
2004 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE – Policy Functions

Issue:

March 12, 2004 Budget Advisory Committee request for report on “how the entire policy function can be reduced by 10%.”

Key Message:

A further reduction of 10% is not recommended.

Key Point(s):

1. Budget Briefing Note, March 9, 2004 responded to the 3 questions raised in the request from the February 13, 2004 Administration Committee as follows:
 - other departments and ABC's do not have a function whose work is similar to that of Strategic & Corporate Policy within their program areas;
 - the functions cannot be integrated across the Corporation because the program and operational policy functions are already integrated within their appropriate programs and operations;
 - reducing the budget of the Strategic & Corporate Policy Division would be additional to a 9.1% reduction in positions from 2003 to 2004 and would result in staff terminations;
 - the division has undergone a 23% reduction in staff from 1997 to 2003; and
 - 20 specific outcomes and actions were identified as impacts of reductions.

2. For some departments, the 2004 Budgets recommended include 10% reductions attributable to the staffing freeze and gapping. Additional reductions result in staff terminations. The following information builds on the March 9, 2004 Briefing Note to BAC.
 - The Social Policy and Research unit in CNS has been static since 1998 and a 10% reduction eliminates one of eight (8) positions and is one staff termination.
 - The Policy and Research unit in UDS has 28 positions of which three (3) are gapped – a 10% reduction. An additional 10% is three (3) staff terminations.
 - Transportation Planning in UDS has 10 positions of which one is gapped – a 10% reduction. An additional 10% is one staff termination.

- WES total of 24 positions includes two (2) gapped positions and three (3) positions in Water and Waste Water which are rate supported. An additional 10% is two (2) staff terminations.
 - The Strategic & Corporate Policy Division includes three (3) gapped positions in the EMT recommended budget and one position affected by the freeze. An additional 10% of the seventeen (17) policy positions is two (2) staff terminations.
 - Toronto Public Health's 20 policy and research positions include 1.8 gapped positions. An additional 10% is two (2) staff terminations.
 - EDCT has a total of 27 policy and research positions, the majority of which support district operations. There are no vacancies. A 10% reduction is three (3) staff terminations.
 - Finance has a total of 2 policy positions. A 10% reduction is .02 of a position.
 - Corporate Services has 10 fully staffed positions. A 10% reduction is one (1) staff termination.
3. The number of policy and research staff reported in the March 9, 2004 Briefing Note totals 146, including Strategic & Corporate Policy. The application of the staffing freeze and the gapping included in all salary budgets means that a further 10% reduction of 15 positions, as noted in #2 above, results in 15 staff terminations and the associated severance costs.
4. What is the impact? These staff write the reports which form the basis for the decisions made by councillors at Committees and at Council. These reports are the foundation for service operating plans, procedures, standards, by-laws, program plans, major policy strategies in economic development, culture, social development, environment, official plan. These staff respond to councillors' requests for information, research, data analysis. These staff support the full range of roundtables, advisory committees and working groups established by Council to engage residents in the city's business. At the BAC meetings the week of March 9, 2004, fifty-six (56) requests for reports, briefing notes and longer term studies were approved. The vast majority of these requests required a one week turn-around time. There is a direct link between the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of service provided to the public and the work performed by staff preparing operational, program and corporate policies. There is a direct link between the confidence the public has in Council's decision-making and the quality and timeliness of information which helps Council make the best-informed decisions possible.

Conclusion:

In preparing the March 9, 2004 Briefing Note for the BAC, a detailed review of staffing levels associated with policy and research was undertaken in each Department. This review was put in the context of this Council's priority directions and new demands. Departments have realigned and redirected existing resources to respond to these new requirements within existing resources.

In light of this review, any further reductions will impact directly on the current Council priorities including the Safe City and Clean & Beautiful City initiatives, enhanced civic engagement activities such as Listening to Toronto, advancing the integrity agenda and rebuilding public confidence, the Toronto Public Service initiative, and various service improvement initiatives including structural options, alternative revenue sources, and the ongoing intergovernmental actions for new deal, new urban agenda, enhanced legislative powers.

Date: March 23, 2004