

January 16, 2026

City Planning Division, Planning & Housing Committee
Toronto City Council
100 Queen Street West
West Tower, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
phc@toronto.ca

Re: Opposition to Rezoning and Proposed Housing Development at 125 The Queensway – Protection of Employment Lands Adjacent to the Ontario Food Terminal

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA), which represents approximately 200 companies engaged in growing, transporting and trading fresh produce in Ontario, I am writing to express strong opposition to any rezoning at 125 The Queensway that would permit residential development adjacent to the Ontario Food Terminal (OFT) - a provincially significant employment zone that is foundational to Ontario's food system and economy.

Protection of Employment Lands and Strategic Economic Function

We understand that on January 22, the Planning and Housing Committee will consider several reports addressing employment land conversions that could enable residential uses. In contrast with housing objectives, maintaining the land's current employment designation is essential not only for economic resilience but also for food system functionality.

The Ontario Food Terminal is a critical employment hub, wholesale marketplace, and logistics centre that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is the largest wholesale produce distribution centre in Canada and among the top four of its kind in North America, handling approximately 2 billion pounds (~1.05 million tonnes) of produce annually - equating to approximately 5 to 5.6 million pounds a day.

Notably:

- The Terminal serves over 5,000 registered buyers, including independent grocers, small and mid-sized retailers, restaurants and foodservice businesses.
- The broader economic ecosystem connected to the OFT supports more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs across farming, logistics, transportation, processing, wholesale distribution, retail, and related services.

This employment and economic activity extends well beyond the Terminal's physical footprint and directly contributes to local and provincial economic vibrancy.

For this reason, the City has consistently recognized that the Ontario Food Terminal plays a pivotal role in the provincial agri-food network. The retention of these lands is as vital to a livable economy as increasing housing supply.

Food Security, Market Access, and Community Impact

The Ontario Food Terminal anchors food distribution and affordability throughout the city, province, and beyond. Its competitive wholesale marketplace:

- Enables independent and small-format retailers to procure fresh produce at competitive prices;
- Supports culturally diverse communities with access to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables;
- Contributes to food equity, as smaller retailers and food service operations rely on the Terminal to stock affordable produce.

These strengths are particularly relevant in a period of rising food bank usage and food insecurity, where organizations such as the Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest depend on stable, affordable produce sources to support vulnerable populations.

Disrupting the Terminal's operations through incompatible adjacent land use would have direct consequences for food affordability and access across Toronto.

Empirical Evidence of the OFT's Provincial and National Role

Based on extensive, peer-reviewed research and publicly available evidence, the OFT is not only a vital component of Toronto's food system - it is critical infrastructure supporting communities across the province and beyond, whose operation would be put at risk by incompatible residential development. Recent research and internal reports affirm that:

- The Terminal distributes approximately 2 billion pounds of produce annually, serving not only Ontario but markets as far east as Newfoundland and west toward British Columbia.
- It handles roughly 400 different fresh produce and related products on its 38-40-acre site, encompassing wholesale units, farmers' market space, cold storage and ancillary logistics facilities.

It is also important to emphasize that the OFT's reach extends well beyond Ontario. Data from the Canadian Produce Marketing Association's membership demonstrates fresh produce sourced from the Terminal is bound for communities in nine provinces.

Land-Use Compatibility and Operational Vulnerabilities

The OFT's continuous, intensive operations involve 24/7 truck traffic, cold-chain logistics, and industrial-scale activity. Planning analyses - including those referenced internally by Toronto Public Health and urban planning reviewers - highlight vulnerabilities where adjacent residential development:

- Generates land-use conflicts including complaints related to noise, trucking and heavy logistics;
- Creates political pressure to curtail necessary operations that underpin provincial and municipal food distribution;



THE ONTARIO PRODUCE
MARKETING ASSOCIATION

- Compromises critical supply chain resilience amid weather, transportation bottlenecks or other disruptions.

Weakening the Terminal through incompatible land use ultimately threatens food security, particularly for lower income communities and culturally diverse neighbourhoods across the city. The proposed rezoning is inconsistent with several of Toronto's policy commitments, which emphasize food equity, poverty reduction, and healthy built environments, including:

- Toronto Food Charter;
- Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Black Food Sovereignty Plan;
- C40 Good Food Cities Declaration.

Supporting these frameworks while undermining a key food system asset represents a contradiction within Toronto's policy agenda, as these risks are not hypothetical and directly conflict with the City's stated food and equity priorities.

Maintaining employment land around the OFT will:

- Secure the long-term viability of a provincially significant food system asset;
- Sustain jobs across multiple sectors integral to the agri-food supply chain;
- Support Ontario farmers and regional agricultural producers;
- Uphold competitive access to fresh food for all residents — particularly in neighbourhoods with high need.

The Ontario Food Terminal is far more than a wholesale market; it is essential public food infrastructure. We strongly urge the City to reject any rezoning that would introduce incompatible residential development adjacent to the Terminal and to uphold the land's employment designation. Council's decision on this matter will have long-term implications for Toronto's economy, food security, and resilience.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Harris, M.A., CAE
President

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