

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM47.107	ACTION			Ward: All
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Taking a Stand for Toronto's Local Democracy- by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Gord Perks, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Province of Ontario not to implement a “Strong mayor” system in Toronto with legislation that includes a veto over the City’s budget, or other items before Council, or any other legislative measure that would grant additional mayoral powers over City affairs than what is already granted under the City of Toronto Act.
2. City Council request the City Clerk to report to the first Council meeting of the next term on a governance structure that will enable the current model of mayoral powers under the City of Toronto Act, in relation to any changes to that Act or others.
3. City Council affirms its position that any changes to Toronto’s local elections or its governance structure should be decisions made by Toronto’s City Council.

Summary

On July 19, 2022, the Toronto Star reported that Premier Doug Ford will move forward with legislation to install a “Strong mayor” system in Toronto. While there were few details in the article, mayors in many American cities under this governance model have the final say on the budget and other important matters.

Such a move would erode democracy by stifling local advocacy on the most important issues affecting Torontonians. That’s why this motion sends a strong message to the provincial government that City Council does not support a “Strong mayor” system in Toronto with legislation that includes a veto over the City’s budget, or other items before Council, or any other legislative measure that would grant additional mayoral powers over City affairs than what is already granted under the City of Toronto Act.

Our City’s governance structure should be designed for not only what we aspire to be, but to take into account what guard rails are necessary to protect a healthy local democracy. In Toronto’s case, we don’t need to look very far back in our own history to see how important the ability is to hold the mayor’s power in check. In fact, it was absolutely necessary. As they say, “hope for the best and plan for the worst”.

This Motion is urgent because there will not be another Council meeting prior to the introduction of this legislation that will have significant impacts on the City's governance structure.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM47.107