

## Report to Governance Working Group

**To:** Chair and Members  
**Governance Working Group**  
**From:** Cathy Saunders, City Clerk  
**Subject:** Advisory Committee Review – Interim Report III  
**Date:** November 10, 2020

## Recommendation

That the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to report back to the Governance Working Group with respect to the next steps required to implement the revised Advisory Committee Structure, as outlined in the report dated November 10, 2020 entitled “Advisory Committee Review – Interim Report III”; it being noted that the proposed implementation of the new structure would be in July 2021.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this interim report is to respond to the following Council direction from September 29, 2020:

“That the following actions be taken with respect to the 1st Report of the Governance Working Group from its meeting held on August 24, 2020:

- a) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to report back to the Governance Working Group (GWG), with respect to the advisory committee review, as it relates to the following:
  - i) options for the consideration of the GWG including:
    - A) revisions to the current advisory committee structure including, potential reduction of overall committees, mergers of committees with areas of overlap/redundancy, to achieve a more meaningful and collaborative approach to citizen engagement;
    - B) any alternative collaborative structure(s) for citizen committee work, including alternate citizen selection models for participation in committees and working groups that would encourage participation from a more diverse range of Londoners, that would link directly to the council strategic plan; and,
    - C) revisions to the current advisory committee structure that enhance advice on public preferences on decision making through the provision of clear specific directions from council and administration over self-directed “work plans”;
  - ii) additional service area detail related to the existing committees that are more closely linked to the role of ‘expert panel’;
- b) clause 1.1 BE RECEIVED for information; and,
- c) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to post to the City Website the agendas and reports of the Working Groups as established by Council; it being noted that these would be included on the “Advisory and Other Committee Meetings” page.”

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background Information

#### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- Finance and Administrative Services Committee, February 27, 2012
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, December 16, 2013
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, March 17, 2014
- Civic Works Committee, June 19, 2018
- Corporate Services Committee, November 13, 2018

- Corporate Services Committee, March 19, 2019
- Governance Working Group, August 24, 2020

## **1.2 Legislative Requirements**

At the time of writing this report, municipalities are legislatively required to have the following advisory committees:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Planning Advisory Committee
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Advisory Committee

## **2.0 Discussion and Considerations**

### **2.1 Citizen Engagement Groups and Expert Panels**

In terms of citizen engagement (or participation), the intention is to involve citizens in the decision making process. It is an interaction between the public and their government. The municipal government is generally considered closest and most accessible to the public, so it should be anticipated that both the government and the public at large would be interested in this action. This speaks to why all parties consider this to be so valuable.

Engagement can happen at any stage of a process, whether policy development, implementation or review/evaluation. In some cases, public consultation is mandated by either local policy or provincial legislation. It does not pre-suppose any special requirements to participate, in fact broader and more diverse participation is more likely to increase the quality and quantity of opinions for consideration; notwithstanding this, engagement may also include individuals with expertise, experience and subject-matter knowledge.

Expert panels are used when there is very specialized input being sought; the role is generally more of an evaluative one, but this is not necessarily the only expert panel outcome. In some cases experts may debate and discuss the merits of various options with a goal to a recommendation that is based on specialized education, knowledge and/or experience. The participants offer focused, evidence-based, guidance, and not broader and more general “public opinion.” Different from the above-noted engagement description, members of expert panels would be expected to have specific professional-based credentials. Municipalities engage these groups most often, when the expertise is not readily available from existing staff.

## 2.2 Existing Advisory Committee Mandates

Currently, there are areas of overlapping roles between some of the existing advisory committees.

The following chart is a high level illustration, included for demonstration purposes only.

	Environment (inc. climate change)	Planning (inc. heritage)	Safety	Transportation (inc. active)	Diversity (inc. AODA)	Housing
LACH		✓		✓		✓
ACCAC		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ACE	✓	✓	✓	✓		
AAC	✓	✓		✓		
AWAC			✓			
CCAC			✓		✓	✓
CSCP		✓	✓	✓	✓	
CAC	✓	✓	✓	✓		
DIAAC				✓	✓	✓
LHAC		✓	✓			✓
TAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
TFAC	✓	✓		✓		
EEPAC	✓	✓	✓	✓		

In addition to this illustration, it is worth noting that there are several designated membership positions on the existing committees that are for members of other advisory committees (ACs).

These factors demonstrate potential opportunities to combine ACs and reduce the overall number, based on the current committees.

## 2.3 Consultation To-date

The staff report of March 19, 2019, outlined feedback that was provided through consultation. This input was from current and former AC members, civic administration, the public and from members of Council. From this consultation there were a number of points (concerns) that may be remedied with a revised structure. In addition to the consultation previously undertaken, there have been a number of submissions (formal and informal) as well as media and social media commentary.

## 2.4 Timelines

The current advisory committee appointments are for a term ending June 30, 2021. These appointments were made notwithstanding current advisory committee terms of reference as an interim measure during the on-going review.

The current term of Municipal Council ends November 15, 2022. In the past, advisory committee appointments have been in synch with the Council term.

## 2.5 Implementing Change

There are a variety of competing interests to balance when determining if change in current structures and process should be undertaken. Regardless of the option that Municipal Council may direct, a phased approach utilizing a model of implementation that would facilitate on-going evaluation of the process is recommended.

## 2.6 Options for Consideration

### *Reduce to Legislatively Required Advisory Committees only*

In this option, all existing advisory committees would conclude at the end of the current term, or at a date determined by the Municipal Council. New advisory committees would be created, based on current legislative requirements and with direct reporting relationship to Council. This option could be further considered in terms of whether these required committees would continue to function in the same manner as they do now in terms of membership, mandate, terms of reference, etc.

Note: all additional options below would be in addition to the legislatively required advisory committees.

### *Reduce to Legislatively Required Advisory Committees with Administrative Discretion for additional committees as required*

Task forces, working groups, and administratively-led groups are convened, as required, for any subject matter deemed necessary. These additional groups would be led by civic administration and not have a direct reporting relationship with the Municipal Council, although they may provide reporting from time-to-time. In this option, the civic administration would incorporate the comments from the task forces and working groups into the staff report on the subject matter, which would be submitted to Municipal Council for consideration.

### *Create new Advisory Committees with Different Linkages to Corporate Work*

Examine the needs for engagement or expertise based on existing governance structures and/or the Council Strategic Plan. This could establish an advisory body for each standing committee of council ensuring reporting relationships and areas of jurisdiction are clear. Sub-committees (or working groups, or other like body) could be developed from each on project-specific matters, as included in the Strategic Plan.

### *Expert Panels*

Establish Expert Panels on the recommendations of the Civic Administration, as the need for such arises. The Civic Administration would then incorporate the Expert Panel's comments in the staff reports submitted to Municipal Council for consideration.

### *Move to new and different means of engagement*

The current advisory committees, are only one example of the many ways in which the corporation engages with the community. It is however, more formalized than most other methods in that there is a direct connection to the Municipal Council. Moving away from 'advisory committees' to different models may or may not continue this connection. One option would be to create an 'Engagement Community' that would be consulted on a regular basis, with the information being provided back to Municipal Council. It would involve an open call to volunteers of the community who would be involved in routine survey completion, and various forums and discussions (few 'formal' meetings). The implementation of this type of a model would be beyond the legislative function of the City Clerks' Office, and would require more of a corporate approach.

As a result of COVID-19, there are a number of new innovations being introduced, in order to continue to interact with the public. Webinars and virtual discussions and meetings are being normalized to a large degree. This is an important factor to consider in this discussion, in addition to the limitations that these innovations may present.

## *Streamlining the Existing Structure*

In what could be termed a “modified status quo” the existing structure is largely left intact. This is the option recommended at this time, as is outlined in more detail in the following sections, noting that Municipal Council may propose additional changes to this proposed structure.

### **3.0 Proposed Next Steps**

#### **3.1 Modified Status Quo**

The following outlines an initial proposed change to the advisory committee structure; it is based on the current committees, but looks to incorporate to the fullest extent possible, the Municipal Council direction of August 24, 2020.

A modified status quo structure (new committee names are for illustration purposes), through to the end March 2023, is recommended as follows:

#### **Legislatively Required Committees:**

Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee – A ‘new’ committee taking on the responsibilities of the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH), the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) and some matters from the London Housing Advisory Committee (LHAC).

Accessibility Advisory Committee – responsibilities of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACCAC), combined with some matters from LHAC.

Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee – managed outside of this structure, administratively.

#### **Additional Committees:**

Transportation Advisory Committee – A combination of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Cycling Advisory Committee (CAC), along with some portions of the current Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee.

Climate Change Advisory Committee – A combination of the Advisory Committee on the Environment and the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee.

Ecological and Environmental Review Panel – former EEPAC \*existing in the form of an ‘expert panel’ not citizen engagement.

Childcare Administration Advisory Panel – former Childcare Advisory Committee \*existing in the form of an ‘expert panel’ not citizen engagement.

Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee – adding appropriate matters from LHAC to this mandate. (No revised name proposed, as this was changed recently by the members.)

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee – similar to existing committee.

The above-noted structure combines some committees together and/or redistributes portions of existing mandates to other committees. Of specific note, the current Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee (CSCP) and the London Housing Advisory Committee (LHAC) mandates would be dispersed among the remaining committees. These two committees have very broad terms that overlap in a

variety of areas. The Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee is legislatively required and duplicates much of the CSCP mandate.

Noting that the matter of affordable housing is a current need in the community, that there is a homeless population in the city, and that both of these matters are priorities of the strategic plan, Municipal Council may wish to consider the creation a task force with a very specific mandate to focus on these matters or new matters that may arise, potentially including those that relate to funding opportunities.

Taking this phased approach will allow the current Council to move toward change in smaller steps, and evaluate along the way. The proposed changes are summarized in the following table:

Current Advisory Committee	Proposed New Committee
London Advisory Committee on Heritage	Planning & Heritage Advisory Committee
Agricultural Advisory Committee	
Accessibility Advisory Committee	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Community Safety & Well-Being Advisory Committee	Community Safety & Well-Being Advisory Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee	Transportation Advisory Committee
Cycling Advisory Committee	
Advisory Committee on the Environment	Climate Change Advisory Committee
Trees and Forests Advisory Committee	
Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee	Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee	Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
Environmental & Ecological Advisory Committee	Environmental & Ecological Advisory Committee (*as “expert panel”)
Childcare Advisory Committee	Childcare Advisory Committee (*as “expert panel”)
Community Safety & Crime Prevention Advisory Committee	None – mandate moved to other committees
London Housing Advisory Committee	Some mandate moved to other committees where appropriate, with additional consideration for a new revised alternative as appropriate

### 3.2 Amendments to Terms of Reference

The above-noted proposed structure would require changes to the existing terms of reference for implementation. If supported, a future report would be brought forward with Terms of Reference for the ‘modified status quo’ structure. These Terms of Reference would generally incorporate the following:

- establish the “reporting relationships” to standing committees based on revised responsibilities
- be focused on responsibilities, work and projects that would be provided directly by Municipal Council or the Civic Administration, removing the requirement for Council-approved work plans
- remove specific meeting date requirements, in favour of convening meetings as they are required
- provide for ‘sunset’ clauses for the committees and/or appointments
- any additional direction from Municipal Council

The Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Peer Review Panel and the Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy would also be used to guide the development of new Terms of Reference for the proposed structure.

### **3.3 Potential Gains with the Above-noted Framework**

There has been a lot of feedback (formal and informal) from the public, elected officials and staff related to advisory committees. There has not been any broad consensus conveyed to abandon the idea of such committees, but rather to make changes that will increase the benefit for all involved.

A common theme to the commentary was related to the notion of meaningful work (for the committees) and receptiveness of Municipal Council to the advisory committee recommendations. Anecdotally from the Clerk's area, we know that the advisory committees sometimes struggle to draft their work plans because there are not clear enough expectations from administration or council, related to their work. It is for these reasons that it is strongly recommend that each Terms of Reference clearly identify that the work of the advisory committees will filter to them from the civic administration and/or from specific Municipal Council direction. Notably, legislative requirements are exclusive of this direction. This change will help to ensure that the advisory committee work is focused on the initiatives and work plans of various service areas and also to the Council Strategic Plan. This should also assist to establish connections directly with civic administration in order to share suggestions, advice, feedback and potential innovations, all of which are intended outcomes of the structure. An additional consideration will be the designation of specific staff from service areas to liaise this direction; as previously reported, there are a number of civic administration that currently participate with the advisory committees as resource members.

In considering the significant potential change noted above, it is anticipated that the need for meeting frequency may also change. Therefore, it is proposed that any modifications to the Terms of Reference consider specifying that the committees will meet as required.

Should the proposed changes outlined in this report be approved, it is recommended that the terms of appointments to the structure conclude in March 2023. Having the appointments continue slightly beyond the current term of Municipal Council will provide for some continuity through the orientation a new Municipal Council as well as an opportunity for the new Municipal Council to begin considerations of any additional change they may wish to implement.

### **3.4 Recruitment and Appointment**

Pending the approval of any changes to the committee structure, a recruitment of members will be undertaken. This will be done in a manner similar to the most recent recruitment and utilize as many channels as possible to reach all sectors of the community. In some cases it may be necessary to target recruitment, particularly in terms of populating the expert panels. In all cases, the membership will be in accordance with any revised Terms of Reference for the committees.

A future report will also outline additional options in terms of the method(s) of appointing the membership. A randomized selection from the submitted applications is recommended, to the fullest extent that may be possible.

### **3.5 Future State Considerations**

The current Council Policy for the Establishment of Task Forces and Working Groups is an important policy to keep in mind, in terms of the flexibility that any structure may have.

## **4.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

### **4.1 Budget and Budget Impacts**

It is anticipated that the above-noted and recommended structure can be accommodated through the existing advisory committee budgets.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The Municipal Council, civic administration and the advisory committee membership have all acknowledged the potential value of having municipal advisory committees. In the consideration of any change options, it is critical to keep in mind that the existing advisory committees are not the sole means by which the Corporation engages and consults with the public.

The recommendations herein, attempt to balance the previous consultation with the advisory committee membership with the desire to improve an existing structure. This proposal is intended to be a first step, of potentially many, to modernize the advisory committee structure.

**Prepared, Submitted and Recommended by:**

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**Michael Schulthess, Deputy City Clerk**

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