

Preservation of Rental Housing Stock

ACTO was added as a party to an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) where a landlord was seeking to convert 957 apartments in five buildings in uptown Toronto to residential condominiums. The central issue was whether the proposal was consistent with good municipal planning – did it meet the requirements of the *Planning Act* and was it consistent with Toronto policy on conversions to condominium. The policy uses rental housing vacancy rates as an indication of the need to preserve rental housing and there was much argument about how those numbers should be applied and interpreted. ACTO argued against the conversion in support of the decision of the City of Toronto to refuse to allow the conversion.

The OMB accepted the arguments put forward by the City and ACTO and denied the landlord's appeal. The OMB decided that the proposal was not consistent with good planning or the Toronto Official Plan Policies on housing, and did not conform to the requirements of the *Planning Act*. Furthermore, it was not in the public interest to allow the conversion because it could jeopardize the availability of affordable rental housing stock. Converting to condominium did not comply with the objective of having a full range of rental housing available in all areas of the city. This could have adverse effects on low-income people who need rental housing because they cannot afford ownership.

This was an important victory for all tenants in the City of Toronto and across Ontario. It shows that our cities must have strong planning policies that protect rental housing.