



December 30, 2020

RE: Year-End 2020 - towards a better 2021?

Dear Resident Association Reps,

It's time to put a cap on 2020, and to wish you all the best for 2021!

FoNTRA had another successful year with more RA Reps participating in our virtual meetings, and many letters sent and deputations made to the City's virtual meetings on our issues.

We all know that 2020 did not work out the way anybody expected, and we have been forced to adjust and to do many things differently as well as trying to make it all work better for us, such to reduce the barriers to residents' access to the City's virtual decision-making processes such as Committee of Adjustment and TLAB. Our City leaders have for the most part been listening and responsive.

The Province not so much. They have continued to make changes "under cover of COVID" that "benefit speculators, not people".

Our year-end document, attached, pulls together some materials, some reflective, to stimulate our thinking about what the pandemic means for life in communities, and some to remind us to stay awake on issues that we need to keep in mind in 2021. It includes:

- What Toronto is doing as the Coronavirus Recovery Is Changing Cities,
- How continued Provincial actions are taking away the City's ability to make decisions about our future, but with one bright spot - the Supreme Court of Canada is taking on the Province's decision to replace the 44 wards (pre-2018) with 25 (now),
- Managing the increasing intensification pressures to help ensure we have a livable City - such as at Yonge and Eglinton and the "Midrise March" on the Avenues, as well as the appropriate implementation of the City Yellowbelt initiatives.

In the new year, some of the issues that FoNTRA will be participating in are:

- Addressing noise and pollution by banning leaf blowers and loud muffler noise (and please forward the petition to your members);
- Lessons learned from CovidTO programs such as ActiveTO, including adding more bike lanes;
- Finding new ways to pay for growth to ensure there are adequate services and public realm available;
- Beginning the implementation of the Yellowbelt initiatives, with the introduction of “as of right” garden suites; and
- Supporting FoNTRA priorities in the 2021 Toronto Budget decisions.

FoNTRA will also be continuing to work on meeting the needs of our members and continuing to ask for your assistance in making FoNTRA work better for you – in our operations as well as in developing ways to resolve planning and related issues. A heads up that:

- In the first quarter, we will undertake a short survey of members on our services. We will need your responses!
- We will be holding our AGM (unfortunately probably still virtual) at the end of March/early April to review that last year and plan for the future. We are planning for special guests this time.
- We are beginning a review of our web site and communications strategies. Let us know if you or others can help with these initiatives. And a reminder to complete the web site survey organized by Rita Bilerman of ARA.

All the best for 2021! We look forward to continuing to work with you in making the City a better place for all.

Yours truly,

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Attachment: FoNTRA 2020 year-end issues report

FoNTRA 2020 Year-End Issues Report

How the Coronavirus Recovery Is Changing Cities

As cities emerge from coronavirus lockdowns, the way people use parks, stores, restaurants, transit, streets and homes is changing in ways both subtle and dramatic.

https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2020-city-in-recovery/?cmpid=BBD122820_CITYLAB&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=201228&utm_campaign=citylabdaily

The City of Toronto set up a Recovery and Renewal Task Force in the spring which reported in October and December 2020 and their recommendations are worth reading.

EX17.1 Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX17.1>

EX 19.1 Update Report to City Council on Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX19.1>

Provincial actions

Changes made by the Provincial government negatively impact on City Planning, the Greenbelt and the environment. Recently they passed Bill 229 which reduces conservation authority power to protect the ravines and wetlands in their jurisdiction. The Bill allows developers to apply to the Premier for an overriding Ministerial Zoning Order if the Conservation Authority refuses to grant permission to encroach onto environmentally sensitive lands. Previously they passed legislation to reduce the time allowed for a municipality to review planning applications, and heritage preservation.

A recent article by Shawn Micallef illustrates the value of the conservation authorities and their unique contribution, in his account of the role of TRCA in the Portlands Flood Protection Project on Toronto's waterfront – a project that will unlock major land development and recreation opportunities that are responsible and environmentally sound.

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2020/12/19/massive-don-river-project-shows-why-conservation-authorities-matter-and-why-doug-fords-government-is-wrong-to-attack-them.html>

The government is proceeding quickly with a new orbital highway cutting into the Greenbelt, while allowing trucks to continue to avoid the high user charges on Highway 407 by taking the overcrowded Highway 401.

And over 30 Ministers Zoning Orders (MZOs) have been issued riding roughshod over local interests.

And this year a bill was passed withdrawing the municipal ability to hold elections using ranked ballots.

One bright spot - Earlier this year the Supreme Court of Canada granted the City of Toronto its right to appeal the government's Bill 5 – the Premier's interference in Toronto's 2018 municipal elections. Recall that the rules, and the wards were changed in the middle of the election, weeks before voters went to the polls — resulting in a halving of the number of councillors and a doubling of the number of constituents that have to be served by each councillor. So watch for the Supreme Court appeal in 2021.

Midtown/North Toronto Issues

Neighbourhood Character

Residents of Midtown/North Toronto neighbourhoods (like Leaside, Lawrence Park, Glebe Manor Estates, Lytton Park) are increasingly concerned about the erosion of the character of their neighbourhoods. The “prevailing character” is generally modest housing in “Revival” styles, often Tudor and Georgian, that reflect their Between-the-Wars period (i.e. 1914 to 1945) development. These neighbourhoods are seen as “desirable” and face increasing demolition/infill development pressures, resulting in demolition and replacement by much larger homes of variable styles, often “jumped up” over an integral garage. It seems likely that a multi-pronged approach – heritage efforts (multiple listings/designations), but also including design guidelines, and by-law revisions, will be required to address this.

“Midrise March” on Avenues

Mid-rise development on Avenues like Avenue Road, Yonge, Mount Pleasant, Bayview and Laird has been viewed as an acceptable form of “gentle density”. However developers are increasingly buying up the frontage of whole blocks or large parts of them, and the resulting projects become “hi-rises laid on the ground”, far larger than originally envisaged. Mid-rise policies do not appear to address this situation.

What to watch out for in 2021

2-stroke Garden Equipment

Next year, Toronto City Council will vote on a motion to ban 2-stroke leaf-blowers and similar garden equipment. In that motion (*see link at bottom*), it is noted that:

- *pollutants emitted: **1 leaf-blower = 500 cars!***
- *produces toxic aerosol (including carcinogenic particulates) that affect breathing and brain development in children; damages insect species, pollinators and bird populations badly; and harms soil biology*
- *kills small animals and insects through suction, and that*

- *breathing in combustion aerosols and fine particulates compromise those with lung disease and significantly raises the risk of death from COVID-19*
- Further, it is known that leaf blower 2-stroke engines create more pollution per minute than cars and trucks -- shockingly, 30 minutes of leaf-blowing emits into the atmosphere as many greenhouse gases as driving a big pickup truck **6,200 kilometres!**
- Leaf blowers stir up ultra-fine particles from the ground. These microscopic pollutants are known to contribute to lung cancer, heart disease, strokes, asthma and other respiratory ailments.
- The average leaf blower generates 100-110 decibels. Noise at that level has been demonstrated to cause hearing loss, hypertension, loss of productivity, and can even negatively impact children's cognitive development.
- As a result leaf blowers are dangerous both for the operator and those involuntarily affected

Please sign this petition to be delivered to City Council members to urge them to support the motion to BAN THESE MACHINES for the health of Torontonians, our children and our habitat.

https://www.change.org/p/toronto-city-council-tell-toronto-city-council-to-vote-to-ban-leaf-blowers?source_location=petition_footer&algorithm=promoted&original_footer_petition_id=25533824&grid_position=1&pt=AVBldGI0aW9uABpBiQEAAAAX%2BFYn5luTCk3Y2M1MWZkNg%3D%3D

<https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/12/people-toronto-want-leaf-blowers-banned/>

Charges to pay for Growth

A report will be brought forward for City Council consideration on changes to charges to pay for growth (i.e. Parkland bylaw, the new Community Benefits Charge bylaw, and Development Charges) in order to meet the Provincial statutory transition deadline of September 2022.

Lessons Learned from CovidTO programs

City staff will be reporting back on lessons learned re CaféTO, CurbTO and ActiveTO programs (expected first quarter of 2021) .

2021 Budget

The 2021 City of Toronto Budget is expected to be tough and with only a short time period for input. Take note that public deputations will take place on Jan 20, 21 and 22, 2021. We will be supporting the proposed new Vacancy Tax which will help to free up rental accommodation.

And finally, FoNTRA has its own action item:

Comparative website information – We know that a number of RAs are reviewing their websites during COVID.

ACTION: RAs are requested to complete the Excel spreadsheet below and send to Rita Bilerman at rbilerman@hotmail.com who will consolidate results. Contact her if any questions.



Copy of Comparative
Website Info Oct 2020