



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study and Action Plan

Date:	May 4, 2010
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	pg10030

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the status of the 'Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Action Plan'.

The Action Plan consists of a number of components to encourage the reurbanization of Toronto's *Avenues*. It includes the *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study* prepared by Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects with E.R.A. Architects, Quadrangle Architects Limited and Urban Marketing Collaborative, and consultations with members of the Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team, various stakeholders and the public. This report provides updates on these initiatives and makes recommendations related to implementation.

Toronto's *Avenues* are an integral part of the urban fabric. *Avenues* serve as social and commercial centres and are intimately linked to the identity and vitality of the neighbourhoods that surround them. They are also part of Toronto's Official Plan growth management strategy and therefore it is important to anticipate and set the stage for an appropriate, typically mid-rise, form of development. In the City of Toronto, mid-rise buildings are defined in relation to the adjacent street or *Avenue* and can rise no taller than the street 'right-of-way', which is generally between 4 and 11 storeys.

The Official Plan vision for Toronto's *Avenues* is one of vibrant, tree-lined streets, wide sun-lit sidewalks, framed by well designed and contextually sensitive mid-rise buildings that support an active street life by providing a variety of retail and community uses at the ground floor level. Mid-rise buildings are an integral part of the City's past, present and future built form and they also help to achieve the growth targets while enhancing and revitalizing existing neighbourhoods.

The implementation of the *Avenues*' vision has been dependant on individual *Avenues* Studies, sixteen of which have been completed across the city to date. Even with new as-of-right zoning in those areas, there has been a slow response from the development community. A faster and more pro-active 'Action Plan' was deemed appropriate to put new housing and jobs close to existing transit and infrastructure. This report, the Consultant study, the ongoing work of the Mid-Rise Building Interdivisional Team, and other related city initiatives together form the 'Action Plan'.

The consultant's *Avenues & Mid-Rise Building Study* provides guidance about the future built form of the *Avenues* through suggested Performance Standards which will provide the foundation for new zoning regulations and urban design guidelines for mid-rise buildings that respect individual characteristics.

This report recommends that staff use the Mid-Rise Performance Standards in reviewing proposals for a two year monitoring period. During the monitoring period, an implementation strategy will be developed which will include a review of existing zoning, the statutory 5 year review of the Official Plan, and the new Urban Design Handbook, in order to incorporate the Performance Standards in guidelines, policies or new as-of-right zoning.

By the end of the two year monitoring period, staff will report back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the effectiveness of the Performance Standards and potential implementation measures as appropriate and necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Council request staff to use the 'Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards' contained in Section 3 of the report entitled *Avenues & Buildings Study* and attached as Attachment 5 to this report in the evaluation of all new and current mid-rise development proposals on the *Avenues* and in the implementation of future Avenue studies so that the *Avenues* "vision" can be realized more quickly and effectively.
2. The effectiveness of the Mid-Rise Performance Standards referred to in Recommendation (1) above, be monitored by staff during a 'monitoring' period of approximately two years.
3. Staff report as soon as possible, and prior to the end of the 'monitoring' period, respecting the implementation of the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards to the Planning and Growth Management Committee.
4. The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning incorporate the following matters into the 2011 statutory 5-Year review of the Official Plan:

- a. a review and potential expansion of the *Avenues* identified on Map 2, Urban Structure Map, of the Official Plan and their underlying Land Use Designations;
 - b. a review of Map 4, Higher Order Transit Corridors and Map 5, Surface Transit Priority Map, in light of any changes to Map 2 and Transit City.
 - c. a review of the Avenue policies in Section 2.2.3 of the Official Plan and identification of any Official Plan amendments required to implement the recommendations of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study, including the future role of Avenue Studies and segment studies;
 - d. a review of the Built Form policies of Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan to include the creation of new policies for mid-rise buildings and public realm improvements to implement the recommendations of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study;
 - e. a review of policies relating to the preservation and enhancement of public lanes on the *Avenues*; and
 - f. a review of Secondary Plans and Site and Area Specific Policies relating to areas that overlap with *Avenues* to identify any appropriate amendments to implement the recommendations of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study where necessary.
 - g. a review the Housing policies of Section 3.2.1 of the Official Plan and the thresholds for demolition and conversion of rental housing units in the implementing By-law 885-2007.
5. The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning develop a process and criteria for identifying *Avenues* or portions of *Avenues* where further study is needed to determine if Enhancement Zones or other appropriate solutions or applications should be considered.
 6. The Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team maintain an ongoing role during the 2 year phase in period.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 4, 5, and 6, 2003, Council adopted a report that identified criteria and a process for selecting areas to be part of an Avenue Study. To date, 19 Avenue Studies have been initiated while 16 have been completed. Both the final staff reports and

consultant's studies on City-initiated Avenue Studies can be found at:
<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/studies.htm#ongoing>

During the 2005 budget process, Council allocated a portion of the Avenue Studies budget for a public Symposium to explore opportunities for encouraging more mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*.

At its meeting of April 23 and 24, 2007, City Council adopted Planning and Growth Management Committee Item PG 3.7 "Urbanizing the *Avenues* Mid-Rise Buildings Symposium Update and Avenue Studies Next Steps") which provided the authority to establish an Interdivisional team to review the issues and obstacles raised at the symposium and to seek viable solutions in order to promote the development of mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-2401.pdf>

In October 2008, the consultant team of Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects was hired to undertake the *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study* which sought to expedite and encourage the development of more and better designed mid-rise buildings.

On September 16, 2009 Planning and Growth Management Committee adopted Item PG 31.1 "Update on the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Action Plan") which provided the authority to conduct city-wide public open houses and community meetings.
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-23230.pdf>)

BACKGROUND

The *Avenues*

In conjunction with the *Centres, Employment Districts and the Downtown and Central Waterfront*, the *Avenues* form part of the City's growth management strategy in the Official Plan. Identified in Map 2 Urban Structure of the Plan, *Avenues* represent segments of main commercial streets that can accommodate new housing and jobs while improving the public realm. There are approximately 160 kilometres of *Avenues* identified.

Section 2.2.3 of the Plan provides the framework for studying the *Avenues* which, in consultation with the local community, set out a blueprint for future growth through amendments to the zoning regulations and the creation of urban design guidelines. Council has made annual recommendations for specific segments of *Avenues* to be studied in detail. To date, 19 Avenue Studies covering approximately 38 of the 160 kilometres of *Avenues* have commenced, 16 have been completed. A list of Avenue Studies can be found in Attachment 1.

On November 28 and 29, 2005, City Planning Staff hosted a public symposium entitled "Mid-Rise Buildings - Urbanizing the *Avenues*". The purpose of the three part symposium was to explore opportunities for encouraging more mid-rise buildings on Toronto's *Avenues*. The ideas and suggestions that emerged were used to inform both the purpose of the Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team and the objectives and recommendations of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study. For further details about the Mid-Rise Buildings Symposium visit: http://www.toronto.ca/planning/midrise_symposium.htm.

The *Avenues* & Mid-Rise Buildings Study

In October 2008, Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects with E.R.A. Architects, Quadrangle Architects Limited and Urban Marketing Collaborative was hired as the City's consultant to study the *Avenues* and develop ways of encouraging mid-rise development on the *Avenues*. The objective of the Study was to build on and implement the Official Plan policies by making recommendations, such as performance standards, to catalyze the reurbanization of the *Avenues* and address the issues raised at the 2005 Mid-rise Buildings Symposium.

Phase I of the '*Avenues* & Mid-Rise Buildings Study' involved background research, stakeholder consultations and developing and testing the draft Performance Standards for mid-rise buildings which were presented to the Planning and Growth Management Committee in September 2009.

Phase II work included public meetings and discussions, refinement of the performance standards, analysis of retail and heritage/built form character, identification of optimal site and dimensional characteristics, visualizations, development of compliance alternatives and recommendations.

The consultant's recommendations are based on creating certainty through new as-of-right zoning and design guidelines which would shorten the review and development approval process.

Study Area

The Study focused on *Avenues* on Map 2 Urban Structure of the Official Plan that have not been studied. Properties that front onto an *Avenue* that have not been part of an *Avenue* Study, do not have Secondary Plans in place and have not been part of a City-initiated planning study that resulted in area based zoning changes are included. The proposed Performance Standards will apply primarily to lands designated Mixed Use Areas that front on to the *Avenues* identified on the Study Area Map in Attachment 2. Although the intention of the Study is to provide Performance Standards and recommendations for mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*, they may also be appropriate

and useful to guide the review of proposals for mid-rise buildings in Mixed Uses Areas not on *Avenues*.

Avenue Characteristics

Studying the *Avenues* at the city wide level highlights the variety of building and lot characteristics that have emerged in different parts of the City. The built form of Toronto's *Avenues* corresponds to the different historical periods of development and can generally be divided into two categories, pre-war and post-war development. The pre-war era of development is illustrated by the grid system and garden suburbs, while the post-war development is characterized by the automobile suburb which were generally built with no or little reference to public transportation.

A key implication of these two periods of development is the parcel fabric and built form that exists between the two. Generally, the pre-war fabric is characterized by narrower right-of-ways, a finer grain property fabric (narrower lot widths), shallow lot depths, shorter blocks and buildings built closer to the property lines. They are generally better served by public transportation. The post-war era of development is defined by larger right-of-way widths, larger blocks, wider and deeper properties and buildings set further back from the property line to accommodate surface parking. Plaza-style retail is a common example of development from this era.

Interdivisional Team

The Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team was formed in 2008 in response to the need to take a co-ordinated approach to reurbanizing the *Avenues* and is comprised of representatives from the following City Divisions and Agencies:

Affordable Housing Office
City Planning
Corporate Finance
Deputy City Manager's Office, DARP Team
Economic Development, Culture & Tourism
Real Estate Services
Fire Services
Legal Services
Municipal Licensing & Standards
Office of the Mayor
Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Social Development, Finance and Administration
Solid Waste Management
Technical Services
Toronto Building
Toronto Association of Business Improvement Districts

Toronto Community Housing Corporation
Toronto Parking Authority
Toronto Transit Authority
Toronto Water
Transportation Services

In addition to the Divisions and Agencies listed above, public utilities such as Bell and Toronto Hydro have participated in the Interdivisional problem-solving exercise.

The Team was asked to explore solutions to encourage and facilitate development of mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*. Some of the solutions being explored include looking at ways to optimize land through shared parking, loading and servicing areas, alternative thresholds for curb side garbage pick-up, a Harmonized Peer Review process for the conveyance of lanes, the impacts of the Harmonized Street By-law on the *Avenues*, and developing partnerships between city agencies such as the Toronto Parking Authority and developers.

A summary of the issues and solutions being examined can be found in the Comments Section of this report.

Community Engagement

Prior to the public consultation meetings, staff met with representatives from People Plan Toronto (<http://peopleplantoronto.org/>), and Plan Toronto. It was recognized that as a City-wide study, unique public outreach and education measures may be necessary. In addition to the traditional Open Houses, staff set-up a Mid-Rise Study website and a 'facebook' group.

The website <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/midrisestudy.htm> was created to enable interested parties to obtain information and learn about the study. It provided information about the public meetings, links to various presentations and the display boards used at the open houses and community meetings.

Staff conducted four public open houses and community meetings and one focus group session:

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 - Metro Hall
Thursday, February 18, 2010 - Scarborough Civic Centre
Wednesday, February 24, 2010 - North York Civic Centre
Wednesday, March 3, 2010: - Etobicoke Civic Centre
Wednesday, March 9, 2010: - Metro Hall (Focus Group Meeting)

The meetings began with an open house where staff used display boards to explain the performance standards and identify where they will apply. This was followed by a consultant team presentation to communicate the Study objectives and a question and

answer period to allow the public to raise issues and ask questions. Approximately 70 people attended all four sessions. The Public Open House and Community Meeting notice as well as the Focus Group notice can be found in Attachments 3 and 4.

The following is a list of the issues and opinions that were expressed by participants:

- The importance of contiguous retail, (even if the market cannot accept retail presently, the form of the main floor should not preclude retail in future)
- Allowing flexibility in the uses within mid-rise buildings
- Preservation of local commerce ('mom and pop' shops)
- Allowing flexibility in how the sidewalk is used
- Co-ordination of utility infrastructure and development
- Preservation of parking on the main streets
- Retention of historic buildings and building façades
- Desire to encourage 'greening' of buildings, in particular green roofs
- The need for higher design standards and more control over urban design, architectural quality and materials
- Desire to encourage the use of rear laneways to re-route overflow parallel parking and create a buffer between the properties fronting onto the *Avenues* and the adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Promoting more grocery stores on the *Avenues*
- Overlook onto backyards (transition to residential neighbourhoods)

Many of the issues raised are addressed in the study. Some issues that are beyond the scope of the study are being addressed through other initiatives which influence development on the *Avenues*. Initiatives and programmes pertinent to developing the *Avenues* are discussed below.

In addition to the open houses, a focus group was held with individuals who participated in Local Advisory Committees for completed Avenue Studies. The meeting provided the opportunity for focus group participants to share experiences and lessons learned from previous Avenue Studies as well as provide Staff with feedback on the *Avenues* & Mid-Rise Buildings Study.

Many participants of the focus group supported the idea that Toronto should be a 'walking city' and appreciated that many of the Performance Standards encouraged a better walking environment and a more equitable relationship between the private (buildings) and public (sidewalk) realms.

City Planning has also been working with the Canadian Urban Institute (<http://www.canurb.org/>) to develop a coherent cross-municipal strategy to overcome the challenges of mid-rise development in Ontario. Staff participated in a workshop entitled 'Building confidence, breaking barriers - making mid-rise work for Ontario' in December 2009.

Staff also met with representatives from the broader development, architectural and planning community, including the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD), the

Ontario Growth Secretariat, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), York, Ryerson and the University of Toronto. Staff also participated in discussion with staff from other municipalities, including Mississauga, Ottawa, Vancouver and Chicago, and presented a draft of the study at the 2009 Walk21 Conference in New York City.

Growth Plan

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework for managing growth and contains policies to direct where and how to grow, infrastructure to support growth, protection of natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation.

The Planning Act requires City Council's planning decisions to conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement 2005 (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The key objectives of the PPS include building strong communities, wise use and management of resources and protecting health and safety.

The PPS includes policies directing municipalities to manage and direct the use of land to achieve efficient development patterns. Policy 1.1.3.3 states:

Planning authorities shall identify and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated taking into account existing building stock or areas, including brownfield sites, and the availability of suitable existing or planning infrastructure and public service facilities required to accommodate projected needs.

The PPS recognizes that municipalities through its Official Plan will implement policies that direct growth that are consistent with the PPS. As discussed below, the City of Toronto Official Plan through its growth strategy and land use designations supports and compliments the PPS. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides a comprehensive policy framework to direct and manage physical, social and economic development change. The Plan encourages population and employment growth, recognizing that directing growth to appropriate areas is critical to Toronto's future. Chapter Two sets out the growth management strategy to guide reurbanization and direct job and population growth to certain 'growth'

areas including the *Downtown and Central Waterfront*, the *Centres*, the *Avenues* and *Employment Districts* - shown on Map 2, Urban Structure.

Forming part of the growth strategy, the *Avenues* are important corridors along major streets where reurbanization and transformation is anticipated incrementally. Policies in Section 2.2.3 directs new development to support and promote the use of transit, contribute to a range of housing options and to provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment that encourages walking and strengthens local retail.

The Plan directs that the framework for change on the *Avenues* is tailored through a local Avenue Study that involves an assessment of local conditions and results in a vision and an implementation plan including community improvements, contextually appropriate zoning and design guidelines. Since 2000, 16 Avenue Studies have been completed for approximately 35 of the 160 kilometres of *Avenues*. The *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study builds on the results of 16 Avenue Studies completed to date and provides a framework for future development on portions of *Avenues* that have not yet been studied.

Land use designations identified in Chapter Four of the Plan are considered one of the key implementation tools for achieving the growth management strategy of the Official Plan. Four land use designations, *Employment Areas*, *Institutional Areas*, *Mixed Use Areas* and *Regeneration Areas* accommodate most of the increased jobs and population anticipated by the Plan's growth strategy.

It is important to recognize that the intensity of growth in each of the four land use designations will depend on where it is located in the City. For example, *Mixed Use Areas* in the *Downtown and Central Waterfront* will have the most intense urban form in terms of densities and built form. The appropriate scale of development on lands designated as *Mixed Use Areas* along an *Avenue* are determined through an *Avenue* Study and the outcome of the 16 Avenue Studies completed, have generally resulted in permissions at a much lower scale than in the *Downtown* and most often at a lower scale than in the *Centres*.

The Official Plan also contains policies for development in *Mixed Use Areas* that are adjacent to or close to *Neighbourhoods*. Section 2.3.1, Healthy Neighbourhoods, states that development in *Mixed Uses Areas* that are adjacent or close to *Neighbourhoods* will:

- a) be compatible with those *Neighbourhoods*;
- b) provide a gradual transition in scale and density, as necessary to achieve the objectives of this Plan through the stepping down of buildings towards and setbacks from the *Neighbourhoods*;
- c) maintain adequate light and privacy for residents in those *Neighbourhoods*;
and

- d) attenuate resulting traffic and parking impacts on adjacent neighbourhood streets so as not to significantly diminish the residential amenity of those *Neighbourhoods*.

Furthermore, Section 3.1, The Built Environment, compliments Chapters Two and Four by providing direction on matters that can improve everyday life in the City. Section 3.1.1, The Public Realm, recognizes that City streets are a significant public open space that serves pedestrians and vehicles, provides space for utilities and services, trees and landscaping and functions as a meeting place and should be designed to perform their diverse role and balance the needs of existing and future users.

The policy objectives highlighted above as well as others contained in the Official Plan helped to guide the development of Mid-Rise Performance Standards and recommendations contained in the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study.

The Toronto Official Plan is available on the City's website
http://www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/introduction.htm

Zoning

The Zoning By-law Project is in the process of creating a single zoning by-law that develops a common terminology, structure and approach to regulating land uses that apply across the City. The April 2010 staff report outlines all of the major changes made to the draft Zoning By-law since its initial release in May 2009. The Zoning By-law will serve as an important tool for implementing some of the suggested Performance Standards outlined in Attachment 5. The Performance Standards which the by-law addresses, and does not, are detailed later in this report.

The draft new Zoning By-law is available on the City's website:
<http://www.toronto.ca/zoning/index.htm>

COMMENTS

The consultant's *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study*, dated May 2010 considers discussions and information gathered from the public, the development community, City staff and the Interdivisional Team. It builds on *Avenues Studies* completed to date as well as the 2005 Mid-Rise Buildings Symposium and includes a number of recommendations to encourage the reurbanization and promote mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*.

This study builds on the principles and visions established in the *Avenues Studies* undertaken to date and on the best urban design and built form principles and practices in Toronto and other cities around the world. It has developed a set of mid-rise

Performance Standards to be used as the framework for growth on *Avenues* which have yet to be studied (see below for more information).

Staff has reviewed the recommendations in the consultant's Study. This report deals with those recommendations that are considered appropriate at this time.

The full consultant's Study is available on the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study website: <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/midrisestudy.htm>. Section 3, "Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings" is included as Attachment 5.

Summary of the Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings

The vision for the *Avenues* is one of animated sidewalks and buildings that frame the street, with heights that are proportionate to the right-of-way widths. In general terms there are 3 components to the buildings, the first 3 storeys relate to the sidewalk and pedestrian realm, the next three (or up to 80% of the right-of-way) form part of the 'streetwall' and relate to adjacent buildings while the upper storeys, (between 7 and 11 storeys) are stepped back to allow skyview, sunlight and transition. See Attachment 5.

In order to achieve this vision, the consultant has developed a comprehensive set of 19 Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings, detailed in Section 3 of consultant's Study, Attachment 5 of this report. Some of these performance standards may be incorporated into new zoning for the *Avenues*.

The Performance Standards generally address the overall size and shape of mid-rise buildings, the design of the adjacent public realm on the Avenue and the quality of the buildings and landscape.

Ideal Lot Characteristic

Recognizing that some sections of *Avenues* have unique lot, block and street patterns, the Performance Standards are not intended to address all the intricacies of every potential development. Detailed study will be required to address area-specific irregularities and to develop specific solutions as was done in the St. Clair Avenue Study with the introduction of 'enhancement zones' for shallow lots and the deep site solutions in the Kingston Road Avenue Study.

The ability of individual sites to meet the Performance Standards and in particular the proposed maximum allowable height depends primarily on the width and depth of the lot.

Ideal lot depths depend on the width of the adjacent right of way. The chart below describes the minimum lot depth required to achieve the maximum recommended height while incorporating angular planes, setbacks and typical parking layouts for the four prevailing right-of-way widths. The Study also suggests an optimal lot width of 30

metres is needed, irrespective of the right-of-way width to accommodate structured on-site parking and step-backs at the upper storeys.

Right-of-Way width	Ideal minimum lot depth (metres)
20 metres	32.6
27 metres	41
30 metres	44.6
36 metres	51.8

Building Height and Size

In order to establish appropriate height parameters on the *Avenues*, a 1:1 ratio is being recommended where the maximum building heights are relative to the right-of-way widths identified in Map 3 Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets of the Official Plan. This results in the following recommended maximum heights:

Right-of-Way width	Mixed-Use Buildings	Commercial Buildings
	Storeys	Storeys
20 metres	6	5
27 metres	8	7
30 metres	9	8
36 metres	11	9

To discourage the underdevelopment of sites, a minimum building height of 10.5 metres which would permit a building of up to three storeys is recommended.

To provide flexibility of grade level uses and increase the marketability of retail spaces, a 4.5 metre minimum height of the ground floor is suggested for both buildings that propose retail and residential uses at the ground floor.

Streetwall Height & Step-backs

The Study recognizes that access to sunlight is an important factor when creating vibrant pedestrian-oriented streets. To achieve a minimum of five hours of sunlight on sidewalks, a 45 degree front angular plane taken from a height of 80% of the right-of-way width (as shown on Map 3 of the Official Plan) is recommended.

Building step-backs are an important tool to articulate the mass of buildings. While the exact location of the front building step-backs are not prescribed, the Study suggests that front step-backs may be appropriate on buildings taller than 7 storeys, but the exact location should be determined as part of the site plan process.

To create a continuous street wall at grade that facilitates a smooth transition between the private and public realms, the Study recommends that buildings should be built to 75% of

the front property line or sidewalk setback line, with the remaining 25% to be built within 5 metres of the front property line or sidewalk setback line.

Side Yard Setbacks and Step-backs

To create continuous façades along the *Avenues* and avoid blank walls, the Study suggests that buildings should be built to the side property lines for a minimum of 10.5 metres in height to a maximum of 80% of the maximum permitted height at which point a minimum side step-back of 5.5 metres is recommended. Blank sidewalls should only be permitted up to a height of 6 storeys and appropriate materials should be used to mitigate the visual impact.

Rear Transition

To ensure gradual transition and compatible development, buildings fronting onto an Avenue should step down towards and be setback from adjacent *Neighbourhoods*. The Study recommends a 7.5 metre setback from the rear property line adjacent to a neighbourhood in addition to a 45 degree angular plane. The location of where the angular plane is taken from depends on whether the lot is considered shallow or deep. The definitions of shallow and deep lots, outlined below, are established using the right-of-way widths and the lot depths required to reach the maximum heights. For deep lots the Study recommends a 7.5 metre setback and a 45 degree angular plane measured from the rear property line adjacent to a neighbourhood and a 7.5 metre setback and a 45 degree angular plane measured from a height of 10.5 metres above the rear setback line.

Right-of-Way width	A deep lots is greater than :	A shallow lot is less than or equal to:
20 metres	32.6 metres	32.6 metres
27 metres	41 metres	41 metres
30 metres	44.6 metres	44.6 metres
36 metres	51.8 metres	51.8 metres

Enhancement Zones

The consultant's Study suggests considering the application of Enhancement Zones to facilitate the ability of very shallow lots fronting on the *Avenues* to reach the maximum recommended mid-rise heights and still meet the angular plane and rear yard setback requirements. The concept of Enhancement Zones was developed during the St. Clair Avenue Study process to address the limitations of shallow properties on a relatively wide right-of-way.

The application of Enhancement Zones required a City-Initiated Official Plan amendment which identified specific residential properties developers could purchase and use as a buffer between the rear of the Avenue Property and the side yard of the residential

property. No building will be built on the lands identified as an Enhancement Zone on St. Clair Avenue West, but could be used for public lanes, landscaping and surface parking.

A process and criteria for identifying *Avenues* or portions of *Avenues* where further study is needed to determine if using the enhancement zones is desirable and beneficial should be considered.

Criteria for selecting *Avenues* or portions of an *Avenue* where further study is needed may include:

- Areas where a mid-rise building could not be achieved with existing lot depths
- Areas where enhancement zones would help the development meet the Performance Standards in Attachment 6 of this report
- Areas where enhancement zones would help create a logical rear lane system, extend or widen an existing lane way
- Areas where new buildings must be set back to accommodate minimum sidewalk requirements
- Areas where the introduction of Enhancement Zones could be applied to the majority of the blocks along the Avenue Segment
- Areas that have generally uniform lot pattern within the block

Front Property Setbacks

To ensure sufficient space for pedestrian and sidewalk functions minimum sidewalk zones are proposed. A 4.8 metre minimum sidewalk zone is proposed for right-of-ways up to 30 metres wide while a 6 metre sidewalk is suggested for right-of-ways 30 metres wide or greater. To achieve these dimensions, it is proposed that the front yard setback will vary depending on the current sidewalk width. When retail at grade is not required, and residential at grade is proposed, an additional 4.5 metre front yard setback is suggested to provide adequate separation between the public sidewalk and the private residences along with the ability of the residential uses to convert to retail in the future.

Vehicular Access

To promote a safe and uninterrupted space for pedestrians, the consultant's Study suggests that vehicular access to on-site parking, loading and servicing facilities should be provided from flanking streets and rear lanes, not from the *Avenues*.

Design Quality

Good design is important for building a beautiful City. Both the public and private realms should exhibit a high quality and standard of design and should demonstrate that *Avenues* are Toronto's main commercial streets that serve the local community as well function as destinations. The consultant's Study makes a number of recommendations in

this regard, giving particular attention to streetscape treatment, exterior building materials, façade design and building articulation.

Heritage and Character Areas

In addition to portions of *Avenues* that are designated as a Heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act or currently under study for designation, the consultant's Study attempts to recognize the unique characteristics of individual *Avenues* by identifying Character Areas.

The Character Areas outlined in Attachment 6, highlight areas along the *Avenues* that should be noted for their natural, built or cultural significance to the neighbourhood or City as a whole. They are not intended to prohibit or limit the development of mid-rise buildings. To ensure that appropriate consideration is given, additional Performance Standards (19A to 19G, Attachment 5) are proposed to guide development in these areas. The consultant's Study also suggests that any proposed development in a Character Area be required to submit a "Character Area Response Statement" as part of the Site Plan Control application. The Statement would describe how the proposed development responds to and integrates with the existing context.

It is proposed that the Character Areas be refined during the 2 year monitoring period to confirm the overall integrity and significance of the existing historic contexts prior to future zoning and Official Plan amendments. Staff will also consider the applicability of the suggested "Character Area Response Statement" during the monitoring period.

Staff have also suggested that development on or near individually significant buildings that stand alone, or exist in small groups outside of identified Character Areas also be subject to a review to ensure that is contextually appropriate and integrates sensitively to the surrounding area (i.e. appropriate transitions, massing and materials).

Retail Priority and Ground Floor Uses

As part of the consultant's Study, a retail analysis of all the *Avenues* under study was conducted to determine where retail at grade should be required, encouraged and permitted. The research was primarily influenced by the existing continuity of retail space, the length of the retail strip, existing retail composition of the area, access and transportation conditions, marketing and management, and the population near the retail area.

Four categories of retail on the *Avenues* were identified:

- a) established districts characterized by stable main-street type retail corridors that are supported by a large residential base;
- b) transitioning urban communities where there are opportunities to increase residential density;

- c) suburban *Avenues* are areas where the existing retail is not well defined and primarily auto-oriented; and
- d) undefined areas which are those that do not function as retail streets or serve a community function.

The study suggests that in established districts, retail at grade should be required to maintain a successful continuous retail strip that helps to animate the streets. Retail should be encouraged in areas that are categorized as transitioning urban communities and permitted along portions of *Avenues* that are suburban or undefined.

Attachment 7 outlines areas identified as established districts.

Compliance Alternatives and the Ongoing Work of the Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team

Compliance Alternatives are creative solutions and ideas which can meet the intent of the City's technical requirement and standards while addressing the constraints of smaller, Avenue sites. The solutions proposed by the consultant team include shared underground parking, parking stackers and elevators, shared vehicular access and service loading areas, amenity space alternatives, coordination with utility providers for placement of utility infrastructure, flexible retail spaces and possible alternate exiting requirements.

Members of the Interdivisional Team have reviewed many of the consultant's ideas for compliance alternatives and, as stated in the Recommendations above, City Planning should continue to work with the Interdivisional Team to find workable and acceptable solutions to some of the technical requirements for constrained sites. If acceptable solutions can be agreed upon, a protocol for ensuring that the information is disseminated to Staff will be developed.

While an expedited process may encourage more mid-rise buildings, it should be recognized that many of the potential compliance alternatives will require minor variance approvals, or an agreed upon protocol for recurring issues.

The Interdivisional Team work includes Toronto Buildings, Solid Waste Management, Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Technical Services, Bell, and Toronto Hydro.

Toronto Buildings

Some Ontario Building Code requirements, such as a second 'means of egress' and non-combustible construction materials can be seen to be tailored more for tall buildings than mid-rise, and often add an expense to mid-rise buildings.

City of Toronto Buildings Officials have indicated that a 'Compliance Alternative' for exiting requirements for mid-rise buildings on small lots may be possible. For

example, the new requirement for sprinklers in residential buildings (including mixed use) comes into effect in 2010. Sprinklers will aid in early fire suppression and may reduce the need for duplication of life safety measures.

Changes to the OBC, together with potential Compliance Alternatives may make it easier and less expensive to build mid-rise buildings.

Solid Waste Management (SWM)

Solid Waste has indicated that there may be an opportunity for shared loading spaces between two or more small sites. This would require the applicant(s) to propose the shared use at the time development applications are submitted to ensure that proper easement agreements are in place and that the loading space has been designed to be large enough to accommodate all of the containers required for the two or more sites. The storage of waste materials would be required to reside within each individual building.

There may also be an opportunity to increase the 30 unit threshold for required Type G loading spaces, in favour of curb side garbage pick up, however this requires further study.

In addition, SWM supports the preservation and enhancement of public lanes as they enable the easier provision of loading spaces - particularly lay-bys which require the least amount of building footprint and do not require turn-around on small sites.

Toronto Water

Defining the physical parameters of buildings through the Mid-Rise Study will help Toronto Water to estimate the water servicing needs for the *Avenues*. This will allow Toronto Water to proceed with functional servicing studies. The timing of these studies will be subject to the level of development proposed in an area, staffing resources, and funding availability.

The cost recovery charge for water and sewer service connections are directly reflective of a competitive bid prices. They can be higher on *Avenues* where there is a congestion of underground infrastructure, wide pavement width and when light rail transit tracks need to be crossed.

Transportation Services

Transportation Services has indicated that while not desirable, underground parking garages encroaching beneath boulevards that consist largely of soft landscaping, and a generous vertical clearance between the garage and the surface of the boulevard may be acceptable.

Municipal Code Chapter 743 Use of Streets and Sidewalks, is in its final draft form and is anticipated to be before Council in the winter of 2011. The draft by-law indicates permission for service vehicles that need to back into or out of loading facilities from local streets and lanes. The consultant's Study encourages loading from the rear or side of an *Avenue* site, so this provision will assist the servicing of buildings on constrained *Avenues* sites.

The by-law will specify that driveway access must be taken from the lower volume street, which will strengthen the pedestrian realm along the *Avenues*.

A Council endorsed access management policy may be needed to limit the number of driveways across sidewalks. A committee is in the process of being established to develop an access management policy for the City.

Technical Services

Technical Services has indicated that work is ongoing on items which may assist the Right-of-Way permit process with respect to related road modifications and utility placement. This may help shorten and streamline the approval process for proposals on the *Avenues*.

Avenues sites are often required to convey land to the City for road widening purposes or lanes through the Planning Act process. The City of Toronto has a Harmonized Peer Review Process, which was recently before Committee and Council:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-4977.pdf>

Appendix A to that report outlines when a Record of Site Condition (RSC) and concurrence from a City Peer Reviewer are required for lands to be conveyed to the City. There are a number of possible combinations of requirements. For example, if the *Avenue* development site is not moving to a more sensitive use, the Chief Building Official will not require a RSC prior to Building Permit issuance, and Technical Services will also not require an RSC. Further, if the width of the conveyance is less than or equal to 1.0m in width, then Technical Services will not require concurrence from a City Peer Reviewer.

Also, if the land to be conveyed is less than or equal to 100 square metres in area, then an RSC and Peer Review are not required if the former use of the site was residential, parkland or institutional. This may assist the redevelopment of *Avenue* sites with rear lane conveyance requirements.

The City's Requirements for Garbage and Recycling Collection from Developments and Redevelopments can be found at: <http://www.toronto.ca/garbage/development.htm>. This document is currently being updated.

Bell

Bell has indicated a preference for the placement of their equipment at the rear of the ground floor of mid-rise buildings where feasible, and have provided a copy of their Urban Design Manual.

Toronto Hydro

Many potential *Avenue* development sites have pole-mounted transformers in the adjacent right-of-way. Toronto Hydro has provided a contact to assist with the early determination of the location, above or below grade, of their equipment. This contact information, as well as links to the Municipal Consent Guidelines (MCR) will be posted on the City's Mid-Rise Building website.

Broader Issues Related to the Development of Mid-Rise Buildings on the Avenues:

Toronto's development community has been slow to embrace the construction of new mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*. In addition to the consultants study and the ongoing work of the Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team, there are a number of related initiatives, issues and policies which form an important part of the city wide *Avenues* story, and influence the development of new mid-rise buildings. Many of these are not Avenue-specific, but taken together they speak to the city's commitment to implementing the *Avenues* vision.

Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion

Rental housing above ground floor retail uses forms a significant characteristic of many of the pre-war *Avenues*. This type of housing is an important part of the City's housing stock that is protected by the Official Plan's housing policies found in Section 3.2.1. The implementing By-law 885-2007 passed under Section 111 of the *City of Toronto Act*, 2006, also enhances the City's existing powers to protect rental housing from demolition and conversion to non-rental purposes (e.g. condominium, offices or other non-rental uses).

This by-law prohibits demolition or conversion of rental housing units where there are at least six dwelling units without a permit issued under Section 111 of the City of Toronto Act. If approved, the permit may include conditions. When 6 or more rental units are to be demolished, the policies of the Official Plan requires that applicants replace the rental units with the same number, size and type of rental housing units that existed. However, if the rents for all of the rental units exceed mid-range rents, replacement is not required. It may also not be required if Council has determined that the City's rental housing supply has returned to a healthy state, but this is not the case currently where there has been very little increase in the supply of rental housing for the last 15 years. Proposals

involving demolition or conversion of six or more rental housing units require a decision by City Council.

This Official Plan policy requirement and the By-law apply to a number of potential redevelopment sites on the *Avenues*. These policies are intended to maintain the range of housing form, tenure and affordability in the City and to minimize the dislocation experienced by tenants when forced by demolition and redevelopment to leave their homes and communities. Historically, many of the existing mixed uses on these *Avenues* have involved rental housing units and represented desirable and often affordable locations sought out by tenants.

Staff recognize that this policy can be a constraint on smaller *Avenues* sites where reurbanization is encouraged. In cases where the allowable density increase may not be significant, it can pose a challenge for developers to accommodate both new, usually condominium units, as well as the replacement rental housing.

Staff has recommended that the six unit threshold for the replacement of rental units on the *Avenues* be reviewed as part of the statutory 5 year review of the Official Plan.

It should be noted that such properties will benefit from not having to pay development charges on any rental residential units that are replaced.

<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/housing.htm>

Additional Site Plan Control Powers

The exterior design of buildings is important in creating good urban design on the *Avenues*.

On January 1, 2007, the Province transferred the majority of the City's Site Plan Control powers from Section 41 of the *Planning Act* to Section 114 of the *City of Toronto Act*. The Act provides two additional Site Plan Control powers dealing with:

- matters relating to exterior design, including without limitation the character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings, and their sustainable design, but only to the extent that it is a matter of exterior design; and
- the sustainable design elements on any adjoining highway under the City's jurisdiction, including without limitation trees, shrubs, hedges planting or other ground cover, permeable paving materials, street furniture, curb ramps, waste and recycling containers and bicycle parking facilities.

The Act requires provisions in the Official Plan and a Site Plan Control by-law to implement these two new powers.

At its January 27 and 28, 2009 meeting, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 66 to the Toronto Official Plan dealing with these new provisions. Council's

decision was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by four parties. On April 9 2010, the Ontario Municipal Board approved a settlement between the City and appellants resulting in modifications to OPA No.66. The amendment to the Official Plan is now in effect.

A Site Plan Control by-law will now be required to implement these additional powers related to exterior design and sustainable design in adjacent rights-of-way. A Site Plan Control by-law is an important planning tool for implementing the policies of the Official Plan. The implementing by-law may amend the Development Approval submission requirements to include a 1:50 Detailed Elevation drawings depicting exterior design elements for development that is three storeys or higher for Site Plan Applications on the *Avenues, Downtown and Central Waterfront* and *Centres*. This will enable staff to review the quality of development being proposed early in the process.

The Official Plan Amendment and implementing by-law will help to address the proposed Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards relating to Exterior Building Materials, Façade Design and Articulation, Streetscapes and Design Quality and Heritage and Character Areas.

Development Application Review Project (DARP)

The consultant's *Avenues & Mid-Rise Building Study*, suggests that an expedited approvals process would assist in development of more and better mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*.

An efficient, timely and transparent development approval process is important for Toronto's growth, competitive edge and quality of life. DARP is an inter-divisional staff team that reports directly to Deputy City Manager Richard Butts. The team is committed to continuously improving the development application review process through:

- a consistent approach to service delivery;
- consultation with the development industry; and
- promoting collaboration and information sharing amongst staff.

DARP representatives form part of the Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team.

Toronto Green Standard

As of January 31, 2010 new planning applications for Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan Control and Plans of Subdivision, are required to meet the Tier 1 environmental performance measures outlined in the Toronto Green Standard:

<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/environment/index.htm>

Developers may also choose to meet Tier 2, a voluntary higher level of environmental performance. If an applicant achieves both Tier 1 and Tier 2 they are eligible for a potential Development Charge refund of 20%. According to research conducted by the

consultants, mid-rise buildings can reasonably meet Tier 2 of the TGS and would therefore benefit from the Development Charge refund.

Green Roof By-law

Green roofs provide many benefits including mitigating impacts of development on storm water quality and quantity, reducing the heat island effect, improving air quality and reducing energy consumption amongst others. The Toronto Green Roof By-law requires green roofs on all new developments, with the exception of industrial buildings, above 2,000 square metres gross floor area.

The By-law applies to all site plan applications submitted on or after January 31, 2010 for new residential, commercial, institutional development with a Gross Floor Area of 2,000 square metres or greater.

However, mid-rise residential buildings less than 6 storeys or 20 metres in height are exempt from being required to have a green roof.

<http://www.toronto.ca/greenroofs/overview.htm>

Commercial Floor Space Requirements in *Mixed Use Areas*

In November 2009, City Planning proposed an Official Plan Amendment to Chapter 4, Section 4.5, Mixed Use Areas to address instances where redevelopment proposals that attempt to reduce or eliminate existing commercial space in Mixed Use Areas may have a relatively large local impact, especially those for shopping centres upon which local residents have relied to meet their day-to-day convenience needs. The Planning & Growth Management Committee referred the proposal back to staff for a further report to address concerns expressed at the Committee meeting.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/decisions/2009-06-04-pg26-dd.htm>

The April 2010 staff report scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning & Growth Management Committee on May 19th, 2010, proposes revisions to the proposed Official Plan Amendment to place stronger emphasis on the need to consider retaining retail space, eliminating the threshold amount of retail floorspace being redeveloped, and encouraging the zoning and building design to provide for retail space should it be desired / warranted in the future.

The staff report also lists a number of considerations to be used either to determine the amount of retail commercial space that must be provided in the new development in order to alleviate the impact of the loss of the retail commercial space on the local neighbourhood, or to justify not retaining or replacing any of the existing space.

Size of Commercial Floor Plates

Small retail commercial spaces provide important opportunities for small businesses on the *Avenues*. They also contribute to the ability of *Avenues* to function as safe,

comfortable and successful pedestrian shopping strips. Recognizing this, City Council on November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009, adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 95 which provides the City with the ability to introduce zoning by-laws to limit the size of new stores along pedestrian shopping strips typical of the older *Avenues*.
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/decisions/2009-06-04-pg26-dd.htm>

Toronto Food Strategy

Avenues and the adjacent community benefit from having groceries available within close proximity to where people live. The Toronto Food Strategy <http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/health/food.nsf>, is an initiative led by Toronto Public Health. It is an action plan to improve the food system to better support good nutrition, healthy development and disease prevention, poverty reduction and social justice, a strong local economy, environmental protection and climate change action, and the promotion and celebration of culture and community through food.

Toronto Public Health and City Planning are currently working together to identify areas, including *Avenues*, where access to food could be improved and to explore opportunities to realize the goals of the Toronto Food Strategy.

Sign By-law Project

Signs are an important part of commercial main streets that contribute to the visual character of the public realm on the *Avenues*. The new Toronto Sign By-law which regulates permanent signs in the City came into affect on April 6, 2010.

The new by-law promotes the animation of the *Avenues* by regulating the type, size, location and other characteristics of signs in commercial districts including:

- the total area that a sign can cover on the 1st and 2nd storey
- the spacing and height of signs that project from the building face
- the maximum area for overhanging signs, and
- the total area that a sign can cover a window, such as a storefront.

Additional information can be found on the website:
<http://www.toronto.ca/signbylawproject/index.htm>

Design Review Panel

Ensuring high quality building and public realm design is an important component of the reurbanization of the *Avenues*. Council recently adopted changes to the mandate of the now permanent Design Review Panel. The thresholds for private ream projects which may be reviewed by the panel now include:

- i. If the application is located along an “Avenue” as identified in Map 2 of the Official Plan, or a planned Transit City Line and contains significant public realm impacts as a result of location, scale, form or architectural quality.
- ii. If the application is for a large development site fronting on a Major Street identified on Map 3 of the Official Plan, with three or more buildings and one or more new public streets
- iii. If the application is for a large retail development fronting on a Major Street identified on Map 3 of the Official Plan.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/decisions/2009-11-30-cc42-dd.htm> and <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/designreviewpanel.htm>

Streetscape Manual

The *Avenues* are a vital part of Toronto’s open space system, and they function as movement corridors for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicles, as well as support many social and business activities. Much of the quality of Toronto's public realm comes from the appearance and character of its streets.

The Streetscape Manual is an urban design reference tool for the improvement of the City's arterial street network. The Manual focuses on design quality in the public right-of-way, with an emphasis on coherence, beauty, durability, accessibility, pedestrian amenity and tree canopy.

The Manual provides clarity to the City’s design objectives for the public realm, as well as providing technical details for the construction of the sidewalks, trees and lighting on the *Avenues*.

The Manual is now available at: www.toronto.ca/streetscapemanual

Designing Transit Cities Symposium

In November 2009, City Planning, in partnership with Canadian Urban Institute, the TTC, Metrolinx and other organizations, hosted Designing Transit Cities, a two-day symposium on city building around public transit.

The symposium attracted over 500 attendees and included workshops, presentations and panel discussion with local and international experts moderated by CBC's Matt Galloway. Panellists included Councillor and TTC Chair Adam Giambrone, Metrolinx Chair and former Chief Planner Paul Bedford, as well as other transportation and planning professionals. Much of the discussion at this Symposium was focused on ensuring that new development be transit oriented, as is anticipated on the *Avenues*.
<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/transitcities/index.htm>

Toronto Walking Strategy

The *Avenues* & Mid-Rise Buildings Study supports the principles of the Toronto Walking Strategy, which was adopted by City Council in May 2009, through the adoption of guidelines that encourage a wide pedestrian clearway and an animated and inviting streetscape.

http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/walking/walking_strategy.htm

TTC Metropasses

The *Avenues* are all public transit routes, and new mid-rise development on the *Avenues* brings potential new transit users.

At its meeting on November 30 2009, City Council endorsed the requirement of a TTC adult Metropasses to be provided by developers during the first year of occupancy for each new condominium unit in new developments with 20 or more units, in certain designated growth areas of the City, including the *Avenues*. A background report on this policy can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-24384.pdf>

Higher Order Transit

Transit City routes will be implemented over time, and many of them are on *Avenues* (portions of Sheppard East, Eglinton Crosstown, Jane, Waterfront West and the Scarborough Malvern line). Maps 2, 4 and 5 of the Official Plan will be examined holistically as part of the 5 year review of the Official Plan. Staff has considered, at a broad level, the impact of mid-rise development along these routes, particularly the amenity of the public realm.

http://www3.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Projects_and_initiatives/Transit_city/index.jsp

As well, several Mobility Hubs intersect with the *Avenues* and detailed master plans will need to be developed for these areas as part of the Province's Big Move policies. Metrolinx has begun to lead the way in preparing these master plans, and they may also be considered in the 5 year review of the Official Plan.

<http://www.metrolinx.com/en/default.aspx>

Development Charges

On November 2, 2009, the Executive Committee referred a recommendation to the Chief Planner for a report "on the possibility of reducing development charges for smaller scale Avenue intensification projects."

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/decisions/2009-11-02-ex36-dd.htm>

The Development Charge By-law expires within four years and a review of the by-law will commence in 2012. As part of the background study for this review, consideration will be given to the impacts of reducing or eliminating DC's on the *Avenues*, however further study is required.

http://www.toronto.ca/finance/dev_charges_bylaw_review/index.htm

Ontario Growth Secretariat

The Ontario Growth Secretariat maintains an Image Bank which includes photos of Mid-Rise buildings from across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, as well as New York and San Francisco. This is a resource which helps illustrate examples of appropriate intensification including mid-rise buildings, and can be used by developers or for public outreach and education purposes.

https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_rsgallery2&Itemid=2

Ontario Building Code

Mid-rise buildings (above 600 square metres and 3 storeys) generally fall within Part 3 of the Ontario Building Code (OBC), which is the same section that governs Tall Buildings. Thresholds above 18 and 36 metres in height require additional life safety measures, which affect mid-rise buildings.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing anticipates the release of the next edition of the Ontario Building Code in 2011. As part of the consultation, a Stakeholders Session will be held in May of 2010 which will seek information and input about the potential use of wood for the construction of buildings higher than 4 storeys, similar to that recently approved in British Columbia and in use in parts of Europe. City staff, from Buildings and the Mid-Rise Building Interdivisional Team will participate in this review. A change in the use of construction materials would allow for greater flexibility on small lots and have a positive impact on the cost of construction for mid-rise buildings.

The consultant's team has recommended that the following sections in the OBC be reconsidered: "3.4.2.1 Minimum Number of Exits" and "3.2.2.43 Group C, up to 6 Storeys" and "3.2.2.51 Group D up to 6 Storeys, Sprinklered." for wood frame construction up to six storeys for residential and commercial uses. Any changes to the OBC can only be implemented by the Province.

Tall Buildings Study

Concurrent with the *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study* staff, together with the consulting firm Urban Strategies Incorporated, have undertaken a 'Tall Buildings, Inviting Change in Downtown Toronto' study.

This study recognizes that Tall Buildings are appropriate in the *Downtown*, and provides guidance on their spacing, placement and orientation. Taken together, these two studies will give clarity to the City's vision for growth in the *Downtown* and on the *Avenues*.

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Mid-Rise Performance Standards contained in the consultant's study are recommended to be implemented through inclusion in the City's Urban Design

Handbook, the draft new zoning by-law, and potential future amendments to the draft new zoning by-law. Some aspects of the *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study* should be reviewed and implemented through the statutory Official Plan review while some of the compliance alternatives proposed will require further consultations with the Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team to determine if and how they may eventually be recommended for implementation.

It is recommended that staff consider the Mid-Rise Performance Standards effective immediately, to guide the evaluation of development applications on portions of the *Avenues* included in the Study. Their efficacy will be monitored for a period of up to 2 years and any suggested improvements or revisions will be reported back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee. Any Performance Standards that have not been incorporated into new city-wide zoning or as guidelines will also be reviewed and reported on at that time.

Zoning By-law Amendments

The timing of both the Zoning By-law Project and the *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study* afforded the opportunity to take an expedited approach and introduce some of the Performance Standards recommended in this Study into the new draft zoning by-law.

The new draft zoning by-law proposes to add a number of the Performance Standards for typical *Avenues* across the City. These standards will apply to properties along major streets that typically contain buildings built nearer the street and may contain both commercial and residential uses (Standard Set 2) and along major streets most likely occupied by commercial plaza-type development, with buildings built further from the street (Standard Set 3).

The Mid-Rise Performance Standards that have already been incorporated into the new draft City-wide zoning by-law, Standard Sets 2 and 3 include:

- a minimum building height of 3 storeys or 10.5 metres
- minimum ground floor height of 4.5 metres
- front yard angular planes to ensure sunlight access to sidewalks
- a rear yard setback of 7.5 metres and a 45 degree angular plane when the property abuts *Neighbourhoods*
- a rear yard setback of 1.5 metres if the property abuts a public lane when the property abuts a residential zone
- a front yard setback of 4.5 metres for residential uses if located at grade
- 75 percent of the front building wall to be built to the property line or front setback line
- parking rates for developments along the *Avenues*

Additional Mid-Rise Performance Standards recommended in the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study and described above that may require future amendments to Standard Sets 2 and 3 include:

- maximum building heights which will be based on the right-of-way width
- minimum front yard setbacks based on minimum sidewalk widths
- side yard setbacks and building step-backs
- rear transition to *Apartment Neighbourhoods, Employment Areas, Natural Areas, Parks and Other Open Space Areas*
- front yard angular planes for sidestreets when the property is located at the corner
- vehicular access
- new areas where retail at grade is required
- balconies and projecting building elements
- mechanical penthouse restrictions
- additional requirements for residential uses at grade
- location of loading and servicing areas
- bicycle parking requirements for small sites

Staff has determined that some recommendations from the consultant's study including requirements for mid-block vehicular access and amenity space requirements will require further study.

Statutory Review of the Official Plan

The City is required under Section 26 of the Planning Act to carry out a 5-year review of the Official Plan in 2011. There are a number of aspects of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study that should be reviewed and implemented through the Official Plan review.

The addition of mid-rise building policies in Section 3 of the Official Plan would provide direction, similar to the Tall Buildings policies, on where they are appropriate, how they should be designed and how they should respond to the existing and/or planned context. Such policies might include reference to maximum mid-rise building heights relative to adjacent streets and context, clear rear transition objectives, consistent street walls, and the contribution of mid-rise buildings to the public realm of the *Avenues* and elsewhere.

For pedestrian safety and the continuity of the commercial district, it is desirable that vehicle access and servicing of shops and residences not take place on the *Avenue* frontage. The Official Plan review can explore how development on the *Avenues* might facilitate the creation of rear public lanes for vehicular access, commercial loading and servicing where none or substandard lanes currently exist.

The original selection of *Avenues* on Map 2 of the Official Plan will be a decade old by the time of the 2011 Official Plan review. It is now time to see if any arterial roads have evolved in a way that they might now be shown as '*Avenues*'. Similarly there may be

Avenue segments at the edge of Employment Districts or that have significant areas within a ‘Neighbourhoods’ designation where one could debate whether inclusion as an *Avenue* segment is relevant. The areas shown as *Avenue* segments on Map 2 of the Official Plan should therefore be revisited as part of the 5-Year Official Plan Review.

The *Avenues & Mid-rise Buildings* Study Performance Standards are not recommended to be applied to Secondary Plan areas or Site and Area Specific Polices of the City. However, it is important to review *Avenue* segments that fall within the Secondary Plan areas or Site and Area Specific Polices to see which of the Performance Standards should be applied. The Secondary Plans could then be amended as part of the 2011 Official Plan review, to clarify which Performance Standards apply to various *Avenues* within a Secondary Plan area or have Site and Area Specific Polices.

There will also be a need to amend the *Avenues* Policies in Section 2.2.3 of the Official Plan to ensure they are in full concordance with any recommendations adopted by Council coming out of this *Avenues & Mid-rise Buildings* Study. For example, if certain *Avenue* segments are zoned to the scale recommended in the Study, there may be no need for the *Avenue* Segment Studies currently required for development on an *Avenue* where an *Avenue* Study had not yet been completed. The changes to Section 2.2.3 of the Official Plan would logically be part of the 2011 review of the Official Plan.

Staff have also recommended that the six unit threshold for the replacement of rental units (in Section 3.2.1 and its implementing by-law) on the *Avenues* be reviewed as part of the statutory 5 year review of the Official Plan.

Ongoing consultation with Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team

The Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team was formed in response to the need to take a coordinated approach to reurbanizing the *Avenues* and was responsible for exploring solutions that will encourage and facilitate development of mid-rise buildings on the *Avenues*. To address concerns by stakeholders, the Study proposed a number of recommendations with respect to the technical requirements for parking, loading and servicing as well as potential amendments to the Ontario Building Code. It is recommended that City Planning continue discussions with the Inter-Divisional Team on these issues.

Website

The *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings website will be maintained to post new and useful information and related links, such as the upcoming Ontario Building Code Stakeholder sessions and Utility contact information.

Conclusion

Toronto's *Avenues* are an integral part of the urban fabric. Serving as social and commercial centres, they are intimately linked to the identity and vitality of the neighbourhoods that surround them. The *Avenues* are also part of Toronto's Official Plan growth management strategy and therefore it is important to anticipate and set the stage for an appropriate, typically mid-rise, form of redevelopment.

The Action Plan outlined in this report consists of a number of components to encourage the reurbanization of Toronto's *Avenues* including the consultant's *Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study*, the Mid-Rise Buildings Interdivisional Team, and consultation with various stakeholders and the public. This report provides updates on these initiatives and makes recommendations about implementation.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: List of Avenue Studies
- Attachment 2: *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study Area Map
- Attachment 3: Public Open House and Community Meeting Notice
- Attachment 4: Focus Group Meeting Invitation
- Attachment 5: *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Building Study Section 3: Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings
- Attachment 6: *Avenues* and Character Area Map
- Attachment 7: *Avenues* and Established Districts (retail at grade is required)

Attachment 1: List of Avenue Studies (completed and ongoing)

Pilot Avenue Studies

The Queensway Between Kipling Avenue and Mimico Creek
Finch Avenue West at Weston Road between Milvan Drive and Signet Drive
Bloor Street West Between Dundas Street West and Lansdowne Avenue
Kingston Road between Guildwood Go Station and Highland Creek

2003 Avenue Study Areas

College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue
Lake Shore Boulevard West between Etobicoke Creek and Kipling Avenue
Bloor Street West between Mimico Creek and Prince Edward Drive
Wilson Avenue between Bathurst Street and Keele Street

2004 Avenue Study Areas

Danforth Avenue between Victoria Park Avenue and Warden Avenue
Dundas Street West between Royal York Avenue and Humber River

2005 Avenue Study Areas

St. Clair Avenue West between Bathurst Street and Glenholme Avenue
St. Clair Avenue West between Glenholme Avenue and Keele Street
O'Connor Drive between Sandra Road and Victoria Park Avenue

2006 Avenue Study Areas

Avenue Road from Wilson Avenue to Lawrence Avenue West
Lawrence Avenue from Victoria Park Avenue to Birchmount Road

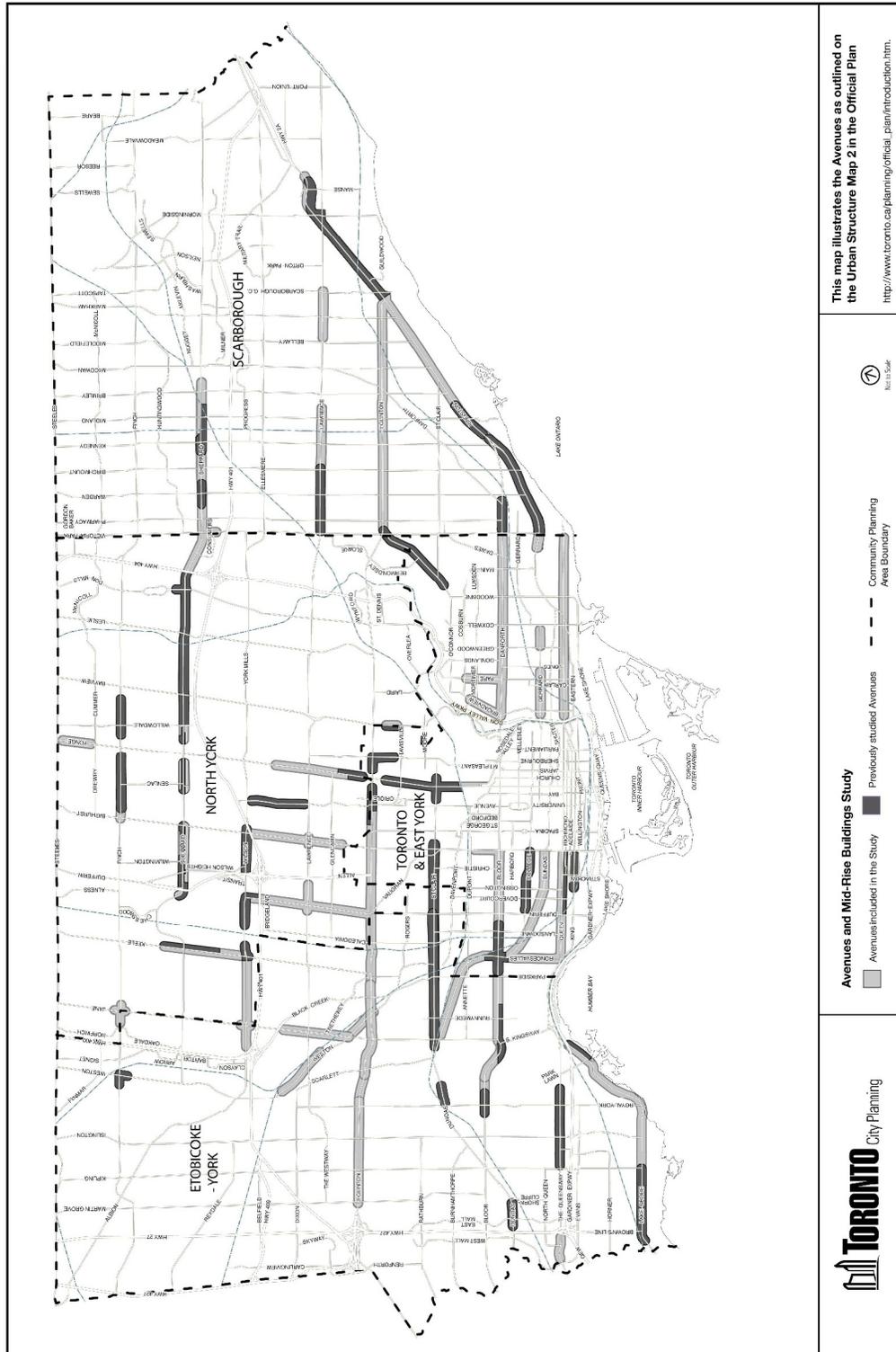
2008 Avenue Study Areas

Bloor Street West from Dundas Street West to Keele Street
Kingston Road from west of Danforth Avenue to east of Chine Drive in the Cliffside Community

2009 Avenue Study Areas

Sheppard Avenue East from the former Hydro Corridor to Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue
St. Clair Avenue West from Scarlett Road to Keele Street

Attachment 2: Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study Area Map



Attachment 3: Public Open House and Community Meeting Notice



The City of Toronto holds public consultations as one way to engage residents in the life of their city. Toronto thrives on your great ideas and actions. We invite you to get involved.

Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study

Public Open House and Community Meeting

City Planning, in consultation with Brook McLroy Planning + Urban Design / Pace Architects (BMI/Pace) has undertaken a city-wide study of mid-rise buildings on Toronto's Avenues to implement the Official Plan objective of reurbanizing Toronto's arterial corridors.

The purpose of these meetings is to introduce the objectives of the study, present initial findings and provide an opportunity for the community to have input and provide feedback on the study. If you cannot attend the meeting, you can still make your views known by sending a fax (416) 394-6063 or by writing to Lorna Day, Program Manager, City Planning Division, City of Toronto, 2 Civic Centre Court, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M9C 5A3.

If you would like further information about the study, please contact Andrea Oppedisano, Assistant Planner, at (416) 394-8246, or by e-mail at midrise@toronto.ca.

The study will address portions of the following Avenues in:

ETOBICOKE/YORK

Wed., March 3, 2010

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Etobicoke Civic Centre,
Council Chambers**

Bloor Street West
Dundas Street West
Eglinton Avenue West
Finch Avenue West
Jane Street
Lake Shore Boulevard
West
The Queensway
Weston Road
Wilson Avenue

NORTH YORK

Wed., February 24, 2010

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**North York Civic Centre,
Council Chambers**

Bathurst Street
Dufferin Street
Finch Avenue West
Jane Street
Keele Street
Lawrence Avenue West
Sheppard Avenue East
Wilson Avenue
Yonge Street

SCARBOROUGH

Thurs., February 18, 2010

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Scarborough Civic Centre,
Council Chambers**

Eglinton Avenue East
Kingston Road
Lawrence Avenue East
Sheppard Avenue East

TORONTO/EAST YORK

Tues., February 16, 2010

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Metro Hall, 55 John Street,
Room 308 and 309**

Bathurst Street
Bayview Avenue
Bloor Street West
Broadview Avenue
Danforth Avenue
Dundas Street West
Eglinton Avenue West
Gerrard Street East
Kingston Road
Pape Avenue
Queen Street W. and E.
Roncesvalles Avenue
Yonge Street

Background information and more detailed information on the Study area can be obtained by visiting the City's website at toronto.ca/planning/midrisestudy.htm

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.



Attachment 4: Focus Group Meeting Invitation



You are invited to participate in a Focus Group to discuss the City-wide *Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study*

**Tuesday, March 9, 2010
7:00 pm
City Hall, Committee Room 4
100 Queen Street West**

Over the past year City Planning, in consultation with the firm of Brook McLroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects has been undertaking a City-wide Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study to implement the Official Plan objective of re-urbanizing Toronto's arterial corridors.

Similar to Avenue Studies conducted in the past, the main objective of this City-wide Study is to encourage future intensification along Toronto's Avenues that is compatible with the adjacent neighbourhoods through appropriately scaled and designed mid-rise buildings.

Building on and learning from Avenue Studies, this Study will identify a list of best practices, categorize the Avenues based on historic, cultural and built form characteristics, establish a set of performance standards for new mid-rise buildings and identify areas where the performance standards should be applied.

Based on your previous participation in a Local Advisory Committee, we would like to invite you to take part in a Focus Group and share your experience on the Avenue Study process with us and each other. We would also like to present you with some key information about the City-wide study and solicit your feedback. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to also attend any of the Open Houses / Public Meetings about the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study. See below for details.

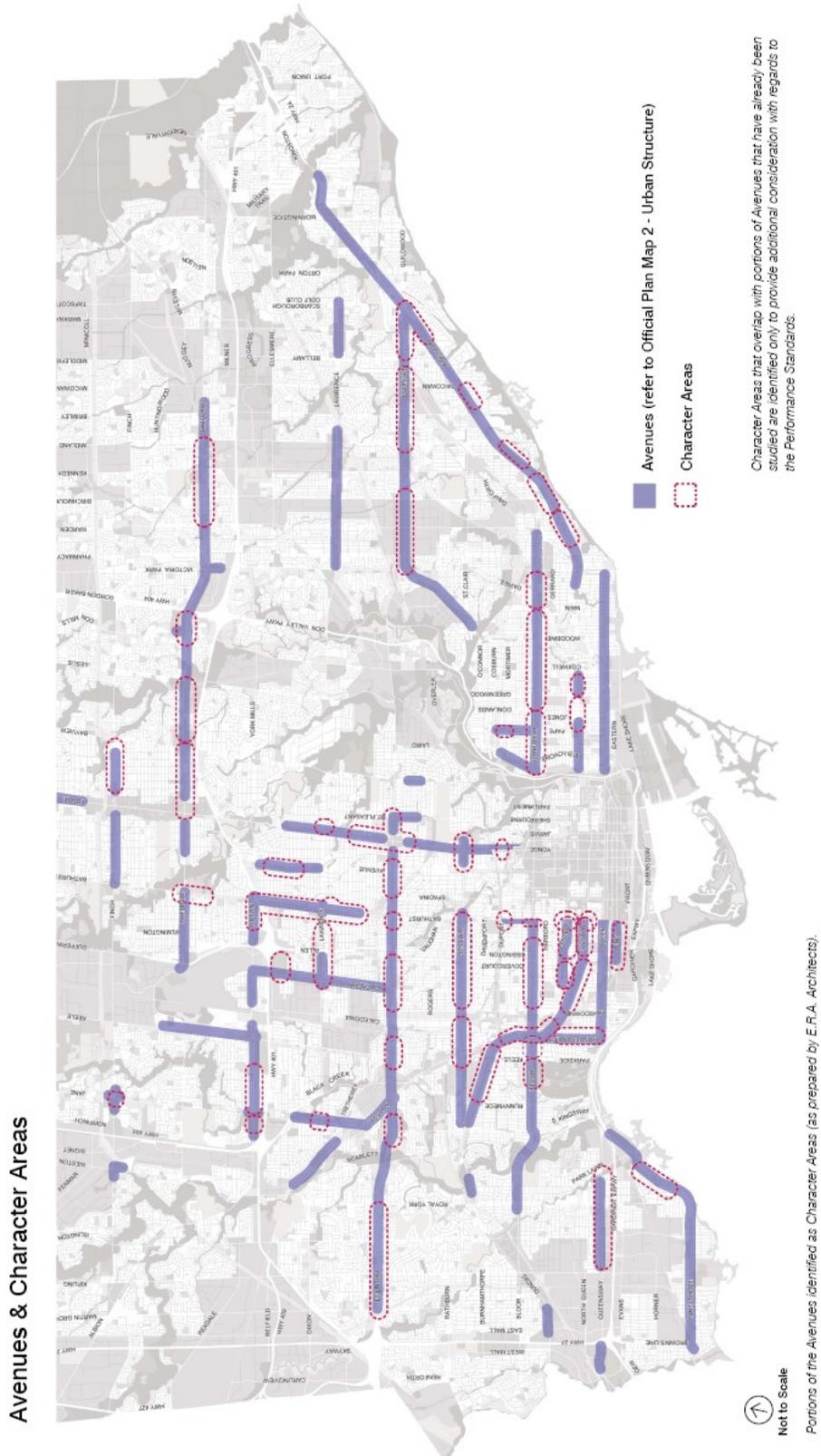
Seating is limited, so we ask that you kindly RSVP to Andrea Oppedisano, Assistant Planner, at (416) 394-8246, or by e-mail at midrise@toronto.ca.

www.toronto.ca/planning/midrisestudy.htm

Attachment 5
Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study Section 3: Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings

Under Separate Cover

Attachment 6: Avenues and Character Area Map



Attachment 7: Avenues and Established Districts (retail at grade is required)

