

Final Report - Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children

Date:	October 13, 2009
To:	Planning & Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards:	All – General Amendment; Wards 20, 27 & 28 – Area Specific Amendment
Reference Number:	Pg090034

SUMMARY

At its meeting of June 4, 2009, the Planning and Growth Management Committee considered a draft Official Plan Amendment to encourage the development of dwelling units suitable for households with children. The Committee directed City Planning staff to circulate the staff report containing the amendment to stakeholders and other respondents for comments, and hold a community consultation meeting on the matter.

This report provides an overview of the comments that were offered by interested parties during the Community Consultation meeting and via e-mail. The revised draft policies, which include a number of minor refinements, are shown in Attachment A of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that Council:

1. Amend the Official Plan substantially in accordance with the draft official plan amendment presented as Attachment A; and
2. Authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft official plan amendment as may be required.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact.

CURRENT PROPOSAL

The proposed amendment, set out in Attachment A, involves two changes to the Official Plan. The first is a general amendment to the Housing Policies, to include the term “dwelling units suitable for households with children” as part of a full range of housing.

The second, more specific amendment is to the Site and Area Specific Policies of the Official Plan. This would require that 10% of all dwelling units in larger developments (with 100 or more dwelling units) in the downtown area be built either with three or more bedrooms, or offer the potential to be easily converted to contain three or more bedrooms.

DECISION HISTORY

Planning and Growth Management Committee has considered a number of reports on the issue of housing suitable for families with children. The most recent one on the subject was before the Committee at its June 4th meeting.

This Planning staff report, dated May 14, 2009, highlighted a number of proposed changes to the Official Plan to encourage the development of units for households with children and discussed comments received during a preliminary consultation process.
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-21308.pdf>

In response to that report, Planning and Growth Management Committee directed staff to:

1. Circulate the City Planning report dated May 14, 2009 to stakeholders and other respondents for comments on the proposed Official Plan Amendment attached as Appendix C;
2. Hold a formal community consultation meeting on the proposed Official Plan Amendment in September 2009;
3. Report to a statutory public meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee on November 4, 2009 on comments received, and on any refinements to the proposed Official Plan Amendment; and
4. Provide notice of the statutory public meeting in accordance with the regulations under the Planning Act.

Reports to the Committee were also prepared in August 2008 and November 2007.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-15309.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-9313.pdf>

The August 2008 report provided information on the supply and production of units with three or more bedrooms, approaches used in a number of other jurisdictions, and possible changes to the Official Plan to encourage the development of dwelling units suitable for households with children.

Another noteworthy report, prepared by Planning staff in consultation with Toronto Building staff, was submitted to the Committee in September 2007. Among other issues, that report discussed the use of knock-out panels to facilitate the creation of larger family units and the protection of larger units in high-rent buildings.

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

It is clear that few new housing opportunities are being developed for families with children. In recent years, fewer than 2% of dwelling units in high-rise condominiums have been constructed with three or more bedrooms. The downtown area, in particular, is seeing a lack of family-oriented housing being produced.

There is concern that most young families in the downtown are outgrowing their current apartments and choosing to move to the suburbs, in part, because larger or more appropriately-designed dwellings are in short supply. Healthy and vibrant communities depend on a diverse and balanced population, including households with children. To retain and attract families especially in the downtown area, a greater range of housing types and sizes are required.

COMMENTS:

Consultation Process

As requested by the Planning and Growth Management Committee, the staff report of May 14, 2009 containing the original draft Official Plan amendment was circulated to stakeholders and other respondents.

Internal stakeholders consisted of: the Affordable Housing Office; Shelter Support and Housing Administration; Toronto Building; Legal Services, Public Health; Social Development, Finance and Administration; Children's Services; and Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

External stakeholders included: the Toronto District and Toronto Catholic District School Boards; Residents, Neighbourhood and Business Associations from the subject area; the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD); individual developers and solicitors; the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations; City Parents Network; and Home Ownership Alternatives Non-Profit Corporation.

Most of these internal and external stakeholders had been given an opportunity to comment on the proposal during a preliminary, informal consultation process that occurred this past April. These stakeholders, and other parties that had expressed an interest in the issue since the June 4th Planning & Growth Management Committee meeting, were invited to a Community Consultation meeting on the matter. As well, the general public was advised of the meeting through newspaper ads which appeared in the Toronto Star and Now Magazine.

The Community Consultation meeting took place on September 23, 2009. It was attended by approximately 30 people, including Councillor Vaughan, a trustee's assistant and staff from the School Boards, representatives from the Residents and Business Associations, several development companies, a law firm, and the City Parents Network.

Generally, those attending the meeting were in support of the proposal, as it was felt that there was a lack of housing available to families in the downtown. A couple of people, who spoke to the issue, requested that more than 10% of new units be suitable for families. Also, it was suggested that the proposal be extended to include the Waterfront area. In addition to facilitating the creation of units for households with children, there were calls for larger units, more affordable units and more quality schools in the downtown area. It was considered that additional programs and services may be required to adequately serve an increase in the family population.

Two people attending questioned the practicality of housing for families in the downtown. In particular, a representative of a development company (Concert Properties) was concerned about how the proposal requiring more flexible units may affect developers providing market rental housing. She also indicated that the 10% requirement for three + bedroom units may not be achievable as most companies were producing far fewer larger units (although Concert had one building where 4% of the units were three bedrooms).

The following sections provide a summary of the concerns raised at the Community Consultation meeting both in support of, and in opposition to, the proposal. Also included in this assessment are the comments provided to staff in six e-mail submissions. These are presented in Attachment C of this report.

Following this summary of issues is an overview of some of the key themes identified by the stakeholders at the Community Consultation meeting and via email. This report follows a similar discussion to that presented in the May 14, 2009 report on the results of the preliminary consultation process. For a complete assessment of all of the issues brought to staff's attention on the subject, it is suggested that the May 14th report be read in conjunction with this one.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-21308.pdf>

Summary of the Issues Raised during the Community Consultation in Support of the Proposed Amendment

- Vibrant communities require a variety of residents, including a mix of families, seniors and singles.
- Too few units and buildings are available for families downtown. The market is predominantly targeted towards empty nesters and young adults.
- Seniors are becoming more isolated because their children are not able to stay downtown, which produces a greater impact on social services to provide care for seniors.
- There is a need for larger units, as most existing and new apartments in the downtown are very small in size.
- Children are enriched by the city experience (multiculturalism, the waterfront, museums, art galleries, special events and festivals).
- Proposal would encourage families with multiple children to consider high density apartment dwellings as a feasible option by providing more private spaces within each unit. This may lessen the desire of families to purchase homes in the suburbs,

and therefore function as a sustainable alternative to suburban living. It may provide a positive environmental impact by helping to reduce urban sprawl.

- Efforts to encourage the provision of family units in the downtown will serve to maintain and bolster school enrolment.
- Although additional family-oriented units are needed, more affordability of housing and the provision of public services and amenities (schooling, green spaces, traffic management etc.) are also important.

Summary of the Issues Raised during the Community Consultation in Opposition to the Proposed Amendment

- Concern raised about the implementation of the policy, in particular how the policy will affect developers providing market rental housing. Internal flexibility is difficult to provide in rental accommodation, as units may need to be altered to satisfy changing tenant preferences.
- The vast majority of market rental with three-bedrooms is rented by students, not families.
- The market does not need more disincentives to build rental.
- Affordability is the greatest barrier to most families wishing to purchase housing downtown. Units constituting family size condominium housing (containing 3 or more bedrooms) tend to be at least 1,200 square feet in size. Current downtown condominium construction and development costs dictate a sales price for such a unit of about \$600,000. Based on CMHC guidelines and assuming a conventional mortgage, household income would need to be a minimum of \$120,000 per year. This is out of the price range that most families can afford.
- The City will be forcing developers to build units that they will not be able to sell under normal market conditions. The units will be sold at a loss. This means that the remainder of the units in a project will need to sell at a greater price to make up the loss, or projects will not go ahead.
- More attention needs to be given to finding strategies that will result in housing that most families can afford. The City should re-examine the charges it imposes (Land Transfer Tax, Parks Levy, Development Charges, Public Art Contribution, etc.) on all new sale housing. As well, the Province needs to re-evaluate the new HST.
- Some people prefer to reside in buildings that do not allow children, and have chosen to live in the downtown for that reason.

Key Themes Identified during the Community Consultation Process

The following discussion outlines a number of issues or themes that emerged from the Community Consultation meeting and the e-mails submitted. As mentioned, the May 14, 2009 staff report also identified a broad range of themes that were raised during the preliminary consultation process. This builds on some of the analysis provided in the earlier report.

Policy Threshold by Unit Type

There were clear differences in opinion on this issue. Two individuals at the Community Consultation meeting requested that the proposed requirement of 10% of the units being

suitable for households with children be increased to 20%. However, it was indicated that development companies have been producing fewer than 2% of their units with three or more bedrooms. A representative of a development company questioned the industry's ability to meet the proposed threshold.

The current proposal requires that 10% of the units be built to contain three or more units, but allows for fewer than 10% of such units to be constructed as long as the units can be easily modified to contain three or more bedrooms to accommodate the changing needs and preferences of the occupants. It is believed that the proposal as set out in Attachment A is reasonable and offers a compromise position.

It had also been suggested that the City may consider imposing a requirement to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are built as moderately-sized two bedroom units. At this point, the market seems to be providing an adequate number of two bedroom units, although many would be considered small relative to more traditional units.

Affordability

Affordability continues to be an issue of concern, and is perceived as a major obstacle to attracting households with children.

A key criticism made by one developer, as mentioned earlier, was that units with three or more bedroom units are typically at least 1,200 square feet in size, and may cost about \$600,000 a unit. While it is true the larger condominiums can demand a substantially higher sales price, the proposal does not establish minimum unit sizes beyond those set out in the Ontario Building Code. Based on the experience of one developer, additional bedrooms need not come at a significant premium. In one project, several designs are being sold with either two or three bedroom layouts, and range from 824 sq.ft. to 1,112 sq. ft. in size. The price for the three-bedroom option is only about \$5,000 more than the two-bedroom design to cover the costs of interior wall partitions and other associated alterations. While the outer dimension of the two and three-bedroom units is the same, the flexible design does permit the creation of an additional bedroom for children.

This is not to suggest that only modestly-sized apartments should be created. However, it is possible to build three-bedroom units that are well-designed, functional and not cost-prohibitive.

Need for Incentives

Representatives from the residents associations and building industry have suggested that additional incentives would help to stimulate the development of units for families with children.

Some of the options raised in both the community consultation and preliminary consultation processes include:

- lowering or eliminating the land transfer tax, parks levy, development charges and public art contribution to decrease costs associated with family units (although

current development charges are the same for two-bedroom and three + bedroom units).

- lobbying the Province to re-evaluate the new HST.
- investigating “rent to own”, assisted mortgages and other affordable home ownership models for families (some of which are being considered under the Housing Opportunities Toronto plan).
- reducing parking requirements for affordable/non-profit housing in the downtown area (now under review).

Amenities and Services

As mentioned in the previous consultation process, stakeholders again emphasized the need for services and amenities on-site and within walking distance to attract families with children in the downtown area. In particular, quality schools and day care facilities are considered essential.

Built Form and Building Design

Suggestions were put forward in support of providing a range of housing types for families with children. As identified in the previous report, efforts will be made in the conceptual stages of project planning to ensure that a variety of unit types and sizes, including townhouses, are incorporated into the project design, wherever possible. Attention should be given to clustering the family units on ground-oriented and lower floors to improve potential access to outdoor grade-related and lower-podium play areas for children.

Rental Tenure

As discussed, a comment was made that the policy may be impractical for rental units, as preferences respecting the number of bedrooms may change with each new tenant household. Specifically, it was felt that accommodating changing needs may be costly for landlords. Staff considers that, even where buildings are rented, 10% of the units should be designed and maintained with three or more bedrooms, or as an alternative, as flexible or convertible units. However, where a building consists entirely of units offered on a rental basis, it would be the landlord’s decision whether to lease any flexible units as either two or three bedroom units, on a case by case basis. There is nothing to force a landlord to convert these units from one type to another on the basis of tenant demands. The option, in this case, may be viewed as a marketing feature that could potentially draw more prospective tenants. As mentioned earlier, flexible design need not be expensive.

Also, some new buildings provided on a rental basis are condominium registered. Preserving this option would provide some flexibility should the units be sold to individual purchasers in the future.

Geographic Area of Focus

The question was again raised about why the waterfront area was not being included in the proposed change. As the Central Waterfront Plan has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, and the new Official Plan is also not in effect for the Waterfront area, it is considered that any policy change affecting this area should be revisited at a later date.

Further Refinements to the Draft Amendment

The revised draft amendment (shown in Attachment A) includes several minor changes that were made to the original draft amendment circulated during the earlier consultation process (see Attachment B of this report).

Regarding Policy 3.2.1.1 of the Housing Section of the Official Plan, one minor refinement was made. The term “housing suitable for households with children”, used to include this form of accommodation as part of the full range of housing, has now been replaced with the term “dwelling units suitable for households with children”. In this situation, the use of the words “dwelling units” is more appropriate than the more general word “housing”, as these three + bedroom units will be interspersed with other smaller units in the apartment and townhouse stock of housing.

Several changes were also made to the earlier version of the more specific amendment. Initially, it was proposed that the amendment would be introduced as a new policy 2.2.1.4(c) of the *Downtown* Section of the Official Plan. However, for administrative reasons it is now being brought forward as an amendment to Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies of the Official Plan.

Some stylistic changes were made to the text to clarify the intent of the policy. Emphasis is placed primarily on the provision of units with three or more bedrooms. However, these units may contain fewer bedrooms, if they are constructed and maintained in a manner that ensures they can be converted later to three or more bedrooms through minor changes to internal wall configurations.

Infill on sites containing existing buildings is also now explicitly subject to the policy.

As well, the suggested side-bar dealing with adherence to the Ontario Building Code standards of bedroom size, ventilation and lighting for additional bedrooms created at a later date was deleted as this can be achieved through the building permit approvals process.

Implementation Process

Planning and Legal staff will further investigate the appropriate implementation mechanisms to give effect to the official plan amendment (e.g. general zoning amendment for the downtown area versus site-specific zoning amendments).

It is proposed that this requirement for three or more bedrooms would be applied where planning approvals (excluding site plan approval) are needed to construct a new residential development, including infill, which contains 100 or more dwelling units.

The proposed amendment allows the option of fewer than 10% of the units being constructed as units with three or more bedrooms. Where the designated units are not initially built as three bedrooms, proponents would be required to demonstrate that the units could be potentially converted through minor alterations to contain three or more

bedrooms. In this case, proponents would be expected to submit alternate building plans and drawings for these units at the outset to show that the specified units are also designed to contain three or more bedrooms, and such designs would satisfy minimum bedroom size, natural lighting and ventilation requirements as set out in the Ontario Building Code, as interpreted by the Toronto Building Division. These designs should also be made available to subsequent purchasers of the flexible units.

Also, at a minimum, developers would be required to market at least 10% of their units in new developments as potentially containing three or more bedrooms (as an alternative to a lesser number of bedrooms). As mentioned, the choice as to how the units would be initially constructed would rest with the potential buyer.

As it is difficult to determine the exact percentage or number of units that will ultimately be built and occupied by households with children, servicing demands will need to be monitored over time. Planning staff will continue to work in conjunction with other agencies (e.g. School Boards) to determine changes in servicing needs, and will utilize Census and other available data sources in an effort to determine the type of households that occupy the proposed units.

CONTACT

Barbara Leonhardt
Director, Policy and Research
City Planning Division
ph: 416-392-8148
fax: 416-392-3821
bleonha@toronto.ca

David Spence
Senior Planner, Policy and Research
City Planning Division
ph: 416-392-8124
fax: 416-397-4080
dspence@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gary Wright
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Official Plan Amendment (Revised)
Attachment B: Draft Official Plan Amendment (Original)
Attachment C: Written Comments Received from Stakeholders during Community Consultation Process

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Attachment A:

Draft Official Plan Amendment (Revised)

Authority: Planning and Growth Management Item No.____, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on _____ and _____, 20__.

Enacted by Council

CITY OF TORONTO

Bill No.

BY-LAW No. ~-2009

To adopt Amendment No 103 to the Official Plan of the City of Toronto generally respecting all the lands in the City of Toronto, and more specifically lands in the City’s downtown area.

WHEREAS authority is given to Council under the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended, to pass this By-law;

WHEREAS the Council for the City of Toronto, at its meeting of _____ and _____ 20__, determined to amend the Official Plan for the City of Toronto adopted by By-law No. 1082-2002; and

WHEREAS Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the *Planning Act*;

The Council of the City of Toronto **HEREBY ENACTS** as follows:

1. Amendment No. 103 to the City of Toronto Official Plan, consisting of the attached text shown on Schedule “A” is hereby adopted pursuant to the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended.

ENACTED AND PASSED this _____day of _____, A.D. 20__.

Mayor

City Clerk

**SCHEDULE “A”
(to Attachment A)**

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

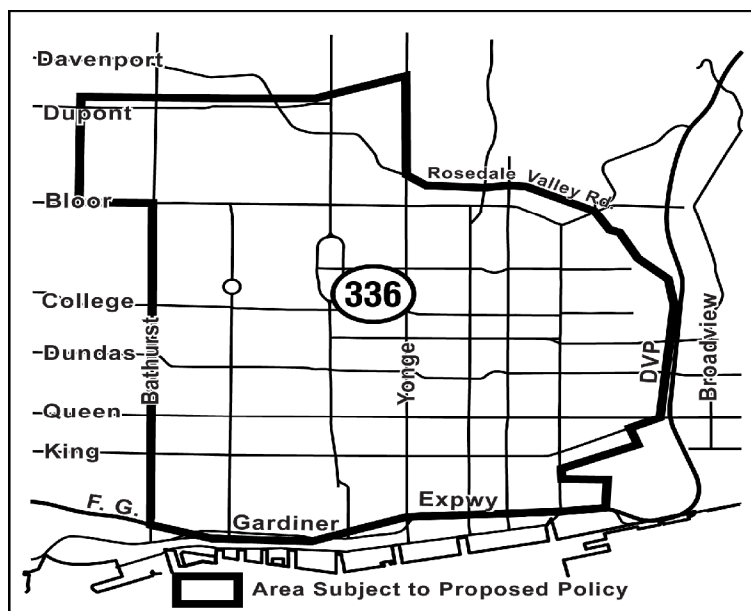
1. Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1, Housing, Policy 1 is amended by inserting the words “dwelling units suitable for households with children,” after the words “at-risk groups,”
2. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies are amended by adding the following:

“336. Downtown Area

New developments, including infill, containing 100 or more dwelling units within the area shown, will ensure at least 10 percent of the new dwelling units are suitable for households with children in the following manner:

- a) 10 percent of the units to be built in the development will contain three or more bedrooms; and
- b) for the purpose of this Policy, a unit will be deemed to contain three or more bedrooms if it is constructed with a fewer number of bedrooms and thereafter maintained in a manner that ensures it can be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through minor changes to internal wall configurations.

Transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing that is subject to recognized government funding programs and municipal housing agreements is not subject to this requirement.”



Attachment B:

Draft Official Plan Amendment (Original)

1. Proposed Amendment to Housing Policies – Section 3.2.1 of the Official Plan

Amend Policy 3.2.1.1 by inserting the words “housing suitable for households with children,” after the words “at-risk groups,” so the policy would read as follows:

“A full range of housing, in terms of form, tenure and affordability, across the City and within neighbourhoods, will be provided and maintained to meet the current and future needs of residents. A full range of housing includes: ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless people and at-risk groups, housing suitable for households with children, housing that meets the needs of people with physical disabilities and housing that makes more efficient use of the existing housing stock”

2. Proposed Amendment to Policies relating to the Downtown - Section 2.2.1 of the Official Plan

Add a new clause (c) to Policy 2.2.1.4, which would read as follows:

- 4(c) requiring in new developments with 100 or more dwelling units in the *Downtown*, that at least 10% of those units be provided as units suitable for households with children in the following manner:
- i) the units be built to contain three or more bedrooms; or
 - ii) the units be built to contain a lesser number of bedrooms if requested by the initial purchaser, provided that such units retain the ability to be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through relatively minor changes to internal bedroom wall configurations; or
 - iii) any combination of (i) and (ii) above.

Transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing that is subject to recognized government funding programs and municipal housing agreements is not subject to this requirement.

Where some of the units for households with children are provided as flexible units, they must be designed and constructed to allow the potential for three or more bedrooms which would satisfy minimum bedroom size, natural lighting and ventilation requirements set out in the Ontario Building Code.

Attachment C:

Written Comments Received from Stakeholders during Community Consultation Process

External Stakeholder Comments Received, Supportive of Proposed Official Plan Amendment

- 1. Statement from Trustee Chris Bolton, Vice Chair and Trustee, Ward 10, Trinity-Spadina, Toronto District School Board**
(comments offered at the Community Consultation Meeting, September 23, 2009)

As Trustee for Ward 10, which includes municipal wards 19 and 20, I wish to express support for the efforts at City Council regarding the provision of family housing units, specifically, Councillor Vaughan's request of staff to examine opportunities to encourage condominium developers to build larger units conducive to families with children.

This motion would be a tremendous step towards addressing the supply of housing in a market predominantly targeted towards empty nesters and young adults. No doubt the disparity of incomes reported recently by the Centre for Urban and Community Studies (in December 2007) is a consequence of this trend. Retaining an affordable housing stock in my ward will be a continuous challenge amidst the increasing desirability of living in the city, which has occurred at the expense of middle class families. Somehow, this trend needs to include households with children.

The provision of public amenities amidst emerging communities such as the railway lands and the West Donlands, coupled with the provision of affordable housing will no doubt retain and attract families. This will ensure that affordable housing targets identified in pursuant with the Official Plan are met. But what would be particularly useful are effective planning tools for those areas without plans containing similar policy objectives.

My ward has struggled with fluctuations in school enrolment levels amidst a system-wide decline. Council's proactive efforts to encourage the provision of affordable family units would bring some welcome relief to these challenges.

On behalf of constituents in my ward, your consideration in this endeavour would be most appreciated.

Further Comments:

- Trustee Bolton would like to encourage the City Council to request that 20% rather than 10% of new developments be put aside for family housing;
- That there be more regular and ongoing communication between the city planning department and school board trustees around this issue;

- There are almost 5000 vacant seats in the schools and if the city and the school board don't work together to preserve the downtown as a community and family area, Toronto will soon look like Detroit and not like Oslo.

2. K. Holden, Bay Corridor Community Association (BCCA) Executive Member
(comments offered at the Community Consultation Meeting, September 23, 2009)

On behalf of the BCCA, I support this initiative. Philosophically, I believe that to be vibrant, a community must attract a variety of residents/families and provide sufficient services to hold those residents for the long-term rather than as transient residents who do not expect to contribute to their community or to live in it for the long-term.

I live within the boundaries of the BCCA. The BCCA is bounded by College Street on the south, Queen's Park Crescent West on the west, Charles Street on the north and Yonge Street on the east. This neighbourhood association supports the concept of a complete community for all ages, races, and socio economic levels. At present, the BCCA has an abundance of small and very small units in our condo towers which appeal to university students and single downtown workers. The BCCA supports this proposal for the inclusion of family size units in downtown developments as we would like to encourage more families to live in our community.

Here are some comments based on points contained in the Summary Report for this proposal.

- 1) **Affordability of Units:** The larger space necessary for a family is a very desirable commodity for not only a family but also for most individuals purchasing a condominium unit. The puzzle is how to make those larger units affordable to a family. Inventive methods of assisting families in their purchasing of 3 plus bedroom condos need to be explored and laid out specifically, whether in a city fund to extend mortgages to families, city run rent to own plans or other.
- 2) **Section 37 Funds:** Negotiations between City Councillors and developers of Section 37 Funds is a contentious and murky issue for many communities. Further, the decisions for the deployment of the funds within the city is not sufficiently transparent which can raise questions about Section 37 Fund allocations. If Section 37 Funds were to be used in any way to support this amendment or to make housing affordable for families, the funding process would need to be completely transparent and very specifically defined.
- 3) **Developers Opposed:** Developers are opposed to this amendment as shown in their responses to this proposal. They express interest in 'incentives'. Without the co-operation of developers, this initiative cannot succeed. I believe it is critical to proceed with discussions with developers to make this plan as attractive as possible for them without destroying the integrity of the original amendment proposal.
- 4) **Appendix C (Page 31 of Summary) – 'At Risk Groups':** I feel that this request for a change in the original parameters alters the intent/emphasis of the proposal

document which is written in support of ‘dwelling units for households with children’. Possibly, this Appendix C should be left out as it could create complications that jeopardize the acceptance of the proposal by City Council. In that instance, a second proposal document for the ‘at risk’ should be considered for presentation at another time.

3. C. Padmore

(e-mail received during consultation period)

I am interested to see more units for households with children. As a single parent raising one child, there would be still so much to benefit from being in a community and city where families are encouraged to live in the city core. The City of Toronto really is a good place to raise children, right? I think so. For so many reasons. The multiculturalism. The waterfront. The museum and the art galleries. The special events & the festivals. Colleges and universities. All in walking distance. The city comes alive with children. The children are enriched by the city experience.

My building has a definite community feel to it. Really I think that is due to that there are families living here and people seem to enjoy this home kind of feeling (a bit rare in condominium buildings). Several families here have extended family living within the building too. I love the way the families here have active interest in their community and love to see the citizenship values in action.

Me, I am thinking there are a few gaps I would like to see closed, one being that once a family is of a certain size the pressure is on to move out of the city. Schooling, traffic, green spaces are other areas which also need more consideration as we accept that there are families living the downtown core. There also would be a positive environmental impact to be realized when we reduce urban sprawl.

I am currently studying at George Brown College, School of Design, with a particular interest in way-finding and accessibility. Living in the city for me is a MUST because I live with a disability. The concept of an accessible city with families dwelling therein is very forward-thinking and exciting. I am very interested to see the city be world-class in this way. Allocating a minimum percentage of new units to be built at family-inclusive size just makes good long-range design sense.

Please consider these comments for discussion with regards to the proposed amendment.

4. S. Trotta

(e-mail received during consultation period)

Although I am unable to attend tonight's meeting about the Official Plan amendment to encourage the development of dwelling units for households with children, I am an ardent supporter of this amendment and so I would like to offer my comments.

For the entire two year period of my M.E.S. program at York University I carried out research in an apartment building community in the Jane-Wilson area of Toronto, and I believe that my observations and learnings from my time spent there offer support to this amendment. TCHC owned, the buildings located at 20, 30 and 40 Falstaff Avenue contain 669 units within them and house many new immigrant families. Although the majority of the units in these buildings are three-bedroom units, I believe that units with three or more bedrooms would be beneficial in a community like this one.

Units with more bedrooms may be beneficial for many reasons, including:

1. They facilitate and support communal living for blended and extended families, such as household that contain multiple nuclear family units.
2. They mitigate, to some extent, what I have called "corridor life" (amongst children especially, the corridors of these apartment buildings function as meeting places and play spaces). Although this corridor life is not necessarily problematic, it can be a nuisance to households because of noise, etc.
3. They create flexible living spaces by providing more square footage within the units.
4. They address a desire that is common amongst many cultures to continue to enjoy the benefits of communal living
5. They encourage families with multiple children to consider high density apartment dwelling as a feasible option by providing more private spaces with each unit. This may lessen the desire of families to purchase homes in the suburbs, and therefore function as a sustainable alternative to suburban living.

Furthermore, the development of units with three or more bedrooms does not only have to be encouraged in new developments. Perhaps there is the opportunity to push for this through the Tower Renewal Project as well. Retrofitting apartment towers to contain units with more bedrooms will decrease the number of units per building; however, it may help to positively impact the overall efficiencies of the buildings.

I believe that both within the context of my research experiences as well as in the broader context of the City of Toronto, encouraging the development of apartment units with three or more bedrooms is correct and I, therefore, support this Official Plan amendment.

External Stakeholder Comments Received, Non-Supportive of Proposed Official Plan Amendment

1. H. Cohen, President and L. Poplak, Director of Planning and Development, Context (letter received during consultation period)

We believe that the City of Toronto's goal to encourage families to live downtown is admirable; however, we are not supportive of the proposed means by which City Planning hopes to achieve this goal

In our experience, units constituting family size condominium housing (as you've defined it - containing 3 or more bedrooms) will tend to at least 1,200 square feet in size. Current downtown condominium construction and development costs dictate a sales price for such a unit of about \$600,000. Based on CMHC guidelines and assuming a conventional mortgage, household income would need to be a minimum of \$120,000 per year, which is close to double the average household income in the GTA (this presumes that said families can come up with a \$120,000 downpayment). This is out of the price range that most families can afford. Thus affordability is the greatest barrier to the vast majority of families who might otherwise wish to purchase condominium housing (or any housing, for that matter) downtown.

If the City mandates a minimum number of these larger units you will be forcing the creation of a product that is unattainable to its target market. In other words, you will be forcing developers to build units that they will not be able to sell under normal market conditions.

It has been argued that if developers were required to build large units, the selling price will reflect market demand and essentially the units will be sold at a loss. This means that the remainder of the units in a project will need to sell at a greater price to make up the loss, or that projects will simply not go ahead.

If the City is really serious about encouraging larger units it should find strategies, by consulting with the private sector, which will actually produce housing prices a majority of families can afford.

On the cost side of the equation, the City should look at the charges it imposes (Land Transfer Tax, Parks Levy, Development Charges, Public Art Contribution, etc.) on all new sale housing, generally in the range of \$25,000 per unit for larger units. It should ask the province to get involved as well. For example, the new HST will add at least \$16,000 to the price of larger units. If the various levels of government were prepared to do their share, the private sector would be incentivized to contribute as well.

In conclusion, the goal of encouraging family housing is a challenging one – it will not be realized by simply mandating its supply. Rather, we suggest that the City consult further with all interested parties on practical steps that can be adopted to achieve the goal of producing housing that the majority of families can afford.

2. J. Petrie, Downtown Resident

(e-mail received during consultation period)

I live downtown and work downtown, both on purpose so that I am not aggravated by noisy children and their arrogant parents. Your proposal to force developments in the downtown area to encourage dwelling units for households with children is quite distasteful. I own a condo and pay property taxes to the City of Toronto and the thought of you wasting my tax money on such a proposal is outrageous to me. I would have preferred to reside in a building that does not allow children at all but that is apparently against the law and now you want to go even further and force children on us! Has it ever occurred to you that not everyone likes having children around them? Not only do children disturb the enjoyment of others, they are quite destructive to buildings that they occupy. Not everyone wants or desires to have children surrounding them all the time. Some people do choose to live downtown so as to lessen the possibility that their residential building is not overrun with noisy and destructive children. Politicians should realize that. Although I see no need for the proposal, I understand that the proposal would not require developers to build larger units specifically for households with children. I am told and hold you to it that first it would see that 10% of units in most larger new developments in the Downtown either have three or more bedrooms, and that it is only intended to promote greater variety and choice in accommodation. Second, I understand that the proposal will not be requiring that households with children occupy these units. There is no attempt to alter the type of residents in the Downtown, but merely offer the opportunity if certain households choose to live there.