



Toronto Wholesale Produce Association

Ontario Food Terminal
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Planning & Housing Committee
Toronto City Council
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RE: PH35.15, OUR PLAN TORONTO: RECOMMENDED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT FOR CITY-WIDE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND CONVERSION REQUESTS - FINAL REPORT

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Toronto Wholesale Produce Association (TWPA), the 21 fruit and vegetable wholesalers operating at the Ontario Food Terminal, I am writing regarding the July 5th meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee. In particular, I am writing regarding the committee's agenda item PH35.15. Although I do not currently anticipate that a proposed conversion of 125 The Queensway into a non-employment use will be considered at the July 5th committee meeting, TWPA would like the committee to know that we and others are opposed to this conversion request in the unlikely event that it is in fact considered before the first half of 2023.

As you already know, Municipal Conversion Reviews are about balancing the interests of employment lands and other uses, and this conversion request does not strike an appropriate balance because it is adjacent to the entrance to the Ontario Food Terminal, a Provincially-Significant Employment Zone.

The Ontario Food Terminal and its surrounding lands are major direct and indirect employers in Ontario. On any one day, approximately 5,000 employees work at the Terminal, and the Terminal indirectly employs tens of thousand more throughout the province. Moreover, the lands surrounding the Ontario Food Terminal are just as significant to employment as the lands on which the Terminal is located; many employees work for wholesalers or food processors in the agri-food network of businesses in Etobicoke nearby the Terminal. That is why the City has continuously recognized that the Ontario Food Terminal and the surrounding lands play a pivotal role in the provincial agri-food network; for years, the City supported the designation of the Terminal as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (including most recently in February 2019).

The Ontario Food Terminal is relied on by independent grocers, restaurants and many others – and ultimately regular Torontonians – throughout the City of Toronto. The Terminal plays a large role in permitting smaller businesses to compete against much larger or chain businesses. It allows residents of Toronto to access a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables within walking distance of where they live.

Furthermore, because the Terminal is used by organizations such as the Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest, it plays a fundamentally important food security and equity role. That is why the committee heard earlier this year from more than six organizations opposing this request, as well as opposition from local Ward Councillor Mark Grimes and TWPA. Those other organizations included: Second Harvest; the Toronto Farmers' Alliance (TFA); the Ontario Produce Marketing Association

(OPMA); the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG); and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (OFVGA). It is also why City Staff's preliminary assessment concluded that the lands at 125 The Queensway "should be retained as Employment Areas and continue to be designated as General Employment Areas".

A major residential development proposed to be adjacent to the entrance of the Terminal – at 125 The Queensway – would adversely impact the operating environment for nearby businesses at the Ontario Food Terminal and the viability of the surrounding Employment Area. Pressures on traffic and anticipated complaints by residential neighbours about the facility, for example, could harm the long-term sustainability of these essential employment lands. In addition, the Ontario Food Terminal relies on the continued existence of employment lands surrounding the Terminal for use by produce wholesalers and other businesses that support the Terminal. The loss of employment lands at 125 The Queensway would serve to put pressure on those other employment lands.

In preparation for this committee hearing, we noted with interest the summary report of the findings of the Land Needs Assessment, a component of the Municipal Comprehensive Review. As you know, it states the following:

The Land Needs Assessment study conclusions are that there is more than sufficient potential housing in areas designated for residential development in the City of Toronto to accommodate the population growth anticipated by Schedule 3 of A Place to Grow, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020, ("Growth Plan"). The potential housing supply in the city is more than double the amount of housing required to accommodate the forecasted population growth between 2016 and 2051. The surplus potential housing stock after accommodating the population growth forecasted by the Growth Plan at 2051 is equivalent to almost forty years of potential housing supply.

Thank you for your consideration. Once again, we recognize the need for more affordable housing in Toronto, but we also know that residents of Toronto need to work and eat, too. As a result, I am asking you to reject the proposed conversion of 125 The Queensway.

Sincerely,

Fred Koornneef
Chair