



United Way
Toronto

Thursday, May 29, 2014

Councillor Peter Milczyn
Chair, Planning and Growth Committee, City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West, Suite C51
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Re: Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) Zoning class
Meeting Agenda Items PG 33.6 & PG 33.7**

Honourable Chair,

As you may know, staff from the Planning Division and the Tower Renewal Office recently concluded public consultations across the city on the new zoning by-law. United Way Toronto is proud to have been a key partner in that process and to have hosted consultations at a number of our Community Hubs. The Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) zoning will promote greater community programming and economic opportunities in Toronto's tower apartment communities. Those goals align well with United Way Toronto's mission to build strong neighbourhoods across our city.

Our research, from *Poverty By Postal Code* in 2004 to *Vertical Poverty* in 2011, has shown that Torontonians who live in the inner suburbs, especially those in high-rise rental apartment blocks, face complex barriers that need systemic change. Zoning is an important tool that can promote the types of neighbourhood investments and job creation we all want to see.

That is why we are excited that implementation of RAC has entered a new phase and staff and councillors are now moving closer towards implementation. As part of that process, we would like to submit the following two recommendations:

1. Look beyond RAC at other systemic opportunities

As mentioned, our research, and that of several other foundations and agencies, has identified multiple barriers that people in Toronto's inner suburbs face. RAC will help to overcome a few of those barriers to encourage more community programming, economic opportunities and other land uses. During implementation, it could also help identify other by-laws that hinder growth and prosperity. Therefore, we urge City of Toronto to look at other municipal legislation and regulation with a view to making greater economic and social impact, such as:

- I. Licensing and Standards
- II. Procurement practices
- III. Employment Lands and other areas where zoning can be updated.



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2. RAC implementation should be monitored and reported on annually

RAC represents the first important step to making these ideas a reality. Once the citywide Zoning By-law has passed Council, we look forward to continuing to work with City staff and local partners to support the implementation process. However, as with all systemic changes, issues will likely emerge, concerns and ideas will be raised and hurdles may have to be overcome. In some neighbourhoods RAC may be adapted more readily than others. It is important to document all of those instances into a regular report back to Council. As landlords, business owners and residents will not be required to report specifically on their adoption of RAC, this will require a coordinated effort among a range of City Divisions to pool knowledge and information about where and how RAC is being applied. Regular reporting will help ensure that:

- I. RAC is meeting the needs of apartment residents
- II. Additional barriers to creating complete communities are being identified and addressed
- III. The impact of RAC is being tracked for greater systemic change.

In conclusion, we would like to congratulate all City staff and councillors who have helped bring about this important new by-law. As RAC is implemented across Toronto's neighbourhoods to eventually include all rental tower communities, we will work with all partners to ensure resident engagement and local decision-making continue to play an integral role in the prospective changes that are considered under this by-law. We look forward to our continuing partnerships that deliver positive changes for our residents and help build complete communities.

Sincerely,


Pedro Barata
Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs
Cc: Members of Planning and Growth Committee