

# GV5.1 Attachment 1

## Attachment 1

### **Summary of Feedback from Neighbourhood Associations and Members of Council**

At its meeting in April 2019, the Special Committee on Governance approved a workplan for staff to conduct consultations with the public, Members of Council and City divisions. Further the Committee requested the City Manager to provide special outreach through, and engagement with, neighbourhood associations. At its meeting on September 25, 2019, the Special Committee adopted GV4.2 "Special Committee on Governance: Public Consultation and Workplan Update," which described public input collected from May through August 2019. Consultations included online surveys, public meetings, community-led meetings and discussions with students and subject matter experts.

Below is a summary of further input provided to City staff in September and October, 2019 by neighbourhood associations and Members of Council.

#### ***Feedback from Neighbourhood Associations***

City staff engaged neighbourhood associations through an online survey, five pop-up consultations in civic centres and an evening workshop. Overall, 107 neighbourhood organizations from across the city (including all four Community Council areas and 11 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas) provided input through one or more methods: The survey generated 210 responses, 42 people representing 27 neighbourhood associations attended the pop-up discussions, and 35 representatives of 28 neighbourhood associations participated in the workshop.

Input shows that neighbourhood associations vary widely in their size and focus, and generally are very familiar with the City's governance and decision-making processes, particularly Community Councils and the Committee of Adjustment. Most see their role as speaking for the interests of their local neighbourhood, community engagement and support to their residents in understanding and navigating City processes, policies and services.

Many associations described that contacting their Councillor, rather than going through City staff or other processes, was the most effective method of advancing their issues, but expressed concerns that the change in ward boundaries and size are limiting their Councillor's availability to hear the voices of residents and neighbourhood associations. Few alternative governance models were proposed, but most suggested that the City should be doing more to support their role as a link between the City and local residents. Common suggestions of support included providing resources and information, and organizing opportunities for groups to network with each other and with councillors and City staff. One focus in particular was for supports to assist them in coordinating information across City departments and finding resolution to common problems. Some described this function as "system navigators", a centralized City resource providing coordination and connection between them and City departments.

Neighbourhood associations also offered perspectives on a number of city services, for example 311, City Planning, and bylaw enforcement. A more detailed report will be posted to the consultation ([www.toronto.ca/TOgovernance](http://www.toronto.ca/TOgovernance)) and Open Data webpages. The detailed datasets describe issues, concerns and ideas from neighbourhood associations about local issues such as the development process, traffic, pedestrian safety, bike lanes, and city-wide challenges including climate change, parks and trees investments, affordable housing, tenant protection and food security.

### ***Feedback from Members of Council***

Staff spoke with 11 Members of Council and four Members of Council completed a survey to provide feedback on whether and how the reduction in the size of City Council has affected their role as councillor and if they had any suggestions for changes to the City's governance framework.

While many acknowledged that the larger ward size has had some impacts on their role as councillor, the stated extent of the impacts varied widely. Some councillors commented that the larger ward and increased number of constituents has made it very difficult to balance their role as local representative, addressing local community and constituent issues and their role in making decisions on City-wide strategic policy. Others reported that the additional resources approved by City Council in December 2018 to hire staff or fund a constituency office has largely addressed these issues and any challenges they experienced early in the term.

Some councillors felt that one mechanism to address the difficulty in balancing local and city-wide issues was to establish another level of advisory or decision-making body or bodies that would delineate their functions into two roles – one carried out by elected representatives and the other carried out by appointed representatives. Conversely, others felt that both local and city-wide functions are essential and inherent to the role of an elected Member of Council and that this cannot be replaced by an unelected body within the City's governance structure.

Many councillors acknowledged the importance of neighbourhood and residents associations in community engagement and local issues. However, feedback on any new role these associations could play in the City's governance framework ranged from no change, to the establishment of some criteria for formalizing neighbourhood associations, to leveraging them in establishing a new level of advisory or decision making body.

Most councillors did not suggest any changes be made to the Committee structure, Community Council boundaries, or Member or public appointment processes.