

April 28, 2020

Mayor John Tory and Members of City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of City Council,

RE: April 30th Special City Council Meeting, Agenda Item CC20.2 City of Toronto Response and the Ongoing Management of Emergency City Business during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the City of Toronto, the building and renovation industry provides over \$14.8 billion in investment value and employs over 118,000 people¹. As a simple rule of thumb one crane in the sky is equal to 500 jobs. With approximately 1,500 member companies, BILD is the voice of the home building, land development and professional renovation industry in the Greater Toronto Area and Simcoe County. Residential Construction is a key economic driver to every community in Canada.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Toronto City Council and the City Manager's Office for the strong leadership and guidance that you have shown throughout this pandemic. We greatly respect your governance in keeping people safe, and this is our industry's first priority too. Construction sites have instituted various health and safety measures, such as splitting crews into staggered shifts, utilizing the extended start and closing times, only allowing one trade in an area at a time, limiting no more than 3 people in an open air hoists, and every construction site in Ontario that has 20 or more people has a joint health and safety committee – to ensure all employees have a voice.

We acknowledge that the City is experiencing financial pressure estimated at \$65 million per week. The pressure, we understand, is driven primarily by lost revenues due to the pandemic lockdown, coupled with increased costs responding to the emergency. We also acknowledge that this may be driven higher if there is a significant real-estate market impact, if the physical distancing measures are extended beyond 12 weeks or there continues to be additional waves of COVID-19 throughout the remainder of the year (based on City's April 17th News Release). We appreciate that the "real-estate market" is specifically referenced in the way, as we know it will take our collective efforts to help stabilize the local economy. Our industry is facing unprecedented times and many of our members are concerned about the viability of existing and future projects, as well as the overall health of the City. BILD and its members want to be apart of the solutions during this difficult time.

In the interest of alleviating the City's financial pressure and the growing impact of housing affordability, we have a shared interest in keeping business moving. We recognize that City Planning and Building's initial plan was to triage critical development projects, but we are now past this initial plan stage. The City needs to be working towards restoring all service functions related to development applications, it is one the of key ways the City can start to recoup revenues. We, therefore, recommend the following:

BILD recommends that the City start to safety restore all services related to development applications, which would include accepting new planning and building permit applications. This would allow for the collection of its related application fees and development charges, thereby assisting the City's financial shortfall and it would also help to restore the flow of much needed housing supply.

¹ Based on 2018 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Statistics Canada data



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Building Industry and Land
Development Association

We also recognize that the City has cancelled all meetings in the month of May. In light of this, BILD recommends that Toronto City Council provide staff with the necessary delegated authority to process development applications where a Council decision would otherwise be required.

We hope that this situation will subside soon and that we have all done our part to flatten the curve. When this is all behind us, we will need to focus on our recovery efforts and we are happy to assist you in those conversations. Again, thank you for your leadership during these trying times. We are your partnership in prosperity, and with this turmoil, so if there is anything we can do at BILD or with our members that can be of service to you, we welcome that discussion.

Stay safe and healthy,

Dave Wilkes
President & CEO, BILD

*Cc: Chris Murray, City Manager
Jeff Fielding, Chief of Staff, City Manager's Office
Saad Rafi, Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild
BILD Toronto Chapter Members*