

**From:** [Jack Copple](#)  
**To:** [councilmeeting](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan McMurray](#)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Comments for 2024.CC24.2 on December 17, 2024 City Council  
**Date:** December 17, 2024 8:04:39 PM  
**Attachments:** [TYRLC 2024.CC24.2, Policy Framework - City Response to Demonstrations.pdf](#)

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To the City Clerk:

Please see attached comments I am submitting on behalf of Susan McMurray, Executive Assistant, Toronto & York Region Labour Council to the agenda for the December 17, 2024 City Council meeting on item 2024.CC24.2, Policy Framework - City Response to Demonstrations

I understand that these comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Thanks,  
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## **CC24.2 - Policy Framework - City Response to Demonstrations**

Dear Councillors and Mayor,

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council is writing to speak firmly against the renewed interest of City Council implementing “bubble-zones” to restrict the freedom to picket and protest. This past May when a similar item first made its way to Council [we underlined](#) the dangerous, anti-democratic, and likely unconstitutional nature of bubble-zones, and the concerns we raised then still remain.

This motion calls on the city to create a by-law that will have troubling impacts on the right to free expression and free assembly as enshrined by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Loosely defined terms like “nuisance,” as employed by the City of Vaughan, will create an ambiguous environment where rights enshrined in the Charter are subject to quick, arbitrary judgments, as opposed to the high standard of regard they require.

Creating a by-law of this type could easily see its scope of use expanded to threaten even more of working people’s fundamental rights, like the right to free and fair collective bargaining and labour action, including the right to strike. During the discussion earlier this year, a councillor explicitly noted that restrictions like these would have been useful in curbing an action taken by healthcare workers fighting for better working conditions in the city—an instructive example of how a by-law like this would be used.

Further, this by-law aims to address harassment, destruction of property, violence, hate, and so on; acts that are already illegal. Granting extra powers to police and by-law officers will not serve to protect working people from activity which is already illegal, instead it will only serve to undermine and weaken Canadian democracy.

In addition to our opposition to such a by-law, we are opposed to the manner in which it is being pursued: by bringing it directly to Council for a sudden vote. This approach is in-and-of-itself anti-democratic. It denies the public the opportunity to be consulted and ensure their concerns are heard and considered before it moves forward. If a bubble-zone by-law were to come before Council, it should do so in a manner which respects the democratic process, and first see it undergo extensive consultation to allow members of the public to share their thoughts.

Lastly, it is worth noting, as staff have done in their report, that the City has a legal obligation to uphold and protect the Charter Rights of all its residents, something which

would likely be a difficult thing to balance when adding restrictions to those rights. Further review with the City Solicitor and other constitutional lawyers is necessary to avoid infringement on rights and could help the City avoid a costly legal challenge to any by-law in the future.

Ultimately, the path to improving the lives of working people in Toronto will not be through broad, sweeping restrictions on their rights. Instead, it will be found in improving their working and living conditions, and improving democratic engagement, to collaboratively building a city which serves all working people.