



**Zelinka Priamo Ltd.**

LAND USE PLANNERS

**VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION**

February 2, 2023

Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
C/O Municipal Services Office – Central Ontario  
777 Bay Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 2J3

Attention: Erika Ivanic

Dear Minister Clark:

**Re: Toronto OPA 524**  
**ERO # 019-5228 / Ministry Reference # 20-OP-219126**  
**City of Toronto Official Plan Review**  
**Comments on Behalf of Choice Properties REIT**  
**Our File: CHO/TOR/21-01**

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We are the planning consultants for Choice Properties REIT ("**Choice**") regarding **Toronto Official Plan Amendment ("OPA") 524**, adopted on February 3, 2022, which introduces Protected Major Transit Station Area ("**PMTSA**") policies within delineated station areas.

Choice is the landowner of a significant number of properties throughout the City of Toronto, including properties within adopted PMTSA boundaries ("**Choice Lands**") that will be subject to the policies of OPA 524 and related amendments, as adopted. The Choice Lands are developed for a variety of purposes, including commercial, industrial and residential uses. At this time, Choice generally seeks to maintain existing operations while preserving opportunities for minor infill and expansion on their lands, prior to potential comprehensive redevelopment.

Choice is supportive of the Province's direction to increase densities within the vicinity of higher-order transit stations in order to decrease car reliance, accommodate population growth, and realise the full potential of transit investments. Accordingly, Choice is supportive of the City of Toronto identifying a number of their properties within PMTSAs. **As detailed within this letter, we respectfully request that the Province consider modifications to the Implementation policy language adopted as part of OPA 524 for the reasons outlined herein.**

## REQUESTED MODIFICATIONS TO IMPLEMENTATION POLICY 5.6.18

On behalf of Choice, we have reviewed the adopted policies of OPA 524, and are concerned that the new Implementation policies, as adopted, do not sufficiently protect for interim development considerations in order to reflect the context of the broad range of existing developments and uses within PMTSAs. Specifically, we respectfully submit our comments for Policy 5.6.18, which is adopted as follows:

*“Minor additions, extensions, conversions and renovations to existing buildings, or new ancillary buildings or structures are not required to meet the minimum development density within a delineated Protected Major Transit Station Area.”*

Choice supports the inclusion of Policy 5.6.18, which recognizes existing uses on a site and would allow for renovations, additions, or extensions to existing buildings for lands within a PMTSA, without requiring that such development meet the minimum development density that has been established. Through Policy 5.6.18, the City has recognized the importance of supporting the existing function of lands within a PMTSA prior to comprehensive redevelopment. However, in our submission, **Policy 5.6.18 does not sufficiently support interim infill development within PMTSAs. Interim infill development still delivers intensification to a site in a near-term and cost-effective manner, and as such, should be contemplated within PMTSA policies.**

In our submission, **the policy framework, as adopted, may have an inadvertent effect of limiting development potential in the near- to- medium-term** by preventing infill on lands developed with uses such as traditional large scale, stand-alone retail stores or employment uses within PMTSAs.

We understand that the City’s proposed PMTSA boundaries would cover large areas of the City, and extend to numerous different properties developed with a broad range of uses including residential, commercial, and employment. In our experience, **comprehensive redevelopment of such expansive areas will likely occur over the course of several years or decades in order to be fully realized.** In the interim, it is appropriate support the existing function of lands within PMTSAs prior to comprehensive redevelopment. Indeed, Policy 5.6.18 partially addresses this same concern by acknowledging support of existing land uses and expansions thereto.

**We submit that Policy 5.6.18 should be expanded to permit infill in the form of standalone development, which would not be required to meet the minimum density contemplated by the respective PMTSA policy. Accordingly, we suggest the following modification to adopted Policy 5.6.18:**

*“Minor additions, extensions, conversions and renovations to existing buildings, new ancillary buildings or structures, **replacement of existing buildings, and stand-alone infill development for non-residential uses** are not required to meet the minimum development density within a delineated Protected Major Transit Station Area.”*

Permitting infill development on individual sites will increase the density within a delineated PMTSA in the near- to- medium-term, and will not in itself preclude long term redevelopment that may be anticipated within the PMTSA. The adopted policy framework has recognized the issue; however, our suggested language would provide certainty that existing sites are not stagnant until such time as a comprehensive redevelopment is advanced (which could be upwards of several decades).

#### **ESTABLISHED INFILL AT 3730 LAKESHORE BOULEVARD W**

As an example, the Choice Lands at 3730 Lakeshore Boulevard W is a retail commercial development that has increased in density over the last 10 years through the introduction of new infill buildings. The site is located within the adopted Long Branch GO Station PMTSA (SASP 646), approximately 850 metres from the Go Station lands. The lands have an adopted minimum FSI of 1.5.

Multiple small-scale infill commercial buildings have been added to the site since the initial grocery store development (Figure 1), including the LCBO/Dollarama (Figure 2), and Shoppers Drug Mart (Figure 3).

**Figure 1: Aerial of 3730 Lakeshore Blvd W, dated September 2013 (retrieved from Google Maps)**



Figure 2: Aerial of 3730 Lakeshore Blvd W, dated September 2014 (retrieved from Google Maps)



Figure 3: Aerial of 3730 Lakeshore Blvd W, dated September 2017 (retrieved from Google Maps)



The infill history of this site clearly demonstrates the type of development that would be prohibited by Policy 5.6.18, as adopted. Underutilized sites have the potential to contribute to increases in employment density; make more efficient use of lands and servicing; contribute monies in the form of development

changes and/or cash-in-lieu; and contribute to the creation of complete communities prior to comprehensive redevelopment.

If required to meet a minimum FSI at the time of these infill proposals, the policy context would have rendered underutilized areas of the site stagnant until such time as comprehensive redevelopment would be feasible. As the site has been incrementally developed prior to the introduction of PMTSA policies, the interim infill buildings have increased the site's contribution to employment density around the GO Station lands.

The requested policy modification would protect for similar types of infill development which increases the density of people and jobs without precluding future redevelopment potential at an appropriate time.

**In our opinion, the proposed policy modification is consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement*, conforms with the applicable policies of the *Growth Plan* and represents good planning to ensure sustainable growth in the City of Toronto.**

Please kindly ensure that the undersigned is notified of any further modifications, approvals, and/or notices with respect to this posting. We reserve the opportunity to provide further comments in the event that additional information becomes available.

Should you have any questions, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours very truly,

**ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD.**



Jonathan Rodger, MScPl, MCIP, RPP  
Principal Planner

cc. Choice Properties REIT (via email)