

Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines - Supplementary Report

Date: January 24, 2018

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its meeting of November 15, 2017, a final report was tabled at the Planning and Growth Management Committee and recommended the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines be approved for use in the evaluation of current and new townhouse and low-rise apartment development applications, replacing the 2003 Infill Townhouse Guidelines. A monitoring period of at least two (2) years was also recommended to determine if any further revisions to the Guidelines, related policies and other implementation tools will be warranted for Council consideration.

The Planning and Growth Management Committee deferred consideration of the final report and requested City Staff to conduct further consultation with development industry representatives and resident associations.

Further consultation with development industry representatives and resident associations were conducted, which resulted in minor revisions to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines. The revisions were made to ensure that the Guidelines are clear, consistent, and achieve good urban design principles. These revisions retain the original intent of the Guidelines.

This Supplementary Report amends the previously submitted Final Report from the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, dated October 24, 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the "Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines" (Attachment 1) for use in the evaluation of current and new townhouse and low-rise apartment development applications, effectively replacing the 2003 Infill Townhouse Guidelines;

2. City Council direct City staff to monitor the effectiveness of the Guidelines, including the Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards (DIPS) and other related policies for a period of at least two (2) years to determine if any further revisions are warranted for Council consideration;
3. City Council direct City Staff to conduct staff training sessions for the "Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines" to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of the applicability, objectives, and limitations of these Guidelines; and
4. City Council direct the Chief Planner, in consultation with relevant City officials, to actively provide direction in cases where an application requires further review due to the complexity of a project or conflicting priorities. In some cases, the City's Design Review Panel should advise in this process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact to the City.

DECISION HISTORY

In February 2003, City Council adopted "Design Guidelines for Infill Townhouses" (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/council/cc030204/plt2rpt/cl004.pdf>). Council authorized City staff to use these Guidelines to inform the review of all new townhouse development applications city-wide.

At the January 5, 2012 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting, City Planning staff was requested to review "Pedestrian Considerations within Infill Developments" (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG10.14>), including the City's current "Urban Design Guidelines," in order to give increased consideration to the pedestrian realm, and report back to the Committee with any suggested revisions.

On May 14, 2015, Planning and Growth Management Committee adopted the report "Official Plan Five-Year Review: Urban Design Consultation Summary and Next Steps" (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG4.4>).

The report provided an overview of Phase I of the Urban Design Policy Consultations "Urban Design Matters" undertaken as part of the City of Toronto's Five-Year Official Plan Review. Feedback received by City Planning through the consultation process included the need to re-examine and clarify development criteria for low-rise buildings, as well as the need to establish urban design policies for low-rise developments.

On November 16, 2015, Planning and Growth Management Committee adopted the report with amendments on the "Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines Project".

Staff report for action – Supplementary Report – Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG8.12>

On November 15, 2017, Planning and Growth Management Committee deferred the consideration of the report and requested City Planning staff to conduct further consultation with development industry representatives and resident associations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG24.11>

COMMENTS

Further consultation with development industry representatives and resident associations were conducted after the November 15, 2017 Planning and Growth Management Committee. Minor revisions were made to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines to ensure the Guidelines are clear, consistent, and achieve good urban design principles. These revisions will retain the original intent of the Guidelines.

In addition to the recommended monitoring period of at least two (2) years on the effectiveness of the Guidelines included in the previous Final Report, this Supplementary Report recommends staff to create a "monitoring file" to track the effectiveness of the Guidelines, as well as continuously receive and record comments/feedbacks from City staff, the development industry, and external stakeholders. The monitoring period should track the use of the Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards (DIPS) in developments with public and private streets, as well as the implementation of shared amenity spaces within townhouse and low-rise apartment developments.

This Report also recommends City staff, as part of the monitoring program, provide regular "Consistency Workshops" to evaluate whether the development review process is consistent across the four (4) planning districts. These workshops will assist in achieving a more consistent application of the Guidelines. The consistency workshop will also act as a development review team to assist in complex development applications and monitor comments/feedbacks from the development industry and other stakeholders on the Guidelines.

This Supplementary Report recommends the implementation of a City staff training program on the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines across relevant City Divisions and Districts. Staff training will focus on the applicability, objectives, and limitations of the Guidelines, conducted in a series of workshops and site tours. Sessions will include relevant City staff/officials and building industry representatives to explore technical and "real-world" challenges.

Finally, this Supplementary Report recommends that in cases where City staff and applicants cannot come to an agreement, the Chief Planner will, in consultation with relevant City officials, actively provide direction in cases where an application requires further review due to the complexity of a project or conflicting priorities. In some cases, the City's Design Review Panel should advise in this process.

Minor revisions have been made to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines to respond to comments received through the additional consultation sessions conducted on December 15, 2017 and January 8, 2018 with the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and on January 16, 2018 with representatives from Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) and Bayview Village Association. The following are descriptions of revisions made to the Guidelines:

- Refinements to the Introduction section to provide additional language to clarify the intent and role of the Guidelines;
- Additional text and changes to several guidelines to improve clarity of understanding and applicability; and
- Removed and revised several guidelines covered in other City documents or in the zoning by-laws.

The revisions aim to provide more clarity and precision to the Guidelines, while eliminating duplications between the Guidelines and other City documents or in the zoning by-laws.

CONTACT

Lorna Day, Director, Urban Design
Email: Lorna.Day@toronto.ca
Tel (416) 392-1126 Fax (416) 392-1744

Joseph Luk, Urban Designer, Urban Design
Email: Joseph.Luk@toronto.ca
Tel (416) 392-0759 Fax (416) 392-1744

SIGNATURE

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: The Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines
Attachment 2: Revisions Matrix to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines