

City Council,

Attn: Sylwia Przedziecki,

Meeting date: Oct. 11-13, 2023.

Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Telephone: 416 - 392-8485, Fax: 416 - 392-2980, Email: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

CC11.18. Our Plan Toronto: Recommendations on Five Deferred Employment Area Conversion Requests.

Re: Conversion request No. 103 for 340-364 Evans Ave. and 12-16 Arnold St.

Dear Council members,

Mimico Lakeshore Community Network (MLCN) represents local groups and involved local residents. We note that the conversion request for 340-364 Evans and 12-16 Arnold St. is still being debated. City staff have recommended that those lands be maintained as core employment areas and not converted to mixed use. MLCN continues to support that position given the importance of employment lands in South Etobicoke.

As a group that has appeared multiple times at the Ontario Municipal Board (now the Ontario Land Tribunal) we are aware that opening up those sites to residential would set a precedent leading to other similar applications. Such applications would put pressure on businesses that would prefer to stay in the area which is close to major road access and serves as a buffer between employment lands and residential. Those businesses, all key components of the local economy, including **Cinespace Toronto, Steam Whistle, Sunbelt Rentals Company, Gambles Produce, Bondi Produce and Specialty Food and Klause Marine Inc**, are all supporting staff's recommendation to reject the conversion request.

The South Etobicoke Employment Area is among the largest in the City, providing 43,000 jobs, with many of those employees living in the neighborhood. Those South Etobicoke Employment area jobs include the ones related to the film industry. Cinespace Studios Toronto, who is Ontario's largest film production facility, is part of an industry that provides over \$2.5B in production spending in Toronto annually, as well as 35,000 jobs. The industry has succeeded on Employment Lands because production activities operate, 24/7, rely on close transportation routes, and are not in close proximity to residential buildings.

Toronto has lost more than 500 hectares or 6 percent of its employment lands over the last 18 years. According to a Presentation by the Film Commissioner and Director, Entertainment Industries on **Toronto's Film Industry: Protecting a Valuable Asset**, "Toronto's film production industry is a high growth sector driving Toronto's future economic growth. That growth can only be maintained or grow with the protection of employment lands. Significant amounts of production spend and jobs are turned away from Toronto each year because Toronto doesn't have enough studio space. Employment lands are necessary as studio uses are not compatible with mixed use zoning"

The Toronto Industry Network, the largest city-wide organization representing manufacturers and other businesses in Employment Areas, states that there are misconceived notions about the rationale for conversions. According to the Toronto Industry Network, quoting the **Lands Needs Assessment** document, there is more than enough lands for housing to accommodate population growth until 2051 without the need for conversion of employment lands. This was also reiterated by the **South Etobicoke Industrial Employers** group. The Toronto Industry Network goes on to state that the vacancy rate at employment lands is less than 1%. They say that a city report found that only 20% of conversions resulted in built housing, because many of the land acquired through conversions were actually resold or "flipped".

The letter from Letter from **Richard Lyall, President, Residential Construction Council of Ontario** states that *"importance of Employment lands employing nearly 400,000 is not in dispute. Employment lands constitute an integral and important role in the vitality of a municipality like the City of Toronto. The proposal (for 340-364 Evans Ave. and 12-16 Arnold St.) includes not only alternative employment uses (more practical for the contemporary work environment) but a net increase in actual jobs that would be undertaken on a long-term basis on the site."*

But would those proposed "alternative" jobs pay as much as the average annual wage of \$66,800 as a full-time job on Employment Lands currently does?

The Mimico Lakeshore Community Network (MLCN) continues to support City staff's recommendation that 340-364 Evans Ave. and 12-16 Arnold St be maintained as core employment and not be converted to mixed use. MLCN continues to support that position because of the importance of employment lands being part of a complete community

Yours sincerely,

Les Veszlenyi & Angela Barnes
Co-Chairs of **Mimico Lakeshore Community Network** (MLCN)

