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April 28, 2020

Mr. Richard Lyall
President
Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)
25 North Rivermede Road, Unit 13
Vaughan, ON L4K 5V4
By email: lyall@rescon.com

Dear Mr. Lyall:

Re: Toronto Building Service Levels

Thank you for your letter of April 27, 2020 regarding Toronto Building's current service levels. I appreciate your understanding of the current challenges faced by the City of Toronto as we strive to provide the high level of service, which the public expects during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also share your belief that the construction industry is vital to the economic well-being of Toronto.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on how Toronto Building has responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19. In doing so, I hope to correct any misunderstandings you may have about our service levels. I also want to reassure you that Toronto Building is actively working to identify innovative approaches to how we operate, in order to mitigate COVID-19's impact on the city and the development industry.

On the matter of service levels, Toronto Building has not suspended services related to the review or issuance of building permits. Toronto Building has been reviewing and issuing building permits since the service disruption on March 17, 2020. Recognizing the need to reduce a potential backlog in the system, all permitting staff were recalled to work on April 6, 2020. Since that time, staff have been processing building permit applications to support the construction industry. Toronto Building is also accepting and processing new permit applications through our email channel. The current focus of our permitting, however, is on applications that were in the system prior to the service disruption. Toronto Building also worked with City Planning and other City divisions to prioritize the issuance of critical building permits. Since the service disruption, our permitting staff have issued almost 2,000 permits, which accounts for over 5,000 new residential units and a construction value of over \$900 million.


Your letter notes that Toronto Building is allowing progress reports from qualified professionals in lieu of City inspections. Initially, this was the case, while Toronto Building

inspectors continued to carry out occupancy inspections. This was done in order to facilitate much needed housing and commercial opportunities across the city. Our inspectors are now conducting all inspection services (other than those in occupied homes). Progress reports in lieu of City inspections will continue to be accepted for occupied homes.

Your letter further identifies the important role of technology to modernize permit delivery. Toronto Building has been actively engaged in identifying and using technology as a tool to improve the services we provide to the public, the building industry and other partners. We are working with our technology partners to provide as many of our permitting staff with the opportunity to fully provide our services remotely. We expect to have our staff equipped with teleworking equipment shortly. COVID-19 has provided its own set of challenges in this area. Further, we are continually evaluating our ability to provide our services safely and once staff have the equipment they require to carry out their duties remotely, we will begin reviewing and issuing permits for applications received since the service disruption.

I support your comments suggesting that a healthy construction industry and housing supply is integral to the economic recovery of Toronto post-COVID-19. Toronto Building is committed to finding further opportunities to modernize and transform our service delivery model. The Division continues to work with a consultant team from KPMG on its Program Review. The recommendations, expected later this summer, will align with those from the recent End-to-End Review of the Development Review Process. Technology is a key component of this analysis. With a more short-term focus on innovation, Toronto Building has also established a dedicated team focused on affordable housing projects, in collaboration with other City divisions.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me on Toronto Building's current service levels. Ongoing dialogue with RESCON and other industry stakeholders is vital as Toronto Building continually evaluates ways to increase service levels during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and as we look for opportunities to accelerate and strengthen the economic recovery to follow.



Will Johnston, P.Eng
Chief Building Official and Executive Director
Toronto Building

Cc: His Worship, John Tory, Mayor, City of Toronto
Chris Murray, City Manager, City of Toronto
Courtney Glen, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Deputy Mayor, Ana Bailão, Chair, Planning and Housing Committee
Tracey Cook, Deputy City Manager; Infrastructure & Development Services