

To: City Executive Committee

City of Toronto

October 19, 2020.

Subject: Recovery and Renewal Report, EX17.1, October 21

We were surprised by how timid is the report of the City Manager.

At one point the report notes: 'The pandemic has exacerbated the City's structural financial challenges, especially the misalignment of revenues and responsibilities, which have long been discussed prior to the pandemic.'

Yet instead of responding to this truth, the recommendations state the city should try harder to do things better, and that it should again beg the other governments for more revenue to deliver programs. This is the same strategy the city has used for the past 50 years and it is no more likely to produce recovery and renewal now than it has in the past.

What the city should be doing is asking for more control over its own affairs - more authority to manage itself without provincial oversight - and appropriate revenue sources to meet its expenses. In short, the city needs a fundamentally new legislative arrangement which is guaranteed by a charter, that is, an agreement between the province and the city lodged in Section 43 of the Constitution Act, approved by the House of Commons and the Senate.

The agreement should state that the city has independent responsibility for and authority over such things as:

- * local transit, including subway systems;
- * land use planning
- * public health
- * affordable housing

* public education

* social service programs including child care

* the property tax system

The agreement should also permit the city to raise revenues to meet its needs, including the ability to broadly expand the sale tax abilities the city now has under the City of Toronto Act.

We urge the City to propose to the province that an agreement be negotiated for these purposes, and that the agreement be lodged as a single province amendment under Section 43 of the Constitution Act so it cannot be arbitrarily change by the province. This is the only way in which the `misalignment of the revenues and responsibilities' can be rectified.

Recommendation:

That the city indicate to the province its desire to negotiate a charter agreement as outlined above.

Yours very truly,

John Sewell for
Charter City Toronto
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