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# Toronto's "Harmonized" Comprehensive Zoning By-law: Closer to Approval

July 30, 2009

Since 2004, the City of Toronto has been working on harmonizing the 43 different zoning by-laws inherited from its pre-amalgamation municipalities into one single comprehensive zoning by-law. While the existing zoning by-laws have certain elements in common with one another, there are significant differences in their methodologies, format, land use categories, and development standards within each category.

The harmonization process involves the review of over 10,000 property-specific amendments and a list of different regulations, and is intended to provide a uniform and consistent approach to zoning applications. The goal is to develop a common terminology, structure and set of defined zoning terms that apply across the City.

In addition to the harmonization of existing standards, the draft zoning by-law also includes some new standards relating to parking and loading, large format stand-alone retail in Employment-Industrial Zones, zoning for Places of Worship, regulations for new 'tall' buildings, regulations relating to the storage of dangerous substances, and the minimum height of buildings along Avenues and Main Streets.

While the City intends to "grandfather" and deem properties and their existing buildings in compliance with the performance standards in the draft zoning by-law, there is also a likelihood that many properties will be rendered legal non-conforming. This can have a significant impact on property values and development rights. For these reasons, property owners should be aware of the potential impacts which the draft comprehensive zoning by-law might have.

Community consultation for the new draft zoning-by-law is now almost complete. City staff are expected to report back to the Planning and Growth Committee in the fall of 2009. A statutory public meeting is intended to be held in November 2009 with the potential enactment of the draft by-law by **November 30, 2009**.

WeirFoulds can advise you on how the city's new zoning by-law could impact your property rights and interests, both now and in connection with any future development plans or proposals you may have.

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