

**January 16, 2026**

To the Planning and Housing Committee:

Toronto is at a pivotal economic moment. Global trade uncertainty, protectionist policies, and supply chain disruptions are reshaping how and where goods are produced. At the same time, [Mayor Chow's Economic Action Plan](#) calls for strengthening Toronto's economic resilience, protecting good jobs, and supporting domestic production. Now more than ever, it is essential that employment lands are clearly understood and actively positioned as a foundation of the city's long-term economic competitiveness.

The City's Planning and Housing Committee will be considering four items at its January 22, 2026 meeting that reflect the growing pressure on Toronto's employment lands. These are reports on applications that their respective applicants have appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, and they collectively raise fundamental questions about how and where employment uses can be sustained over the long term. While each item must be considered on its own merits, taken together they underscore the importance of acting within a narrowing window, and the broader challenge facing the city: balancing competing land-use demands while ensuring Toronto retains the space needed to support good jobs, domestic production, and economic resilience.

Employment lands must be more clearly understood for what they are: critical assets for jobs and the economy, not simply industrial real estate subject to redevelopment pressure. Toronto and the GTA cannot respond to protectionist trade policies, reduce reliance on vulnerable supply chains, and accelerate domestic production capacity without a stable and sufficient supply of employment land. Without a more coordinated narrative and approach, the region risks undermining one of its pillars of economic competitiveness.

Toronto's employment lands consistently punch above their weight. While occupying less than 12% of Toronto's land area, they support 25% of all jobs and 30% of business establishments across the city.

**Employment lands are investment.** They are also a major source of reinvestment, with industrial building permits in Toronto's employment lands averaging over \$63 million annually between 2021 and 2024, demonstrating sustained interest, confidence, and long-term commitment from employers.

**Employment lands are jobs.** Perhaps most critically, employment lands are home to **92% of Toronto’s manufacturing jobs.** Jobs in manufacturing, distribution, and other goods producing sectors are widely recognized as accessible, living-wage opportunities—particularly for newcomers, equity-deserving communities, and others who are often excluded from more precarious labour markets. Toronto’s labour force is one of the most diverse in the world, representing communities from across the globe, a strong competitive advantage as we look to broaden trading partners and diversify supply chains.

**Employment lands are businesses.** They are home to small businesses, entrepreneurs and start-ups, and contribute to the ecosystems that support so many of our key industries and growth sectors, including food & beverage and film, both at risk through the applications under appeal and before our Committee.

**But employment lands are vulnerable.** The sectors most impacted by protectionist trade policies—primary export sectors including manufacturing, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing—are almost exclusively housed in employment lands, accounting for 77% of establishments and 81% of jobs in tariff-exposed sectors. With Toronto accounting for over half of Ontario’s GDP, prolonged uncertainty around employment land protection has impacts well beyond the city’s boundaries.

While the City continues to advance housing priorities and support business operations, losing stable, serviced, appropriately zoned land for good jobs does not make housing more affordable. Instead, it reduces accessible job opportunities and leads to inefficient land use patterns, increasing commute times and the cost of goods for consumers and businesses alike. Efforts to “reshore” these industries, expand domestic production of goods, and attract investment from non-US global partners cannot succeed without an adequate and certain employment land supply in the largest consumer market in Canada.

Protecting and preserving the limited and finite supply of employment lands therefore remains an urgent priority. **Official Plan Amendment 804 is an important step in establishing a clearer, more predictable framework for where employment uses are protected and how these areas can evolve over time,** helping to reduce uncertainty for employers and investors. At the same time, policy protection alone is not sufficient. A broader and more cohesive narrative is needed to ensure employment lands are investment-ready, support intensification and innovation, and remain resilient in the face of ongoing economic change.

Councillor  
**Gord Perks**

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Recommendations:

1. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to reiterate the City's request for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to approve Official Plan Amendment 804 under Section 26 of the Planning Act.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development & Culture, in collaboration with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to engage industry, labour, business, institutional and government partners to develop a shared call to action to all levels of government to protect and preserve employment lands, increase productivity in employment areas, and grow manufacturing jobs in Toronto and Ontario.

Sincerely,



Gord Perks  
Chair, Planning & Housing Committee  
City Councillor, Parkdale-High Park



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