



OLIVIA CHOW
MAYOR

February 25, 2026

Re: Updating the Effectiveness of the Committee of Adjustment

Dear Planning and Housing Committee,

Over the past few years, the City of Toronto has dramatically expanded where and how we allow more housing to be built. In the face of a housing crisis and with a growing population, we have been transforming zoning rules to help build more and bring down the cost of housing.

Until recently, around 70% of residential zones only allowed single-detached homes. Today, nearly all residential lands in the city have been rezoned or redesignated to allow more housing to be built. This includes multiplexes, garden suites, laneway suites, six-storey apartment buildings on Major Streets, and 282 km of Avenues identified as areas for future growth such as midrise buildings. And more work is to come.

Residents, builders and developers are now starting to use these new permissions to build more Missing Middle housing. Complex and expensive planning approvals such as Official Plan Amendments or rezonings are no longer required. More projects are permitted as-of-right or with minor variances to the zoning bylaw.

In this new framework, the Committee of Adjustment (CoA) will play an increasingly important role as we collectively work to translate new permissions into new housing.

Some recent CoA hearings and decisions have raised questions from stakeholders on how the CoA applies Council-approved policies and CoA



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members' approaches to evaluating variances.

Administrative management of the CoA moved from City Planning to the Development Review division last month, which gives us an opportunity to make sure it is best equipped to perform all of the important roles it must serve.

In this context, I am requesting City staff to review and report on how the CoA can be most effective, including opportunities to streamline and bring greater consistency to decision-making, improve timelines, and support faster delivery of housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Planning and Housing Committee request the Executive Director, Development Review, and any other divisions as appropriate, to engage industry, builders, planners, and other users and stakeholders of the Committee of Adjustment and report in Q2 2026 with preliminary findings, potential opportunities and a workplan on:
 - a. Improving customer service, streamlining decision-making, improving timelines, leveraging technology, simplifying submission requirements, and supporting faster delivery of housing, while maintaining the integrity of the development review process.
 - b. Attracting and retaining highly qualified panel members for the next round of recruitment and appointments;
 - c. Improving panel training and continuous education, including on changes to City and provincial planning rules;



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- d. Standardizing the practice of Development Review staff reports to the Committee of Adjustment, including comments where applicable indicating where projects align with Council-approved policy objectives;
- e. Opportunities to better streamline and coordinate the application processes for tree removal permits and minor variances;

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia Chow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Mayor Olivia Chow