

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Intersection of City Committees and the Youth Engagement Working Group

Date Prepared: January 23, 2023

Report To: Special Meeting of Council

Councillor and Role: Councillor Jill Bruce, Youth Engagement Working Group

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

To advise Council of disconnect between the Youth Representatives on City Committees and the Youth Engagement Working Group and to confirm direction, or alternatively, receive further direction from Council on proposed changes.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

At the October 4th meeting of the Youth Engagement Working Group (YEWG), the disconnect between the youth representatives on other committees and the YEWG was discussed. The terms of reference of all City Advisory Committees (Arts & Culture, Inclusion, Sustainable & Active Mobility and Seniors) requires a Youth Representative between the ages of 18 and 30 as a member, a practice put in place many years ago as a way to ensure there were youth voices on all committees. Staff advised the YEWG that they would like to find a way to find an intersection between the new YEWG and the other committees with youth representation and asked for their feedback on how to connect the groups as one youth member on a committee does not represent the views of all youth.

The YEWG was established in early 2022. As noted in its terms of reference, its purpose is to oversee implementation of the Youth Engagement Strategy approved by Council in October 2020 and provide ongoing advice and guidance on how to best engage youth on City matters. The Working Group provides perspective on topics that are of interest to youth, will recommend the most appropriate engagement tools and methods, and help identify barriers and gaps that might impact youth engagement. In doing so, the Working Group will consider the City's Engage! Policy and other relevant City policies, programs and tools including the City's Online Youth Panel. The Working Group will also consider how the City's established relationships with youth serving agencies can be leveraged to ensure engagement of hard-to-reach youth such as newcomers, youth at risk, and other vulnerable groups.

YEWG members agreed that it would be of benefit to have communication with the youth representatives on other committees but were hesitant to recommend that members sit on multiple groups as time to participate is an ongoing challenge for this demographic. It was suggested that youth representatives on existing committees be extended a standing invitation to attend YEWG. Staff then followed up with the youth representatives on other city

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committees to discuss the issue. A meeting was held between the Co-Chairs of the YEWG and the youth representatives from the Inclusion Advisory Committee and Sustainable & Active Mobility Advisory Committee to determine how to move forward. It was again recognized that sitting on two committees would be onerous on members and it was recommended that youth representatives be provided with agendas of the YEWG with the ability to attend as ex-officio members should they wish to do so.

In their discussions with the youth representatives, all agree that while they do fit the criteria of being between the ages of 18-30, they are representing their own organizations and interests and not necessarily the “youth perspective.” A follow up meeting with staff leads of City committees that have youth representatives noted that there is a disconnect but that it is important for some of these committees to ensure good demographic representation. That said, all recognize that one youth voice on a committee does not truly represent youth.

Staff are therefore recommending that the “Youth Representative” requirement be removed from the Terms of Reference of City committees and instead change them to say that a broad perspective of ages be included on Committees during the selection process. For the YEWG to achieve its intention, they must become the voice of youth for the City. If Advisory Committees would like additional insight from youth, or a project requires a youth view, then the YEWG or the Youth Panel should be engaged for consultation as per their purpose to ensure as many youth as possible are engaged.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: N/A

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Youth Engagement Working Group, Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, Inclusion Advisory Committee, Senior's Advisory Committee, Sustainable & Active Mobility Advisory Committee

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Connected City: Increase and improve opportunities for residents to connect with each other and the City.

An Effective City: Work with our employees to improve organizational performance through effective processes and policies.

4. Alignment with Adopted Plans: N/A

5. Accessibility and Inclusion: The IAC and SAMAC Youth Representatives were consulted in the process and Staff will include a broad range of ages in the Committee selection process. The key is to ensure variety of demographic.

6. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A

7. Privacy Implications: N/A
8. Engagement and Communications Considerations: N/A
9. Human Resource Implications: N/A
10. Procurement Implications: N/A
11. Information Technology Implications: N/A
12. Other Implications: All terms of reference will need to be reviewed and modified.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the proposed amendment to remove the Youth Representative label from the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committees, to direct Staff to ensure all terms of reference for committees reflect the need to have age diversity, and to further direct Staff to ensure ongoing communication between the YEWG and City Committees.

Prepared by:

Approved by: