



December 9, 2020

12th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Cathrine Regan

RE: EX19.3 Policy Analysis, Potential Design and Possible Implementation of a Vacant Home Tax in Toronto

Dear Mayor Tory and Members, Executive Committee,

This is to express our full support for the proposed Vacant Homes Tax, the proposed design based on the Vancouver model, and its implementation in 2022. We also support a much more meaningful starting rate of 3%, rather than the timid 1% being used in the report's scenarios.

The public policy rationale for a vacant home tax is clear: it will assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing and increasing rental vacancy rates. Toronto is fortunate in being able to learn from the Vancouver experience in designing and implementing such a tax. The staff report recommends the Vancouver design but does not make a recommendation regarding the tax rate. We encourage City Council to be bold – set a starting tax rate of 3% so that the revenues would likely exceed \$100M annually, a much more significant amount to be invested in affordable housing conversion and construction.

While no data exist regarding the current vacancy rate, residents are well aware of “dark houses” and “dark buildings” in neighbourhoods across the city. A vacancy tax will normalize occupancy of these homes, which will be positive to community life, as well as assisting in the City's dire fiscal situation.

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel
Co-Chair, FoNTRA
129 Hanna Road
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 3N6
gkettel@gmail.com

Cathie Macdonald
Co-Chair, FoNTRA
57 Duggan Avenue
Toronto, ON
M4V 1Y1
cathie.macdonald@sympatico.ca

Cc: Heather Taylor, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
Abigail Bond, Executive Director, Housing Secretariat
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Christopher Toomey, Senior Financial Analyst, Corporate Financial Strategies & Policy
Casey Brendon, Director, Revenue Services
Andrew Flynn, Controller, Office of the Controller

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. **Its members, all residents' associations, include** at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. **The residents' associations that make up** FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.