



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards: Monitoring

Date:	September 16, 2013
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster B\PLN\PGMC\PG13072

SUMMARY

In July 2010, Council directed staff to use the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in the evaluation of mid-rise development proposals. Council also adopted a monitoring period of approximately 2 years in order to measure the effectiveness of the Standards. City Planning is well underway in this monitoring of the Performance Standards, however further work including inter-Divisional consultation, consultation with stakeholders, and the general public is necessary to complete a comprehensive review. This report requests Council extend the monitoring period to provide time to conduct this consultation. Staff will report back with results of the monitoring period by the end of 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council extend the monitoring period to the end of 2014 to allow staff to complete consultations on the effectiveness of the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards, and direct the Chief Planner to report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee at the conclusion of the monitoring period regarding any modifications to the Performance Standards.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

During the 2005 budget process, Council allocated a portion of the Avenue Studies budget for a symposium to explore opportunities for encouraging more Mid-Rise buildings.

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 inter-Divisional 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 led by 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>)

At its meeting of July 6, 2010, City Council approved a portion of the consultant's Avenues and Mid-rise Buildings Study, including the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards. Council also directed staff to monitor the Performance Standards over a 2 year period. (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.PG39.9>)

ISSUE 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 162 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, sets out a blueprint for future growth through amendments to zoning regulations and the creation of urban design guidelines. Council has made recommendations for specific segments of *Avenues* to be studied in detail.

To date, 21 Avenue Studies covering approximately 51.1 of the 162 kilometres of *Avenues* have commenced, and 19 have been completed. Eglinton Connects – the largest *Avenue* Study to date – is anticipated to be substantially complete in the first quarter of 2014.

The Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study

In October 2008, City Planning engaged Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects with E.R.A. Architects, Quadrangle Architects Limited and Urban Marketing Collaborative 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.

The consultant's recommendations were based on creating certainty through Performance Standards, which set expectations for how mid-rise buildings fit in their context and transition to lower-scale neighbourhoods. The Study also encourages the development of as-of-right zoning for mid-rise buildings, thereby shortening the review and development approval process.

The Performance Standards included in the Study apply mainly to properties that front *Avenues* which have not yet had a completed *Avenue* Study, and do not have a Secondary Plan. An *Avenue* Study results in new zoning and design guidelines. 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*. (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-30538.pdf>)

COMMENTS

In the period beginning July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2013, the City received approximately 60 site-specific development proposals for mid-rise buildings along the *Avenues* (proposals for buildings that are between 4 and 11 storeys, excluding townhouses). An additional 66 site-specific applications for mid-rise buildings were received for areas of the city outside of the *Avenues* (a significant number of which were in the Downtown and Central Waterfront, and in the Centres). These proposals were received in all Planning Districts of the City.

Table 1 - Approximate number of proposals for 4 to 11 storey buildings between July 1 2010 and July 1 2013. Excludes townhouses and stacked townhouses

	Avenues	Downtown or Centres	Other Locations	Total
North York	22	1	10	33
Scarborough	6	0	8	14
Toronto-East York	25	19	21	65
Etobicoke-York	7	3	4	14
Total	60	23	43	126

The Performance Standards are being used by stakeholders and staff to assist both with the design and evaluation of development proposals in all Planning Districts of the City. They have ensured a new level of consistency and predictability. The Standards were also used as a starting point for some planning and urban design studies, including The Eglinton Connects Study, O'Connor Avenue Study, and the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan. Relevant development proposals presented to the Design Review Panel were evaluated using the Standards as well.

As a component of the monitoring period, staff have held internal meetings with Divisional Staff from each of the four Planning Districts. With input from community planners and urban designers, staff have considered potential amendments to the Performance Standards for both *Avenues* and other mixed-use areas. The next steps in this process will be to consult with the mid-rise inter-Divisional team, stakeholders, and the general public. Some of this work may result in recommendations to amend the Official Plan.

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study contains the Performance Standards for mid-rise buildings, and is the City's only document directly related to the design of mid-rise buildings. As the Performance Standards are currently being used in the evaluation of development proposals, and as a basis for significant studies such as Eglinton Connects, and the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan, it is necessary to continue to use the Performance Standards.

Staff will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Standards, and report back with any amendments.

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SIGNATURE

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