



May 8, 2025

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Planning and Housing Committee
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Attention: Nancy Martins, Committee
Administrator

**Re: 2025.PH21.1 – Official Plan Amendments to align with Provincial Legislative and Policy changes related to Employment Areas | OPA 804
Planning and Housing Committee, May 8, 2025**

We are the lawyers for Champagne Centre Ltd. (the “**Champagne Centre**”), the registered owner of 2 Champagne Drive and 1107 Finch Avenue West (the “**Subject Property**”) in the City of Toronto (the “**City**”). The Subject Property is currently occupied by the Champagne Centre, an innovative, multidisciplinary medical mall that provides a wide range of critical health and wellness centres by private, public, and non-profit providers. The Champagne Centre is one of Ontario’s largest medical facilities, serving more than 5,000 patients per week in the heart of North York. During the past 15 years, the Champagne Centre has undergone numerous rezoning, design and building permit processes, investing millions of dollars from both privately and publicly funded tenants to create a unique 270,000 square foot health and wellness centre. This facility was specifically designed and built for the services currently provided, and any modifications would result in a loss of tens of millions of dollars for the Champagne Centre. This irreplaceable centre houses many medical services, including the North York General Hospital outpatient clinic and other medical services provided by over 70 physicians and medical staff.

On behalf of Champagne Centre, we provide the following comments on Official Plan Amendment 804 (“**OPA 804**”) the City’s new response to Bill 97, the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* (“**Bill 97**”) and the new Provincial Planning Policy, 2024 (“**PPS**”). Bill 97 and the PPS restricted area of employment protections to traditional manufacturing, warehouse, and related industrial uses. Through the proposed adoption by-law, the City intends to repeal Official Plan Amendment 668 (“**OPA 668**”) and Official Plan Amendment 680 (“**OPA 680**”), its prior response to the new Provincial direction, to which the Province previously intervened by Regulation 396/24, and replace these with nearly identical policies in OPA 804. Champagne Centre maintains the same concerns with this instrument as it outlined in our prior correspondence respecting OPA 668 and 680. Champagne Centre is also supportive of the comments submitted by Gladki Planning Associates Inc. on behalf of the DUKE Heights BIA.

OPA 804 continues to broadly restrict the City's employment areas in a manner inconsistent with provincial policy, while eliminating existing permissions for commercial and other non-employment uses. OPA 804 should be refused, subject to staff conducting further analysis, consultation, and refinement of the amendment's application to ensure that the City achieves the Province's policy directions and objectives. In the alternative, we request that the Committee amend OPA 804 to expressly exclude the Subject Property from its application.

Background

As noted, the Subject Property is currently occupied by the Champagne Centre and contains a mix of institutional and commercial uses, reflecting the eclectic range of uses in the DUKE Heights Employment Area. This area would not currently meet the new definitions of "area of employment" or "employment areas" in the *Planning Act* or the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.

The Subject Property is also designated *General Employment Areas* in the City's Official Plan and is subject to an approved, but not yet in force, Site and Area Specific Policy (the "**SASP**"). The SASP would permit overnight accommodations in association with a Professional Medical Office and Clinic. The SASP is further supported by an application for zoning by-law amendments to facilitate the development. No decision has been made on this application.

OPA 804 is Contrary to Provincial Legislation and Policy Direction

OPA 804 is inconsistent with the Province's clear policy direction for employment lands, implemented through the PPS and the Bill 97 *Planning Act* amendments. Like OPAs 668 and 680, OPA 804 purports to include largely all employment areas as "areas of employment", despite clear provincial direction to limit areas of employment to sites featuring heavy industrial uses to make more land available for mixed-use development.

While OPA 804 proposes to redesignate four of the City's employment areas, the City's analysis appears limited to certain office parks and criteria not consistent with Provincial policy. Many additional areas across the City already include a broader range of uses beyond that of an "area of employment". OPA 804 would continue to limit development of these lands, despite their more varied existing and planned context.

OPA 804 Does Not Represent Good Planning

OPA 804's policy direction does not represent good planning. The Province has provided clear direction to limit areas of employment to sites featuring heavy industrial uses. In imposing those limits, the Province intends to make more land available for housing and complete communities. OPA 804 risks impeding those goals, by imposing additional barriers to the expansion of existing non-employment uses across the City. OPA 804 risks impeding those goals, by imposing additional barriers to the expansion of existing non-employment uses across the City. A more nuanced and comprehensive approach to redesignating the City's employment lands would be consistent with the PPS and *Planning Act* and represent good planning.

The Champagne Centre successfully delivers critical health-care services to the City's residents, and its ability to expand those services is central to its continued success for the City and Region. Ensuring it can do so serves both employment and broader planning goals. Limiting the range of permitted uses at the Subject Property is also contrary to the *Planning Act* and the PPS.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on OPA 804 and ask that our office be provided with notice of any meetings and decisions related to this matter.

Yours truly,

Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP



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cc: Peter Voltsinis, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP (pvoltsinis@cassels.com)