



REPORT FOR ACTION

Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities - Study Update

Date: October 19, 2016

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on City Planning's Study entitled "Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities" (the Study) and highlights insights from Phase 1 which included: consultations with stakeholders, analysis of the demographic characteristics of households with children and a review of the existing and proposed housing stock in each of the Study's seven focus areas. A review of best practices from Toronto and abroad provided examples of how good design can improve livability for current and future families living in vertical communities.

The Study builds on previous City Planning work including the Condominium Consultations and the Chief Planner's Roundtable on Families in the City. The purpose of the Study is to encourage that new multi-unit residential includes family appropriate housing in terms of quantity of units but also quality and functionality. The Study seeks to implement Official Plan policies which aim to provide a full range of housing across the city by specifically addressing the needs of households with children at three scales: the unit, the building and the neighbourhood.

Work to be undertaken in Phase 2 and 3 of the Study will result in a handbook that includes design and policy directions for family appropriate housing in new buildings at the Study's three scales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Planning and Growth Management Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation this report.

DECISION HISTORY

Official Plan Policies

Responding to a 2007 City Council motion, City Planning analyzed the supply of larger (3 bedroom) units suitable for households with children and proposed an Official Plan Amendment to policy 3.2.1.1 to include a provision for "housing suitable for households with children" alongside a requirement for three bedroom units in buildings with a 100 units or more in the Downtown. The OPA was referred back to the Chief Planner for further consideration in conjunction with the Official Plan Review.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.PG39.2>

Condominium Consultation

Building on the results of the 2012 Living in the Downtown survey, City Planning undertook a Condo Consultation Study that included; consultation with condo residents, condo boards, businesses located in condo buildings, property managers to identify possible changes to City policies as they relate to condo living in Toronto. The consultations identified a number of issues related to raising children in condo buildings including the need for larger affordable units, the lack of child specific amenities and the need for additional storage space for larger seasonal items as well as everyday items such as strollers.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PG34.19>

Chief Planner's Roundtable on Planning Cities for Families

In 2014, following up on the Condominium Consultations, City Planning held a Chief Planner's Roundtable on the topic of Planning for Families. The panelists included planners, architects, developers and professionals involved in delivering services to children and families. The discussion focused on the availability of community services and facilities to support children, affordable family housing and access to child care.

<http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Chief%20Planner%20Roundtable/RoundtableVol3-WEB.pdf>

COMMENTS

Policy Background

Planning for complete communities must consider the needs of Toronto's diverse population and offer people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to thrive. Specifically, planning for Toronto's future needs to accommodate families with children

and provide them the opportunity to rent or buy appropriate housing in a variety of forms including mid-rise and tall buildings. Thus, the objective of this Study is to ensure that there is sufficient new housing designed to accommodate the needs of families with children.

Provincial Policy Framework

The Planning Act provides the underlying foundation for municipal planning policies. Section 2 of the Planning Act requires municipalities to have regard to matters of provincial interest, such as the orderly development of safe and healthy communities and the adequate provision of a full range of housing. Section 16(1) of the Act requires municipalities to include in their Official Plans goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment. Recognizing the need for municipalities to plan for and regulate various matters relating to housing type and character, Section 34(1)4 allows municipalities to pass zoning by-laws to regulate the type of construction and the height, bulk, location, size, floor area, spacing, character and use of buildings or structures.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating development and land use. Key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. Policy 1.4.3(b) instructs planning authorities to permit and facilitate all forms of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006) provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including creating complete communities that offer options for living, working, learning, shopping and playing and providing housing options to meet the needs of people at all stages of life. City Council's planning decisions are required to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Municipal Policy Framework

The Official Plan vision for Toronto's future is focused on creating an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging - a city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life. To be successful, the Plan recognizes that housing choices must be available for all people in their communities, at all stages of their lives. The Growing Up Study specifically addresses Policy 3.2.1.1 of the Plan which states that "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..." by examining how new multi-unit residential housing in mid and tall buildings can better accommodate the needs of households with children.

Furthermore, the Plan's rental housing protection policies in conjunction with the City's Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Control By-law provides tools to ensure that Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities - Study Update

as development of rental housing occurs, rental replacement housing of the same number, size and type are included in the new development. Policy 3.2.1.6 helps to ensure that larger rental units which are more affordable and appropriate for households with children are replaced and maintained in the market.

The Official Plan's growth management framework illustrated in Map 2 Urban Structure directs a vibrant mix of residential and employment growth to the Downtown and the four Centres: Etobicoke Centre, North York Centre, Yonge Eglinton Centre and Scarborough Centre. Since the majority of the new residential growth in these areas has been in the form of tall buildings, they, along with Humber Bay Shores and the Sheppard East Corridor Secondary Plan Area have been identified as Growing Up's seven Study areas.

Study Overview

The Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities Study seeks to address how new multi-unit residential buildings can accommodate the needs of children and youth. This Study expands on previous City Planning work and recognizes that the design of the unit, building and neighbourhood are as important as policy requirements that focus on the number of bedrooms. The Study investigates how to comprehensively accommodate families in our growing vertical communities.

Growing Up is divided into three phases. Phase 1 focused on background research and consultation with various stakeholders to understand the challenges and opportunities facing families raising children and youth in higher density housing and by architects, designers and developers involved in designing and building residential housing. Phase 2 of the Study will focus on synthesizing the background research, precedents and feedback received to produce a draft handbook that provides design and policy directions for new buildings at each of the Study's three scales. Work to be undertaken in Phase 3 will involve refining the design and policy directions by collaborating and re-engaging with all stakeholders as well as developing a strategy to implement the Study findings.

Background Research

An increasing number of households with children are choosing to live in mid-rise and tall buildings. In 2011, in the City, approximately 15% or 10,000 more families lived in buildings greater than five storeys than in 2006.

Customized census data provided a snapshot of the households with children living in buildings greater than five storeys in each of our Study areas. It is important to note the variation in the size of each of the Study areas when considering this data. The proportion of families in each of the Study areas ranges from 16% of the total households in the Downtown and Humber Bay Shores to 46% in the Sheppard East Subway Corridor Secondary Plan Area. In all areas, the majority of families live in two bedroom units. A higher proportion of families owned their units in North York Centre, Scarborough Centre and Humber Bay Shores, while the majority of families in

Downtown, Etobicoke Centre, the Sheppard Corridor and Yonge and Eglinton rent. This information is summarized in the table below and a profile of each areas is available at:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=1d438aa342132510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

Table 1: Characteristics of Households (HHL) with Children in Toronto

Study Area	Total HHL	Total HHL with children	% of HHL with children in 5+ storeys	% that own	% that live in bachelors or one bed units	% that live in two bed units	% that live in three + bed units
City of Toronto	1,047,875	461,910 (44%)	30%	63%	22%	59%	19%
Downtown	111,930	18,020 (16%)	66%	29%	32%	56%	12%
Etobicoke Centre	7,750	2,170 (28%)	96%	26%	25%	59%	16%
North York Centre	21,980	7,121 (32%)	89%	60%	25%	64%	11%
Yonge Eglinton	11,605	1,559 (13%)	87%	24%	32%	64%	4%
Scarborough Centre	5,790	2,014 (35%)	99%	73%	27%	57%	16%
Humber Bay Shores	2,625	419 (16%)	100%	88%	6%	86%	8%
Sheppard East Subway Corridor SPA	13,225	6,109 (46%)	62%	20%	31%	49%	20%

Source: Statistics Canada: 2011 Census; 2011 National Household Survey

Two and three bedroom units

The majority of the growth in the seven Study areas have been in a tall building built form and account for over 90% percent of the total proposed residential development. The focus of this Study on vertical housing is essential to ensuring Toronto's new housing stock is equipped to provide for the needs of our diverse population. For the purpose of understanding the variety of the proposed mid-rise and tall building housing, the Study examined the distribution of unit types in the seven Study areas.

Between January 1st, 2011 and June 30th, 2015 City Planning received 360 applications for a total of 95,332 residential units. The following table highlights the range of unit types proposed at the time the planning application was submitted. In most areas, the number of three bedrooms is negligible with the exception of Downtown and the Sheppard Corridor where approximately 8% of the total units proposed are three bedroom units. In all areas, at least 20% of the units contained 2 bedrooms.

Table 2: Unit Breakdown of Applications Received in the Study Areas

Study Area	Total # of units in 5+ storeys*	% of bachelors and one beds	% of two beds	% of three+ beds
Downtown	69,164	70.0%	22.0%	8.0%
Etobicoke Centre	2,017	53.4%	45.7%	0.9%
North York Centre	2,657	58.6%	37.8%	3.6%
Yonge Eglinton	7,547	72.0%	27.0%	1.0%
Scarborough Centre*	5,946	51.0%	47.0%	2.0%
Humber Bay Shores	3,080	66.5%	33.1%	0.4%
Sheppard East Subway Corridor SPA	4,911	51.0%	41.0%	8.0%

Source: LUIS II, Research & Information, City Planning Division

*No applications were received in Scarborough Centre between January 1st, 2011 and June 30th 2015. The numbers included applications submitted between January 1st, 2001 and July 31st, 2007.

While two and three bedroom units are generally considered larger units that could accommodate households with children, a closer look at the unit size revealed significant variation in the size of two and three units available in the marketplace. The following chart provides a snapshot of the range of unit sizes of two and three bedrooms available between January 1st, 2010 and December 31st, 2015.

Table 3: Range of two and three bedrooms sizes available between January 1st, 2010 and December 31st, 2015.

Planning District (sizes in square feet)	Etobicoke York	North York	Scarborough	Toronto East York
Smallest 2 bedroom	625	557	630	532
Largest 2 bedroom	1296	1935	1356	2120
Smallest 3 bedroom	900	742	950	742
Largest 3 bedroom	2152	2790	1970	3489

Source: RealNet, 2016

Since 2010, Community Planning staff have secured family appropriate housing in new developments through tools such as Section 37 and zoning by-laws. In the examples reviewed, the majority of applications secured 10% of the units as three bedrooms or as units that could be convertible to three bedrooms through adaptable interior layouts to permit the changes in the number of bedrooms or through "knock out" panels to allow the merging of two smaller units. Recently, a number of Secondary Plans and Site and

Area Specific Policies have also resulted in policies that require a portion of new development to be suitable for large households. Examples of these include the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, the Mimico-by-the-Lake Secondary Plan, and the Dupont Street Regeneration Study.

The market is also responding to a greater desire for larger units. Urban Nation Inc. reports that amongst the top 20 selling new condominium apartment projects, the proportion of two and three bedroom sales increased to 44% in Q2 2016 from 27% five years ago in Q2 2011.

Case studies

A series of local and international projects were studied to analyze how they provided good planning for children and youth. The projects selected illustrate how good design at the unit, building and neighborhood scales can improve the livability for current and future families residing in vertical communities. The projects in Toronto were selected from areas across the city to demonstrate how we've already had some success in planning for children while the international examples demonstrate best-practices in other contexts that would inform our own context. Design elements will be distilled into generic lessons that can be applied broadly across Toronto and inform both policy and design directions in Phase 2 and 3 of the Study.

The following list highlights case studies that are available at:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=5a6fd5d330263510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

Unit Scale

- 150 Dan Leckie Way, Toronto and East York District
- Kent Vale, Singapore
- Unite d'Habitation (The Radiant City) Marseille, France
- Examples of:
 - Generous Balconies
 - Integrated Storage
 - Space Efficiency

Building Scale

- NXT & NXT2 at Windemere By the Lake, Etobicoke York District
- North Toronto Collegiate Institute & Residential Towers, North York District
- Batiment Home, Paris, France
- Ramona Apartments, Portland, USA
- Via Verde, New York City, USA
- Examples of:
 - Unit location
 - Courtyards
 - Multi-purpose Lobbies
 - Communal Areas
 - Social Circulation Spaces

- Storage
- Programmatic Space

Neighborhood Scale

- Concord Park Place, North York District
- Parkway Forest, North York District
- Lee Centre Residential Towers, Scarborough District
- Harbourfront School, Community Centre and Child Care, Toronto and East York District
- St-Lawrence Neighborhood and Downtown Alternative School, Toronto and East York District
- Southeast False Creek, Vancouver, Canada
- Schoolyard to Playground Initiative, New York City, USA
- Visage and Swiss Cottage Cultural Centre, London, England
- Paris Rive Gauche neighbourhood, Paris, France
- Superkilen Park, Copenhagen, Denmark
- The Giraffe Child Care Centre, Boulogne-Billancourt, France
- Hammarby Sjostad neighbourhood, Stockholm, Sweden
- Examples of:
 - Adventure/Nature Play
 - Whimsy in the Public Realm
 - Pocket parks
 - After school programs
 - Community Gardens and Shared streets
 - Accessible and Season responsive design

Consultation activities undertaken in Phase 1 were designed to uncover the challenges and opportunities faced by both the users (families) and producers (architects and developers) of new multi-unit residential buildings. The following activities represent the range of consultation undertaken in Phase 1 of the Study:

- an online survey that attracted over six hundred respondents;
- nine visits with families currently living in tall buildings in the following areas across the City:
 - Liberty Village
 - Mount Pleasant & Davisville
 - Scarborough Civic Centre
 - City Place
 - North York Civic Centre
 - Kennedy & Sheppard
- The Esplanade
- Humber Bay Shores
- Yonge & Sheppard
- workshops with children and youth including a kindergarten class charrette and a full day walk shop at Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School;
- interviews with eight developers;

- roundtables with the design community; and
- presentations to the City's Design Review and Planning Review Panels.

The survey, interviews and visits with families living in tall buildings provided insight into the lived experience of families – what was important to them, how residents use their space and what changes or "hacks" they needed to make to accommodate their specific needs. Issues identified include: the design and size of the units and balconies; flexibility and storage within the unit; child-specific indoor and outdoor amenities within the building; the location of units within the building; the location and availability of schools, child care and recreation programs; and the design of the public realm.

Roundtables were held with the design community which included architects, interior designers, landscape architects, planners and urban designers. These sessions showcased professional experience, advice and design solutions to achieve better functioning spaces for families with children. For example, focusing on unit size as well as the number of bedrooms could allow for more flexibility over time as needs change. New unit and building layout approaches such as integrated furniture design and movable walls as well as alternative construction methods were raised as opportunities to increase flexibility. These stakeholders also provided advice on the importance of the design and size of balconies so that they could function as outdoor "living rooms", the height of units to allow for bunk beds and the need for "messy" amenity space. The clustering of family units on the lower levels was recommended to allow children the opportunity to play outdoors while maintaining a visual connections to the unit from ground level.

Interviews with developers highlighted a number of challenges experienced in both the marketing and sale of family units. The most common issue raised was the slower absorption rates of three bedroom units which directly affects the ability to obtain financing. Large condo fees and property taxes associated with large units was identified as another barrier. There was also reluctance on the part of developers to openly market to families, specifically including child friendly amenities could be a deterrent to buyers without children. Other topics raised include the "penalty" of the parking requirement for the third bedroom and the importance of location when marketing units to families. To this end, mid-rise buildings were identified as having an advantage as they are generally built on the Avenues which are adjacent to established neighbourhoods that often have convenient access to transit and community infrastructure in place.

A complete summary of the feedback received through the Phase 1 consultation program is contained in Attachment 1.

Next Steps: Direction for Phase 2 and 3 of the Growing Up Study

The background research and consultation undertaken in Phase 1 will inform our understanding and direction of appropriate housing for families with children. This will form the basis of the design and policy directions that will be included in a handbook. The following represents a preliminary list of design directions and considerations at the

unit, building and neighborhood scales that responds to the research as well as the feedback and insights gained thus far. These directions will be refined through design development as well as further consultation in Phases 2 and 3 of the Study.

Emerging design directions at the unit scale:

- Entryways should accommodate multiple people, strollers or large items.
- Living rooms should provide sufficient space for a family to relax, socialize, play and study.
- Units should provide sufficient space to allow a minimum of four people to eat at a table.
- Bedrooms should accommodate a minimum of two people, have a sufficient floor to ceiling height to accommodate a bunk bed, be designed for privacy and include a window to the exterior for light and air.
- In-unit storage for large and seasonal items should be provided.
- Units should allow for conversions, such as adding an extra bedroom.
- Balconies and terraces should be designed as an extension of the indoor living space and supports play.

Emerging design directions at the building scale:

- Organize family units in the lower portions of the building adjacent to open space.
- Lobby design should be functional and allow for socializing.
- Common floor areas, like elevator lobbies, should be designed to enable casual interaction between residents to foster a sense of community.
- Indoor and outdoor amenity space should be flexible and allow for multiple uses and users, including children, and a proportion of these spaces should be purpose-built for children.
- Privately owned public space should be provided where appropriate and contribute to and be relate to surrounding open space in the public realm.
- Additional storage space that is secure and convenient should be provided for larger items such as strollers and bicycle equipment.
- The design, organization and construction of the building should allow for flexibility.

Emerging design directions and multi-faceted community opportunities at the neighbourhood scale:

- The design of the public realm that is safe and encourages independent mobility and active transportation for all ages through all seasons.
- Leveraging opportunities for engagement and sustainable design to become a learning opportunity in order to shape future stewards of the built and natural environment.
- Encouraging community hubs and investigating possible joint-use facilities in the neighbourhood such as school yards being open to the public after-hours or child care outdoor play areas being located in parks and open to the community after-hours.

- The provision of community infrastructure such as public schools, child care, libraries, parks and recreation centres and programs that support raising children in the city is the responsibility of a variety of agencies. Further work through the inter-divisional advisory committee to address issues raised at the neighbourhood scale will continue in Phases 2 and 3 of the Study.
- The handbook will refer to and coordinate with the ongoing studies and initiatives currently being undertaken by the following divisions and agencies:
 - Child Care Demand Study (Children’s Services)
 - Parks and Facilities Master Plan (Parks, Forestry & Recreation)
 - Schools within Mixed Use Buildings: Commercial and Condominium Buildings (Toronto District School Board)
 - Active and Sustainable School Travel (Metrolinx)
 - Regulations, Policies and Guidelines Respecting Interior Bedrooms (City Planning, Public Health and Toronto Buildings)
 - Road Safety for School Children including the *Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools* (Public Health)
 - Seniors Strategy on Age Friendly Cities (Social Development, Finance & Administration)

Next Steps: Coordination with Emerging Secondary Plans and Provincial Policy

Planning policy requirements related to new family-appropriate housing must be carefully considered as part of broader housing initiatives including provincial efforts to advance housing affordability through Bill 7, Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016. Criteria to determine where City Planning should direct family appropriate housing will form an important part of the implementation strategy to be undertaken in Phases 2 and 3. Additionally, the Growing Up Study will coordinate and prioritize implementation of design and policy directions through concurrent City Planning studies including TOcore and the Midtown Focus Review: Growth, Infrastructure and Built Form Review.

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ATTACHMENTS

Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities – Phase 1
Summary Report

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/SIPA/Files/pdf/V/2016-09-08%20Growing%20Up%20Phase%201%20Summary_AODA%20FINAL_V2.pdf