

Supplementary Report to PH27.11 on the Consequences to the City of Toronto Regarding the Development Application at 125 The Queensway

Date: February 4, 2026

To: City Council

From: Lou Di Gironimo, General Manager, Toronto Water

Wards: Ward 3, Etobicoke-Lakeshore

SUMMARY

This supplementary report to PH27.11 is intended to support the recommendations from City Planning to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal in opposition to the Official Plan Amendment application for re-designation of the lands at 125 The Queensway from General Employment Areas to Mixed Use Areas, which includes residential uses.

The City of Toronto owns and operates the Humber Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at 130 The Queensway, directly across the street from the proposed development. This report is intended to inform City Council of the potential operational and financial consequences to the City should this development proceed, as well as impacts to any potential residential development.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 15, 2023, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 644, which refused conversion request 022 seeking to convert 125 The Queensway from General Employment Areas to Mixed Use Areas. A link to the decision history can be found at the following link <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH4.5>.

OPA 644 was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and came into effect on January 28, 2025.

On October 20, 2024, the Minister of Municipal Affairs issued the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (“PPS 2024”). The PPS 2024 removed the requirement that conversions of employment areas to non-employment uses only be permitted through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.

On May 21, 2025, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 804, to align with the Provincial legislative and policy changes related to Employment Areas, including the PPS 2024 and Bill 97. The decision can be found at the following link:
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH21.1>.

OPA 804 has been sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for final review and approval.

January 22, 2026, the Planning and Housing Committee adopted item PH27.11 to oppose the current application regarding 125 The Queensway at the Ontario Land Tribunal. The decision can be found at the following link:
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.PH27.11>

COMMENTS

The Humber Wastewater Treatment Plant is owned and operated by the City of Toronto. It treats municipal wastewater for a significant portion of western Toronto, operating 24/7, 365 days a year. The plant has a rated capacity of 473,000 cubic metres per day, servicing an equivalent population of approximately 662,000 to 685,000 people.

The plant is within 20 metres of the proposed development. Sewage treatment plants are specifically addressed under the D-2 Compatibility between Sewage Treatment and Sensitive Land Use Guideline as issued by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). The legislative authority for this guideline is within the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Planning Act. Under this guideline, the recommended separation distance from a plant with a capacity of 25,000 cubic metres per day or more is 150 metres. In addition, the D-6 Compatibility between Industrial Facilities Guideline (as issued by the MECP), whose authority derives from several provincial acts, also recommends a separation distance of 300 metres. The proposed development would not be within the separation distance recommended in provincial guidance.

The impact of odours on potential residents is the primary concern. Current odour control systems at the plant are designed to account for everyday odours and have generally reduced 95% of off site odours. However, process upsets and other unusual events outside of staff control do sometimes occur. For example, extreme weather can cause extended power failures and/or equipment failures. When this happens, tanks need to be drained and cleaned, which can take days or even weeks to complete and often results in significant odours in the vicinity of the plant. While staff work diligently to prevent and mitigate these issues, they simply cannot guarantee these incidents will not occur in the future, particularly in the face of climate change.

Other hazards posed by the plant that are incompatible with residential development include heavy truck traffic, bulk chemical deliveries multiple times per week, and heavy construction. The plant has been continuously under construction for decades and Toronto Water has budgeted over \$700 million worth of upgrades. Due to the size and nature of this facility, it is likely there will always be some form of major construction taking place at any given time. While construction work is regulated by local noise bylaws, it should be noted as a risk to enjoyment of property due to the potential for dust, noise and vibration.

In considering the application to change the land designation, it is also critical to consider the potential long-term costs to the City. Air quality surrounding sewage treatment plants is regulated under the Environmental Protection Act, Ontario Regulation 419/05- Air Pollution – Local Air Quality. Environmental Compliance Approvals (ECAs), issued under the regulations, are comprehensive documents that dictate the types of equipment, monitoring and reporting measures that need to be in place at the facility. The specific measures that need to be in place are generally determined through comprehensive engineering studies and depend on factors including proximity to sensitive land uses and the type of facility. ECA approvals are negotiated with the MECP to ensure operators are adequately protecting the environment from adverse affects.

Under the Environmental Protection Act, “adverse effect” means one or more of,

- (a) impairment of the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it,
- (b) injury or damage to property or to plant or animal life,
- (c) harm or material discomfort to any person,
- (d) an adverse effect on the health of any person,
- (e) impairment of the safety of any person,
- (f) rendering any property or plant or animal life unfit for human use,
- (g) loss of enjoyment of normal use of property, and
- (h) interference with the normal conduct of business.

Odour and noise complaints are required to be fully investigated, mitigated if possible, and reported to the MECP. In the event the MECP begins receiving an increased number of complaints, they will require the City to develop a mitigation plan to reduce their impacts on the community. In 2011, it was estimated that a second phase of odour control upgrades would cost approximately \$85 million (in 2026 dollars), would only minimally improve odour treatment and would not account for any process upsets. Moreover, there would be significant increases in operating costs in terms of energy use and maintenance which have not been quantified.

Permitting residential development in the immediate vicinity of a large wastewater treatment plant would not be in the best interest of the residents who may not fully comprehend the realities of living near a municipal sewage treatment plants prior to moving in. It also has major potential financial impacts for the City and operating impacts on the plant. For these reasons, Toronto Water firmly opposes any residential development at 125 The Queensway.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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