A RECIPE FOR CHANGE

The Fourth Wall exhibit proposed 36 recommendations to increase civic engagement. The following staff report addresses eight items (highlighted). Red bubble boxes mark each Fourth Wall item, as they appear in the report.

REACHING OUT

1 Public notices should be completely re-designed, as 'marketing' materials
2 The Ontario Planning Act should be amended to allow for public notice re-design
3 Public notices should be published in more than one newspaper

SPENDING OUR MONEY

4 Let's explore participatory budgets for Toronto's neighbourhoods
5 The number of community information sessions across the city should be increased
6 The budget process should be promoted more widely, using plain language

THE NEXT GENERATION

7 Our provincial curriculum should include a full course on municipalities and neighbourhoods
8 A 'City Hall School' should be created with a designated classroom at Toronto City Hall
9 Let's lower the voting age to 16

ELEVATING THE CITIZENRY

10 It's time to retire the title of "worship"
11 Toronto should create tributes to non-elected (and unwealthy) community leaders
12 Citizens should decide in a poll who we name landmarks after, rather than politicians naming things after themselves

CITIZENS UNITE!

13 The City should have several staff positions dedicated to supporting residents' groups
14 Let's create and support an active city-wide association of residents' groups

HOP TO IT!

15 Let's bring ranked ballots and Instant Runoff Voting to Toronto

CHOOSING WHEN WE CHOOSE

16 Our municipal elections should be held on a Saturday or Sunday
17 Let's dump the four-year term, since no one asked for it in the first place
18 Legislation should be created imposing a binding referendum on future term extensions

OUR ELECTIONS: BACK TO BASICS

19 Our elections website needs a makeover including a fully integrated ward search function
20 Campaigns should be allowed to easily provide contact information online
21 The election website should include active hyperlinks to candidates' websites
22 The city should proactively promote the nomination process and encourage nominations

MAKING MEETINGS MEANINGFUL

23 New regulations should restrict the introduction of controversial motions without notice

24 Overnight consultations should be banned due to inaccessibility
25 A minimum deputation length should be established, one that cannot be over-ruled
26 Let's explore the viability of evening meetings for Community Councils (6-9pm)
27 "Timed items" should be introduced more frequently to make attendance easier
28 Childcare opportunities should be explored for public meetings
29 Snacks and beverages should be provided at all public meetings
30 Meetings should be better promoted with good design, plain language and translations

BREAK IT DOWN

31 Our ward boundaries should be redrawn to reduce the discrepancy in sizes
32 Let's explore new models of subsidiarity for Toronto's neighbourhoods and former cities
33 The proposed "Dialogue on reconnecting people with government" should be launched in 2012

UPGRADING THE CLAMSHELL

34 Better signage and outreach/education materials should be created in our City Hall lobby
35 Free and open Wi-Fi should be immediately installed at City Hall and all Civic Centres
36 A "one stop" resource centre for citizen engagement should be created at City Hall

● MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITY   ● PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

Civic Engagement Report to Government Management Committee

Date:	May 8, 2012
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to motions from Government Management Committee and Executive Committee regarding civic engagement. Two separate items, GM4.13, June 2011, and EX15.15, January 2012, both titled *Civic Engagement Office*, requested the City Manager to assess the use of the first floor of City Hall for civic engagement purposes. Motions from EX15.15, along with several from EX15.16 (Enhancing the City of Toronto's Engagement with Citizens, Transforming City Hall, January 2012), suggested ways to enhance and increase public participation in Toronto's municipal government. This report responds to all motions in items GM4.13 and EX15.15 and two motions from EX15.16.

The balance of motions from EX15.16 are addressed in a separate, forthcoming report from the City Clerk to Government Management Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends:

1. That City Council endorse the City Manager's action plan to enhance technology supports to civic engagement including piloting online consultations and dialogues with the public.

   4W · 34 & 36

2. That City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the Executive Director of Facilities Management, to undertake a review of the design and functionality of the City Hall main floor and the main floors of the civic centres to

enhance the public's use of these spaces, and bring forward capital funding requirements for this review through the 2013 budget process.

3. That Government Management Committee request the City Clerk to consider in her forthcoming report on the Procedural Bylaws, the matter of Order of Public Speaker, particularly as it pertains to participants in need of assistance or with small children in attendance.

Financial Impact
This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

- City Council (GM4.13, Civic Engagement Office) at its meeting of June 14 and 15, 2011 requested:

  " *the City Manager to report to the Executive Committee in the Fall 2011 to provide an update on the Corporate Civic Engagement strategy with information on engagement and consultation activities, the City's engagement community of practice, inclusive of corporate and divisional engagement activities. The report to include an assessment of the potential for future use of space in the City Hall main floor for civic engagement purposes.*"

- The City Manager reported to Council in July 2011 (CC10.2) with an update and information on Corporate and Divisional civic engagement work. Information on the use of the Rotunda for engagement purposes was not included in the Council report, but is discussed below, in this report.

- The Executive Committee at its meeting of January 24, 2012 requested the City Manager and the City Clerk to report to the Government Management Committee on the following recommendations (EX15.15, Civic Engagement Office, a different item with the same title as GM4.12 above)

  1. *The City Manager and City Clerk report on opportunities to improve the availability of information about governance and opportunities for citizen engagement in the rotunda of City Hall:*   **4W • 36**
      a) *Opening a Civic Engagement Office in the Rotunda to act as a one stop*
  4W • 33   *resource centre for citizens.*
      b) *Launch of a "Dialogue to reconnect people with government", to be launched in 2012.*
      c) *Civic Engagement Staff be dedicated to supporting resident community groups.*   **4W • 13**

4W · 34

    d) *To install better signage in Toronto City Hall and Civic Centres to guide residents through the areas enabling all to conduct city business in a more fluid manner.*

- The Executive Committee at its meeting of January 24, 2012 requested the City Manager and the City Clerk to report on the following recommendations to the Government Management Committee (EX15.16, Enhancing the City of Toronto's Engagement with Citizens, Transforming City Hall.)

4W · 1

1. *The City Manager and City Clerk report on measures already underway to improve the way notice is given for formal and informal meetings and open houses, and on any additional actions City Council can take to improve the way residents and businesses are given notice of things which affect them.*

4W · 5

2. *The City Manager report on ways to increase public participation in the budget process including the number of annual budget information sessions across Toronto.*

3. *The City Manager and/or City Clerk, as appropriate, report on the feasibility of the following electoral reforms:*

4W · 16

    a) *Holding elections on Saturday or Sundays;*

    b) *Using ranked ballots and instant run-off voting;*   *4W · 15*

    c) *Improving the City's elections website including a ward search information, links to candidates' web sites and contact information; and*

4W · 19, 20, 21

    d) *Pro-actively promoting the nominations process and encouraging*   *4W · 28* *nominations.*

4. *The City Manager report on the feasibility of providing child care for all public meetings hosted by the City of Toronto to increase the participation by parents of small children.*

Motions 3a) to d) are included in a separate forthcoming report from the City Clerk to Government Management Committee.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The following sections provide information on each of the Committee motions listed above.

1. Update on Civic Engagement Strategy

In response to City Council's request at its meeting of June 14 and 15, 2011 for an *"update on the Corporate Civic Engagement strategy with information on engagement and consultation activities, the City's engagement community of practice, inclusive of corporate and divisional engagement activities"* (GM4.13, Civic Engagement Office), the City Manager reported to City Council in July 2011. That report can be found here http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.CC10.2.

The City Manager's report outlined the extensive civic engagement work undertaken by the City each year. Members of the public regularly provide advice, input, recommendations and feedback to City Divisions, Council and its Standing Committees on City reports, services, issues and policies. City Divisions regularly engage the public in their planning and decision-making about services and programs. The City Manager's Office has implemented a civic engagement strategy that supports divisional engagement activities, undertakes research, and develops participatory models of engagement and corporate best practices on city-wide issues.

The July 2011 report also described the range of methodologies and practices City staff employ in engaging the public. Because there is no single approach to civic engagement, each engagement strategy reflects legislative, Council, ward and jurisdictional requirements and considerations, public and stakeholder outreach and communication needs, and the availability of budget, resources, and time. The City Manager's Office and divisional engagement staff test and pilot new approaches and methodologies and evaluate efforts to ensure ongoing continuous improvement in the delivery of quality civic engagement.

2. Use of Rotunda at City Hall – Civic Engagement Office 4W • 36

City Council requested the City Manager to assess "*the potential for future use of space in the City Hall main floor for civic engagement purposes*" (GM4.13). Executive Committee recommended, that the City Manager "*improve the availability of information about governance and opportunities for citizen engagement in the rotunda of City Hall*" by "*Opening a Civic Engagement Office in the Rotunda to act as a one stop resource centre for citizens*" (EX15.15).

The City's civic engagement strategy, as outlined in the City Manager's report to Council in July 2011, has achieved results because it functions in a decentralized manner. Public participation is supported throughout the organization and across all communities in Toronto.

This decentralized model allows for both place-based and policy-based engagement across all divisions and neighbourhoods. Additionally, the current strategy provides staff training and development, and engagement advice and information to members of Council and the public. As well, the City established 311 as the City's centralized call centre in order to streamline requests for information from the public and avoid confusion and to serve as a one-stop resource for the public.

The City Manager does not recommend that an Office be opened in the Rotunda of City Hall. There is no budget for the establishment of a separate Office dedicated to Civic Engagement. Currently, three policy and research staff in the City Manager's Office provide part-time support to the civic engagement strategy, in addition to their other duties.

3. Public Signage – City Hall Rotunda and Civic Centres' First Floors

Executive Committee recommended (EX15.15), that the City Manager "*improve the availability of information about governance and opportunities for citizen engagement in the rotunda of City Hall*" by installing "*better signage in Toronto City Hall and Civic Centres to guide residents through the areas enabling all to conduct city business in a more fluid manner*."

City Hall was built in 1965. It has undergone several transformations during that time each intended to balance the business of government, public access and historical preservation. Over time, signage, display space and wayfinding have been modified. The design and placement of signage has improved, but it can still be difficult for the public to locate an office, service or meeting they are looking for.

Facilities Management has completed a review of City Hall's main floor signage, and in particular the public Rotunda and is in the process of installing new wayfinding and directory signage to support ease of public access to information, services and facilities, as well as conducting business with the City. The new signage will have a branded look and feel including the use of the new signage template with clear white font against a consistent blue background, which has created a more unified look to signage at City Hall. New wayfinding and directional signage will also be installed on the City Hall 2nd Floor in the coming months. This initiative will also be extended to Metro Hall and the civic centres in 2013.

Facilities Management is reviewing the current Display Policy which governs all Civic Centres to address the display of printed materials including free newspapers and tourism pamphlets. It is anticipated that the revised policy will be ready for the City Manager's review in fall 2012.

A review of public space might examine:
- How the public's interaction with public space enhances or detracts from its use, accessibility and the perceptions of the buildings as welcoming, inviting and engaging spaces.
- Display space for flyers, pamphlets and resource materials about the City government, council and opportunities for public engagement.
- Lighting, sightlines and obstructions to ensure the public can move easily through the site.
- Permanent locations for information about meetings, events or public sessions that can be easily and regularly updated
- Information sources that are easy to update and navigate using different starting points e.g. by staff name, division or project.
- Ongoing reviews of space and use as required in order to adapt and change with the public's needs and expectations.

The City Manager, in consultation with the Executive Director of Facilities Management will undertake a review of the design and functionality of the City Hall main floor and

main floors of the civic centres to look at opportunities to enhance the public's use of these spaces and bring forward any capital funding requirements for this review through the 2013 budget process.

4. Online Public Dialogue on Engagement

4W • 33

Executive Committee recommended (EX15.15) that the City Manager *improve the availability of information about governance and opportunities for citizen engagement in the rotunda of City Hall*" by launching a "*Dialogue to reconnect people with government*" in 2012.

In past Council terms, the City has engaged the public on the question of how they would like to participate in municipal decision-making. The City's *Listening to Toronto* sessions, Governance Review and the joint City-Province of Ontario's *Strong Toronto/Strong Ontario* consultations asked the public for their input on civic engagement. In addition, several other consultations provided information for Council and staff consideration on the question of participation including, most recently, the Core Service Review. A summary of the public's response is available here http://www.toronto.ca/civic-engagement/pdf/engagement_meta_data_march_2012.pdf.

In 2012 the City Manager will launch an online discussion with Torontonians to pilot and test online consultation tools. This *Dialogue on Engagement* will include:

- Social media tools to expand the online network of residents connected to the City.
- Enhanced opportunities for the public to learn about their local government and public participation including:
  - How City government works
  - Information on opportunities for participation
  - Resources for local and neighbourhood engagement
- Online questionnaires and surveys to seek public input on the issues they would like more information on.

4.1. Increasing use of social media

A report, Social Media for Public Engagement, submitted to Government Management Committee, at its meeting of March 28, 2012, from the City Manager provided information on all the ways in which the City is using social media to engage the public, the guidelines for use approved by the City Manager in 2010, and the approvals process for City staff to use social media for work purposes.

The Civic Engagement Twitter account, @TorontoCivicEng, is currently used to inform the public about upcoming opportunities to participate in public consultations. In 2012, staff will use this channel to direct the public to educational civic resources and City surveys, and help the public to navigate the City's website. Divisional staff will also be supported and encouraged to develop social media platforms such as Facebook as part of

their communication and outreach strategies for individual consultations and engagement activities. The City's recent changes to its approvals process for the use of social media will support increased efforts in this area. Staff will continue to evaluate the use of social media as an engagement tool and track and report out on its use in consultation summaries and reports.

Feedback from previous city-wide consultations (e.g. the Core Service Review) suggests that members of the public appreciate opportunities to speak with City staff, to ask questions and provide input. Staff will explore the use of Web forums including "chats" and presentations as an engagement strategy and to increase public participation in the City's online presence.

4.2. Education and information about City government   4W · 34

One of the foundations of civic engagement is the availability of quality public information. Public participation is limited if people do not have access to information about how the current system of governance works, about the City's finances and budget process, and about the role of the public and the City's intergovernmental relations.

The City's public civic engagement portal, www.toronto.ca/civic-engagement, includes introductory guides to many of these topics. Through the 2012 *Dialogue on Engagement* and an enhanced social media presence, staff will be able to seek regular input from the public on how they would like to engage with the City. For example, input may be gathered on:

- **What residents are interested in learning about the City.** This would help staff to develop new resources and make them available online.
- **Feedback on the City's Civic Engagement Website.** The City's Civic Engagement website is a one-stop source of information about opportunities to get involved with the City. The page links to information about City Council, upcoming consultations, advisory bodies, social media, learning resources and other ways to engage. During 2012 staff will regularly update the content of the civic engagement website and solicit feedback from visitors to better meet public needs and interests.
- **Information to support public participation in the budget process.** During the City's Service Review consultations in 2011, participants indicated that they would like to know more about the City's budget process and financing of City services and programs. During 2012, staff will work with Financial Planning staff to provide a comprehensive listing and description of City services, simplified information about the City budget and use social media and the Civic engagement website to inform the public of opportunities to participate in the budget process.

5. City Budget Process

Executive Committee requested (EX15.16), that the *"City Manager report on ways to increase public participation in the budget process including the number of annual budget information sessions across Toronto*."

Quality, accessible information is one foundation for good civic engagement, and must be partnered with appropriate, timely and purposeful methodologies. Civic engagement principles suggest the timing of the participation must match the stage at which a discussion is developing or a decision is being made, and there must be the likelihood that public involvement will have an impact on the outcome.

The City works to meet these standards by:
- providing information through diverse channels,
- applying a timeframe that encourages learning and exploration of an issue, and
- inviting the public to provide their input directly to decision-makers.

In the past the City has held public sessions across the City during the budget cycle. Although public interest in being involved is high, turnout for these sessions has traditionally been low, even when widely advertised. Sessions convened by City Councillors have tended to generate more participation. Supported with resources from Financial Planning, Councillor-led sessions have typically resulted in clearer directions and suggestions for balancing the budget from participants through their elected members of Council.

This report addresses the public engagement aspects of the City's Budget Process. Decisions regarding the timing of Council and Committee meetings and provisions for public deputations will be developed in consultation with the Budget Chair.

In the case of the City's budget, staff have, over the past several years, provided increasingly more information on the public website, and in a greater variety of formats (e.g. graphics, presentations, factsheets, introductory guides, hyperlinks to other background information). For example, as part of the City's Open Data initiative, all of the raw data for 2012-2021 Capital Plan by ward and the 2012 Budget by Expenditure Category for each Program was uploaded to the Budget website. Staff have developed information packages for City Councillors and community groups, and connected budget information with other resources such as the Council Briefing Book and schedule of committee meetings.

Additionally, the Budget Committee increased the number of hours set aside to hear deputations on the budget in 2011 and, along with the City Clerk's enhanced Meeting Monitoring system, has improved access to the public who wish to follow the Committee's agenda and meeting process online.

The objectives of an engagement strategy for the City's Budget are to:

- provide participants with clear information so that they can be familiar with the topic or issue under consideration
- inform the public about the budget schedule and opportunities to participate
- reach as many stakeholders as possible, and
- ensure that input is directed to decision-makers

The Chief Financial Officer and the Financial Planning Division will work with Strategic Communications and staff in the City Manager's Office to create resources to support the public's participation in the budget cycle. These could include introductory guides to:

- the City's budget process
- the budget processes for City Agencies such as the TTC, Police, Library, Board of Health
- Cost-Shared services
- Descriptions of the components and differences between the operating and capital budgets
- Development of polices, revenue sources and user fees
- The City's long-term financial planning process
- Revenue sources
- Why costs increase
- Glossary of terms

As noted in section 3.2 above, City staff will explore the use of webinars and downloadable presentations or videos on the City budget, online chats and information sessions for the public to ask staff questions, along with information on making a presentation to Council's Standing Committees. The City's Civic Engagement website could be used to gather public feedback on the kinds of information and resources the City can provide to support public discussion and deputations about budget issues.

6. City Support to Resident Community Groups 4W • 13

Executive Committee recommended that the City Manager *improve the availability of information about governance and opportunities for citizen engagement in the rotunda of City Hall"* by dedicating "*Civic Engagement Staff to supporting resident community groups (EX15.15)"*.

As noted above, the City's public civic engagement website, www.toronto.ca/civic-engagement, includes introductory guides on governance, decision-making, the role of the City in relation to Federal and Provincial governments, City finances, as well as resources for local engagement. The site also includes a searchable database of engagement opportunities that the public can view by date, location, key word or access a full listing of current and past consultations.

Because there are several different types of resident and community groups, the City has developed multiple strategies to support them.

- The City Clerk maintains a registry of Resident and Ratepayer groups for Ontario Municipal Board purposes. These groups can request that their contact information be included on the City Clerks' list at http://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/08/101000050908.html. The City Clerk has requirements for groups to register, however, there is no system of formally recognizing or accrediting residents' associations, other than if they incorporate as non-profit entities with the Provincial of Ontario.
- Staff in the City Manager's Office support resident associations in the same way they provide information to anyone who contacts them for advice regarding civic engagement. The civic engagement website has resources, including toolkits and guides, for community engagement for the public. City staff support resident and community groups through the City's Community Development Officers (SDF&A), Community Health Officers (Public Health), Community Animators, Coordinators and Programmers (TEO, Tower Renewal, Housing, Economic Development).
- 311 is the City's centralized information source and provides responses to questions about the City and public meetings. Their knowledge base includes contact information for staff who are able to respond to questions about opportunities for civic engagement.
- 211 is a fully searchable, bilingual online database of community organizations, groups and associations in Ontario, accessible 24 hours a day and updated regularly. The public can also call to be connected with groups in their neighbourhood or which support their community of interest. The City of Toronto is a partner in 211 and staff frequently use their database for outreach purposes.

As with the City's civic engagement strategy, the City Manager does not recommend centralizing this support in the Rotunda of City Hall. Duplicating information available through City staff, 311 and 211 is not an efficient use of resources.

The City Manager, with the City Clerk, will review the current process for registering Residents and Ratepayers associations in order to ensure that they are provided with adequate notice and information about City decisions that affect them. One current challenge is there is an absence of formal procedures for the City to recognize the authenticity/legitimacy of a residents group – any individual or group can self-declare themselves as representatives. Outreach and communication about the current system which allows groups to self-identify, meet basic criteria and administer their own contact information might increase participation in the current registry and address privacy or accuracy concerns. Work on a resident's registry (see section Civic Engagement Knowledge Base and Online Consultation Platform below) may also provide a more streamlined and effective notification process.

4W · 1

7. Public Notice

Executive Committee requested (EX15.16), that the "*City Manager and City Clerk report on measures already underway to improve the way notice is given for formal and informal meetings and open houses, and on any additional actions City Council can take*

to improve the way residents and businesses are given notice of things which affect them."

Public notices within a local government context take several forms. There are formal and informal, required, or legislated, and expected, or common practice, right-to-know and informational and good-to-know. Some forms, such as statutory planning notices, require the use of a prescribed format or template, while others apply more creative graphics and design.

The City is required to give public notice of intent to pass by-laws, for a number of actions and to provide other information. City Council determines the type of notice unless otherwise specified by legislation. Council adopted the minimum public notice requirements for notice given under certain legislation (City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 162, Notice, Public). The notice requirements include posting on the City's website.

7.1. Non-statutory Notices

The City Clerk has created an award winning public information system called **Toronto Meeting Management Information System** (TMMIS) that allows members of the public to:
- Receive an email when a Committee or Council meeting agenda is posted
- Register to speak at a Committee
- Map the items for all Committee meetings with a address reference point
- Follow the agenda and disposition of items in near-real time
- Use a mobile device to view their website (mobile friendly options available)
- Learn about key decisions via twitter
- Access video archives, Bills from meetings, decisions and minutes online

A description of TMMIS can be found at www.toronto.ca/legdocs/tmmis/help/help1.htm.

The City's website now includes a "subscribe" function, http://www.toronto.ca/e-updates/, which allows the public to receive notification about:
- City publications and electronic newsletters
- City Council and Committee agendas and minutes
- Public consultations
- Media releases
- RSS Feeds,
- Social Media alerts from the City's Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, flickr and YouTube sites
- Information about road closures and traffic disruptions
- Emergency and major incident information
- Celebrate Toronto – festivals and special events information
- Public health, environmental, cycling, walking, infrastructure and environmental assessments and planning reviews

Staff have improved outreach and communications strategies for public meetings over the past few years to support the public's participation in the City's engagement activities. This has included increased use of social media as well as traditional methods of public notice (e.g. flyers in City owned centres such as recreation facilities, libraries and daycares; email lists, and multilingual advertisements in local newspapers). Staff will continue to work with Access, Equity and Human Rights Division as well as front-line staff to reach out to the public to increase civic literacy and familiarity with the City, and to ensure that those who wish to participate in their local government can do so.

7.2. Statutory Notices

When it comes to statutory notices such as those required by the Planning Act, current legislation is very specific with regards to all of the parts, including some of the wording, of the notice.

For example, following a description of *how* notice must be given, subsection 5(11), O. Reg. 545/06 5(11) of the Planning Act, Open House, Public Meeting outlines all of the required details of the notice including:

1. The date, time and location of the public meeting or open house.
2. An explanation of the purpose and effect of the proposed by-law.
3. A description of the subject land, a key map showing the subject land, or an explanation why no description or key map is provided.
4. Where and when additional information and material about the proposed by-law will be available to the public for inspection.
5. The following statements:
   i. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to (name of municipality or planning board) before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of (reference to council and name of municipality, or name of planning board) to the Ontario Municipal Board.
   ii. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to (name of municipality or planning board) before the by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to do so.
6. If it is known that the subject land is the subject of an application under the Act for a minor variance or a consent, for an amendment to an official plan or a Minister's zoning order, or for approval of a plan of subdivision, a statement of that fact and the file number of the application. O. Reg. 545/06, s. 5 (11).

The language, format and level of detail in statutory notices may not be accessible to all readers or members of the public. Simpler terms, clearer design or making the notices available in different formats may achieve the same objectives, but also be easier to understand and allow more people to follow planning decisions. The City Clerk's office has been seeking permission for greater flexibility in issuing public notices and ways to

simplify and make notices more effective without reducing their reach, or resulting in greater cost.

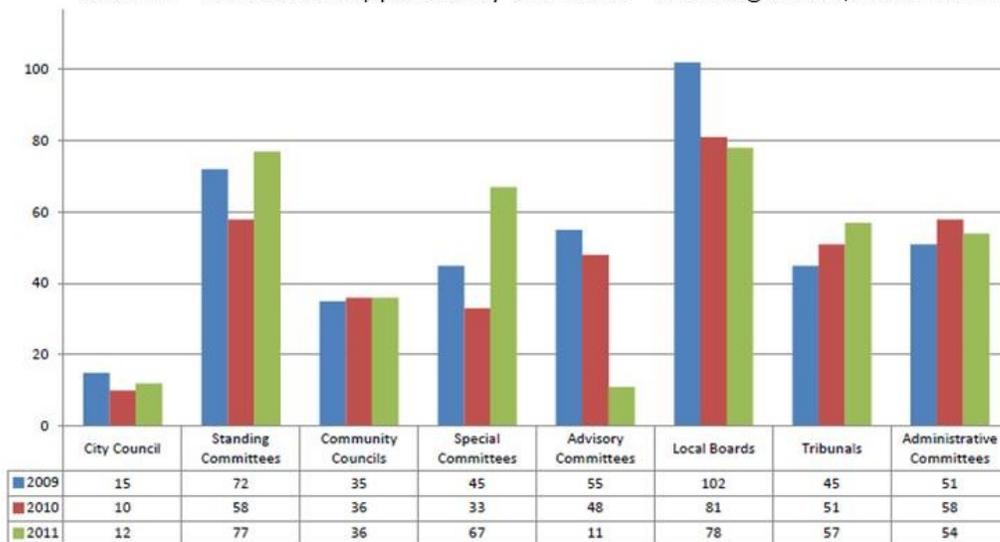## 8. Provision of Child Care at Public Meetings

Executive Committee requested (EX15.16), that the "*City Manager report on the feasibility of providing child care for all public meetings hosted by the City of Toronto to increase the participation by parents of small children*."

The provision of child care in the City of Toronto is a carefully designed system of legislation and policies created to provide safe, age appropriate activities with set ratios between children and trained, licensed providers in spaces that have been inspected and licensed to do so.

The City holds public meetings throughout each year which are supported by divisional staff for information, discussions or consultations. These meeting are generally held after regular business hours, although for some stakeholder (business, industry or sectoral) meetings are held during the day.

In 2011, for all of the bodies it resourced, the City Clerk's Secretariat provided just over 1,200 hours of meeting support. Providing child care for all of these meetings would require a budget and the availability of appropriate facilities during the hours of the meetings. Most of the City's legislative meetings (including Council, Standing Committees and Special Bodies) meet during the day.

Chart 1 – All bodies supported by the Clerk – meeting hours, 2009-2011

	City Council	Standing Committees	Community Councils	Special Committees	Advisory Committees	Local Boards	Tribunals	Administrative Committees
2009	15	72	35	45	55	102	45	51
2010	10	58	36	33	48	81	51	58
2011	12	77	36	67	11	78	57	54

The provision of child care for public meetings depends on several considerations including:

- Are the meetings part of the City's legislative process, typically supported by the City Clerk or informal meetings, typically supported by divisional staff?
- Are meetings held during the day or do they take place after work hours?
- Does the meeting location have an existing child care facility, or space that could be used for child care, or is the meeting at a location without adequate and appropriate space for child care?
- Will parents remain onsite or will they be moving to multiple sites or going off site? If parents cannot be guaranteed to remain on site, the provincial *Day Nurseries Act* requires any premise that receives more than five children under the age of 10 years, not of common parentage (children who have different parents), for temporary care and guidance, to be licensed as a day nursery http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90d02_e.htm
- Is it likely that the stakeholder demographic participating in the meeting/event indicates a need for child care? What is the likelihood that there will be participants with children?
- Are there resources available including a budget, trained staff, a registration system or sufficient lead-time to provide child care?
- Are there liability issues for the City in providing this temporary service?
- Are there other opportunities available for participants to provide input where child care is not required e.g. phone survey or online questionnaire?

For additional information on child care arrangements, legislative requirements, including ratio and minimum space, see Appendix A.

The City Manager will:
- Update current facilities listings to include information about child care facilities in locations that are booked for public meetings.
- Create a database of companies which could provide temporary child care at public meetings where no child care facilities exist but appropriate space is available.
- Direct staff to consider using either existing child care facilities or establishing a temporary facility where the following conditions are met:
  - The meeting is likely to attract participation with child care needs
  - Sufficient numbers of participants indicate a need for child care and
  - The cost is less than reimbursing those participants individually
  - Budget and related resources have been approved

The City Manager recommends the City Clerk be requested to consider in her forthcoming report on the Procedural Bylaws, the matter of Order of Public Speaker, particularly as it pertains to participants in need of assistance or with small children in attendance.

9. Civic Engagement Knowledge Base and Online Consultation Platform

The City Manager's Office is developing a civic engagement knowledge base and online consultation platform as part of the City's capital IT investment. This initiative, called *Engage Toronto*, is currently being developed in consultation with City divisions and includes a review of other jurisdictions and best practices. Staff will solicit feedback from the City engagement practitioners and the public as the initiative rolls out. Some of the components being explored include:

- **A resident registry system.** Several cities offer residents the opportunity to register with the City (join a database) and indicate which issues or areas of the City they have an interest in. Staff would use the registry to notify residents about Council reports, City projects and public consultations and to conduct surveys and polls.
- **Citizen Panel.** Residents who register with the Engage Toronto system could also indicate if they are interested in providing their input on a wide range of City issues. City staff would encourage participants to complete a voluntary disclosure form similar to the ones used to recruit members to the City's advisory bodies to seek demographic diversity and a representative sample for some research purposes.
- **Idea managers.** Public consultations can take many forms. One online technique being used in many other cities is the collection of ideas from the public, with the option to comment on, expand on, discuss and vote on each idea. Visitors to the website can sort ideas using different criteria such as "most popular", "most discussed", "highest rated" or by date. This technique works best for projects that are still in the discussion or idea generation phase and have a well defined scope.
- **Collaborative site for City staff to post public information and data.** Instead of a few staff posting information to the civic engagement knowledge base, engagement practitioners across the city will be able to contribute information on current and upcoming engagement activities, publish surveys and polls and upload reports and outcomes from past or completed consultations to a single database. This will improve data coordination and avoid the need for the public and staff to reference several sites or information sources.
- **Survey tools.** The *Engage Toronto* initiative includes the development of a new online platform. One component of this platform could be a consistent survey tool that staff could use that would address quality, privacy and data security issues that can arise when staff use multiple, or third party survey instruments (e.g. issues related to the location of data servers or surveys that don't comply with privacy requirements).

Pilot projects to test each of the elements of the Engage Toronto initiative will provide valuable information about the costs and benefits of using these tools. Staff will be able to revise each of these components and incorporate lessons learned into future divisional and corporate civic engagement activities.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Additional Information on Child Care Arrangements, Considerations and
Requirements for the Provision of Child Care

APPENDIX A

Additional Information on Child Care Arrangements, Considerations and Requirements for the Provision of Child Care

Arrangements for the provision of child care typically fall into four categories:
1) provision of care at an existing facility
2) child care at a temporary facility
3) reimbursement for a parent's child care expenses
4) accommodation of parents at City meetings

1. Use of existing Child Care Facilities

Child care centres that provide care during the day to registered children would not be available for use by the City for daytime public meetings (most centres are in use until 6 pm and cannot accommodate extra children who are not registered with that centre). However, if the City wished to use an existing child care facility, such as the ones at City Hall and Metro Hall for after-hours meetings, the cost would be an average of $30 per hour per child care staff, plus any associated, i.e. custodial costs. Staff would need to be paid for a minimum of two hours even if no children use the facility. For a three-hour evening meeting, this would be a minimum of $180 for two staff to be on hand in case of an emergency or a child needing individual attention.

Additional considerations and requirements for the provision of child care at public meetings at existing child care facilities include:

- Parents to remain in attendance of the meeting/event and in the building while children are in care
- Children must be free of illness and or fever, or they cannot be admitted into care
- Provincially mandated ratios to be maintained – number of staff per child, varies by the age of the child
- Food /snacks would need to be paid for and provided by the City, and food restrictions/rules at the centre would have to be adhered to (e.g., no nut products).
- That staff at the child care centre are amenable to working overtime – contracts are negotiated with individual staff at these centres, not typically through the centre administration.
- That the administration and/or board of the child care facilities are amenable to letting their centre be used for care of children not registered in their centres or after-hours.
- The centre's insurance and liability to cover this type of use is secured without additional costs
- That appropriate accommodation is available e.g. cots for late night meetings
- That the after-hours use of the facility does not compromise the normal operating procedures of the facility e.g. will be cleaned and open for regular hours. Some

centres have indicated a reluctance to do this because of the extra work required to ready their centre for use the next day.

Participants would need to pre-register in order to ensure that the appropriate number of staff is in place.

Number of Staff required for a Day Nursery Other than a Day Nursery for Children with Disabilities Group

Age Group	Ratio of Employees to Children	Maximum Number of Children in a Group
Infant - Under 18 months of age	3 to 10	10
Toddler - 18 months of age and over up to and including 30 months of age	1 to 5	15
Preschool - more than 30 months of age up to and including 5 years of age	1 to 8	16
Junior Kindergarten - 44 months of age or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1 to 10	20
Senior Kindergarten - 56 months of age or over and up to and including 67 months of age as of August 31 of the year	1 to 12	24
School age - 68 months of age or over as of August 31 of the year and up to and including 12 years of age	1 to 15	30

2. Setting up Temporary Child Care Facilities

Where no child care facilities exist, staff could still make arrangements for care during public meetings. The City could choose to make space and staff available for child care. For example, the City could contract with a private company to provide child care in a location in close proximity to the meetings such as another committee room. The Ministry of Education, which regulates child care facilities in Ontario, requires that licensed facilities provide children with at least 2.8 square metres (30 square feet) of unobstructed floor space for each child.

Setting up a temporary child care facility would require many of the same needs be met as with an existing facility, but would also require that the child care operator:

- Provide approved developmental and age appropriate resources and safe products – e.g. toys and highchairs, cleaning supplies
- Ensure parents complete contact and information forms, sign in and out forms
- Have procedures in place for notification of parent during meeting,
- Have procedures are in place for emergency evacuation including pre-determination of meeting place, transportation route and notification of authorities
- Apply a criminal reference check policy
- Follow all applicable regulatory requirements e.g. procedures in place for notification of suspected abuse

Participants would need to pre-register in order to make sure that the appropriate number of staff is in place to meet provincial requirements regarding ratios. Costs for hiring a child care service to set up a temporary facility would include an hourly rate for staff as well as an administration and booking fee from the company. Minimum hours would

apply, with the service being paid for regardless of whether or not participants used the facility.

In both the above situations, it will be important to ensure that the number of potential participants in this program warrant the cost and administration of such a program. Various factors such as the level of demand, age of the child, hours of care, time of day and the availability an existing facility or setting up a temporary facility affect the cost estimates for these two types of care.

3. Reimbursing Child Care Expenses

A third option, one which staff who hold non-legislative, public meetings have previously used, is to issue a voucher to reimburse child care expenses arranged for by the participants themselves.

For large public consultations, staff have requested that participants notify them, in advance, if they have any special needs that the City could meet, that would facilitate their participation. Members of the public typically request such supports as large-print documents, sign-language interpretation, multilingual translation, TTC fare or attendant care. Staff make every effort to arrange these supports, with the caveat that some services require more lead-time than others and the City cannot guarantee that every request can be met. For example, securing a French interpreter may require several weeks notice, while Large-Print documents can typically be generated quickly in-house. When staff receive requests for child care they determine if there are sufficient numbers to warrant the City providing the care (and then only if facilities are available), or reimbursing participants for their own costs.

Typically the City reimburses child care costs at the Provincial minimum wage for the number of hours of the meeting plus half an hour before and afterwards. Currently for a three hour meeting the cost to the City would be $41 ($10.25 x 4 hours) per participant.

The limitation of this system is that it is done on the "honour system" requiring participants to indicate in advance that they need child care. However, the advantage to this system is that it avoids requiring the City to set up child care facilities potentially without any participants to use the service.

4. Additional Child Care Options

In addition to the above approaches there are two other alternatives that Council could consider

- a room with closed-circuit TV or webcam for parents to follow proceedings while caring for their own children, and be available to speak when their name is called by the Chair to present; and
- agreement by committee members to allow persons with small children to receive priority times for speaking to a Committee.