

July 4, 2023
EMAILED



A SUNBELT RENTALS
COMPANY

Chair Brad Bradford and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto, Ontario,
M5H 2N2

Re: Proposed Conversion at 340-364 Evans Avenue and 12-16 Arnold Street (July 5/23 PHC)

Dear Chair Bradford and Members of Planning and Housing Committee:

We are William F. White International Inc. (White's), Canada's leading supplier of studio space and media production equipment are proud to play a leading role in an industry worth over \$2.5B annually to the City of Toronto. Annually, we support well over one-hundred productions that employ thousands of creative crew members in the Toronto area. Our clients range from Netflix, Disney, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Amazon, CBC, and Apple TV to name a few.

Our Headquarters for Canada are located in our 338,000 square foot flagship facility at 800 Islington Avenue in South Etobicoke, an Employment Area evolved into of the best-known film industry clusters as well as one of the most highly sought-after business locations. We are part of a growing film hub that includes many studios in our area, and with our support, it will continue to expand. Along with acres of equipment, we have a Virtual Production learning lab that we partner with Humber College, that leads next generation technology for the film industry, globally.

We have 240 employees based at our Islington location alone and as an organization that strongly promotes internal career advancement, we offer a wide range of well-paid, primarily full-time positions from apprentice/entry level to executive/management. As featured in the City's Official Plan Review "[Employment Stories](#)", our workforce is not only diverse but local with 90% of our staff living within a 20km radius of our head office. We recognize that local opportunities are a significant quality of life factor and are a major contributor towards a greener, more livable City.

We are also a proud corporate citizen – Every year our corporate support and staff participate in the Lakeshore Santa Claus Parade, The Toronto Pride Parade, Haven on the Queensway, Doors Open, Clothes Off Our Racks (film industry charity), we also provide money and equipment support to over 20 film festivals in and around the Toronto area and we are one of TIFF's largest supporters. For many years, we have partnered with educational institutions, community Colleges and Universities such as Sheridan, Humber, OCAD. Other support includes, WIFT - Women in Film & Television, education support of film unions and crew training where we provide Mentorship and Scholarship programmes to expand careers and workplace development.

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Today, I would like to express my concern of the above noted proposed conversion request, which is located on lands surrounded by the South Etobicoke Employment Area and in very close proximity to our Headquarters. The issue of land conversions and the effect on the film industry is well documented in a recent staff [Briefing Note](#) (June 1/23 PH4.8) and unfortunately after a forced relocation from our previous location to a temporary conversion for an elementary school across from our current location, this is an issue that we know first hand and are all too familiar with. It is often said that “the film industry never sleeps” and that very much holds true for our operations. Loading, outdoor, and other film industry related activity can be loud/noisy and often operates at unconventional business hours. We are a high volume, high truck trip generator and given the nature of the industry, we need to operate and be available on a 24/7 basis. We rely on a local road network for the fast, efficient movement of goods. We also know that complaints can be costly. This means we need a business location and roadway options that avoid residential areas.

We are also well aware and concerned of the other impacts conversions bring upon the long term health of our industry, issues of employment area destabilization; land use certainty and investment risk; land use conflict, land/rent availability and affordability; disincentive/pull to other jurisdictions; and the need to maintain a healthy employment land use base for new businesses to locate and for the ‘clustering effect’ to flourish – these are all real issues and predominate discussions with industry partners today.

The proposed conversion would mean the loss of a heavily relied on stretch of roadway with immediate highway access that avoids conflict with residential areas, and also represents the loss of a prime business location at a time of unprecedented market demand and record scarcity. By way of precedent, a conversion at this location could justify a conversion on any other parcel of land along this significant, 2.8-kilometre span of contiguous exclusive Employment Area lands on the north side of Evans Avenue, from The East Mall (to the west) to Islington Avenue (to the east).

For the long-term success of our operation and in consideration of the wider area implications affecting the local film industry described above, **we urge this Committee to refuse the proposed conversion application before you at 340-364 Evans Avenue and 12-16 Arnold Street.**

Respectfully,



Rick Perotto, Vice President of Business Development, William F. White Intl.

Cc:
Councillor Amber Morley
Councillor Shelley Carroll - Chair, Economic and Community Development Committee
Office of The Mayor, City of Toronto
Marguerite Pigott, Film Commissioner & Director, Entertainment Industries
Patrick Tobin, General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

