



NOTICE OF MOTION

Addressing Moribund Development Sites

Moved by: Councillor

Carroll

Seconded by: Councillor

Chernos Lin

SUMMARY:

The City of Toronto is experiencing a growing number of development sites where planning approvals have been granted, but construction has not proceeded due to broader economic conditions, financing challenges, and market uncertainty. While Council and other levels of government have taken steps to address barriers to housing construction and encourage the timely delivery of approved projects, the City also has a responsibility to ensure that properties within our communities are maintained to appropriate standards while they await redevelopment.

Across Toronto, residents and businesses are increasingly encountering properties that remain vacant, inactive, or in a prolonged state of transition. Regardless of the status of a future development application or approval, these properties continue to exist within established neighbourhoods and should be maintained in a manner that protects public safety, prevents deterioration, and supports the quality and appearance of surrounding communities. As the number of these sites has increased, so too has the impact on neighbourhoods across the city.

In October 2025, City Council adopted amendments through the Property Standards By-law: Phase II Review and Other Property Items to strengthen requirements for vacant properties and clarify owners' obligations to protect properties from fire, accident, trespass, and other hazards. However, the current framework does not specifically address the unique circumstances of development sites that remain inactive for extended periods following planning approval.

A targeted review will examine whether the City's existing property standards processes, service levels, enforcement tools, and interdivisional coordination are effectively addressing inactive and moribund development sites. The review will consider opportunities to improve training and guidance for enforcement staff, clarify jurisdiction and responsibilities across City divisions, identify available municipal remedies to ensure sites are maintained to appropriate standards, and explore options for improving site security and appearance while properties await construction.

Where additional legislative authority may be required, the review will also identify potential changes and engage with the Provincial Government to pursue any necessary amendments to ensure municipalities have appropriate tools to protect neighbourhoods and hold properties accountable.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. City Council request the City Manager to coordinate with the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, to report back to City Council in January 2027 on the effectiveness of the changes implemented through the Property Standards By-law: Phase II Review, including:
 - a. An assessment of whether the updated property standards framework is effectively addressing concerns related to vacant and inactive development sites, including sites where construction has not commenced following planning approval;
 - b. Identification of any additional amendments, policies, or enforcement tools required to address development site-specific property standards concerns, including issues related to site maintenance, security, waste accumulation, fencing, landscaping, and other impacts on surrounding communities;
 - c. A review of training, guidance, and operational procedures provided to Municipal Licensing and Standards enforcement officers responsible for investigating property standards complaints involving vacant and inactive development sites, to ensure consistent application of existing standards and enforcement tools;
 - d. An assessment of jurisdictional gaps or limitations that may prevent the City from effectively enforcing appropriate property standards on development sites, including a review of the legislative authorities available under the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and other applicable legislation; and
2. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with relevant City divisions, to explore opportunities to improve the appearance, safety, and security of inactive development sites awaiting construction, including options for enhanced site management requirements, improved fencing or screening standards, and other measures that can be implemented within the City's existing authority.
3. City Council request the City Manager to include, as part of the report back, recommendations for any necessary by-law amendments, policy changes, operational improvements, or legislative advocacy required to ensure that inactive development sites are maintained to appropriate standards while respecting approved development permissions and the City's objectives for housing and growth.