



OFFICE OF
**BRAD
BRADFORD**

Toronto City Councillor
Beaches—East York | Ward 19

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2118 Danforth Ave East
Toronto, Ontario M4C 1J9

October 12th 2023

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

Re: Exploring the Potential for Office Conversions – and Affordable Housing - in Downtown Toronto

BACKGROUND:

As of September 2023, occupancy rates within the downtown core remain at ~50% of pre-pandemic levels. While some employers are mandating a return to work, others are embracing hybrid and work from home policies. Given the changing nature of work and the ongoing housing crisis, it is time to reevaluate the need for office space.

The City of Toronto must remove barriers to the creation of new housing at every opportunity. That includes making it easier – where possible – to convert older office buildings into housing. This will require that we ensure relief from guidelines and other rules that make it difficult to convert office floor plates into housing. This will also mean modernizing office replacement policies to unlock new housing supply and identify opportunities to secure affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to study potential conversion of office space into new housing, consider what zoning and other regulatory or policy relief may be required to enable economically-viable office conversions, evaluate the feasibility of requiring the provision of affordable housing in lieu of the replacement of office space, and report back to Planning and Housing Committee with recommendations in Q3 2024 as part of the ongoing Office Space Needs Study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Brad Bradford
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