

February 24th, 2026

Planning and Housing Committee,  
100 Queen Street West,  
Toronto City Hall

**RE: PH28.6 – North York at the Centre: Directions Report for an Updated Secondary Plan**

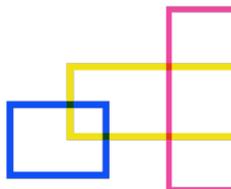
Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

The Yonge North York Business Improvement Area (BIA) represents over 1,600 business and commercial properties within the North York at the Centre Secondary Plan. Our BIA boundaries run along the Yonge Street corridor from the 401 to Finch Station is northern Toronto's primary office, retail, service, and hospitality node.

As the office sector continues to recover from the consequences of the pandemic and from various ongoing global economic impacts, greater attention is needed from the City of Toronto to revitalize the office sector, and to best support its long-term growth and opportunities to live, work and play in North York at the Centre.

**Yonge North York BIA and City of Toronto Collaboration for the North York at the Centre Secondary Plan:**

- Establish a dedicated economic development office with staffing for North York at the Centre to liaise with the Yonge North York BIA to foster business retention and growth, and to implement business attraction initiatives.
- Develop an office-sector economic development and marketing plan for North York at the Centre, with clear retention and growth strategies developed in collaboration with the City, the Yonge North York BIA, and other local office-sector stakeholders.
- Maintain a consistent and direct channel of communication during both the conceptualization and implementation stages of the plan with emphasis on proactive consultation and feedback between the City and the Yonge North York BIA.
- Advance office tenant retention and attraction strategies for North York at the Centre, including the creation of targeted incentives and grants, a temporary recovery-period property tax break, and worker activations such as lunch-time parking discounts.
- Ensure that office space retention is a priority along the Yonge Street corridor from the 401 to Finch Station, and along Sheppard Avenue from Beecroft Road to Doris Avenue.
- Ensure that there is a focus on growth of office hubs within walking proximity of each of the three subway stations – Sheppard Yonge, North York Centre and Finch.
- Formally incorporate the BIA's approved Award-winning [Yonge North York Public Realm Master Plan](#) into the Secondary Plan update. The BIA's Master Plan was undertaken with consultation and input from the public and our local Councillor.



### Why This Matters:

- North York at the Centre is Toronto's largest office employment hub outside the downtown core, with over 36,000 employees (¾ office tenants) and 9 million sqft of commercial space.
- Supporting the financial competitiveness of this area's office space retention and development in the short to mid-term during this challenging market period will preserve quality employment in the long-term.
- As residential density increases, Toronto must maintain long-term vision to preserve and grow jobs by simultaneously retaining and supporting growth of office space in all areas of the City.
- Commercial space generates additional property tax revenue for the City, and catalyzes private investment such as through BIAs, which benefits local residents.
- A strong office sector in our BIA also generates daytime foot traffic essential for our significant hospitality sector, and local retailers and service providers.
- *The North York at the Centre – Non-Residential Current Conditions and Projections Report* identifies that a premier office employment district requires a high-quality public realm.

### Achieve Sustainable Growth and Economic Development in the North York at the Centre

In principle, the Yonge North York BIA supports increased density along the Yonge Street corridor, provided this increase is accompanied by infrastructure, resources, and services required by a growing population. Retention of commercial office and retail space within new developments is essential to serving and to also involving that increased population in driving main street economic prosperity. Creating an innovative design framework that promotes engaging public spaces and active, street-level commercial storefronts will further enrich economic development in the office as well as other business sectors.

Additionally, increased local and regional collaborative planning and coordination is needed to continually improve and manage office worker commute times and traffic flow on Yonge Street by, for example, implementing better alternate routing and regional signal timing, and addressing short-term parking usage.

Expanding permitted commercial uses beyond what currently exists along Empress and Willowdale Avenues risks diluting economic and employment activity in the core, including its significant commercial tax base contribution to the City, and thereby also potentially undermines efforts to support the mid-term viability and long-term vitality of the Yonge corridor as an employment hub.

North York at the Centre has successfully become the "Downtown for North York." To ensure that its future growth builds on this success, collaboration is needed now to retain the economic diversity of Toronto. We also request that the City outreach and coordinate with the provincial and federal governments to best support the future success of this important office node.

For further discussion or should you have any questions, please contact Laura Burnham, Executive Director, at [l.burnham@yongenorthyork.com](mailto:l.burnham@yongenorthyork.com).

Sincerely,  
The Yonge North York BIA Board of Directors

