

# Threats against mayor shouldn't mean stricter access: councillors

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Some Toronto city councillors say the death threats against Mayor Rob Ford are a serious matter but they hope they won't mean less access to City Hall for members of the public.

Right now the doors are rarely locked and people can come and go as they please. There are no metal detectors or searches, only a small, unobtrusive security desk.

Toronto City Hall has been an open place for decades and councillors don't want to see that change.

"There have been, in the past, attempts to close-up the council chambers, or put in new security measures," said Coun. Janet Davis. "I've resisted those. I think we have to continue to be accessible. We've seen Queen's Park and [the parliament buildings in] Ottawa where they're locked up tight."

Coun. Denzil Minnan-Wong is part of the mayor's inner circle and thinks the mayor should take the recent threats very seriously. But there needs to be a balance between security and public access.

"Our job is very hands on," he said. "Many of the people we meet you've never seen before. Often you go into a meeting and don't know what to expect ... that level of openness is what makes city government appealing."

The mayor also promises to continue to be visible and accessible and says he's unfazed by the threats.

Security expert Mark Seenarine says the mayor of any big city can be a target — and can be difficult to protect.

"They could have different threat levels, different factions that want to harm them. So, that's a higher level of threat," said Seenarine.

Mayor Ford's office says the mayor has no plans to change his political style because of the threats.