

Submission to the Toronto Special Committee on Governance, November 1, 2019

by Henrik Bechmann

I am writing to support two additions to Toronto's governance structure:

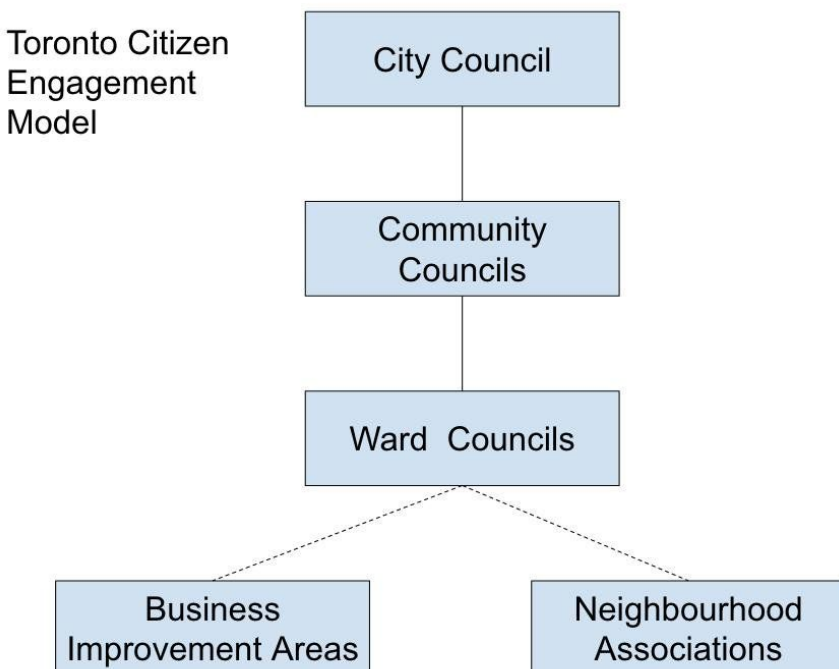
an Office of Neighborhoods

to support Neighbourhood Associations, and

Ward Councils

to support consideration of local issues, and local engagement

These additions would complete support for a deliberative governance structure which, among other things, would support a deliberative, inclusive annual budget cycle.



When it comes to budgeting, my experience is that

most activists are passionate about local and specialized issues

therefore formalized inclusion of neighbourhood associations in the Toronto governance structure would be a good way to capture this input.

Yes, deliberative governance can work

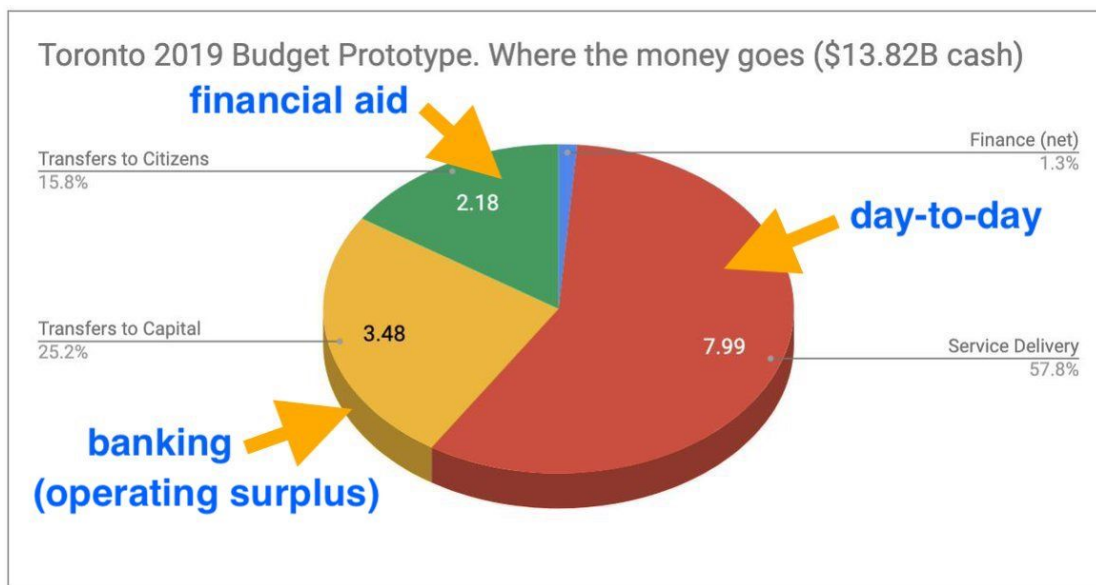
given

- access
- education
- support

In Toronto, there is a common objection that the budget is too difficult to understand. This may be true currently, but it can be fixed.

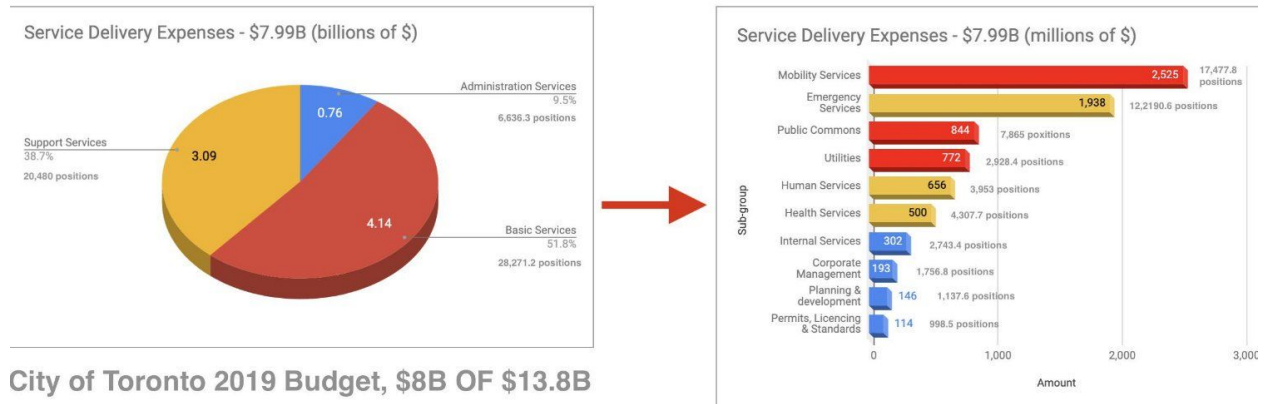
Toronto's budget can be clarified

For example, isolating day-to-day expenses can be isolated from transfers to capital (“banking of operating surplus”) and transfers to citizens (“financial support”):



Created by Henrik Bechmann with City data, and some assumptions and estimates. Does not include the capital budget.

Also the services that Toronto provides can be communicated in natural language:



These natural kind of design choices can be applied to all levels of detail of the budget.

About Henrik Bechmann

Henrik Bechmann is a retired software developer with an interest in better budgeting for Toronto. He was the lead of budgetpedia.ca from 2015-2018, and continues occasional involvement in promoting better budgeting for Toronto. He can be reached with the Twitter handle @henrikbechmann.