



April 14, 2025

Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2  
Attention: Cathrine Regan

**RE: EX22.3 - Towards a Beautiful City - A Path Forward**

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of the Executive Committee,

This is to confirm that FoNTRA strongly supports the five priority actions outlined in the report that seek to increase beauty in the public and private realms, and continue to advance design excellence in Toronto. We have additional comments and recommendations. .

First, we note that these initiatives focus on (internal to the City) process improvements to achieve improved design outcomes. This is important and essential, but good urban design needs to be a critical consideration in planning policies. For example, "beauty" includes consideration of height and massing of buildings in the context of their location. Adding a scattering of six storey buildings in currently one to three storey neighbourhoods of house form buildings, as is currently being considered, will not look beautiful, which was understood in the Official Plan which limited Neighbourhoods to four storeys.

Second, we are concerned that the role and status of the Design Review Panel in promoting and influencing good urban design in the Toronto appears to have diminished in recent times. We understand that there are operational issues related to conflicts of interest that create problems. The role of the public in the process should be strengthened to play an important role in encouraging the development of beautiful public and private developments.

FoNTRA therefore recommends that the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services be directed to:

- review the function of the Design Review Panel with a view to having it play a more effective and significant role in improving the design of public and private development in the city.
- Ensure that urban design considerations are included in developing planning policies for all areas of the city.

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel  
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

Cathie Macdonald  
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

c.c. Jason Thorne, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division  
Howie Dayton, General Manager, Parks and Recreation  
Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services  
Emilia Floro, Director, Urban Design, City Planning  
Kristina Reinders, Program Manager, Urban Design, City Planning  
Paul Farish, Director, Parks Planning & Development  
Elyse Parker, Director, Transportation Policy & Innovation

**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 170,000 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.