

June 28, 2021

To Planning and Housing Committee Chair and Members,

Re: Broadening Access to Our City Planning Processes

The development application process is a significant and important public engagement opportunity for residents to provide input on construction that shapes the future of our neighbourhoods and our City. However, we know that systemic racism exists in our city, in the housing market and in our planning process, and that there are many barriers to ensuring equitable participation in the process.

Through consultation and feedback from residents, I have heard that the community consultation process is inaccessible, and heard calls for the City to act to increase participation amongst marginalized residents. We need to find ways to ensure working groups and input into applications comes from a group of residents that is representative of the ethnocultural and economic diversity of a neighbourhood.

A major barrier to public engagement identified by the community is the language barrier non-English speaking residents face when receiving notice of and participating in community meetings. The City already acknowledges it is important to provide information in languages other than English to Toronto's diverse communities to ensure that language is not a barrier to participation. Many City communications are already published in multiple languages, including "Let's Get Toronto Vaccinated" and our waste management calendars.

This motion seeks to incorporate translation services as a regular part of City Planning's public engagement process, in addition to recommending the exploration of other measures, such as childcare, earlier access to community meeting materials, and continuing to provide a virtual community meeting option after the resumption of in-person meetings.

Recommendations:

1. City Council request that the City Clerk and Chief Planner, City Planning report back to the Planning and Housing Committee on actions which could be taken to address systemic barriers to accessing the public engagement process, including but not limited to:
 - a. Providing translated notification of planning applications and community meetings, through both on-site signage and by mailed notices, in languages other than English in neighbourhoods that meet a minimum threshold of households who speak a language other than English at home.

- b. Continuing to provide virtual community meetings, in addition to in-person meetings, once Covid-19 pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- c. Providing electronic notifications to interested parties via email for public community meetings and decision notices.
- d. Ensuring that meeting materials, including presentations and reports, are available digitally in advance of community meetings.
- e. Improving translation services available at public community meetings by providing interpreters, as required.
- f. Standardizing the requirement for requiring the applicants to provide refreshments at in person public community meetings.
- g. Requiring, if requested, the applicants to provide childcare services at in person public community meetings.
- h. Requiring, if requested, the applicants to provide professional facilitators at community consultation meetings that are anticipated to be contentious.

Thank you,



Councillor Mike Layton
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