

Supporting Representation Through the Public Appointments Process

Date: June 2, 2023
To: Executive Committee
From: City Clerk
Wards: All

SUMMARY

In response to Motion MM6.33 which was referred to Executive Committee by City Council at its meeting held May 10, 11, and 12, 2023, this report provides further information about the public appointments process, including the current process to nominate public members for appointment to the Toronto Transit Commission Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Clerk recommends that:

1. Executive Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting held May 10, 11, and 12, 2023, City Council considered item MM6.33 - Diversifying Civic Appointees on the Toronto Transit Commission Board, and referred the item to Executive Committee.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM6.33>

COMMENTS

The Public Appointments process allows for Council to consider many factors in its deliberations

Public appointments to City boards, committees, and tribunals are guided by the City's Public Appointments Policy. The Policy lays out the general framework for how the public appointments process is administered, including the roles of staff and Council.

It also speaks to important principles in public appointments, including that "City Council also recognizes that the City is best served by boards that collectively reflect the geographic distribution and diversity of the community that they serve", and that nominating panel's recommendations will strive to achieve a balance of:

- qualified applicants covering the range of qualifications specified for the board;
- experienced and new members;
- geographic representation; and
- representation of the diversity and demographics of the community including age, gender, sexual orientation, Aboriginal status, race and disability.

The policy framework, adopted by City Council, provides guidance to nominating panels such as the Civic Appointments Committee on how to approach a selection process, and it allows members of these panels and City Council as a whole to consider many factors when making decisions about which candidates they wish to appoint to City boards, committees, and tribunals, including community council area and persons with disabilities.

In order to help inform their decision making, nominating panel members can review applications which include confidential information about where the candidate lives as well as their responses to voluntary questions about how they identify regarding their gender, age, if they are Indigenous, their race and ethnicity, disability, and if they are 2SLGBTQ+, an abbreviation used to represent a broad array of identities including, but not limited to, two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer. The response rate to these voluntary questions averages over 90%. Nominating panels can also ask interview questions that directly address a candidate's familiarity with the work of the board to which they are applying, its services, and their personal experience using those services.

Staff conduct outreach to support public appointments

In order to support these processes, staff in the Public Appointments Secretariat of the City Clerk's Office along with divisional partners conduct outreach for each opportunity to recruit diverse, qualified candidates from across the city. Outreach methods include a public appointments e-updates list, use of social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter, webinars and events, and direct contact with numerous community and professional organizations that connect with the general public as well as with candidates and stakeholders who offer specific representation, experiences, and skillsets.

A selection process for the TTC Board is underway

A process to consider public appointments to the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Board is currently underway. There are currently two of four public member positions under consideration.

At its meeting held April 19, 2023, the Civic Appointments Committee selected seven candidates for interview and the committee conducted these interviews at its meeting held May 30, 2023. At its meeting scheduled for June 14, 15, and 16, 2023, City Council will consider the two candidates recommended for appointment by the Civic Appointments Committee as part of this process.

Because the TTC Board has staggered terms, the other two public member positions are not expected to be considered by Council until February 2025. In light of this, any changes to the composition of the TTC Board with regards to geographic representation or disability might not be fully implemented until 2025, depending on the nature of those changes and the personal details of the public members who are currently appointed to the board.

Staff are reviewing the Public Appointments Policy

In order to create a clearer, more accessible, and user-friendly document, staff in the City Clerk's Office are in the process of reviewing the existing Public Appointments Policy and anticipate bringing a revised policy to Council for consideration the fall of 2023. Part of this work will include looking at existing language the supports representation from equity-deserving communities in the public appointments process.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

John D. Elvidge
City Clerk