



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) Zoning: Supporting Implementation

Date:	May 15, 2014
To:	Planning & Growth Management Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	19669

SUMMARY

This report outlines the process staff will use to encourage the use of the newly available Residential Apartment Commercial zoning to support achieving more complete communities in the 7 pilot areas identified by City Council at its meeting of April 3 and 4, 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Social Development, Finance & Administration Division recommends:

1. City Council direct the Tower Neighbourhood Inter-Divisional Committee to oversee and coordinate the Residential Apartment Commercial pilot implementation process.

Financial Impact

This report has no immediate financial implications. Funding to support the initiatives outlined in this report are included in the 2014 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development Finance and Administration.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of April 3 and 4, 2013, approved the creation of the Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) zone category and requested a report to Planning and Growth Management Committee on a process to establish pilot projects using the required zoning provisions in certain communities. These communities are described in Attachment 1 (List) and 2 (Map).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PG21.1>

Planning and Growth Management Committee, at its meeting of February 27, 2014, adopted a report from the Chief Planner outlining 564 candidate sites for the RAC zone, some changes to the regulations for the RAC zone pertaining to outdoor sales and display and certain other uses, and seeking permission to hold public consultations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PG31.7>

A separate report on the RAC rezoning process from the City Planning Division will be on the Planning and Growth Management Committee agenda for May 29, 2014.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

All of the locations receiving the new Residential Apartment Commercial zoning permission will have the opportunity to pursue new uses. However, it is likely that granting the permission to undertake new uses will in and of itself not generate significant improvement to the composition of the apartment neighbourhoods. There is a need to increase awareness of the use of the new zoning and benefits that can be realized, to support its implementation.

COMMENTS

As the City Planning report outlines, there is a need to rethink and improve apartment neighbourhoods to achieve a broader range of commercial, community and other non-residential uses located within convenient walking distance. Review of apartment neighbourhoods has found that residents of Toronto's mid-century high-rise apartment buildings tend to be in greater need of social and economic development support as indicated by being:

1. More than 3 times as likely to have low incomes;
2. Nearly 3 times as likely to have moved to Canada in the last 10 years; and
3. Over 50% more likely to be visible minorities;

when compared with residents of Toronto’s singles, semis and duplexes (Table 1). Residents of mid-century apartment towers are just as likely to be children and youth as residents of other building types

**Table 1:
Resident Demographics of Toronto’s Mid-Century High-Rise Apartment Buildings**

Resident Demographics	Mid-Century Apartment Towers¹	Singles, Semi’s and Duplexes	Toronto Overall
Children 0-14	17%	16%	16%
Youth 15-25	12%	13%	13%
Newcomers ²	26%	9%	16%
Visible Minority	60%	40%	49%
Low-Income ³	32%	10%	19%
Unemployed	13%	8%	9%
Often Have Activity Limitations	11%	9%	9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey

Car ownership in apartment communities is relatively low so residents would particularly benefit from establishments and services in close proximity, including more walkable, more convenient and practical access to services.

A community is “complete” when it provides easy access to jobs, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services. Neighbourhoods throughout the City can benefit from becoming more complete communities.

In particular, many apartment neighbourhoods lack convenient access to goods and services. The need for change is more pronounced than ever due to changing demographics. Achieving improved situations will require more than a regulatory change. Barriers to implementation of a better range of uses include lack of awareness of what uses will be possible under the new zoning, the overall benefits of more complete communities and uncertainty about the process for achieving change.

At the time the initial City Planning report was considered, City Council requested a report on a process to establish pilot projects with the new zoning in several areas of the city (see Attachment 1). The identified areas exhibit a broad range of characteristics with respect to existing access to commercial, community and municipal services. Most of the selected pilot areas are aligned with the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas identified

¹ Mid-Century Apartment Towers are buildings with 5 or more storeys which were constructed between 1946 and 1985. This is based on the building structure type category used by Statistics Canada.

² Newcomers are residents who moved to Canada within the 10 years prior to 2011, when the survey was completed.

³ Low-income is based on Statistics Canada’s Low Income Measure (After Tax) or LIM-AT. This measure takes into account household size.

through the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy, and will serve to reinforce efforts in those areas.

To date, there have been a number of projects that have informed the establishment of the new zoning category. A number of City Divisions (Toronto Public Health, Social Development, Finance & Administration and Economic Development and Culture) and external agencies (United Way of Greater Toronto and other community agencies) have been working with small business owners, community organizations and apartment site owners and managers. Based on these experiences and feedback from stakeholders, it was found that the City can support and encourage positive change in the apartment neighbourhoods by acting to:

- Provide information to stakeholders on what the new zoning allows;
- Suggest potential projects based on knowing what has succeeded elsewhere; and
- Provide support for concept development through demonstration projects.

There has been significant progress in generating interest and commitment to new projects through these actions. A sample of actions is listed in Appendix 3.

Proposed Process for Pilot Project Areas

An Inter-divisional Committee co-chaired by City Planning and Social Development Finance and Administration Divisions currently convenes to address issues and opportunities focusing on Tower Neighbourhoods. This committee establishes working groups that undertake cross divisional activities. A workgroup of this committee will be formed to support the implementation of projects using Residential Apartment Commercial zoning as a tool to contribute to achieving more complete neighbourhoods. The workgroup will examine the pilot areas to determine specific needs for improvement, identify Divisional programs, projects and initiatives available to support Residential Apartment Commercial zoning actions and determine how the application of the actions achieves desired outcomes.

In most cases the sites where the new zoning will apply are privately owned. Apartment property owners and managers, community organizations, business owners and funders will need to take on key roles to achieve positive changes in the communities. The workgroups will examine how the City can facilitate a framework that allows for these stakeholders to work together effectively.

Each pilot area will be investigated to identify the role that the City and/or other stakeholders can play to seize these opportunities and identify resources available to be applied to these tasks.

CONTACT

Eleanor McAteer
Project Director
Tower Renewal Office
(416) 392-9716
emcatee@toronto.ca

Elise Hug
Project Manager
Tower Renewal Office
(416) 397-5243
ehug@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Chris Brillinger, Executive Director
Social Development, Finance & Administration

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Council Direction (April 2013) regarding Pilot Project Areas
Attachment 2: Map of RAC Zoning Pilot Implementation Areas to Support More Complete Apartment Communities
Attachment 3: Examples of Demonstration Projects

Attachment 1: Council Direction (April 2013) regarding Pilot Project Areas

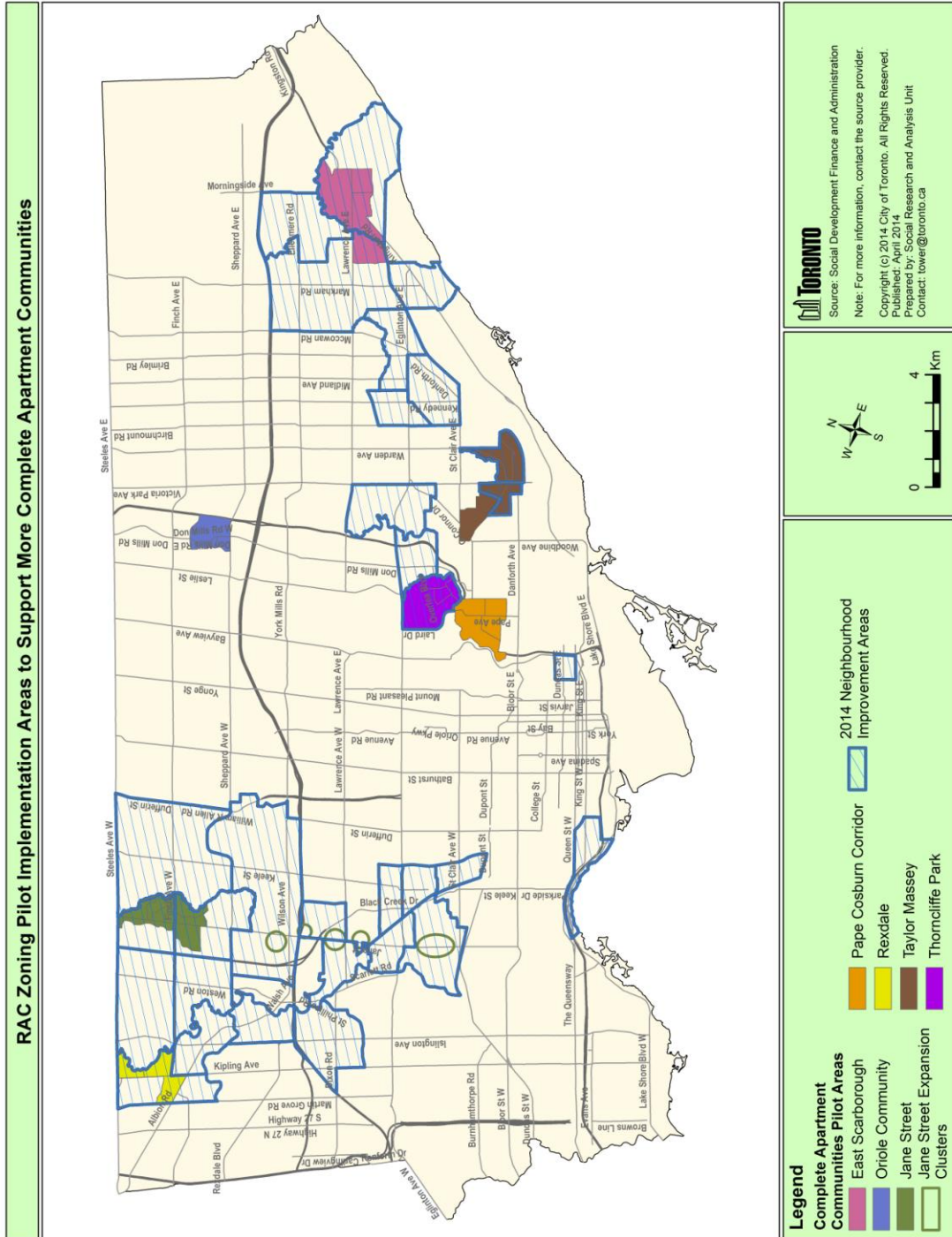
City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Tower Renewal Office report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee by January 2014, on a process to establish pilot projects with the required zoning provisions and to create Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) zoning in communities, including the following:

1. Thorncliffe Park (Ward 26)
2. Jane Street (Ward 8)
3. Rexdale (Ward 1)
4. The Oriole Community (Ward 33)
5. Taylor Massey Neighbourhood (Ward 31)
6. East Scarborough (Ward 43)
7. Pape and Cosburn corridor (Ward 29)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PG21.1>

Attachment 2:

Map of RAC Zoning Pilot Implementation Areas to Support More Complete Apartment Communities



**Attachment 3:
Examples of Demonstration Actions**

<u>Healthy Corner Store Initiative</u>	
A number of partners are working together to improve and strengthen an existing convenience store located on the ground floor of a rental apartment building. Stakeholders are developing a plan to improve service to local residents by renovating the store, improving the range of products including healthier foods, and improving energy efficiency.	
<u>Project Proponents:</u>	Toronto Public Health, East Scarborough Storefront, convenience store operator, apartment building owner/manager, retail consultants and others.
<u>Neighbourhoods:</u>	Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park

<u>Bicycle Mechanic Training & Community Bicycle Clinics</u>	
City Divisions and Evergreen Brickworks will offer bicycle mechanic training to youths during the summer break. Following the training program, the youths will operate community bicycle clinics in apartment neighbourhoods across the city.	
<u>Project Proponents:</u>	Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division, Tower Renewal Office, Evergreen Brickworks.
<u>Neighbourhoods:</u>	Several apartment neighbourhoods

<u>Mobile Fruit and Vegetable Sales</u>	
FoodShare has converted a Wheel-Trans bus to a mobile fruit and vegetable store. The store moves from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, on a weekly schedule, including stops in low-income, high-density apartment communities which are far away from affordable, healthy food stores.	
<u>Project Proponents:</u>	FoodShare, Toronto Public Health
<u>Neighbourhoods:</u>	Several locations