

Details on Public Engagement Activities

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

In December 2018, City Council created a Special Committee on Governance. The Committee was given the mandate to consider the impacts on the City's governance structure and processes from the reduction in the size of Council and make recommendations to City Council on any further changes to its governance structure.

At its meeting on February 21, 2019, the Committee adopted a work plan and public engagement process. Public engagement to date includes:

- Deputations,
- Written submissions to the City Clerk and over one hundred email submissions to the City Manager's Office,
- An online survey which gathered over 350 responses,
- Five public sessions attended by 47 people,
- A discussion guide and workbook used by 15 community groups to lead their own discussions,
- A facilitated session with 8 members of Planning tables representing Neighbourhood Improvement Areas,
- Student consultations on governance conducted by four groups of students in the summer session of the Urban Studies course at Innis College, University of Toronto, and
- Discussions with researchers and subject matter experts.

To encourage broad participation, participants were offered a number of ways to provide input. To allow for analysis across all of consultation activities, the survey information and research questions were kept consistent across all methods.

Participants could complete a survey online; attend an in-person session; participated in a community-led session; or could email, or mail in their comments directly. There were a number of participants who participated in all or more than one of the opportunities.

This report summarizes the feedback received from all engagements and will be used by staff to develop recommendations for the Special Committee on Governance. Included is a sample of quotes from participants, in italics, throughout the report. Once all of the consultations are complete, all of the input from the consultations will be made available to the public on the Open Data portal at www.toronto.ca/Open.

1.2. Key Findings

People who participated in this consultation were clearly passionate about City governance, their elected officials, and civic engagement. They provided many ideas on how to shape and improve the City's various governance structures, processes, and roles to achieve more interactive, efficient and transparent municipal government.

During the consultation, and evident through written submissions, presentations and by public speakers at Committee meetings, the definition of "governance" applied by

participants was broad. Everything from changing the official salutation for the Mayor to a comprehensive overhaul of the City's relationship to the Provincial and Federal governments were raised.

The Committee's direction to staff at its April and February meetings has helped to categorize the input received to date. Staff have focused on issues within the Committee's mandate and the City's jurisdiction, the impact of a smaller City Council, and on issues participants indicated were not working or in their view were "broken" and needed to be fixed. The objective of the consultation was to better understand public sentiment, interests and reasons behind proposed solutions and ideas, as well as look at concerns, questions or complaints. Staff reviewed all ideas equally, whether they were submitted once or multiple times.

Most comments reflect ideas or concerns about issues that pre-existed the change to the size of Council or the interim governance model that was put in place in December 2018. Across all of the governance structures and systems which were consulted on, three primary areas were identified for additional review: issues related to representation, communication and engagement, and committee and meeting management.

While the findings suggest that participants feel the reduction in Council size has challenged the City's ability to operate effectively there were no flags of alarm or crisis or overall sense the system is broken: across all participants there has been no marker of a consistent problem, but rather, there have been suggested tweaks, refinements, and revisions to strengthen the way that decision-making and civic engagement is currently done.

Major themes include:

- A sentiment that Councillors are currently the critical connection for the public's voice to be heard in City decision making and frustration that the change in ward boundaries has increased the demands on Councillors' time.
- A tension between the need for broad, long term and strategic decision-making versus the need to attend to specific, often routine, realities at the ward and neighbourhood level.
- Specific areas where decision making processes could be made more effective, efficient, or accessible including consideration of another level of governance that would link residents and neighbourhood associations or groups to the formal decision-making process.
- A high priority placed on accessible information about decision making, transparent processes, and innovative ways of communicating decisions that are underway.
- A demand for inclusive and relevant opportunities for the public to engage in and influence decision making at the local and City wide level.
- An interest in seeing the leadership role of the Mayor strengthened by starting each term with a speech outlining their strategic objectives and fiscal priorities.

1.3. Consultation Objectives

Considerations that guided the consultation planning included:

- The need to focus on both the structures (e.g. Council, special and standing committees, community councils) and processes (e.g. city-led engagement, partnerships, governance through the City's agencies and corporations).
- How to understand the impact of the reduction in Council size, how well are the governance structures, processes and roles functioning? What isn't working, why and how could they be improved?
- How has the reduction in Council size impacted community and public engagement in local and city-wide decision-making? What would enhance engagement?

The term "governance" and issues related to municipal governance are complex. Participant and communication materials described, in as accessible and clear language possible, the governance structures and processes used by the City and by Council, the scope of the consultation and mandate of the committee so that participants who were very familiar with governance issues, and those who were not, could both participate as they were most interested and able.

1.4. Communications and Outreach

Members of the public were invited to provide their views and ideas on Council's governance structures and processes for local and city-wide decision-making through an online survey, at public meetings, at community and student-led sessions as well as through speakers, presentations and submissions to the City Manager's Office and the Committee.

To support these activities, a website was created with information about the Committee, the City's governance, links to background reports, information about the public sessions and about how community groups could host their own sessions to gather input. A participant guide and online survey were posted and made available in 10 languages.

Information about the consultation was posted to *Get Involved*, the City's public engagement portal, on the City's main webpage, advertised online and through posters at civic centres, libraries, recreation centres and through the City's community networks and partners. Information was provided to City Councillors and divisional staff to promote the consultation and multiple city social media channels were used to encourage participation.

Online advertisement consisted of a poster and campaign materials using the tagline "Share your ideas for decision making in Toronto" with a "Learn More" hyperlink directly to the consultation website and online survey at www.toronto.ca/TOgovernance. The outreach campaign started in mid-May and ran until mid-June, the week after the public consultation meetings were over to encourage participant who had attended the meetings to complete the online survey. The survey remained open until July 26, 2019.

The consultation website and survey were accessibility-compliant, public sessions were held at barrier-free locations and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters attend all City sessions.

Analytics of the media campaign show:

Web pages: Weather Media Network: 350,274 impressions, 581 total clicks, click through rate of .17%; CP24: 200,049 impressions with total clicks of 1,024 and click through rate of .53%; Toronto Star: 150,025 impressions with total clicks of 236 and click through rate of .16%; Toronto.com: 169,428 impressions, total clicks of 234 and click through rate of .14%

Social Media: Facebook ads and Boosted Events posts ran between May 20 and June 17 and received 206 emoji reactions, 75 shares, 18 comments and 515 click-throughs of the survey link.

The City leveraged existing Twitter accounts to promote the consultation between May 20 and July 26 through Get Involved Toronto (@GetInvolvedTO), City of Toronto (@cityoftoronto) and 311 Toronto (@311Toronto), with multiple tweets per day. The City also posted to its Instagram account (@cityofto).

An introductory letter with a direct link to the survey was also sent out through internal and external email networks in June and July, including those of City Councillors, Agencies and Corporations, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA), Federation of Metro Tenants Associations (FTMA), Toronto Public Library branches, Neighbourhood Improvement Area networks, Social Innovation Labs, Toronto Atlas of Neighbourhood Groups and Organizations (TANGO), Confederation of Resident & Ratepayer Associations in Toronto (CORRA), Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA), Advocacy and Social Action for People with Disabilities – Toronto, Local Immigration Partnerships, and The 519 Community Centre.

2. Consultation Activities

2.1. Public Sessions: Open Houses and Discussions

Four weekday public sessions were held from 6-9 pm in four locations (Monday, June 10, Etobicoke Olympium; Wednesday, June 12, Scarborough Civic Centre; Thursday, June 13, North York Civic Centre; Monday June 17, North Toronto Memorial Community Centre), and a Saturday session was held on June 15 at Metro Hall from 1-4 pm.

Forty seven people attended the five public sessions. An open house was held an hour prior to each session with City staff from 311, City Divisions, and the Open Data team available to answer questions and take input on ideas for improving information between residents, the City and Council.

City staff then gave a brief presentation that included the mandate of the Committee with a focus on decision-making structures, processes and roles, followed by the opportunity for questions and comments from individual participants. The participants continued to provide their input in greater detail at small table discussions, facilitated by City staff. Session facilitators provided very brief report-backs on the key topics of the

table discussions at the end of each meeting, with closing remarks provided by the City staff. Participants were also provided time to make a statement or summarize their input to all in attendance. At all points during the consultation, participants were encouraged to follow along in their "Participant Workbook" and to submit it at the end of the session, or when they had an opportunity.

A similar format was generally followed at the session of participants from the NIA Planning Tables, and by the U of T students who conducted their research with other youth.

At each of session there was a mix of participants – some were familiar with governance processes, and some people who shared that they were new to municipal processes, had read about the consultations and wanted to learn more, or who hoped their Councillor would be in attendance.

The two smallest consultations had five participants (Etobicoke and Scarborough) and the largest consultation at Metro Hall had twenty three. A few participants attended more than one session, some participants expressed surprise at the low turn-out, and others felt that it was unfortunate the news about the Raptors making the playoffs dominated both the public's and media attention at the same time as the sessions. An initial online misprint of an address for one session was corrected and staff were dispatched to re-direct any potential attendees to the correct location in the vicinity. Almost all participants stayed to the end of each session, however a few chose to attend the open house portion only to provide their input.

2.2. Survey

A survey was developed with an accompanying workbook with information about the Committee, the scope of the consultation and an overview of municipal governance structures and procedures, illustrated by infographics and visual representations.

Survey questions were created for each section of the workbook starting with the decision making bodies of the City, followed by questions about participation in City-led engagement, and a final section about the ways respondents participated in community-led engagement. Each section asked about the participant's level of engagement, whether they felt the engagements or processes worked well or needed improvement, and then provided space for further comments though open ended questions and response boxes.

The survey was made available online and in hard copy; available in paper format at the public sessions, and by post and e-mail. Online versions were translated into 10 languages. The survey was clicked on 5,700 times, a total of 357 people partially completed and 251 people completed all questions. Many respondents took the time to offer their thoughts in the open ended questions and these comments provided robust observations and further details to the rationale behind their suggestions and ideas.

Many of the people who responded to the survey also participated in the discussions led by the City (about 25%) or community (about 15%) so in addition to the results of the survey, their participation provides useful insight into their involvement across various forms of consultations.

Of approximately 300 respondents, the decision making process that received the most attention for improvement was Community Councils (50%), followed by Standing and Special Committees (40%) and Council Advisory Bodies (35%). Almost 60% review meeting agendas and decisions online; almost 50% receive committee updates by email; and almost 40% watch meeting online. 27% attend, speak or write to City committees.

By far, the most common city-led engagement activity respondents participated in (250 survey respondents) is answering surveys (over 80%), followed by interacting with City staff (just over 50%), meetings and open houses (just under 50%), City-led community network (30%), volunteering (25%), and attending or sitting on a board (10%). Across all these methods, an almost equal number felt the process worked well as those that thought the process needed improvement, with the exception of meetings and open houses where a third more people felt the process needs improvement.

With regards to community-led engagement most (over 50%) of the 250 respondents participated in online neighbourhood networks such as social media groups and web forums or participated in neighbourhood associations such as resident's associations, or community organizations (under 50%).

As part of the consultation materials, staff provided an introduction and overview of how decisions are made by Council and the role of the public in the City's decision-making processes. Some participants expressed that the survey and the preamble on governance structures and engagement processes was very informative, while others found it lengthy and difficult to understand.

2.3. Written and Email Submissions

The City Manager's Office received over 100 email submissions from May 10 to July 27. Of these submissions, seven were voicing support for the proposal on community boards and a City Planning Commission as put forward by the Etobicoke-Lakeshore Community Planning Group in its deputation on February 20 (GV1.2.2). One submission was in support of the Harbord Village Resident Association submission date June 8, 2019. (GV3.1.1). There were 86 email submissions received from July 18 – 26 from citizens expressing support for support for ranked ballots for municipal elections. The top reasons listed were more representative elections, outcomes which better reflected voter interests, and greater public engagement in municipal governance.

2.4. Planning Tables

A separate session was hosted for participants who were members of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA) Planning Tables and interested in learning more about municipal governance, improving their facilitation skills, and wanted to share their knowledge of the challenges in their communities. These participants were predominantly older, female and racialized and knowledgeable about City Council and Councillors, and City-led and Community-led engagement. They expressed an affinity to their Councillors as the representative of City Governance; to Community Development Officers who were a trusted system navigators to the processes; and talked about various challenges to community organizing at the local level.

City Community Development Officers coordinated the discussion on July 24 which was facilitated by members of the Planning tables, was held at the North York Civic Centre and was attended by eight people from various communities across Toronto.

2.5. Student Research

An instructor from the University of Toronto reached out with a request that his students use the survey as the basis of a youth engagement research project for their Urban Studies course at Innis College. The Urban Studies course ran from July 2 for 5 weeks, and the youth conducted their consultations during the last two weeks of July. The sixteen students broke into four groups of four and each group designed, promoted, conducted and reported on their consultations separately. Generally they reported that their participants were predominantly young, enrolled in University, and racialized. The student groups who conducted their research under the auspices of the U of T class each modified the City's survey in ways that were more relevant to their participants and reflective of City governance more generally with a focus on the engagement components.

3. Consultation Findings

Participants commented on a wide range of topics. Comments have been categorized by the major components of the survey and workbook, starting with the roles of Mayor and Councillor, Council and its committees including Community Councils, public and community engagement. Additional categories included the role of neighbourhood associations, electoral reform, and public information.

3.1. Mayor

Some participants commented on the roles, responsibilities, and the powers of the Mayor in the City's governance system. Some participants suggested:

- Starting the term with a forward looking "State-of-the-City" address based on strategic initiatives, keeping Council focused on City-wide issues, and provide accountability by clarifying and promoting a short, and long-term vision for the City.
- Incremental enhancement to the executive authority of the Mayor to "match the expectations of the public and the need for a city-wide focus".
- Setting "key budget priorities to align with strategic fiscal planning, operating and capital budgets to give clear direction to the public service regarding the development of policy proposals and budget priorities".
- Mayoral power to decide the composition of committees ensures they have majority support on committees for their agenda, and others felt representation on committees should be based on wards, not by Mayoral appointment. One person suggested, Councillors should "apply" to the Mayor for their preferred committees.
- One concern was about the title of "Your Worship" given to the Mayor, which the participant felt should be retired.

3.2. City Councillors

Participants felt strongly about accessibility to their Councillor and their approach to their work. There was recognition by the participants that the change in ward size has increased the Councilors' workload, yet there was a strong sentiment that their Councillor should continue to be accessible to constituents, and be a conduit for information between City Council, constituents, neighbourhoods, and wards.

- Many participants feel that the main job of a Councillor is to be readily accessible to the public, involved in their local communities (attending events; holding town halls), and to keep constituents at the ward level well informed (via executive advisories, emails, newsletters, social media).
- A few people expressed concern that the change in ward size inhibited them from approaching their Councillor "in the way that they had in the past".
- Quite a number of participants recognized that "getting the Councillor's ear" was an important step in having your concern recognized, so when a constituent(s) felt they, or their concerns, were not of interest to the Councillor, they felt marginalized.
- Quite a few people felt that Councillors should receive more staff support commensurate with the increase in work load.
- Some participants also felt that the role of the Councillor should have limits, for example, with finite terms; and that they should be prohibited from having final say in decisions outside of their areas of expertise, such as city planning.
- There were suggestions about how to define the responsibilities of the Councillor's job. Examples include that the Councillors should have a portfolio of responsibilities such as with provincial Ministries, or that each Councillor's term should start with budget consultations.
- People from the Planning tables, in particular, recognized that Councillors need to reach out to the most marginalized communities in order for them to feel included in decision making.

"In my community, the Councillor would call meetings to find out what was on the resident's agendas and people would show up with their requests. If there was an issue, then people would attend the meetings."

3.3. City Council

Many people noted a preference for City Council to focus on the City-wide issues, for Councillors to be future-oriented and forward-thinking. Many people expressed concern that the provincial government was able to change the municipal structure without a consultative process, and that the present "ward boundaries are far too large". One idea to address the balance between a focus on City-wide versus local concerns was to create two tiers of governance – a local and a regional level.

City Council Meeting Procedures

Participants had many thoughts on how to improve Council meetings by managing agendas and meeting procedures differently. Suggestions including changes to delegation of authorities, increasing efficiencies and controls, and increasing the

accessibility of information.

- Some suggested that technical decisions be delegated to experts (e.g. planning issues), and that minor and/or local agenda items be delegated to Community Councils. One person thought constituents should weigh-in on issues via electronic voting.
- Participants also recommended that City Council meetings have better controls: enhanced power of the speaker to enforce adhering to the agendas, or through regulation that requires advance notice on controversial motions "so that the public has the option to weigh in on the topic", and through the use of special meetings to resolve complex issues.
- To increase the efficiency of Council meetings by managing the agenda, many participants made suggestions such as: bundle motions, automate the process of declaring a conflict of interest, and minimize time spent on points of order and privilege. Some people suggested restricting question period, or putting it at the beginning of debates. It was also felt that meeting length should be capped (at 12 hours), or that the frequency should be limited (twice per month).

3.4. Standing and Special Committees

Many participants commented on Council's Standing and Special Committees including the number of committees and their mandates and composition.

- The mandate of committees was something about which many people had ideas. Some felt the Executive committee has too much decision making power, or, conversely, that it should create a budget for review by the Budget Committee. Others felt that the Committees in general needed to be empowered to "get things done".
- It was felt that there was a need for more Special and Advisory Committees because these committees "got things done". Committees should have "strategies and action plans", to allow for long term vision and decision making as there is "no integration between the committee and the strategic plans". Suggestions for additional Advisory Committees included one for animals, one for neurodiversity, and one for public relations.
- There were several suggestions to create a single housing committee to address the housing continuum from homelessness to market rent and "make strategic progress on housing action plan". This committee "should be tasked to research and find solutions to housing problems". Another comment was to "make housing and homelessness a priority across all committees and divisions".
- Other suggestions were to change committee names: for example, someone suggested a name change to "Planning, Infrastructure and Housing Committee" to connect housing to infrastructure and development and "Water Management and Environment Committee" to encompass environment and water from rivers, lakes, etc.
- Participants suggests that there were too few councillors on committees to make well considered decisions, and by others, too many. Another participant said it takes too long to make decisions.

"The reduction in the number of Councillors means that there is less debate and decisions are made too quickly."

- It was recognized that committee composition was a political decision that could sway decision making, which was seen as negative. A common comment about the composition of committees was that they should have regional representation (the Civic Appointments Committee was given as an example), and that the tribunals should have regional representatives from Community Councils. Some expressed that the public should also be appointed to be representative of "community voices" or geographic areas in order to ensure "fairness and respect for the uniqueness of each area". Another person thought that a staff person should sit on committees as a "non-decisionary representative".

Committee Meeting Procedures

As with Council, collectively there were a lot of ideas about what is and is not working well with committee meetings, and suggestions for what could be adjusted.

- To increase the accessibility of committee meetings, some respondents said the mandate should be clear. The agendas themselves were difficult to understand, could be organized thematically, or could be weighted so that "important issues surface and are allotted sufficient time for debate". Many people conveyed that they wanted agenda items be timed so people would know when to attend. People asked for advanced notice, "at least ten days" to give the public more "heads up on controversial issues before they happen".

"The City does a good job of putting together agendas, minutes, etc. but I still find it hard to pick out the issues that matter most given the amount of information."

- There were some comments about the accessibility of information; that the summaries of meetings should be more accessible; and that the meetings time and locations are difficult for people to reach, particularly those living outside the downtown.
- Many comments concerned the website for committee agendas: it should be easier to navigate and better promoted ("advertise meetings as if they are products the City is attempting to sell"). Some people requested a rationale to help the public understand why certain decisions are chosen.
- Many people felt that standing committee meetings could be made more accessible by changing their times or locations. To increase access and accessibility, and to consider the needs of neuro-diverse people, meetings could be live streamed and/or there could be visual summaries of discussions. Another suggestion was to make sessions more interactive by holding committee meetings outdoors in parks to increase public engagement.

"Il faut absolument diffuser les réunions du comité francophone sur le web et les rendre accessible sur Youtube ensuite."

Deputations

"Time management of deputations is a fundamental problem. If five minutes get cut to three minutes, people, who have spent a long time preparing their speech, sometimes lose their rhythm and can't get their point across."

Participants provided thoughts on how deputations could be made more accessible by creating a schedule or using technology. Ideas included:

- Scheduling deputations with "specific time slots" at "more accessible times", including after business hours -- though overnight deputations "should be banned as inaccessible". Having a schedule would make "the time required less uncertain and reduce the barriers to attending". One person said to set a minimum time length, and another stated "reduce redundant presentations". Quite a few people wanted more advanced notice.
- Increase accessibility of deputations by allowing citizens to depute remotely.
- Newcomers, specifically, were mentioned as a group in need of information on the deputation process. Have "welcome signs in City Hall to let deputants know where they should go".
- Structure deputations to be "more like a citizen jury" to counter the sense that deputations "can be rigged", or are inconsequential because "the Councillors will vote as they please".
- One person asked "why are written submissions not made public?"

3.5. Community Councils

"Leverage Community Councils to play a larger role in engaging the public, and providing a platform for citizen voices."

Many participants suggested Community Councils were not well understood, should focus on different types of issues, and consider different roles for the community.

- Some said that Community Councils were not well known, there are too few, they are too big, that the delegation of business to them does not save work or time, and they "create an unacceptable distance between Councillors and deputants with problems". Some felt their membership should better reflect the diversity in the neighbourhoods. One noted "planning, parking and traffic are the predominant issues", and another that "most of the time is spent in deputations".
- Many people felt that City Council should be focused "big-ticket items that affect the whole City" whereas Community Councils should be given "power to make decisions on smaller, more localized issues", be able to "better integrate the community voice", and that they should better "involve Community Leaders". It was sometimes noted that Councillors had a tendency to "ward-centric thinking" and "predominantly address the deputants from their own wards". To counter this, one person suggested the focus of Community Council should be to "find common goals and priorities".
- A few participants suggested that accessibility would be increased if meeting locations and times varied.
- Quite a few participants suggested Community Councils should be redesigned to

be "robust mechanisms for community feedback to monitor service standards and community needs". An example would be the creation of "citizen assemblies" supported by experts who would "hand decisions to Councillors for implementation". A related idea was to have a subcommittee of Council created with citizens and regional representatives that would act as a go-between with Council with regards to issues coming from, and recommendations directed towards, Community Councils. One mentioned electing (through ranked ballots) part-time Councillors to sit at Community Council, to compensate for the reduction in Councillors at the City level. Another idea was to have a commissioner at each Community Council who serves at the Executive Committee.

- There was a call for non-elected citizen representation (with term limits). While another noted, "non-elected voting citizen members on Community Councils is a concern for democratic legitimacy and is not appropriate in a representative democracy".

Community Boards

A few participants submitted endorsements of a written submission put forward by a participant at the sessions and submitted to the Committee and the City Manager. The participant recommended a structural model, based on New York City that would see Community Boards established in each ward that would report to City Council.

- Community Boards would be comprised of a mix of citizens, staff, business people, and the Councillor to a total of fifty people with paid staff and a budget. Within this model these Boards would be hubs that attend to a variety of local needs including sharing information, conducting outreach, processing requests and complaints, reviewing the scope and design of capital projects, evaluating the quality and quantity of service delivery, and conducting engagement. At the Community Council level, there would be a "District Service Cabinet" in the four quadrants of the City that would coordinate service delivery, the programming of the agencies, work through inter-agency problems and impediments, and recommend joint programs.

"I strongly support the creation of 25 Resident-based Community Boards, one for each Ward, as described in detail by the Lakeshore Planning Council Corporation on their website."

- The strengths expressed by these participants for community boards included that they would be more representative of the local neighbourhoods, they would address gaps, their decisions would be made in public, they would be legislated and funded by the City, they would reduce competition between groups, and they would build member's capacity to become Councillors.
- At the consultations, and through a written submission, some apprehensions were expressed about the board model: they would be an "unnecessary additional layer of governance" offering identical functions to current structures. Also, while smaller geographic areas may enable residents to better connect to local governance, politically, having fewer Councillors present can "balkanize to

hamstringing City Council if no consensus is reached before the item comes to Council". It was expressed that "There are directions which the City must undertake to which local Community Boards may object. Regretfully the benefit of the entire city must overrule the local objections". A couple of participants expressed concern about how decisions would be made and asked "has equity been baked into the process?" One reflection mentioned that Councillor's workload may increase noting "it can be a full time job to manage people who are not elected", and another said that the Community Board structure would cost the City additional money.

3.6. Agencies and Corporations

"Agency and Board decisions result in the delivery of service. You need both a civic and a public voice on the boards. Boards are a big piece of the City's business and they do not report to Council except at budget time."

Participants provided many ideas about how the City could better manage its' portfolio of agencies, boards and corporations. The most common theme was about increased transparency and accountability. Some participants made suggestions and comments about the process of selecting board members:

- A frequently shared concern about agencies and corporations was that their processes need to be more transparent and accountable to ensure they uphold their mandates, meet their obligations and operated effectively and efficiently.
- For some, this accountability could be achieved through Councillor oversight, but for others, through increased public involvement, more accountability and transparency
- One comment was that agencies and corporations should not suffer less accountability than before the reduction in ward size, and Boards could be "better scrutinized by Council through a cyclical review".
- A few participants felt that paying people to sit on a Board was "unreasonable", and another person noted that perks, like parking passes, could be very valuable.
- There was a strong call to have more citizens on Boards (e.g. the TTC), while others wanted a balance between citizens and councillors, or to have Councillors only on the important boards (e.g. TTC, TCHC, and the Police Board). Others thought Board members should be carefully chosen for their ability to ask the right questions, and they should be informed citizens who are critical and are advocates. Also, staff should be assigned to reduce the workload, and backlogs, on boards that are busy.
- Participants suggested that new members for Appeal Boards [Tribunals] could be drawn from "pools" of qualified persons who are chosen at random like juries, there could be a Council Advisory to recommend new members, and for powerful boards, like the TTC, members could be elected based on their platforms.
- A couple of comments were that Boards could be streamlined, for example, there are a lot of arena boards that could be "streamlined into a super committee", and some of the responsibilities (e.g. with tribunals) could be off-loaded to other groups.

- Some acknowledged that Councillors are not always versed on many aspects of their role on agencies and corporations, so it was suggested that technical staff should make decisions on technical questions. It was also noted by some that the public are sometimes at a disadvantage when dealing with Boards, for example, with regards to development applications for the Committee of Adjustments.
- There was a common call to offer training - whether online or in a classroom - about Boards, for new board members and people interested in City governance.

3.7. Electoral Issues

Several email submissions, and a few session participants suggested reforms to the municipal election process. Participants suggested reforms that would change the process for being elected, who would be able to vote, and the length of elected terms.

- One suggestion was to lower the voting age to sixteen years of age, and another was to have a party system for Councillors (but more people felt Councillors should be less partisan in general).
- Many submissions supported a switch from a "first-past-the-post" to a "ranked ballot" system of electing Councillors suggesting that the change would result in: less incumbent advantage; more candidates running and greater diversity in the opinions that they express; less polarization of debates during election campaigns; less strategic voting or vote splitting; greater election participation (including the involvement of young people) and increased engagement in voting and politics; less apathy; fair and accurate elections that are "more democratic" because "every vote counts"; more diversity among Councillors in office; less extremism in the views of the politicians, or swinging from the left to the right; and, more support for politicians who are elected.
- A few participants expressed that there should not be term limits on Council, or that term limits are an issue that should be determined by referendum.
- One person suggested that City staff should actively encourage nominations by promoting the nominations process.

3.8. Public Engagement

Many participants commented on the role of the public in formal, informal, local and city-wide decision-making. Many wanted more and different types of opportunities to participate, more information about how the city worked and the public's role in the City's governance and more information about opportunities to participate.

- Many participants thought better marketing, promotion and advertisement of opportunities to engage with the City would benefit the public and the City. Some suggested that promotions could be more colourful and appealing, displayed in more channels and locations such as bus shelters and subways with messaging directed at specific groups not just the general public or generic audience.

There were many suggestions about how to encourage diverse perspectives and participation:

- A few people commented that international students and newcomers should be

welcomed and supported with information about the City and governance and that their inputs be valued.

- There were a number of suggestions to "empower local networks for information sharing", including citizens in neighbourhoods who may not be informed on broader governance, but connect through their Councillor.
- A number of participants shared that the City's community development approach is fundamental for mobilizing citizens, and that Community Development Officers (CDOs) perform a central role in establishing relationships and promoting leadership among politically active citizens in Strong Neighbourhoods.

"Initiatives such as Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy allow for neighbourhoods to become more engaged participants in City processes and for social service outreach to take precedence over corporate interest."

Another common suggestion was for an increase in online opportunities to participate in the City's decision-making. Suggestions included:

- Better use of social media and new technology (e.g. live input on issues through polling) and not just emails and phone calls – and have residents sign up for email "Planning Alerts"
- Increasing online engagement through better advertisement – some noted that many interactions occur online first and then lead to participation in other activities. This was seen as particularly relevant for engaging youth.

Participants provided ideas about how to increase civic engagement in decision making including:

- Learning from other cities – some ideas from other cities included creating a centralized "Office of Public Engagement" and increasing the budget for engagement.
- Improving engagement strategies by forming a committee to provide advice on consultations and ways to leverage external networks.
- Starting each Council term with a large-scale public consultation to gather input on service priorities, or to hold a large forum to determine engagement plans.
- "More general consultations and fewer specialized ones", and one participant mentioned a multilayered engagement process "like what was done in Transform TO, and the Climate Action Plan". However, another perspective was that when there are "too many people at one meeting or public forum" people may feel their voice is not important.
- Some participants focused on engagement around the City's budget – suggesting it should be better promoted, made more accessible with plain language and translated, more community information sessions, and a direct vote for spending which would lead to more transparency. Another idea was to "partner with a civic technology group (or OCAD) to offer budget simulation tools and to show the Council process".
- Be more transparent about how feedback is analyzed and used, and to

"genuinely report on public comments collected at engagements".

- Decentralize consultations and hold meetings in more diverse, locally accessible spaces e.g. space at Toronto Community Housing buildings.
- The most common comments about scheduling of events concerned having advanced notice, more happening after work hours or on the weekends.
- There were also request for snacks, beverages, transit fare, honoraria and childcare to incentivize attending public meetings, and "free Wi-Fi at City Hall and civic centres".

3.9. Engagement through Neighbourhood Associations

A number of participants commented on new governance structures or processes that engaged through, and incorporated a role for neighbourhood associations.

- Several participants suggested the City provide resources to Residents Associations. The most frequent resource requested was space for meetings, staff support (including dedicated staff positions, such as a liaison officer), and communications tools to resident associations. Another submission made the request for "capital funding along with spending requirements and regulations that need to be met". There were requests for clearer roles, mandates, specific responsibilities, and increased opportunities to network and collaborate with City staff. Some said that it was difficult to find the Residents Association in their area (that they are more concentrated in the downtown) and wanted the City to support the creation of an "active city-wide association of Residents Associations".
- Quite a few people suggested that Residents Associations should have more influence in local governance, and that the City should "acknowledge that our voice makes a difference". Additional comments were that a legislated role for Residents Associations to "conduct consultations in their communities" was needed.
- Common concerns included that Residents Associations should have "more effective processes for how they are run" and be more "open and democratic" and inclusive. Another concern was that they could be more accessible as meeting schedules "fit the lives of the affluent and senior citizens" and their mandate "prioritizes economic developments and encourages gentrification". Others expressed concern for any additional layer or special role for any group or association that would make it more difficult for non-members to participate, to have equal access to decision-makers or be able to express dissenting or different views.

"If people aren't involved in decision-making, it's because they don't know how to be involved in a way that will ensure they are heard, and in a way that makes it worth it."

3.10. Public Information

Participants also commented on the City information, its accessibility and the challenge of finding it online.

- Some expressed that City "information is inaccessible, especially for

marginalized populations, which is a barrier to effective public engagement."

- Council meeting agendas, minutes are hard to find and understand and there is "too much information to know, understand, and keep up with".
- A common statement was that City surveys and engagement materials should be welcoming, written in plain language, without jargon. There was a need for simple explanations of processes and requirements so that the public could understand the context for decisions.
- One person stated that, to be inclusive, all decision making should be seen through an equity lens, and others mentioned AODA (including neurodiversity). A few people thought that signage at City Hall could be improved and that educational materials should be on display. A more encompassing version of this suggestion was for "a one stop resource centre for citizen engagement with a dedicated independent user experience design team" (and a budget of one million per year). This team would be tasked with the revision of the presentation of City of Toronto from a user's perspective.
- Quite a few people expressed a desire for more educational opportunities regards civic governance. The most common comment was to initiate civic education programs, for example, a "City Hall School with a dedicated classroom within City Hall", or a "Civics 101 training so that residents can begin to build their capacity in facilitation by conducting engagement activities locally", or to have community education sessions offered through Community Development Officers.
- Open Data: At the consultations there was appreciation expressed about the increased availability of information through the Open Data Portal. There were suggestions for an office of data analytics, an open data charter, more frequent releases of data and synchronized releases at the early stages public consultations, that data be shared across divisions so that staff can work simultaneously on the same data, more metrics (such as Councillor voting records), and using data analytics keep track of decisions made by committees.

3.11. Other

A few participants offered advice and feedback on the Special Committee of Governance, city finances and budgeting and the City's legislative authority.

- A few participants wanted the Committee to probe the "public's impression of the accessibility of councillors" as well as to "seek frank feedback from councillors about problems that are encountering due to the reduction in the number of wards".
- Some ideas were expressed about how the consultation process could unfold including "striking a stakeholder committee to advise and assist in the engagement process" or that the process should include public engagement and outreach, brain storming, small group activities, forums, etc. Another said the Committee should include public meetings, surveys, polls and social media outreach.
- Some participants felt that the Committee meetings and events were inaccessible and not well-advertised.

- One suggestion was to conduct a review of Governance every four years.
"People didn't show up because there wasn't a fire burning"
- Some felt that Council could take measures to improve financial management, such as requiring financial offset when budget items are introduced; or examining how to maximize the use of revenue generating tools permitted by the City of Toronto Act. One person mentioned that the Financial Planning Analysis Reporting System was "bogged down" and required "immediate access to budget, staffing and performance data at a cost center level". Another comment was that Council should raise taxes to pay for infrastructure expenses.
- A few participants had specific comments and suggestions related to planning processes, matters and decisions. In particular one submission by the Lakeshore Planning Council proposed the creation of a City of Toronto Planning Commission (CPC) consisting of a panel of independent planning experts. The proposal was modeled after the New York City planning commission that oversees planning staff. City Council would delegate planning decisions to the commission with no litigation, and no appeal of CPC decisions which would be final, unless over-ruled by two-thirds vote of City Council. The proposal is intended to reduce the time to review applications. Additional comments on the City's current planning decisions include issues with recent revisions by the Ontario government, taking too narrow perspective, working to avoid being involved in TLAB hearings, the fact that planning decisions can be appealed, over involvement of the city, the need for more transparency in Site planning, a more City Wide approach and engaging the community much earlier in the application process. Finally participants noted that Councillors are not planning experts but make final decisions, planning takes a lot of City Council time and City Councillors don't have expertise at it, and so Council should delegate these decision to people who are better positioned to make them -- i.e., experts at City planning, and additional staff with expertise to assist the Councillor in processing development files. Some participants noted that the City's Committee of Adjustment should be reviewed to ensure it is effective, efficient and operating within its authorities.
- A few participants suggested that Toronto seek "Charter City" status and establish a City of Toronto Constitution, a model for self-governance and enhancements to the City's autonomy over decisions about Council composition, and revenue generation.