



June 23, 2026

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: MM42.36 – Towards a Beautiful Yonge Street and Beyond.

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of City Council,

We support Councillor Cheng's motion to protect the greenery on Yonge Street in North York Centre. In addition we take this opportunity to make a larger, urgent plea for a coherent plan and sustained effort to make Toronto's public spaces green and aesthetic today, and for the long term. A larger campaign, important to our civic life, is to make Toronto a more attractive and livable city.

Thus we wish to express our strong support for the Motion:

- City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and the City Solicitor, to report back to the Executive Committee in the second quarter of 2027 on options to assign maintenance responsibility and establish enforceable maintenance standards for on-street planters and boulevard tree pits, including amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code and other mechanisms, as appropriate.

This direction is intended to:

- Clarify responsibility for maintaining planters and tree pits on City-owned boulevards
- Establish clear and enforceable maintenance standards
- Identify investments needed to improve the appearance of Yonge Street while awaiting the Transform Yonge project;
- Create a long-term stewardship framework to ensure public realm improvements remain attractive, well-maintained, and accountable

The report notes “vacant planters, overgrown weeds, and landscaping features that have fallen into disrepair”. And the report lays much of the blame on “a jurisdictional gap regarding many of the planters and landscaping features installed by developers on City-owned boulevards. In many cases, it is unclear who is responsible for maintaining them, resulting in deteriorating conditions along one of Willowdale's most important corridors”.

We agree, but we also submit that the situation on Yonge in North York Centre, one of the five original “city centres”, is part of a larger issue in Toronto – the decline in attention to the state of the public realm and the need for the City to:

- Ensure proper setbacks providing public space
- Nurture greenness, i.e., trees, shrubs, and shade, assuring absorption, and softness of the ground
- Maintain the City’s green public investments
- Support the larger aesthetics of good urban design

We appreciate Councillor Cheng bringing forward the thoughtful motion. We do indeed support a more beautiful Yonge Street and stronger accountability for maintaining public spaces in Toronto, and we are in strong support of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel

Geoff Kettel
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of 35 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.