

# GM9.12.1

**From:** [Richard Schreier](#)  
**To:** [Government Management Committee](#)  
**Subject:** My comments for 2016.GM9.12 on January 4, 2016 Government Management Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 23, 2015 2:55:39 PM

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To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the January 4, 2016 Government Management Committee meeting on item 2016.GM9.12, Personalized .TO web address

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

I had originally sent an email to Mayor Tory as well as Rob Mickle but fear the emails got lost in the ether somewhere so I thought I would reach out to this committee directly, particularly since it appears that you have a keen interest in the subject of the City of Toronto acquiring its own web presence as evidenced by this item on your agenda.

I am with CIRA (the Canadian Internet Registration Authority), the non-profit that keeps .CA running and helps improve Canada's Internet infrastructure by supporting Internet security initiatives and the building of Internet Exchange Points, including one in Toronto.

CIRA provides guidance to municipalities on the future of the Internet in Canada. In particular, as you are well aware, there is an opportunity for municipalities like Toronto to own and operate a significant part of the internet unique to your city.

Other municipalities around the world have already capitalized on acquiring their own top level domain, the string to the right of the dot in an internet address. As a result, domain names like bike.nyc, pie.paris or museum.london are now possible, with complete oversight by the respective cities. What's more is that these municipalities are generating net positive revenues while keeping the cost of these new web addresses low enough that even the smallest local business can benefit.

It is true that ".TO" is already owned and operated as a country code top level domain by the Island Kingdom of Tonga and so would not be fully available to the city. My own opinion is that ".TORONTO" has stronger brand appeal, particularly when targeting potential customers outside of the GTA. And yes, I also believe that an initiative like "neighbourhoods.toronto" that celebrated Scarborough, North York, etc. would be eminently possible. Further, the advantages for the City to have full control over ".TORONTO" vs. limited to no control over

“.TO” cannot be overstated.

I am reaching out to you through your meeting agenda to simply offer education for you and the City of Toronto team on the subject of municipal branding and Toronto’s Internet future through the use of a “.Toronto” web address. It sounds lofty, but what it means is that every business, tourist attraction or individual in Toronto will have the opportunity to brand themselves as being part of your great city with an internet address like, “[www.attractions.Toronto](http://www.attractions.Toronto)”, “[www.cntower.Toronto](http://www.cntower.Toronto)”, or “[www.island.Toronto](http://www.island.Toronto)” (and of course many more limited only by your imagination). As mentioned above, this type of new web address is already being used very profitably by cities around the world.

I’d be delighted to set up a call to discuss what having the rights to operate “.Toronto” can mean as a revenue generating service, as the focal point of your online brand and legacy for the future, as an online home for your many businesses/services and citizens or simply as a way to defend your brand from being acquired by someone else. Contrary to the comments made by tech analyst Carmi Levy in the Newstalk 1010 article, a new DotCity domain name can provide a substantial return on investment. New York for example is seeing at least \$600K in NET revenue being returned to city coffers in their first year of operation (forecasting that will be a minimum of \$1M per year in five years) and that does not reflect the added value that local businesses and constituents garner by having more relevant web addresses.

I understand your agenda item calls for a recommendation that your CIO and GM Economic Development provide a report to you for your next meeting. You should know that CIRA offers a free ½ hour webinar which provides a solid introduction to the subject of new top level domains for cities and I would be more than happy to schedule a private showing of the webinar for the City of Toronto as your CIO and GM Economic Development might see fit.

I look forward to hearing from you or your staff and engaging to imagine the online brand opportunity for Toronto.

Richard Schreier

Business Development

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