



John Tory  
Mayor

**AU2.4.1**

April 30, 2019

Stephen Holyday  
Chair, Audit Committee  
Deputy Mayor & Councillor, Ward 2-Etobicoke Centre  
City of Toronto

Dear Deputy Mayor Holyday:

**RE: AU2.4 *Review of Urban Forestry - Ensuring Value for Money for Tree Maintenance Services***

I write to you today in your capacity as the chair of the Audit Committee.

I have been reading with dismay and anger the Auditor General's report on Urban Forestry and in particular her findings and recommendations on tree maintenance services performed by outside private contractors.

There are some valid questions to be asked and answered as to why, for example, the City hasn't before now conducted its own spot audits on the work done by these firms to ensure that we got what we paid for. I will be conferring separately with the City Manager about broader use of these spot audits across the City government.

While I am generally pleased with the recommendations of the Auditor General contained in the report which is before your committee later this week, I don't think they go far enough.

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The apparent finding of work paid for but not done raises issues of serious possible misconduct amounting to the ripping off of the City government and therefore by extension the city's taxpayers.

Accordingly, I would like to request that your committee give consideration at its meeting to commencing legal action, based on the evidence available, to recover money paid to these outside private firms for work not done. Again, dependent on the evidence available from the Auditor General and from our own records, I would favour aggressive efforts to recover this money.

Secondly, if the evidence supports what the Auditor General's report clearly suggests, which is work knowingly billed to city taxpayers when it was in fact not done, I would suggest the committee consider the possible disqualification of firms which engaged in these practices from doing business with the City. This will put all City suppliers on notice that this kind of rip off will not be tolerated.

While I think the recommendations from the Auditor General will be helpful if accepted and implemented, I believe these additional steps I have suggested will help us send a strong message internally and externally that billing for work not done and deceptive practices of the kind that have been recorded in this report are unacceptable in the city of Toronto.

I thank you and the members of the Audit Committee for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto