

## Mid-Term Governance Review White Papers Summary #3

### Proposals regarding Advisory Committees

Objective #3 of the Governance Objectives in the City Strategic Plan commits the City to developing “a democratic, engaging and visible process to maximize input from residents in the work of Council and in policy development, while ensuring that seniors, new Canadians, women and the economically disadvantaged are included.

There are currently 15 Advisory Committees which provide public input to Council. Each Advisory Committee reports to the Standing Committee of Council that is responsible for its specific policy area. The mandate of each Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the Standing Committee and to Council on matters within their jurisdiction. Each Advisory Committee is supposed to focus its attention on the priorities identified in the “Term of Council Plan” approved by Council. Each Advisory Committee operates according to a formal *Procedure ByLaw* and is governed by certain other policies. There are two Advisory Committees that are required by statute – the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Heritage Advisory Committee.

White Paper #7 points out that some Advisory Committees have worked well, while others have left both sides feeling frustrated. Frustration often arises when Advisory Committee members wish to raise and provide input on issues that do not fall within the identified priorities or that do not fall within current budget lines.

White Paper #7 suggests that Council consider whether or not Advisory Committees are the best way to get public input in all 15 cases where they have been established. The paper notes that, in raising this issue, the purpose is not to “ ‘get rid of the Advisory Committees’ ” , but rather to maximize the effectiveness of citizen involvement, reduce volunteer and Councillor frustration, and to try to find the best structure for the desired outcomes for each Advisory Committee mandate.”

Questions/Issues:

In your experience, which Advisory Committees have worked well in providing an opportunity for diverse public input, in the context of Governance Objective #3?

In your experience, which Advisory Committees have not worked well?

Are there Advisory Committees that could work more effectively with some adjustment? If so, what would those adjustments be?

Are there instances where a different process of public engagement would be more effective in achieving Governance Objective #3?