



April 4, 2024

Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2  
Attention: Nancy Martins

**RE: PH11.2 Our Plan Toronto: Official Plan Chapter One - Decision Report – Approval**

Dear Chair Gord Perks and Members of Planning and Housing Committee,

While we support the updating of the Official Plan Chapter 1, we believe that the statement does not yet stress enough the crucial goal of increasing Toronto's liveability – - physical, economic, social and spiritual and the critical aim of developing and retaining complete communities.

Among other things, Toronto badly needs lively democratic participation: In its 2023 Vital Signs report<sup>1</sup> the Toronto Foundation documented a troubling reduction in civic engagement and volunteerism. In part, for this we fault the provincial government, which often overrules City decision-making (as in OPAs 405- Yonge-Eglinton, and 406- Downtown Secondary Plans), and tightens the time frame for municipal decision-making in development approvals, reducing public information and restricting occasions for engagement (for example by causing elimination of Preliminary (staff) Reports).

Given this erosion of our democratic involvement in the direction of the City, the Official Plan Chapter One needs to present the City as a strong defender of healthy democratic practices through full and vibrant civic consultation and engagement as this participation connects (binds) its residents into a community (network) that helps the city define and prioritize the evolving interrelationships of the physical, economic, and shared values that maintain social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

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<sup>1</sup>“The Power of Us”

<https://torontofoundation.ca/powerofus>

We therefore strongly object to the report's proposed preference for “virtual” consultation<sup>2</sup>. Virtual engagement helped us to survive COVID – but, neither sufficient, nor fulfilling, it ill suits normal times.

In addition, we suggest that the document commit to periodic assessment of planning's progress, according to key metrics.

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel  
Co-Chair

Cathie Macdonald  
Co-Chair,

Cc: Kerri Voumvakis, Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director City Planning Division  
Jeffrey Cantos, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning,  
Kyle Fearon, Senior Planner, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning,  
Liam O'Toole, Planner, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning  
Sharon Avery, President and CEO, The Toronto Foundation

**The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)** is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 250,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.

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<sup>2</sup> 1.4 Principles: Access – “**virtual** civic engagement”  
1.7 Have Your Say in Planning Our City - “**virtual** civic engagement”