

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM7.23	ACTION			Ward: All
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Exploring Toronto as a Charter City - by Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the City Manager to report to City Council with a proposal by the end of 2023, including options for methods and budget implications, to provide the public with information on recognizing and enshrining City of Toronto authorities within the Canadian Constitution.
2. City Council direct the City Manager to report to City Council with a public engagement proposal by the end of 2023, including options for methods and budget implications, to seek public input on which powers City Council should have more control over such as planning, taxation, and elections that directly affect the City's ability to deliver services to its residents.
3. City Council direct the City Solicitor to report to City Council by the end of 2023 on the legal mechanism for making an amendment to the Canadian Constitution that would recognize and enshrine certain City of Toronto authorities.

Summary

The municipal government, especially in a city as large as Toronto, plays an important role in delivering services and support to residents at a local level. The responsibility and commitments that Toronto City Council has to its residents are often matters that affect the daily lives of residents. By addressing the specific needs and concerns of their communities, municipal governments ensure that residents have access to safe neighborhoods, reliable public services, well-maintained roads, recreational opportunities, and a thriving local economy. As such, City Council should be empowered to enact policy changes and measures to effectively and efficiently execute the job for which they were duly elected.

City Council continues to call on the Provincial and Federal governments to partner with Toronto to fund various needs of the City such as housing, transit, public safety often to no avail. The result from a lacking in funding and partnership with the other two levels of government is a lack in results for Torontonians and meaningful improvements to our city. We as Council have already seen first-hand the effects of reduced autonomy at the municipal level

from the reduction of City Wards and changes to Planning and Housing from the Provincial government.

A Charter City in Toronto would be created by transferring jurisdiction of certain divisions of powers in the Constitution from the Provincial Government to the City in order to give more autonomy and decision making power to City Council. The goal of a Charter City is to give City Council the ability to have more control over areas such as planning, taxation, and elections that directly affect the City's ability to deliver services to its residents.

Given that Charter Cities have been proven successful in jurisdictions in Europe and the United States, the options to enact a Charter City in Toronto and give more decision-making powers to Toronto City Council should be explored and done so in a meaningful way. Part of that must include effectively engaging and educating the public on those options and the implications, as well as hearing feedback from residents as part of the democratic process. This will allow Council to make the best decision on this matter with as much information from the City Solicitor, City Staff, and public opinion as possible.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM7.23

Attachment 1 - Toward City Charters in Canada

(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-237247.pdf>)