



July 11 2024

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

PH14.5 - Improving Community Consultation in the Development Review Process - Update

This will confirm that in principle we support (with one significant reservation), the staff report and its recommendations, including:

- Planning and Housing Committee to request the Executive Director, Development Review, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to continue to undertake stakeholder consultation on potential policy amendments to address ongoing legislative changes and report back to Planning and Housing Committee by the end of Q2 2025.

We appreciate that City Planning is attempting to ensure a balanced and effective public consultation regime under difficult circumstances. In that regard, the report notes the rapidly changing (and seemingly haphazard) legislative environment directly affecting development review - such as Bill 185 eliminating mandatory pre-application consultation (PAC). The latter process, represented an innovative approach by the City to address the revised review deadlines and punitive application fee refunds imposed by the Province.

We have one related matter to raise which is outside the Review's mandate. The Review deals exclusively with community consultation with respect to development applications, and notes that in 2023, City Planning hosted 325 community consultation meetings in support of site-specific development applications. However City Planning is also involved in public consultation with respect to policy development. Moreover, through initiatives such as Housing Action Plan (HAP) and Enhanced Housing Opportunities in Neighbourhoods (EHON) there appears to be a major increase in recent years in initiatives that require (and receive) public consultation, just as much as site specific development applications. These policy

initiatives – such as Major Streets in Neighbourhoods, Avenues policy tend to be “one size fits all” blanket policies that seem to be replacing, at least in part, the area studies that City Planning traditionally has carried out. These initiatives are extremely complex, and while City Planning has held a swath of public consultation events on these projects, our feeling is that they are failed to meaningfully engage residents, and consequently there is little awareness and understanding of these very important and far-reaching initiatives, and their impacts, which is unfortunate and concerning.

We suggest that if the City continues to move in this direction they need to look at public consultation in a new way – that would involve far more education as well as communication. And also far more analysis of the impacts and effects on the local and neighbourhood level is needed.

We recommend:

- **That PHC request City Planning to examine public consultation with respect to City-wide initiatives (e.g., HAP, EHON) and report back to PHC with terms of reference.**

Yours truly,

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Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Cc: Valesa Faria, Executive Director, Development Review
Kyle Knoeck, Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Michelle Drylie, Project Director, Business Transformation, City Planning,
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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.