



Deputy Mayor

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CHAIR, GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
CHAIR, SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE TORONTO ZOO
CHAIR, FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES
CHAIR, TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

October 29, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

I am writing to express a series of concerns on behalf of my residents regarding **PH25.3 Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Neighbourhood Retail and Services Study - Phase Three Final Report item**. The current city-wide initiative of increasing local retail availability and commercial uses in neighbourhoods is premature, with the potential to impose negative impacts upon residential communities and without sufficient local consensus.

A major point of concern is the **implied approval of specific undesirable retail uses, namely Cannabis retail "Pot Shops" and establishments serving alcohol, as an as-of-right permission. City is the lacking and ability to remove "Pot Shops" from the list of permitted retail uses and is awaiting Provincial response on this request.** I must emphasize that the City needs to **hold on approving this ZBLA until the Provincial Government grants us the ability to locally control or remove these uses.** Approving the by-law now means forfeiting the ability to use our own planning tools to manage the proliferation and location of these sensitive businesses, which is unacceptable to many communities.

The proposed changes carry a high risk of severely impacting the quality of life in established residential areas. The core concern is the incompatible introduction of commercial uses into zones with existing residential requirements, which simply do not mix well in certain areas. Residents are consistently raising alarms that this will cause a detrimental change to the residential character of their streets. Furthermore, **the provision to allow business use in auxiliary buildings and removing parking requirements for it is particularly problematic** as it will inevitably lead to applications seeking to permit parking on front lawns and in front of living spaces, creating unsafe conditions and undermining the very by-laws intended to protect the residential environment. This concern is heightened by the potential for businesses to operate as de facto warehouses and delivery hubs, which is entirely contrary to the quiet, low-traffic environment essential for residential areas.

The "one-size-fits-all" approach has been clearly voiced as inappropriate by the residents for a city as diverse as Toronto. Our City has 158 Social Planning Neighbourhoods that provide a proven framework for tracking and understanding local differences, yet we are not utilizing this framework for a change of this magnitude.

Some neighbourhoods are naturally walkable, but many others have distinct geography and infrastructure that are not walkable friendly and cannot absorb new commercial activity without disruption.

Compounding this issue is the reliance on Map 3, which identifies major streets, but is reportedly an old map, possibly made in the 90s, with no verifiable records on why specific streets were originally selected. It is clear that this map needs to be comprehensively updated as not all listed streets accurately fit the current definition of a "major street."

The claim of "extensive consultation" in the report is a misleading statement when weighed against the city's population and the scale of the change. Only approximately 2,600 survey responses were collected from a City of over 3 million. Personal consultation consisted mostly of one-per-Ward pop-up events, meaning a Ward with a population exceeding 100,000 might have only engaged 30 to 40 people at the pop-up location. Furthermore, in the Ward I represent, Scarborough-Guildwood Ward 24, the largest and most active community association has never met with City Planning Staff on this matter.

I am hearing completely opposite feedback from residents in Ward 24, in every community meeting, any conversation with a resident, and emails on the matter. Residents want their neighbourhoods left out of these significant zoning changes, confirming that each neighbourhood is different and there should not be a one-size-fits-all approach.

Local community organizations have conducted extensive surveys showing that over 90% of residents are against these changes. It is evident that not enough work has been done, and the item is being pushed forward without sufficient data and sufficient local and in-person consultation process.

Based on these fundamental concerns, I urge the Committee to defer the approval of the zoning amendment and pursue a more responsible path forward. We can consider a Pilot Program in selected neighbourhoods where the changes are supported, then take the necessary time to review the impacts on the community. Change Map 3 – Major Streets and commit to a robust process to review the file on a per-neighbourhood basis with extensive local consultation.

Crucially, we must not approve the item until the ability to remove Undesirable Retail Uses is granted by the province.

Finally, a requirement for reporting on monitoring back to Community Councils should be established bi-annually, and all repercussions in allowing business use in auxiliary buildings must be thoroughly considered.

Sincerely,



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