

May 18, 2022

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee,

Re: Potential to Review a Voluntary Property Tax Contribution to support Reconciliation and Justice

The City of Toronto's reconciliation efforts between non-Indigenous Torontonians and Indigenous communities in Toronto continues with the recent release of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

There is a program that originated in Victoria, B.C., which provides homeowners with the opportunity to tangibly, directly, and meaningfully participate in Toronto's reconciliation efforts through a voluntary financial contribution.

The City and its residents economically benefit from the enduring process of colonialism, and the voluntary financial contribution is a method that can help undo the colonial process that allows the City to profit from operating on stolen Indigenous territory.

For homeowners to make this contribution, they can decide to add a certain percentage (in Victoria, homeowners can add between five and 10 percent) to their annual property tax bill. The City will then delegate these contributions to Indigenous communities, along with Indigenous-led organizations, projects, and programming confronting social ills, such as inaccessibility to affordable housing, afflicting Indigenous communities. This action can help ensure that City Council will not redirect these contributions.

The voluntary financial contribution is a symbolic and collective action that can provide Toronto's Indigenous communities with additional resources. It could be a meaningful step toward reconciliation, and provide financial means to make reconciliation possible.

Recommendation:

1. City Council request the City Manager to review the Voluntary Property Tax Contribution option used in Victoria, and determine if a similar program can be implemented in Toronto.

Thank you,

Councillor Mike Layton
Ward 11, University-Rosedale