

REPORT

Community Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: August 25, 2025

From: Jennifer Miller, Acting Director of Community Services
File:

Item #: 2025-236

Subject: Updated Terms of Reference for Community Advisory Assembly

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the updated Terms of Reference for the Community Advisory Assembly, included as Attachment 1 to the report titled “Updated Terms of Reference for Community Advisory Assembly” from the Acting Director of Community Services dated August 25, 2025, be adopted, following updates to reflect feedback from the pilot Assembly members and review by the Assembly Steering Committee.

PURPOSE

To share the process taken to update the Terms of Reference for the Community Advisory Assembly and the updated Terms of Reference, which will guide the upcoming 2025-2026 Assembly term.

BACKGROUND

The Community Advisory Assembly started as a pilot project to test a new model for committee-style public engagement. The Assembly model differs in several ways from traditional advisory committees: larger group of residents; diverse membership that mirrors overall community demographics; covered a range of topics; more frequent meetings; meetings based on dialogue and consensus; led by an external professional facilitator; variety of supports offered to members.

The pilot term ran from January 2024 to January 2025. As with all City advisory committees, the details of the Community Advisory Assembly were outlined in a Terms of Reference document developed to guide the mandate, membership, process and other elements.

The Terms of Reference for the pilot Assembly year were developed based on best practices in public engagement, equitable engagement, and deliberative democracy processes such as citizens' assemblies. The draft Terms of Reference were approved by Council in 2023, and then reviewed by the pilot Assembly members at the start of their term in January 2024. No changes were suggested at that time, so the Terms of Reference were formally adopted by Council in April 2024.

At the end of the pilot Assembly year, the group was asked again to review the Terms of Reference and suggest any changes based on their experience. Through a facilitated workshop process, led by the external Assembly facilitators, the group suggested updates related to topic selection, regular reporting back to the group on their recommendations to the City, allowing Assembly members to serve for longer than one year, and other aspects of the Terms of Reference. See Attachment 3 for the summary of this feedback from the previous Assembly members (this summary was previously shared with Council and the community as part of the Assembly evaluation report to Council on May 12, 2025).

On [May 12, 2025](#), Council directed staff to update the Terms of Reference based on the feedback from the pilot group and the results of the evaluation of the pilot. Staff were asked to bring the updated Terms of Reference back to Council for review and approval.

DISCUSSION

Based on the feedback provided from the members of the pilot Assembly year and Steering Committee members, staff updated the Community Advisory Assembly Terms of Reference document. See Attachment 1 for the updated Terms of Reference.

As part of preparations for the upcoming term of the Assembly, starting in September 2025, staff have reconvened the Assembly Steering Committee with refreshed membership that includes three former Assembly members, three staff members from different City departments, a representative from Council, and one expert in deliberative democracy. The Steering Committee met for the first time on August 6, 2025 and reviewed the updated Terms of Reference. Additional updates to the Terms of Reference were made based on this discussion, largely to increase clarity.

Key updates include:

- Additional details about regular and ongoing reporting back to the Assembly about the status of the advice and recommendations they make to the City. For example, under the Staff Supports section of the Terms of Reference, the following content has been added: "Staff are also responsible for tracking

progress and providing updates on the outcomes of the Assembly's recommendations. Updates should be provided as part of every meeting agenda."

- Providing greater influence for Assembly members in terms of proposing topics for discussion and prioritizing topics proposed by the City for the group to discuss. Added that a balance will be sought between City-generated topics and Assembly-generated topics.
- Added detail that no experience or particular expertise is required to join the Assembly.
- Added former Assembly members to the membership of the Assembly Steering Committee.
- Allow Assembly members to serve for up to two years.
- Opportunity for discussion to continue even if quorum is not reached, with the understanding that no consensus is possible.
- Updates to the member attendance section.

A marked-up version of the document, showing the edits made, is included for reference as Attachment 2.

The updated Terms of Reference will be provided to the incoming Assembly members and reviewed at the first Assembly meeting on September 25, 2025.

NEXT STEPS

The 2025-2026 term of the Community Advisory Assembly will begin on September 17, 2025, with a welcome event for incoming members, City Council, the Steering Committee, staff, and past Assembly members. The welcome event has been added to the Council calendar. The first working meeting of the new Assembly term is September 25, 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to the updates made to the Assembly Terms of Reference. Expenses related to the Assembly initiative are included within the 2025 City budget, with requests for ongoing budget support coming forward to Council in the 2026 Budget process.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The Public Engagement division is leading the Community Advisory Assembly process. Staff from Legislative Services, Climate Action, Engineering and Community Services have been involved in reviewing the updated Terms of Reference.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council's consideration:

1. THAT the updated Terms of Reference for the Community Advisory Assembly, included as Attachment 1 to the report titled "Updated Terms of Reference for Community Advisory Assembly" from the Acting Director of Community Services dated August 25, 2025, be adopted, following updates to reflect feedback from the pilot Assembly members and review by the Assembly Steering Committee.
2. That alternative direction be provided.

Staff recommend option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Community Advisory Assembly Terms of Reference, updated draft August 2025

Attachment 2 – Marked-up version of the Assembly Terms of Reference

Attachment 3 – Community Advisory Assembly's Comments on Terms of Reference, January 2025

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Jennifer Miller, Acting Director, Community Services

This report was reviewed by:
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This report was approved by:
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