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May 7, 2025

By E-Mail

Attn: Nancy Martins
Planning and Housing Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Email: phc@toronto.ca

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee:

Re: Item 2025.PH21.1 - Official Plan Amendments to align with Provincial Legislative and Policy changes related to Employment Areas - Decision Report – OPA 804 Planning and Housing Committee consideration on May 8, 2025

We represent 2827431 Ontario Inc., being the registered owner of the lands municipally known as 1936 McCowan Road, Toronto (the “**Property**”).

Property Description

The Property is located in the Sheppard Avenue East and McCowan Road area and has an approximate area of 9,545 square metres. It is currently developed as a pad-style plaza with two single-storey retail and office buildings connected by a surface parking lot.

The Property is currently designated as *General Employment Areas* under the Official Plan, but is well-positioned to provide a significant amount of housing in order to leverage existing and planned infrastructure.

The proposed Sheppard Avenue East and planned McCowan Road Station on the Scarborough Subway Extension is located approximately 400 metres from the Property, representing a 5-minute walk. Sheppard Avenue East and McCowan Road Subway Station is anticipated to be both the northern terminus of the Scarborough Subway Extension and a future interchange station of the planned Sheppard East line, which is expected to be developed within the next 10 years. In response to this public infrastructure investment, the area is beginning to experience new mixed-use development activity.

As a part of the City of Toronto’s recent municipal comprehensive review process, City Council approved requests to convert lands within the Sheppard Avenue East and McCowan Road area, being 4630 and 4570 Sheppard Avenue East, which are located immediately south of the Property. As such, the introduction of residential uses for the Property would be a logical approach that will allow for a comprehensive development contiguous to other lands along McCowan Road and optimize the potential to deliver much-needed housing and complete communities.

Concerns with OPA 804

The intention of the new definition of Areas of Employment under Bill 97 is to limit employment areas to traditional manufacturing, warehousing or related uses. Office, retail and institutional uses are not included in this definition for the purposes of exempting lands with such uses from conversion policies and to allow for the introduction of residential uses to encourage mixed-use development and complete communities. OPA 804 undermines this objective.

The staff report states that only four employment areas within the City were identified to meet the new definition on the basis that these limited areas are “office parks” that do not act as a buffer to more sensitive uses. In our opinion, staff failed to correctly interpret and implement the new definition as there are other lands across the City, including the Property, that do not meet the new definition of employment areas and should be redesignated accordingly.

Furthermore, in order to implement the new definition, lands should not be redesignated to *Regeneration Areas*, which requires a lengthy local area study process and would further delay the delivery of much needed housing. Rather, the City should redesignate to those land use designations that permit residential uses, such as *Mixed Use Areas*, to provide the necessary certainty to landowners to move forward with zoning by-law amendment (“**ZBA**”) and site plan (“**SPA**”) applications. Through site-specific ZBA and SPA applications, the necessary studies can be completed to ensure that servicing, transportation and all other matters are satisfactorily addressed.

For the reasons set out above, we request that this Committee direct this matter back to staff before this matter is brought forward to City Council for consideration.

We ask to be added to the City’s mailing list in connection with this matter and be notified of any further decisions made by this Committee or Council.

Yours truly,

AIRD & BERLIS LLP



Maggie Bassani

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cc: Client