

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM28.36	ACTION			Ward: All
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### **Addressing Vacant Storefronts - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

### **Recommendations**

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and any other applicable City Divisions, to report to the Economic and Community Development Committee by the fourth quarter of 2025 on policy options to compel landowners to tenant vacant storefronts.
2. City Council request the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building and the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to report on existing property standards applicable to vacant properties, and steps taken by staff to enforce them, and the efficacy of implementing tougher standards.
3. City Council request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to review opportunities to animate and beautify vacant storefronts in collaboration with local Business Improvement Areas and Resident Associations, and to report on the feasibility of a tax reduction program for property owners that host pop-ups and art installations.

### **Summary**

Thriving main streets are the hearts of our communities and neighborhoods. Strong retail strips promote small businesses and local economic growth, and provide spaces for essential services that residents rely on.

With the looming specter of US tariffs, it is more critical than ever to protect Toronto's main streets. Unfortunately, due to Toronto's challenging real estate market and rising cost of development, storefronts are remaining vacant for longer periods as developers are sitting on approvals.

These vacant storefronts create several issues – an uglier, less vibrant streetscape, more crime and public safety issues, and reduced economic activity in our city.

Staff have previously been directed through [2020.MM16.9](#) to explore the feasibility of implementing a vacant storefront tax. Building on this previous direction, this motion includes a wider request for staff to explore policy levers to address vacant commercial spaces in Toronto, and to beautify and improving existing vacant main street storefronts.

**Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM28.36