



May 12, 2016

Jennifer Keesmaat  
Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division  
Toronto City Hall, 12th fl. E.  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

**RE: Neighbourhood Urban Design Guidelines**

Dear Ms. Keesmaat,

We were pleased to attend the Willowdale Neighbourhood Urban Design Guidelines Template, How-To Manual & Pilot Project Presentation and Open House on May 2, 2016. We propose that an umbrella Neighbourhood Urban Design Guidelines Advisory Committee be established to assist in the development and implementation of the template.

The stated intent of the exercise is to produce template documents that may be used by communities across the City that wish to prepare neighbourhood specific urban design guidelines in order to help guide the design of streetscapes, new home construction and additions to existing homes. At the meeting it was mentioned that City Planning is establishing Community Advisory Committees for each of the Pilot Project communities (i.e Willowdale, Long Branch). However, in addition, there is need for an umbrella committee to bring a city-wide focus, as distinct from the local focus of the individual neighbourhood advisory committees.

We also want to raise a critical issue regarding the nature of guidelines. Our observation is that existing guidelines, such as those for Leaside, developed by City staff in consultation with the community and the Councilor, are denied by the Committee of Adjustment, and ignored by the Ontario Municipal Board on the basis that they are not legally enforceable. Unless ways can be established to ensure that the guidelines produced by this exercise are actually taken into consideration by decision-makers, the enormous effort for communities to develop their neighbourhood guidelines will be wasted. And neighbourhood character will continue to be eroded by development that does not "fit".

We believe these suggestions may lead to much improved results. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

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Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Cc: Councillor John Filion, Ward 23  
Joe Nanos, Director, Community Planning, North District  
Kerri Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives  
James Parakh, Urban Design

**The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)** is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of 27 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The over 30 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.