Reference for the Task Force were adopted by City Council in March, 1998.

This interim report outlines the work of the Task Force to date:

- It records what we have heard during our many consultations and what we have learned through our research.
- It proposes a plan of action on how access and equity principles can be incorporated into the political and administrative structures, programs, and services of the new City of Toronto.
- It recommends how the new City can support its communities on significant access and equity issues, e.g., federal and provincial policies on immigrants and refugees, equity in education and training, pay equity, employment equity, anti-racism and anti-hate, faith issues, literacy, self-government for Aboriginal peoples or equality rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders.

The Task Force came into place during a time of great social and political change within Toronto. These changes present challenges to the new City Council and its communities. Our role on the Task Force has been to involve the new City’s communities and staff in dialogue on how we can ensure the City cherishes the values and beliefs of access and equity.

To do this, we held more than 40 community consultations and met with senior staff from all City’s departments and some of its agencies, boards and commissions. We also met monthly and received presentations and written submissions from a broad range of community advocacy groups and organizations concerned with equality rights.

In essence, this report sums up our learnings and is being put forward as a work in progress. It is organized into three sections:

- What We Heard;
- What We Are Thinking; and
- Conclusion and Next Steps.

## 2. What We Heard

Irrespective of whom we spoke to, it was clear that there has been tremendous pressure on the acceptance of access and equity values and beliefs. In Toronto, the largest urban centre in Canada, these issues include the combined impact of numerous demographic, economic, social and funding trends.

### 2.1 From Communities

Following are examples of some of the concerns raised during our community consultations:

- *“There are more single parent families headed by women who are living in poverty and there is also a widening gap between rich and poor. This effects a large number of City residents and we need to address this as it affects the quality of life in Toronto and limits opportunities for women and the poor.”*
- There is high unemployment, especially for youth, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities and racial minorities.
- There are more and more immigrants and refugees who make Toronto their home. Reports show that by the year 2001, foreign-born residents will comprise the majority of Toronto residents.
- *“There are increasing tensions between certain communities and the police and nation-wide debates on providing equal rights to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenderers. The City can’t ignore these issues.”*
- *“Funding and staffing for programs to support the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees has been reduced. The new City has to do something about this otherwise our community support system is going to be lost.”*
- *“There is no action on the Canadians with Disabilities Act. To date, only 8 of the 52 recommendations included in the October, 1996 report by the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues, have been acted upon. People with disabilities need to have our rights protected by law. The City should speak up on our behalf.”*
- Cuts to survivors’ benefits in the Canada Pension Plan will affect women more negatively than men. This will be particularly harsh since women tend to outlive their spouses, and will contribute to the 500,000 women aged 65 and over who already live in poverty in Canada.
- *“There is such slow movement to address the challenges and needs faced by Aboriginal peoples in urban settings. Even though this issue is addressed by the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), there is little reference to it in the Federal government’s initiatives to address the RCAP documents and the City itself needs to look at this report and respond to it also.”*

- *“In just the past couple of years we have seen the closing of Ontario Welcome House which supported the immediate integration of newcomers to the range of public services available to them; the dismantling of the Anti-Racism Secretariat and the elimination of the funding and programs delivered by the Secretariat; the repeal of the Employment Equity Act; no action on a commitment to increase provincial support to the Ontario Human Rights Commission; lack of open dialogue on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act; and the elimination of numerous advisory committees addressing equality rights for women, people with disabilities, ethno-racial communities, Aboriginal peoples and others.  
This has hit our communities hard. It’s almost as if someone was turning the clock back and then along comes amalgamation and the new City of Toronto.”*

## 2.2 From City Staff

From City staff, we heard repeatedly about how the principles of access and equity have become entrenched in the former municipalities within Toronto. For example, we heard:

- *“The former municipalities showed leadership for access and equity issues through municipal councils, the support of its Mayors and the Metro Chairman. This was reflected in the work of departments and special purpose bodies and each of the former municipalities undertook to enable communities to participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the city. They also supported actions to safeguard the rights of individuals within the workplace and community.”*
- *“All of our former municipal governments set up policies, programs, political and bureaucratic structures to deal with human rights, employment equity, community development, community involvement in decision-making, immigrant and refugee settlement, safety for women and children, support for people with disabilities and Aboriginal peoples, hate crimes, and other anti-racism, access and equity issues.”*
- *“Our department developed anti-racism, access and equity policies and action plans to guide us in identifying and eliminating barriers to services and improving access to departmental services, programs and decision-making. We need to continue this in the new City.”*
- Several departments developed innovative services with multilingual capacity and addressing the needs of the visually impaired and the deaf to improve services, programs and decision-making.
- Actions were taken to attract new bidders through advertisements placed in approximately 27 ethnic, local and national newspapers. Data was gathered on the success rate of businesses owned by equity-seeking groups. Policies and procedures were reviewed to eliminate barriers to municipal purchasing and to improve access for small businesses as well as businesses owned by women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities and Ethan-racial minorities;

- Plans were reviewed and recommendations made to encourage the incorporation of design features aimed at creating a safe environments for women;
- A community economic development initiative was developed focussing on assisting psychiatric survivors and a city-wide program on audio pedestrian signals was initiated.
- *“We had implemented TTYs in all major departments, provided vibrating display pagers for deaf staff, and provided materials in a variety of accessible formats. Also, we ensured assertive listening systems were made available to staff, citizens and politicians for public meetings. We need to continue doing these things if the City is going to be accessible to all of its residents.”*
- *“Our department recognized a strong business case for addressing diversity within the workplace and the community. We exist to deliver something to a consumer and must be sensitive to our audience at all times.*

*We live in a rapidly changing community where there are new constituents and new receivers of service. The changes in the community are evident in terms of the greater mobility of people with disabilities, increasing numbers of Aboriginal peoples, the growth of women in the workplace and in business, diversity in religious customs, more acceptance and understanding of differences in sexual orientation and a dramatically changing cultural and racial landscape.*

*A smart organization prepares for this by working with these changes, bringing new communities into the workforce, improving the understanding of our staff and delivering services in a more effective and appropriate manner.*

*This is a significant challenge for the new City of Toronto, one that we must address with commitment, sensitivity and understanding, otherwise we may find it difficult to deliver our services to our communities and we may find that our communities are not involved in our democratic processes.”*

## 3. What We Are Thinking

Since coming together earlier this year, the Task Force has had a good opportunity to review the many concerns from communities and staff as well as some of the ways access and equity issues have been dealt with in other cities. This has given us a significant amount of information and insight in order to develop recommendations for action by City Council. To do this, we are proposing that the City adopt:

- the Vision Statement we have drafted;
- the Access and Equity Principles we are proposing; and
- the political, community and bureaucratic structures we have developed.

We also recommend that these be implemented within the time frames set out with each recommendation.

### 3.1 Vision Statement

We believe that a vision statement is essential to guide the City in incorporating access and equity into all of its activities. This is a major statement of values and beliefs which will inform the City's operations and, more specifically, provide the over-arching values for the principles and structures proposed in the report.

We propose the following access and equity vision statement for the City of Toronto:

**“The population of the City of Toronto is made up of people from diverse communities and equity-seeking groups, i.e., women, people with disabilities, ethno-cultural and racial minorities, immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexuals and transgenders.**

**The City of Toronto will recognize the dignity and worth of all people through the treatment of its communities and its employees, its provision of services and through ensuring participation in its decision-making.**

**The City of Toronto recognizes the First Nations status of Aboriginal peoples as well as the barriers of discrimination and disadvantage faced by equity-seeking groups.**

**To address this, the City will strive to create an environment of equality within the government and within the community for all people regardless of their race, creed, ancestry, language, nationality, place of origin, ethnic origin, Aboriginal status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation and socio-economic status.**

**The City of Toronto will support positive changes within its workforce and communities to achieve access and equality of outcomes for equity-seeking groups and create a harmonious environment for all City residents as well as a City workforce and community that is free from harassment and discrimination.”**

### **3.2 Proposed Principles of Access and Equity in the New City**

As the new City of Toronto moves to integrate access and equity policies and values into its work, it should be kept in mind that many of the proposed principles have been in place in all of the former municipalities within Toronto for more than two decades. The proposed principles are also consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and recent Supreme Court and Ontario Court rulings respecting the rights of Aboriginal peoples, women as well as gays and lesbians.

These proposed principles have been important to communities because they offer practical opportunities for democratic participation by individuals and communities. Whether through advisory committees, mayor’s committees, reference groups, public forums, etc., the former cities within Toronto all sought out and actively supported the involvement of communities in the cities’ life.

The legacy inherited by the new City of Toronto is one that has worked well. To meet the Task Force’s goal of ensuring continuance of these values through all of the City’s operations, it is essential that certain policy principles be proposed by the Task Force, adopted by City Council, and incorporated into all City policies, programs and operations.

The following principles represent a harmonization of the best policies and practices within the former municipalities. They have also been actively supported and articulated by many in their submissions and presentations to the Toronto Transition Team. In addition, research on practices in both American and British municipalities provide similar policy frameworks.

As such, the Task Force proposes and endorses these principles for adoption by Council.

#### **Principle 1 City Governance**

The population of the City of Toronto, in all its diversity, should be reflected and represented through every aspect of its governance structures, including political, administrative and service delivery levels. The City shall concern itself with the social well being of all its residents and act as an advocate for those functions which are the responsibility of other levels of government.

#### **Principle 2 Delivery of Services and Programs in the New City**

All residents should be entitled to services and programs which meet their needs, and, which are culturally and linguistically appropriate, accommodate disability, and are adequately resourced to ensure equitable access and outcomes. This includes support for community economic development initiatives aimed at women, ethno-racial communities, people with disabilities

and Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders.

**Principle 3 Participation in the City**

All residents of the City should have access to full and meaningful participation and consultation in decision-making, policy development, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of services and programs. The City will provide mechanisms for resolving internal and external disputes, and shall use comprehensive communications to serve a population which is linguistically diverse, differently abled and has varying levels of literacy.

**Principle 4 City as an Employer**

The Council of the City should implement employment equity and set as a goal the achievement of a workforce which represents the population. Representation shall be at all levels including Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Committees. The Council should also be committed to an equitable work environment which respects the dignity, worth, and contribution of each person. The City shall monitor the status of disadvantaged groups in its workplace with respect to participation, promotions, compensation, training and benefits.

**Principle 5 The City as a Contractor**

City Council should establish procedures for contracting goods and services to ensure equitable access and allocation for the provision of goods and services. Council should implement a policy of contract compliance to ensure that organizations which supply goods and services to the City through contractual agreements adopt and maintain employment equity and anti-discrimination practices. The City should also undertake outreach initiatives to assist with community development and capacity building.

**Principle 6 City Support for Community-Based Organizations and Activities**

City Council should commit adequate resources to community based, non-profit organizations for the advancement of the principles of equity, access, anti-racism and full participation. Furthermore, Council should take a leadership role and allocate adequate resources to eliminate hate-motivated activity by:

- improving community police relations;
- promoting community building and harmony;
- encouraging community development practices based on a “bottom up” process;

- respecting uniqueness of local communities “one size does not fit all”; and
- providing intervention and mediation where appropriate.

The City shall establish and maintain grant programs including specialized programs aimed at responding to specific community needs. Mechanisms should be established to apply equity principles and criteria to all grant programs.

## **Principle 7    The City in Partnership**

The City should work in partnership with external agencies, institutions and community groups with the objective of strengthening and building community capacity.

These principles provide a foundation which will enable the City of Toronto and its community to continue in the development of values that support the full equality and access of all its residents and communities. As such, they guide the recommendations proposed below and, if adopted by Council, will guide the development of all policies, programs and positions taken by the City of Toronto in future years.

### **3.3    Issues, Challenges and Work Plan**

The Task Force is concerned about the role and function of the City’s bureaucracy in relation to how it supports access and equity. During our consultations, we heard many concerns about City programs, services and decision-making processes.

Some of these included:

- lack of curb cuts in planning pedestrian walkways; poor lighting at night on City streets causing safety problems for women;
- the need to recognize Aboriginal peoples First Nations status and its implications to the City of Toronto;
- lack of affordable childcare causing employment difficulties for women;
- the need for increased action to deal with hate activities in Toronto;
- the need to stabilize support for recent immigrants and refugees;
- the lack of information in accessible formats for the visually impaired, deaf and hard-of-hearing and those who do not speak English;
- the need to address income inequality affecting women, people with disabilities, racial

minorities and Aboriginal peoples;

- the need to enable the City's equity-seeking groups to participate in the City's decision-making.

We heard:

*"We want to be part of the City, not on the side or marginal. We have a lot to contribute and want to be valued just like everyone else."*

*"It's hard getting around the city if you have a disability. Curb cuts are not common outside of the old City of Toronto and audio-traffic signals are only in the pilot project stage. Getting around on public transportation is ever so difficult and there doesn't appear to be any positive changes coming on that front."*

*"There are more and more Native peoples settling in Toronto. These peoples need programs and services that are sensitive to their customs and needs. The City needs to recognize that this is not just a matter of cross-cultural training or anti-racism. It's a matter of self-determination and self-government. The City has to deal with our communities as autonomous entities with our own governance structures and constitutional status."*

*"Hate crimes and racist incidents never seem to go away. We need protection and we need to be able to educate our communities about the dangers these crimes pose for us."*

*"Some people think that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders only live downtown on Church Street. People have to wake up and realize we live all over the City and want acceptance wherever we are. The City has to promote our rights across its boundaries in the same way it addresses racism and anti-semitism."*

The Task Force also learned, from the experience of the former municipalities and other jurisdictions, that adequate resources and structural supports are essential to institutionalize access and equity principles throughout the new City. This will ensure the timely, consistent, and responsible integration of these principles, and support the mechanisms of accountability to Council and the community.

In our consultations, we heard that these were key concerns for the community, departments, and access and equity staff. They thereby provide the basis for recommendations for action to be initiated by specific departments as well as across departments and corporate-wide.

To address these concerns, we recommend that:

- **Each City department, agency, board and commission be responsible and accountable for the identification of access and equity issues within their policies, programs, services and staffing and undertake to develop and implement access and equity plans to address these.**

**Time Frame** Action on this item should be undertaken immediately and the first access and equity plans reported on by the fall, 1999.

**Anticipated Outcome** All City departments and special purpose bodies will have developed access and equity plans to guide their operations and decision-making. These will be reported on to their respective standing committees and to the proposed Access and Equity Committee.

- **Each department and City agency, board and commission include in their access and equity plans responses to the issues and concerns identified by the Task Force and identified below:**

**Corporate Services Department**

- employment equity and human rights policies and programs;
- communications strategy that includes multilingual resource capacity and consideration for improving access to information by the deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired;
- accessible municipal facilities and premises, particularly for peoples with disabilities;
- access to Council decision-making;
- enabling non-citizen residents to participate in municipal elections;
- access to information technology, including e-mail, voice-mail and internet;
- development of access and equity training programs; and
- inclusion of access and equity principles in organizational/staff development programs and performance management/development systems.

**Finance Department**

- an accessible system for the purchasing of goods and services;
- communications strategy, particularly multilingual components and for the visually impaired, regarding taxation issues;
- development of fair wage policy and program; and
- access and equity staff development and education.

**Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department**

- accessible recreation programs;
- economic development programs and support for small businesses and businesses owned by equity-seeking groups;
- access and equity principles and support in a unified city culture plan and city cultural programs, including heritage and public art;
- access and equity staff development and education;
- accessible recreation programs and accommodation for people with disabilities in these programs;
- continuation of special recreation programs targeted to equity-seeking communities, e.g., lifeguard training for Black youth and Muslim women;
- continuation of community development through recreation programs, particularly in high needs areas; and
- provision of employment opportunities (part-time, summer) for youth from equity-seeking communities.

### **Community and Neighbourhood Services Department**

- access and equity criteria in the development of a Social Development Strategy;
- access and equity staff development and education;
- continuation of multicultural and equity programs in the Public Health Department;
- equitable provision of grants and community development supports;
- access to housing for immigrants, refugees, people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples;
- inclusion of equity-seeking communities in program advisory committees, e.g., childcare or homes for the aged advisory committees;
- coordination of translation and interpretation services across the department; and
- provision of support for refugees in social services and hostels.

### **Works and Emergency Services Department**

- continuation of women and people with disabilities in non-traditional occupations;
- communications to ensure community participation in waste reduction programs;
- communication and development of common approaches within emergency services (Fire, Ambulance, Police) and between emergency services and other service providers (health, community agencies) to improve service access;
- access and equity staff education and training; and
- continuation of accommodation for people with disabilities funds to support capital improvements to facilities.

### **Urban Planning and Development Services Department**

- # continuation and development of community involvement in planning issues and environmental consultations;
- expansion of curb cut programs to ensure an accessible City for people with mobility impairments;
- inclusion of access and equity criteria in all planning functions and in the development of the City's official plan;
- access and equity staff development and education;
- coordination of compiling and publishing demographic data; and
- expansion of audible traffic signals at sidewalk crossings for visually impaired.

### **Chief Administrator's Office**

- access and equity issues in organizational reviews and recommendations on political/bureaucratic structures;
- inclusion of access and equity issues in development of City's Strategic Plan;
- inclusion of access and equity criteria in performance management of commissioners and senior staff;
- coordination of access and equity integration in City departments and special purpose bodies.

**Time Frame** Action on these items should be implemented immediately.

**Anticipated Outcome** Responses to the issues identified above should form the beginning of each department's access and equity plans. To initiate this process, it is anticipated that the responsible department will report on how it will address these issues to the appropriate standing committee and refer these reports for information to the Access and Equity Committee.

- **Access and equity action plans be submitted to the Access and Equity Centre described below by September, 1999, for review and comment; and then, be forwarded to the Access and Equity Committee and City Council for approval.**

**The approved plans would then be included as part of the year 2000 budget process and reported on to the appropriate Standing Committee and Council for final approval.**

**Time Frame** Action should begin immediately.

**Anticipated Outcome** The City of Toronto will have in place a comprehensive approach to implementing access and equity policies and programs by the fall, 1999. It is anticipated that these policies and programs will be protected in the budget process and become entrenched as an integral component of City programs, services and decision-making by the spring, 2000.

- **Facilitated by the Access and Equity Centre and chaired by the Chief Administrative Officer, the City establish an Access and Equity Working Group, which includes senior staff from each department, to coordinate the development of access and equity plans and to identify corporate issues requiring attention.**

**Time Frame** The Chief Administrative Officer's Access and Equity Working Group should be initiated immediately and meet as required.

**Anticipated Outcome** This group will facilitate the City's response to access and equity planning and coordinate responses on corporate and cross-departmental issues listed below as well as others that arise during implementation.

- **In terms of cross-departmental and corporate issues, the following issues are to be addressed by the Chief Administrative Officer's Access and Equity Working Group and report through the Chief Administrative Officer to the Access and Equity Committee in summer, 1999.**

To involve communities in city life, departments and special purpose bodies need to:

- (1) ensure diverse communities are involved in the decision-making process of the services and programs that affect them;
- (2) conduct outreach and community development to keep abreast of changes in

the communities and to develop programs that meet community needs; and

- (3) communities should be able to access senior management directly. Senior management should meet with concerned communities periodically to discuss access and equity issues.

To address the linguistic diversity in Toronto's communities, departments and special purpose bodies will need to:

- (1) develop and/or maintain an inventory of staff, at the local and front line level, who speak other languages;
- (2) coordinate a corporate approach to develop standards on languages and coordinate the testing and training of staff;
- (3) ensure staff who are required to use diverse language skills to provide translation/interpretation services are appropriately compensated;
- (4) develop a corporate translation and interpretation service to assist departments in effectively addressing their communication strategies; and
- (5) develop community partnerships that enable them to work with and meet the linguistic needs of new communities.

To ensure appropriate workplace accommodation for the City's diverse employees, departments and special purpose bodies will need to:

- (1) ensure their staff respect and implement human rights policies and workplace accommodation for people with disabilities, women, people with diverse religious customs and so on.

**Time Frame** These issues should be addressed immediately by the Chief Administrative Officer's Access and Equity Working Group, once it is established.

**Anticipated Outcome** City departments and special purpose bodies will be able to effectively address issues that are common to a number of departments. Corporate leadership on these matters will ensure consistency in approach from department to department and will also be cost effective, reducing duplication and cutting unnecessary costs. A report on the time frames required to address each of the above issues should be submitted through the Chief Administrative Officer to the proposed Access and Equity Committee in the summer, 1999.

- **City Council provide tangible support for the City's grants programs to ensure they all promote access and equity goals and enable diverse communities to play an active role in City life.**

This can be done by:

- (1) enhancing the Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Grants Program so that it is adequately resourced and can provide equitable funding to organizations concerned about equality rights in diverse communities.

It should be noted that the provision of such grants is an important tool in promoting autonomous civic participation by equity-seeking communities as well as in meeting the needs of emerging communities as a result of demographic changes; and

- (2) establishing a community task group to work with staff in the implementation of the Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Grants Program as well as all other City grants programs. This will ensure community involvement in the grants process, including the environmental scanning and priority setting.

One representative from each of the Advisory Committees identified below should form the task group for the Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Grants. All other grants programs should develop similar ways of involving communities in the grants process.

**Time Frame** This should be done as part of the 1999 budget process.

**Anticipated Outcome** Additional funding is available to support the autonomous activities of equity-seeking community groups. In addition, representatives from these communities will participate as part of the process of recommending organizations to receive City grants.

## 3.4 Proposed Structures

To ensure short-term and long-term commitment to access and equity by the City of Toronto, the Task Force is proposing the establishment of structures aimed at institutionalizing political responsibility, community involvement and bureaucratic support.

### 3.4.1 Political Structure

We have two purposes in mind in putting forward recommendations in this area:

- (1) to ensure that Council, its Standing Committees, the Mayor and each individual City Councillor value the diversity of the Toronto community; and
- (2) that they are able to take part in promoting the goals of access and equity in meaningful and symbolic ways.

In this context, we make the following recommendations:

- **City Council establish an Access and Equity Committee comprised of Councillors and representatives from each of the advisory committees recommended below.**

This would be a Standing Committee of Council with one representative from each of the City's other Standing Committees, the Police Services Board, the Toronto Hydro Commission, the Toronto Transit Commission and each of the advisory committees recommended below. This will ensure links to all Standing Committees and the City's

largest special purpose bodies as well as to the advisory committees described below.

In addition, the Mayor would be an ex officio member.

***Time Frame*** Action on this recommendation should begin immediately so that the Committee is in place by the end of January, 1999.

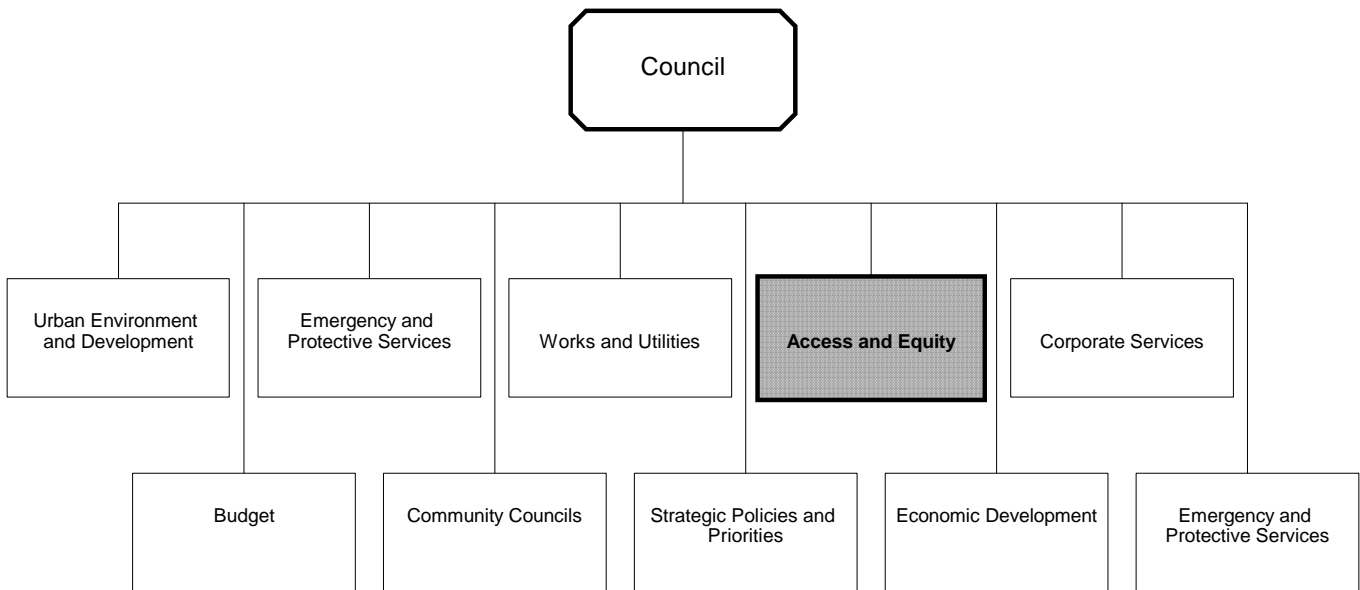
***Anticipated Outcome*** A Committee of Council will be in place to guide the development of access and equity policies, programs and initiatives by the City, its departments and special purpose bodies and, further, to support the development of access and equity initiatives within the community.

- **City Council revise the terms of reference for each of its Standing Committees to ensure they designate a representative to the Access and Equity Committee and that these committees include access and equity responsibilities within their terms of reference.**

***Time Frame*** Action on this item should begin in February and be completed by the spring, 1999.

***Anticipated Outcome*** The Access and Equity Committee will guide the development of the terms of reference and make recommendations to Council on the same. All City Council committees will have clear mandates regarding their responsibilities to ensure ongoing implementation and accountability for access and equity policies and programs.

**Figure 1  
Proposed Political Structure**



### 3.4.2 Community Involvement

The Task Force is extremely concerned about the role, mechanisms and support that are required for community involvement in City decision-making and broadening opportunities for enhance civic participation.

The former municipalities all took this matter very seriously, particularly in terms of supporting the involvement of representatives from diverse communities in municipal decision-making and civic life. In this context, more than 40 committees, advisory bodies and reference groups were established.

To continue and enhance this work, we recommend that:

- **Advisory Committees comprised of community representatives concerned about access and equity issues be established.**

In particular, the following Advisory Committees are recommended for immediate implementation:

- < Committee on the Status of Women;
- < Committee on Action for People with Disabilities;
- < Committee on Aboriginal Affairs;
- < Committee and Ethno-Cultural and Multifaith Issues;
- < Committee on Racial Minority Community Issues;
- < Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues;
- < Committee on Immigration and Refugee Issues;
- < Committee on Poverty and Literacy Issues;
- < Committee on Seniors Issues (to be discussed with the Seniors' Task Force).

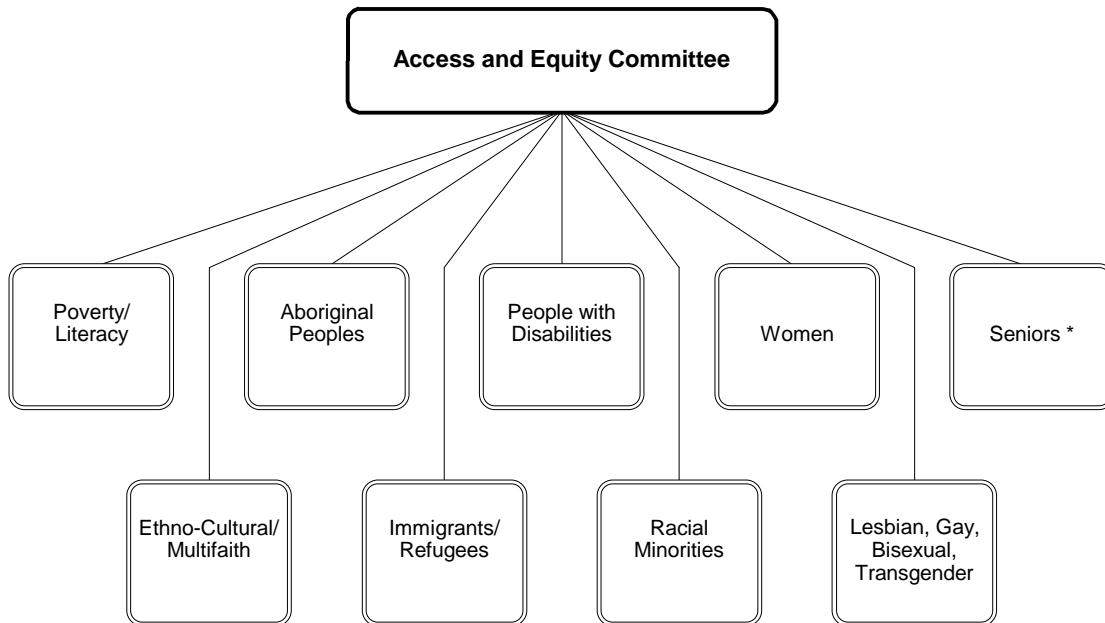
These Committees would report directly to the Access and Equity Committee and be supported by staff from the Access and Equity Centre. One representative from each Advisory Committee will be selected by the Advisory Committee to sit on the Access and Equity Committee as a citizen representative.

**Time Frame** The community members to each Advisory Committee will be selected in the spring, 1999.

**Anticipated Outcome** The Access and Equity Committee will establish terms of reference for these advisory committees, undertake a recruitment campaign and select membership for each committee. These committees will provide a structural response to ensuring the "voice of the City's diverse communities continue to be heard" in the City's day-to-day operations and in community life.

**Figure 2**  
**Community Involvement: Advisory Committees**

\* Advisory Committee on Seniors' issues to be discussed with the Seniors' Task Force.



- **The Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs review the recommendations contained in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the response of the Federal Government, “*Gathering Strength*”, to develop options for City Council’s consideration on how to address the implications of Aboriginal self-determination and relations between this community and the new City of Toronto.**

**Time Frame** This will be initiated in the spring, 1999, once the Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs is set up.

**Anticipated Outcome** The Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs will propose to City Council, through the Access and Equity Committee, appropriate City responses

to the report and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This will provide City Council opportunities to contribute to the growth and development of First Nation's peoples living in Toronto.

- **City Council appoint one member of Council for each Advisory Committee identified above.**

These Councillors will be Council's link to these Advisory Committees, taking an active role in their work and acting as co-chairs.

**Time Frame** Action on this recommendation is required in January, 1999.

**Anticipated Outcome** City Council will have established direct links through City Councillors to all Advisory Committees recommended above. This will ensure coordinated action between the City and its diverse communities on issues impacting on equity-seeking groups.

- **The Advisory Committees develop working groups to address the following issues: Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate; Policing; Business Development; and Employment Equity.**

These working groups should be comprised of at least one member from each Advisory Committee, in addition to representatives from the community concerned about these issues.

**Time Frame** These working groups should be set up shortly after the membership of the Advisory Committees are confirmed.

**Anticipated Outcome** Citizen representatives of the Advisory Committees will have opportunities to work together on issues of common concern. This will provide equity-seeking groups with opportunities to develop common understanding and approaches on key access and equity issues.

### 3.4.3 Departmental Structure

The Task Force is concerned about the role and function of the City's bureaucracy in relation to how it supports access and equity. In reviewing the legacy of the former municipalities within Toronto and research on what takes place in other cities, we are committed to ensuring that adequate resources and structural support exist within the City to implement access and equity principles and policies through the organization in a timely, consistent and responsible manner.

The new City of Toronto is a very large organization, comprising approximately 50,000 staff and providing a wide range of services which may appear overwhelming and touch upon many aspects of the lives of the City's residents. Community satisfaction in service delivery and access to the City are critical and must be safeguarded at all times.

To address these issues, the following structural supports and resources are recommended:

- **The City establish an Access and Equity Centre headed by an executive staff position reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer to coordinate the work of the City on access and equity.** This includes providing secretariat, policy and research support to the Mayor, Council, its Standing Committees, the Access and Equity Committee and the various Advisory Committees recommended above.

Further, the Centre will provide advice and support to City departments, agencies, boards and commissions, particularly the development and implementation of access and equity action plans.

The Centre will conduct research and policy development on corporate-wide and key community access and equity issues and initiate public education activities as well.

- **The Access and Equity Centre establish offices to address the following issues and develop a human resources plan to support the aforementioned Advisory Committees:**
  - < **Women;**
  - < **Disabilities;**
  - < **Aboriginal Peoples;**
  - < **Ethno-Cultural and Multifaith Communities;**
  - < **Racial Minorities;**
  - < **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgenders;**
  - < **Immigrants and Refugees;**
  - < **Poverty/Literacy; and**
  - < **Seniors (to be discussed with the Seniors' Task Force).**

**Time Frame** Action on this should begin January, 1999, and set up to be completed by the spring, 1999.

**Anticipated Outcome** The Access and Equity Centre and its internal organizational structure will be established and the senior staff selected.

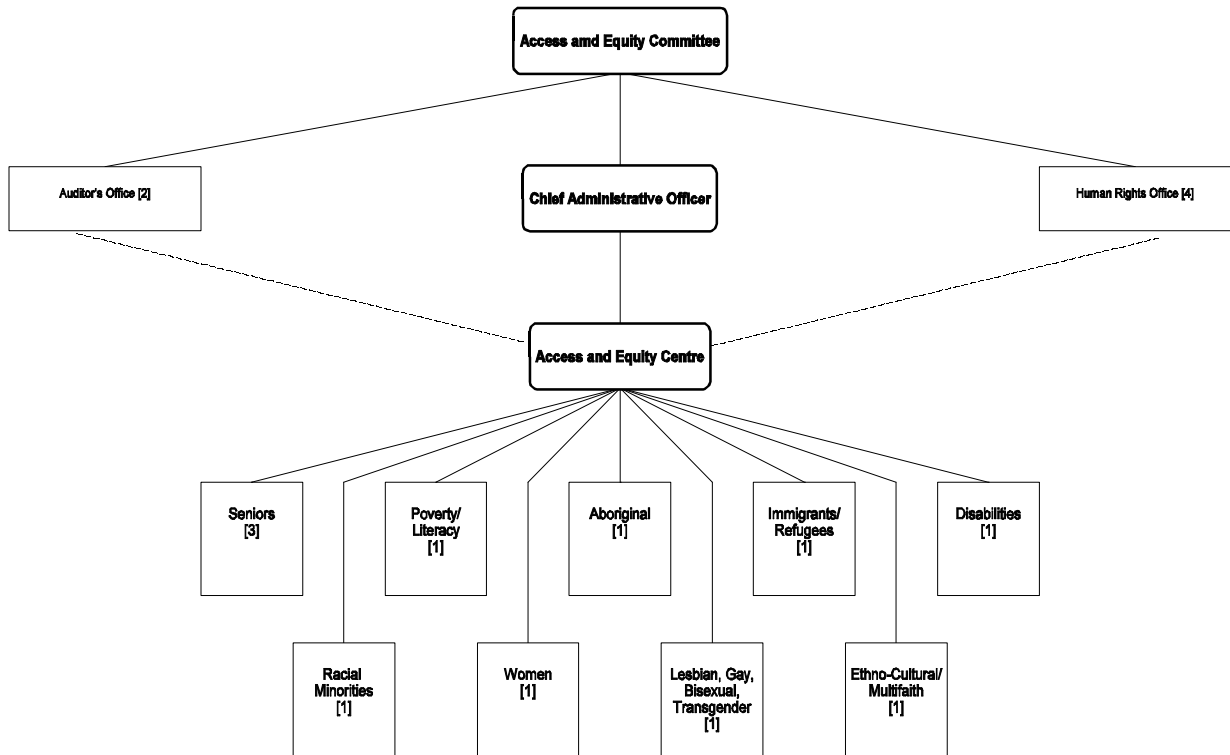
- **The City of Toronto ensure the establishment of an audit and monitoring function on access and equity implementation within the City Auditor’s office, and that this be established as an ombudsman function to undertake systemic audits and investigations of City programs, services and decision-making.**

In this context, the Auditor will report to the Access and Equity Committee and will have the power to both initiate investigations and to respond to resident and community concerns. The Auditor’s office will work with the City’s Access and Equity Centre and other departments as required to undertake audit or investigation.

***Time Frame*** Action on this item should be initiated immediately and resource requirements recommended by the Auditor for inclusion in the 1999 budget process.

***Anticipated Outcome*** City Council will have established an audit and monitoring function to ensure effectiveness in access and equity policy and program implementation. In addition, a mechanism will be set up to undertake systemic analysis and make recommendations on systemic approaches to ongoing access and equity implementation.

**Figure 3  
Proposed Departmental Structure**



[1] Offices report to Access and Equity Centre

[2] For Access and Equity Audits and Systemic Investigations only

[3] Seniors' Office to be discussed with the Seniors' Task Force

[4] On Human Rights policy matters only

- **Departments and special purpose bodies report annually to the City Auditor’s office on the complaints they have received and their disposition.**

***Time Frame*** Such reports will be issued annually.

***Anticipated Outcome*** Departments and special purpose bodies will be responsible for responding to resident complaints. The Auditor’s office will have an opportunity to review these responses, identify systemic issues and undertake investigations as required. The Auditor’s office will also report on these matters to the Access and Equity Committee.

- **The City of Toronto establish a Human Rights Office to manage human rights complaints by City staff and communities in accordance with the City’s human rights policies and procedures.**

***Time Frame*** This will be initiated once the Office is established.

***Anticipated Outcome*** A common approach will be established on all human rights complaints whether addressed internally or through the Ontario Human Rights Commission. In addition, an annual report to Council will be submitted through the Access and Equity Committee. This report will identify issues, trends and disposition of human rights cases within the City’s departments and special purpose bodies.

## 4. Conclusion

The Task Force on Community Access and Equity is putting forward several recommendations for consideration by City Council. These recommendations address the ways in which the new City can continue to support principles of access and equity and ensure that its diverse communities are involved in all aspects of City life, particularly municipal services, programs and decision-making.

To achieve this, we recommend the establishment of:

- policy principles to guide City decision-making;
- political and community structures to ensure ongoing commitment by the City and its communities to access and equity;
- administrative structures to ensure financial and resource support is in place; and
- an audit and monitoring function to ensure effective implementation of access and equity policies and programs.

To implement the above recommendations will require commitment, resourcing and appropriate timing. Based on Toronto's history of commitment and leadership on access and equity issues, we believe the commitment of Council, its departments, agencies, boards and commissions are firmly entrenched. We also believe the same commitment exists within the Toronto community.

In this context:

- the recommendations contained in this report should be included in the 1999 budget process so as to ensure the human resources plan and program budget are in place by the end of March, 1999. This includes the establishment of the audit and monitoring function as recommended.
- the Access and Equity Centre will need to provide periodic reports to the Access and Equity Committee on the progress of implementing the recommendations contained in this report; and
- the Access and Equity Centre, in cooperation with the Chief Administrative Officer's Working Group on Access and Equity, and the Advisory Committees, will need to develop a process to monitor and evaluate the ongoing implementation of the City's access and equity initiatives.

City Council's adoption of these steps and the recommendations contained in this report will ensure that the City of Toronto takes action on access and equity policy and program implementation. This will fulfill the mandate of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity which was established by Council, and more importantly, will ensure that the concerns of equality, social justice and a community free from discrimination is a reality in the City of Toronto.

# **Appendix A**

## **Membership of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity**

### **Chair**

Councillor Joe Mihevc

### **Co-Chairs**

Gloria Fallick

Sylvia Maracle

### **Council Members**

Councillor Elizabeth Brown (Rexdale-Thistletown)

Councillor Peter Li Preti (Black Creek)

Councillor Pam McConnell (Don River)

Councillor Sherene Shaw (Scarborough Agincourt)

### **Community Members**

Shaheen Ali

Dennis Fong

Sonya Greckol

Karen Mock

Charles Ng

Khan Rahi

Duberlis Ramos

Jenny Ratansi-Rodrigues

Al Reeves

Carole Riback

Kenn Richard