

Regional Implications

- Given that increasing or adding new taxes in Toronto would increase “tax flight” to neighbouring municipalities, we should aim to create a GTA-wide charter, rather than just for Toronto. (Many disagreed.)
- We have to find ways to tax those that use our services, but don’t live here.
- Toronto’s planning powers are too limited. By contrast, Vancouver controls its own planning process.
- It was agreed by all that Toronto should explore areas of regional co-operation with other GTA municipalities. On policing, it was suggested that specialized services like forensics should be uploaded from individual police departments to a GTA-wide policing agency. Similarly, we need a region-wide transportation body, similar to Metrolinx, but more democratic and transparent. On the other hand, liquor-licensing and enforcement powers should be downloaded to Toronto from the provincial AGCO.
- Early on, my first group veered into discussing which was more realistic of 2 ways for Toronto to find new revenue. One option is to divert some of existing provincial and federal tax revenues to the municipal level. (Most participants felt that was politically-impossible.) The other was for Toronto to increase current taxes or impose new ones. One participant read a list of 13 possible taxes from a KPMG report.
- Above all, it is critical that Toronto market very well the idea of a charter to neighbouring municipalities. Our best pitch in this regard would emphasize that the legislation creating Toronto’s charter would be open to all other Ontario cities and towns to sign on to have their own charter.
- Someone recommended Engin Isin’s book *Cities Without Citizens* (Black Rose Books, 1992) as a useful read for our discussions.