

## **Update on the Development of a Strategy for Encouraging and Protecting Family Sized-Units**

<b>Date:</b>	November 7, 2007
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	pg070078

### **SUMMARY**

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At its meeting of September 5, 2007, the Planning and Growth Management Committee requested City Planning to report on a strategy to encourage new and protect existing family-oriented housing. This report provides a brief update on the progress being made and steps being taken to develop a strategy. A further report on the strategy will be submitted for the Committee's consideration in the Spring of 2008.

### **Financial Impact**

This report has no financial impact.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

The Planning and Growth Management Committee, at its meeting on September 5, 2007, considered City Planning's report entitled "Encouraging New and Protecting Existing Family-Sized Units". The report responded to four separate requests for reports on related matters. The overall focus of the report was to provide a general discussion on a variety of methods that could be used to facilitate the production and protection of large units suitable for families. Specifically, the discussion included: a preliminary review of the current policy environment; the use of knock-out wall panels to facilitate alteration in the size and bedroom count of new residential units; and the potential protection of large family-sized rental units with high-end rents under the City's new rental housing demolition and conversion by-law.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-5883.pdf>

Following consideration of the report, the Planning and Growth Management Committee requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to:

1. report back to Planning and Growth Management Committee before the end of 2007 on a strategy to create a greater degree of family-oriented housing.

2. seek opportunities to secure knock out panels in new condominium developments in the context of rezonings for increased density.
3. include consideration of the need for protection of family-sized rental units with high-end rents from demolition in the draft implementation guidelines for Chapter 667 of the Municipal Code to be brought to City Council for approval.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

It has become apparent that in certain areas of the City there is a shortage of new family-oriented housing. In particular, the downtown area has seen a relatively small number of family-sized units being produced in recent years. Family housing is an essential part of a full and diverse range of options that must continue to be made available to residents in all areas of the City. Action is required to ensure that housing opportunities will be provided for families with children in both the immediate and long-term future.

## **COMMENTS**

In developing a broad-based strategy to promote and protect family-sized units, staff is pursuing several key areas, which include researching the need for and supply of family-oriented housing and examining the experience of other jurisdictions.

### **Data on Family Housing**

The Planning report of August 16, 2007 provided some preliminary data on the number of three bedroom suites being created in the Toronto area. As part of the strategy, staff is working to expand the data on the supply of, and demand for, family housing across the City and within specific sub-areas.

Since the last staff report, a City Planning research bulletin entitled “Living Downtown” has been released (October 2007) and was presented to Planning and Growth Management Committee on November 1, 2007.

[http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/living\\_downtown\\_nov1.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/living_downtown_nov1.pdf)

The bulletin provides the highlights of a survey undertaken in December 2006 to determine the nature of the downtown population, and motivations for living in the area. The survey compared responses from households living in housing units built and occupied between 2001 and 2006, with those residing in the more established stock built before 2001. It indicates that the population moving into the area tends to be young, single or couples without children. The majority of these people live either in bachelor, one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartments, with few occupying larger family-sized units. Table 1 shows that only about 7% of the survey respondents living in more recent housing (post-2001) occupy three-bedroom or larger apartments, whereas 15% of the those in the more established stock (pre-2001) live in larger units.

Table 1: Household Types by Number of Bedrooms, Downtown Toronto

Bedrooms	Household Type					
	Couples with Children	Single Parent	Couples without Children	Singles	Other	All Households
Recent Housing – Post 2001	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
None (bachelor/studio)	0%	0%	1%	6%	2%	4%
One Bedroom	16%	17%	47%	68%	18%	52%
Two Bedrooms	53%	67%	45%	24%	57%	36%
Three Bedrooms	25%	17%	7%	2%	12%	6%
More than three Bedrooms	6%	0%	0%	0%	11%	1%
All Recent Households	7%	2%	35%	49%	7%	100%
Established Housing – Pre 2001	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
None (bachelor/studio)	2%	10%	2%	20%	1%	11%
One Bedroom	12%	8%	37%	57%	15%	41%
Two Bedrooms	30%	69%	42%	19%	61%	32%
Three Bedrooms	27%	13%	15%	4%	13%	10%
More than three Bedrooms	29%	0%	5%	1%	9%	5%
All Established Households	9%	3%	28%	50%	10%	100%

Source: Living Downtown Survey, Toronto City Planning Research and Information, December 2006.

Additional data from the Living Downtown Survey will be reviewed and analysed for the family-sized units strategy.

Although it is clear that there is a shortage of family units in the downtown area, it is important that any strategy also consider the extent of the problem and the need for action in other parts of the City.

Census data is being generated to help identify the magnitude of the problem both in the downtown and in other areas of Toronto. In particular, efforts are being made to compare the data over a number of Census periods to examine the changes in the amount, type and occupancy of family-oriented housing. Although the household data from the 2006 Census was released this past September, additional cross-tabulations will be required to be performed by Statistics Canada to determine the interrelationship of a number of variables (e.g. household type, structure type and bedroom number for specific geographic areas). Some discrepancies in the Census data that has been released still need to be resolved, before cross-tabulations can be generated.

Other sources of data that are being analysed include: more detailed sales data showing the availability of new units in different areas of the City; and special runs of the City's permit data and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's starts and completions data. The City's development application pipeline data is also being reviewed to identify emerging directions in the development of family housing.

## **Experience in Other Areas**

Staff has been gathering information on approaches that have been used to promote family-oriented housing by other municipalities in Canada, and to some extent, the United States. An assessment of the specific approaches used by other municipalities will be provided in the strategy report.

Consideration will also be given to the work of seniors levels of government in this area. For example, some discussions have been initiated with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation about their efforts in promoting flexible housing design. While their research is focused more broadly on adapting accommodation to suit changing lifestyles for all household types, it is especially relevant to development of a strategy on family housing. Flexible unit designs and layouts complement the concept of “knock-out panels” previously raised by the Planning and Growth Management Committee.

## **Conclusions**

Planning staff is proceeding to address the recommendations made by the Planning and Growth Management Committee at its meeting of September 5, 2007 as part of a broader strategy on the encouragement and protection of family-sized units. Developing this more comprehensive strategy requires a detailed assessment of the data on the supply of family housing and demand for family-sized units across Toronto and in specific sub-areas, as well as a review of related experiences in other jurisdictions. Work in these areas is underway, but requires the analysis of data not currently available. Key data and further research will help guide and inform the discussion of appropriate policy options and implementation tools. It is anticipated that a further report on the strategy will be submitted for the Planning and Growth Management Committee’s consideration in Spring 2008.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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