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The Good Neighbour Guide

FOR RESIDENTIAL INFILL CONSTRUCTION



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Introduction

Cities such as Toronto are in a constant state of change. Some of this change is focused in Toronto's residential neighbourhoods, where people demolish and build, or renovate older houses. The City of Toronto calls this process of building and renovating in established neighbourhoods 'residential infill'.

This guide is intended for property owners, builders, and contractors starting a construction project in an established neighbourhood, and for neighbours in the area. The guide outlines requirements and best practices for residential infill construction, as well as communication tips to help everyone involved move smoothly through the project. If issues do arise, this document provides some guidance and contact information to assist you.

Get to know the players.



Builder

A person who constructs or renovates a building, including contractors, renovators, and other professionals involved in the construction work. In some cases, the builder may also be the property owner.



Property Owner

A person who owns the property and initiates the residential infill project. Property owners are ultimately responsible for any construction projects on their land.



Community Member/ Neighbour

A person who lives in the neighbourhood and who may be affected by residential infill construction.

Link up with web
friendly resources.



If you're reading the print version of this guide, be sure to also download the PDF to access the many [hyperlinks](#), available at toronto.ca/infill

The guide is not intended to anticipate or solve all of the issues which may arise, but highlight some of the significant issues based on the experience of the City, the residents, and the builders who helped put it together.

Residential infill can contribute to the health, vitality, and value of neighbourhoods, including improving property values. Residential infill also contributes to the protection of green space, farmland, forests, wetlands, and watersheds in Ontario's [greenbelt](#). Instead of building out, the city is building up and intensifying.

However, construction can also result in negative impacts on neighbours and the community. If the project is not well planned, managed, or communicated, construction can be disruptive and damaging. Property owners should ensure that new home builders are reputable and registered with [Tarion](#).

Builders earn the trust and respect of neighbours by observing all bylaws and by taking steps to minimize the potentially negative impacts of construction.



Communicating with Neighbours



Informed neighbours are more likely to be understanding and supportive of your project.

As a property owner, it is important to communicate with your neighbours before applying for a building permit. Speak with your neighbours in person about your proposed plans early in the process. Explain the work that you want to undertake, the expected timelines, and how the proposed work might impact them.

At the beginning of demolition and construction, the property owner and builder should provide neighbours with a way to contact them if issues arise. Create a plan with your neighbours for resolving issues. For example, who should be called for immediate action? Who should be called for less urgent, ongoing issues?

Post your building permits in a prominent area on your property. Later in 2017, infill sites will also be required to post signage with key project information including contacts. For more information, visit toronto.ca/infill.





Are you a neighbour with construction nearby?

If you are seeking more information, you can reach out to the property owner and builder. Friendly communication is the best way to build a healthy relationship and keep the communication channels open.

Permits



If you require a permit and do not obtain one before starting work, you can face serious and costly [consequences](#).

In order to receive a building permit for construction or renovation work, the proposed plans must comply with the applicable laws and regulations, such as the [Zoning Bylaw](#) and the [Ontario Building Code](#).

Compliance with the Zoning Bylaw may require approval of variances from the [Committee of Adjustment](#). It is the responsibility of the owner and builder to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with the approved permit plans and in compliance with applicable laws.

Throughout construction, the owner or builder must call Toronto Building for mandatory [inspections](#) at prescribed stages. The new introductory inspection, which property owners should participate in with their builder, outlines the City's expectations, including the requirement to schedule a final inspection upon completion of your project to close the permit.

For new buildings, an As-Built Survey showing setbacks and the elevation of the first floor must be submitted to the Building Inspector prior to starting construction of the first floor walls. In order to ensure construction progresses without inspection delays, it is important that homeowners arrange with their surveyors to have their As-Built Surveys prepared when the first floor is complete.



Related Approvals

Apart from the building permit issued for the proposed construction, here is a sample list of separate, but related, approvals which may also be required from the City in connection with the project. Work with your builder, architect, and other professionals involved in the project to ensure that you have identified all applicable permits.



Heritage Permit

Under the [Ontario Heritage Act](#), both demolition of, and alterations to, a building or structure located on an individually designated heritage property or within a Heritage Conservation District require approval from the City before a building permit can be issued. Demolitions are subject to additional application and notice requirements. In some cases, a report to City Council may be needed. [Heritage Preservation Services \(HPS\)](#) automatically reviews all building permit applications on heritage properties once a submission is made to Toronto Building, and the permit set that you receive back will include a heritage permit stamp on the drawings.

HPS strongly recommends that you consult with them prior to making any permit application on a heritage property. A list of useful information to submit along with your drawings is available on the [Heritage Approval and Building or Sign Permit Tip Sheet](#). To determine whether your property is designated, search the City of Toronto's Heritage Register at app.toronto.ca/HeritagePreservation.



Ravine & Natural Feature Protection

Property owners are required to obtain a permit from Urban Forestry prior to undertaking any work that may cause injury or require the removal of any tree, the placing or dumping of fill or refuse, or altering the existing grade within ravine protected areas as outlined under the [Ravine and Natural Feature Protection Bylaw](#) (MC 658). Approval from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority may also be required – see page 18 for details.



Trees on Private Property

Privately owned trees that are at least 30 centimetres in diameter as measured at 1.4 metres above ground level are regulated by the [Private Tree Bylaw](#) (MC 813, Article III). Trees of any diameter that were planted as a condition of a permit issued under this Bylaw or a site plan agreement are also protected. Property owners are required to obtain a permit from Urban Forestry prior to undertaking any work that may cause injury or require the removal of a tree protected under this Bylaw.



Trees on City Streets

All trees located on City streets are protected under the [Trees on City Streets Bylaw](#) (MC 813, Article II). Property owners are required to obtain a permit from Urban Forestry prior to undertaking any work that may cause injury or require the removal of any tree located on City property.



Trees in Parks

All trees located in a City park are protected under the [Parks Bylaw](#) (MC 608, Article VII). Property owners are required to obtain a permit from Urban Forestry prior to undertaking any work that may cause injury or require the removal of any tree located within a City park.



Landscape Permit

You must obtain a [Landscape Permit](#) from Transportation Services before undertaking any landscaping work within the public right-of-way. An application may be required in order to obtain the permit.



Sewer Discharge Permit and Water Connections

In order for Toronto Water to issue a permit for the [discharge of groundwater](#) or surface water to a City storm or sanitary/combined sewer, you must provide information relating to the quality and quantity of the discharge. A [storm connection exemption application](#) may also be applicable in some situations. New water and sewer service [connections](#) are required for all new residential construction, as well as when more than 50% of the first storey above grade of an existing building has been demolished.



Street Occupation Permit

You must obtain a [Street Occupation Permit](#) from Transportation Services before storing any construction equipment or materials, such as dumpsters, on the sidewalk or street.



Parking Permit

Transportation Services issues temporary [parking permits](#) for passenger motor vehicles of those working on-site. You can obtain a permit at the City Hall customer service counter or online at toronto.ca/transportation. Permits can only be issued if there is space available in the area. The [Permit Parking Bylaw](#) (Municipal Code 925) provides more details. To find out whether your street or area is designated for permit parking and spaces are available, call 416-392-7873 or email: pparking@toronto.ca.



Municipal Road Damage Deposit

The City requires a [deposit](#) when you apply for a building permit application, except under the [FASTRACK](#) program. The City holds the deposit in case damage occurs to the sidewalk or roadway during construction.



For detailed information about building permits, download the Homeowner's Guide to Building Permits from toronto.ca/building. For a list of examples when a building permit is not required, visit toronto.ca/building permit required.

How to Avoid Common Complaints and Issues



Understanding the bylaws and getting ahead of issues before they become problems for you and neighbouring residents can avoid complaints and possible fines.



Dust

- Cut concrete and stone with wet saws to reduce dust.
- Sweep the sidewalk and street at the end of every workday when excavating, backfilling, or doing heavy cutting of masonry.
- Use a fence filter that absorbs the dust in order to better contain dust.
- If planned work will be particularly dusty for lengthy periods of time, notify your neighbours, and provide them with an opportunity to close their windows.



Dirt on the Sidewalk/Road

- As required by the [Streets and Sidewalks Bylaw](#) (MC 743), remove any dirt/mud tracked onto the streets and sidewalks daily. Hose down trucks before leaving the site if mud tracking is a serious problem. You should immediately flush or sweep down any road that has substantial dirt/mud build-up.



Noise

- The City's [Noise Bylaw](#) (Municipal Code 591) applies to all types of noise, including construction noise. Any construction or operation of equipment generating noise in residential areas is permitted ONLY from Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Construction noise is prohibited on Sunday and statutory holidays. This includes truck back up beeps, as well as loading and unloading equipment/materials.
- During the hours that noise is permitted, please take steps to keep noise levels as low as possible (e.g. be mindful of music levels, language/shouting, [equipment noise](#)).

- Noise is any unwanted sound that you can clearly hear from where you are.
- There are exemptions for necessary or emergency work performed by the municipal, provincial, and federal governments.



Safety Conditions

- Enclose the construction site with protective fencing to restrict access as mandated by the [Building Construction and Demolition Bylaw](#) (MC 363, Article III). The construction fence must follow the standards provided in the Bylaw. Protective fencing must be in place before demolition begins.
- Construction project safety is regulated and enforced by the Province's [Ministry of Labour](#). The [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) outlines the requirements for workers and work sites.
- When hiring a builder/contractor/renovator, [make sure they are licensed](#), as required by the [Licensing Bylaw](#) (MC 545). You can call Municipal Licensing & Standards at the City of Toronto to verify at 416-392-6700.
- In winter, clear the ice and snow from the sidewalks next to the construction within 12 hours of a snowfall. This Bylaw, [Snow and Ice Removal](#) (MC 719), applies during construction activity.
- Handle asbestos and lead in accordance with the Provincial [Designated Substance Regulation](#) (O. Reg. 490/09). The regulation applies to the owner of a project, and to every constructor, employer and worker who works in or on the construction project. The Ministry of Labour has an online [Guide to the Regulation Respecting Asbestos on Construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations](#) and information about [Lead on Construction Projects](#).

- Do not harm existing neighbourhood services. Contact your local utilities to locate underground services before you start digging. Visit [Ontario One Call](#).
- Do not leave dangerous building materials, equipment, or vehicles on the site unattended.
- If you are working near overhead power lines, you must [call Toronto Hydro](#) to have your lines de-energized, relocated/removed, or covered.



Concerns About Parking/Materials on Road

- Park vehicles in legal parking spots, and/or have the appropriate permits for occupying space on the street, as regulated by the [Streets and Sidewalks Bylaw](#) (MC 743), [Permit Parking Bylaw](#) (MC 925), and [Traffic and Parking Bylaw](#) (MC 950).
- Ensure vehicles and materials are not blocking any access or egress for neighbours. Parking on one side of the road minimizes the impact on traffic.
- Turn off vehicle engines. The [Idling of Vehicles and Boats Bylaw](#) (MC 517) prohibits running vehicle engines while parked for more than 60 seconds.
- Share a construction management plan with neighbours. The plan should identify where you are storing construction vehicles and materials. When possible, ask for neighbours' input on preferred storage and parking locations.



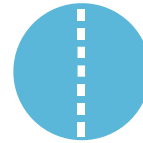
Unprotected Trees

- Design construction projects with tree protection in mind to help sustain the city's urban forest.
- If construction equipment or debris gets close to a tree, or if a structure is built near a tree, it will cause injury to the trunk, crown, and roots of the tree.
- Trees on private property with a diameter of 30 cm or more, all trees that were planted as a condition of a permit issued under the Bylaw or a site plan agreement, and all trees on City property and within ravine-protected areas must be protected during construction. This protection is required under the [Parks \(MC 608\), Ravine and Natural Feature Protection \(MC 658\), and Trees \(MC 813\) Bylaws](#).
- The City has a [Tree Protection Policy and Specifications for Construction Near Trees](#) resource. It includes requirements for tree protection zones, tree protection hoarding standards, horizontal root protection measures, and details about Tree Protection Plans that are prepared in conjunction with an arborist report.



Grading and Drainage

- Prevent rainwater and runoff from pooling against your house as well as any neighbouring houses to avoid flooding, foundation damage, and mould.
- For new buildings, Toronto Building requires a lot grading plan from a Grading Consultant with experience in site grading and drainage as part of the building permit process. The permit will not be cleared without written confirmation from the consultant that the grading has been done in accordance with the lot grading plan. The responsibilities of the Grading Consultant and minimum standards for the grading plan are outlined in the City's online [Grading and Drainage Procedure Requirements](#).
- All stormwater must be managed on your lot. According to the [Streets and Sidewalks Bylaw](#) (MC 743), walkways and driveways shall be constructed and maintained to prevent surface drainage, dirt, dust, and debris that constitutes a hazard or nuisance from entering the street.



Concerns About Property Lines

- Protect your neighbours' property, trees and plants. Make sure construction operations and trucks are kept away from your neighbours' landscaping. If damage does occur, inform your neighbour immediately and remedy all damages within a reasonable period.
- The location and verification of property lines is a civil matter to be addressed and resolved between neighbours.
- Confirm whether or not your land is subject to any public or private [easements](#). An easement is a "right of use" of property by someone other than the property owner or occupier for a specific purpose. For example, Toronto Water usually acquires easements for the operation and maintenance of sewer and water infrastructure. Easements may be privately acquired, for example, in the case of mutual driveways. Find the information on the deed of ownership or the survey of property. Visit the [Land Registry Office](#) (Ontario Ministry of Government Services) to view these. In order to build on land which is subject to an easement, consent from the holder of the easement is required. This is a separate and distinct approval from the issuance of a building permit. Learn more at [Encroachment into a City Easement](#).



Waste & Site Organization

- Do not litter your neighbours' property with garbage, construction or renovation waste. Clean the site daily.
- Place construction and renovation waste dumpsters in locations that will minimize impact on neighbours (e.g. away from their homes, not blocking driveways).
- Do not use City-issued waste bins (garbage, Blue Bin, Green Bin) to dispose of construction and renovation waste.
- The City will not collect construction and renovation waste, as defined on the [City website](#), from the property. Remove this waste from the site on a regular basis. This material can be brought to one of the [City's Drop-Off Depots](#) or have your contractor remove it from the site.
- Do not burn waste.
- If a property is not being occupied during construction, and does not require utility services, such as waste collection or water, you can opt out of these services and opt back in when the construction is complete and the residence is occupied. To opt out of service and opt back in, please



fill out the [Opting In/Out of Solid Waste Management Collection Form](#). Your bins will be removed from the site until you opt back in.

- When selecting where to put portable toilets, take steps to minimize the impact they can have on neighbours (i.e. sight and smell).

Who Can Help



You have tried talking to the property owner and builder, but you cannot reach them or the issues are not resolved. Now what?

Consult this table. It shows which City divisions (and one Provincial Ministry) are responsible for addressing certain issues. A Dedicated Enforcement Unit within Toronto Building is monitoring and coordinating inter-divisional responses to residential infill sites.

| ISSUES/COMPLAINTS | RESPONSIBILITY | CONTACT |
|---|---|--|
| Idling vehicles Dirt/mud, construction materials, drainage issues on streets and sidewalks | Transportation Services | Telephone: 311 |
| Bylaw regulated trees not protected | Forestry | Email: 311@toronto.ca |
| Noise Construction and renovation waste Property standards Home renovators not complying with City Bylaws | Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) | Explain the issue and 311 will coordinate with the division. |
| Worker and site safety concerns Storage of construction material Dust | Ministry of Labour | Toll-free: 1-877-202-0008 TTY: 1-855-653-9260 |
| No permits (or deviation from permits) for construction or demolition in progress or completed Vibration resulting from construction Protective fencing (missing, incomplete, hazardous) Grading and drainage of property (if there is a permit, otherwise MLS via 311) Encroachment onto neighbouring properties | Toronto Building | Your local Building Inspection Office: Toronto & East York: 416-338-0700 North York: 416-395-7541 Etobicoke York: 416-394-8055 Scarborough: 416-396-7322 |
| Parking concerns on public property (streets) | Toronto Police Services | Parking Enforcement Officers (for immediate response): 416-808-2222 Parking Enforcement Area Supervisors (to problem-solve long-term, community parking issues): 416-808-6600 |

Additional Resources



Residential Infill Website

The [Residential Infill website](#) hosts the Good Neighbour Guide, the building permit and inspection status search function, and the City's strategy to improving the response to residential infill construction.

Choosing a Contractor

This City of Toronto [link](#) provides a series of steps and tips for choosing a contractor or renovator.

BizPal

[BizPal](#) helps you find the permits and licences you may require when starting or operating your business. After entering your location, you can use 'construction' as your keyword for your type of business. You will then see a list of topics that you can click through to compile the relevant permits.

Live Green Toronto

This City of Toronto [site](#) summarizes available grants, incentives, and tips to help you reduce energy use and make your home more resilient to extreme weather.

Interactive Zoning Map

The applicable [Zoning Bylaws](#) control the use of land in your community. They stipulate how land may be used, where buildings and other structures can be located, the types of buildings that are permitted and how they may be used, as well as the lot sizes and dimensions, parking requirements, building heights, and setbacks from the street.

Committee of Adjustment

The [Committee of Adjustment](#) consists of four panels of citizen members (Etobicoke York, North York, Toronto and East York, Scarborough). The committees regularly hold public hearings to consider applications for minor variances, permission, and consents related to the municipal Zoning Bylaw. Any person having an interest in an application will be given the opportunity to make their views known. Neighbours within 60 metres of the property being considered will receive notice of the hearing.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

Some properties may also be located within an area regulated by the [TRCA](#). Any development and/or site alteration within TRCA regulated land is subject to the criteria of [O.Reg. 166/06](#) and requires TRCA approval. TRCA approval is required before a building permit can be issued. Please contact the TRCA at 416-661-6600 for more information.

Notice of Project

Before work begins on a construction project, the builder (Constructor in Health & Safety legislation) may need to file a [Notice of Project](#) (NOP) to the Ministry of Labour. The Government of Ontario has some great [tools](#) and [information](#) to keep you informed. You may be asked to complete the Notice of Project as the property owner. Here are some [things](#) you should know first.





Emergency Info:

Possible danger to someone or a property?

9-1-1

Dangerous electrical condition?

Toronto Hydro
416-542-8000 or 9-1-1

Smell natural gas?

Leave the area.
Call Enbridge Gas at
1-866-763-5427 or 9-1-1