



## REPORT FOR ACTION

### Official Plan Review: Draft Built Form Policies

**Date:** May 15, 2018

**To:** Planning and Growth Management Committee

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

**Wards:** All

#### SUMMARY

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This report presents draft changes to Section 3.1.2, Built Form and Section 3.1.3, Built Form - Tall Buildings, of the Official Plan for the purpose of public consultation as part of the Five Year Review of the Official Plan. The draft policy changes are intended to strengthen the existing policies and provide greater clarity through new policies that describe common built form types and the roles and requirements of each type. A draft Official Plan Amendment is appended as Attachment 1 to this report. Attachment 2 demonstrates how the draft amendments would be incorporated into Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 of the Official Plan if approved.

The draft policies add clarity to the existing policy framework as it pertains to a number of urban design objectives including guiding built form by: introducing criteria for low-rise developments and mid-rise buildings; and refining existing criteria for tall buildings.

The draft policies have been formulated to address issues raised as a result of feedback received through citywide consultation and background research.

The draft policies are also intended to address the recently released Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, which includes new and revised policies and definitions for Complete Communities, Complete Streets, the Public Realm and Compact Built Form that emphasize a high-quality, attractive and vibrant public realm, the efficient use of land, the integration of green infrastructure, social equity and quality of life, and a well-connected network of walkable neighbourhoods and destinations that encourage active transportation.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division recommends that the Planning and Growth Management Committee:

1. Direct that the draft Official Plan Amendment containing Built Form policies appended to this report in Attachment 1 be endorsed as the basis for public consultation.

2. Direct City Planning staff to conduct open house(s) in each community council district, and meet with key stakeholders including resident and ratepayer associations, BILD and the Ontario Association of Architects to obtain comments and feedback regarding the draft revisions to the policies for Built Form contained in Attachment 1.

3. Request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division to prepare a Final Recommendation Report with a proposed Official Plan Amendment containing revised policies for Built Form to the Planning and Growth Management Committee in Q2, 2019 for a special meeting in fulfilment of Section 26 of the *Planning Act*.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on February 6, 2012, City Council adopted the report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, summarizing the completed Stage 1 consultations for the Five Year Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews, and identifying thematic areas for policy amendments to be considered as part of the work program for Stage 2 of the Official Plan Review. Council also requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to prepare reports containing proposed Official Plan amendments by thematic areas and directed staff to first address matters required to be part of the Official Plan Review under S. 26 of the Planning Act, such as Growth Plan conformity, employment lands policies and heritage policies. The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG10.8>

Since the inception of the Official Plan Review, a number of thematic policy amendments have been adopted by Council, including the following:

- Heritage Policies (OPA 199) – adopted April 2013 (in effect)
- Section 37 (OPA 214) – adopted July 2013 (in effect)
- Economic Health and Employment Lands (OPA 231) – adopted December 2013 (partial approval)
- Transportation Policies (OPA 274) – adopted August 2014 (in effect)
- Environment (OPA 262) – adopted November 2015 (in effect)
- Neighbourhoods/Apartment Neighbourhoods (OPA 320) – adopted December 2015 (under appeal)
- Greenbelt Conformity (OPA 346) – adopted May 2016 (in effect)

In addition, two secondary plans for Urban Growth Centres contain built form policies specific to their respective geographies. TOcore, the Downtown Plan, was considered at Planning and Growth Management Committee (PGMC) on May 1, 2018. The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.4>.

Midtown in Focus, the proposed Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan, will be considered at the June 7, 2018 PGMC meeting.

At its meeting on January 15, 2018, PGMC endorsed a draft official plan amendment, containing public realm policies and draft terms of reference for a Block Context Plan, as the basis for public consultation. PGMC directed staff to conduct an open house(s) in each community council district, and meet with key stakeholders to obtain comments and feedback regarding the draft revisions. The Decision History can be accessed at this link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG25.7>

## COMMENTS

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### Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

#### *The Provincial Policy Statement*

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 ("PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- The efficient and wise use and management of land and infrastructure over the long term in order to minimize impacts on air, water and other resources;
- Protection of the natural and built environment;
- Building strong, sustainable and resilient communities that enhance health and social well-being by ensuring opportunities exist locally for employment;
- Residential development promoting a mix of housing; recreation, parks and open space; and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit; and
- Encouraging a sense of place in communities, by promoting well-designed built form and by conserving features that help define local character.

The PPS guides the development of official plan policies and informs decisions on other planning and development matters. All decisions of Council affecting land use planning matters "shall be consistent with" the Provincial Policy Statement.

#### *The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (the "Growth Plan") provides a strategic framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region including:

- Setting minimum density targets within settlement areas and related policies directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, cultivate a culture of conservation and promote compact built form and better-designed communities with high quality built form and

an attractive and vibrant public realm established through site design and urban design standards;

- Directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;
- Building complete communities with a diverse range of housing options, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work;
- Retaining viable employment lands and encouraging municipalities to develop employment strategies to attract and retain jobs;
- Minimizing the negative impacts of climate change by undertaking stormwater management planning that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates green infrastructure; and
- Recognizing the importance of watershed planning for the protection of the quality and quantity of water and hydrologic features and areas.

Amendments to the Growth Plan, which came into effect on July 1, 2017, include policies pertaining to the development of a high quality public realm and compact built form that promote pedestrian-friendly, walkable neighbourhoods and the use of transit and active transportation. The Growth Plan requires municipalities to "develop and implement urban design and site design official plan policies and other supporting documents that direct the development of a high quality public realm and compact built form".

### **Draft Official Plan Amendments to Section 3.1.2 Built Form**

Draft amendments to Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan form Attachment 1 to this report and are described below. The draft policies in this section apply to all building types and include policies pertaining to: building location and organization; the relationship between buildings and the street; transition in scale between buildings of different heights and/or intensities; the space between buildings; building articulation and design; and, indoor and outdoor amenity spaces.

The Official Plan's current in-force Built Form section requires that new development "fit with its existing and/or planned context" through a number of objectives including thoughtful massing, location and organization of buildings and servicing. The policies focus primarily on the relationship between new development and the public realm, requiring new development to support, improve, and limit impacts on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces. The draft amendments described in this report aim to strengthen and clarify this relationship, while also addressing the relationship and transition between new and existing buildings.

#### *Building Location, Organization and Massing*

Policy 1 of the Built Form section states that new development will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces through the use of setbacks, building entrance locations, ground floor uses and the preservation of mature trees. Policy 2 of the Built Form section requires that building servicing and access be located and organized to minimize their impact on surrounding properties and improve the safety and attractiveness of adjacent streets, parks and open spaces. These policies are proposed

to be modified to emphasize the relationship between built form and the public realm, and in particular the role that site design plays in contributing to the safety, attractiveness and use of the public realm through the provision of physical and visual space.

Policy 3 of the Built Form section states that new development will be massed and designed to fit harmoniously into its existing or planned context through various criteria. This policy is proposed to be replaced with a number of new draft policies that better articulate the intent of these criteria (described below).

### *Street Proportion, Transition and Spacing*

Street proportion is the ratio of the height of buildings along the edges of the street and the width of the space between the buildings. Street proportion, building transition and building spacing work in concert to increase access to sunlight, daylight and skyview from both the public realm and within buildings.

A new Draft Policy 3 and revised sidebar establish the importance of street proportion as a fundamental determinant in the character of the street and a measure for the provision of comfortable sun and wind conditions on the public realm. The draft policy requires that new development be located and massed to define and frame the edges of the public realm with good street proportion to enhance the utility of the public realm through a number of design criteria that contribute towards improved pedestrian conditions.

A new Draft Policy 4 requires the provision of built form transition in scale between areas of different heights and/or intensity of use, and clarifies how transition is measured and provided for through the application of separation distances, angular planes, stepping down of heights and the location and orientation of buildings. A new Draft Policy 5 provides requirements for building spacing in order to limit overlook between buildings and provide greater opportunities for landscaping and access to sunlight from within buildings.

### *Building Design and Articulation*

Civic buildings are often designed as expressive landmarks that are intended to draw attention and demonstrate design excellence. This is an appropriate treatment for these types of buildings; however, when numerous other buildings are designed this way they can detract from the identity, skyline and urban fabric of the City.

Draft Policy 6 seeks to establish greater built form cohesion throughout the City and create a sophisticated urban fabric by limiting the number of buildings that are designed with individual expression as a primary objective. The draft policy recognizes scale, proportion, materiality, rhythm and fit as elements that should be considered in the design of new buildings, such that each new building is designed primarily to contribute to the streetscape and broader public realm.

Draft Policy 7 builds on this direction by recognizing the City's unique urban fabric that contains numerous heritage resources that should be celebrated and made prominent

through the careful design of new buildings. The draft policy requires development to reinforce the scale, character, form and setting of heritage resources and heritage conservation districts by providing sensitive massing and placement of new buildings.

### *Amenity Space*

Policy 5 of the in-force Official Plan requires new development to provide amenity for adjacent streets and open spaces to make them attractive, interesting, comfortable and functional spaces for pedestrians. Policy 6 of the in-force Official Plan requires the provision of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces for residents of new buildings. In addition to draft modifications to these policies to more clearly articulate the intended policy outcomes for new development, two new draft policies (Draft Policies 11 and 12) are included in Attachment 1 to address the design objectives of indoor and outdoor common element amenity spaces.

### **Draft Official Plan Amendments to Section 3.1.3 Built Form - Tall Buildings**

Draft amendments to Section 3.1.3 of the Official Plan are included in Attachment 1 to this report and are described below. A key direction adopted by PGMCM was to develop specific criteria for low-rise and mid-rise developments, including policy direction on heights, appropriate locations and design considerations. The draft changes to Section 3.1.3 rename the section to *Built Form - Building Typologies* and expand the policy framework to include height and design criteria for Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Buildings, Mid-Rise Buildings and Tall Buildings. The policies in this section provide criteria that must be applied in addition to the general built form policies of Section 3.1.2.

### *Site Composition*

Draft Policy 1 of Section 3.1.3 encourages a mix of building typologies on larger sites that can accommodate more than one building. Where proposals for new development include more than one building, Draft Policy 1 requires development to ensure appropriate site composition and coordination of different building types through the application of various design criteria.

### *Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Buildings*

Where appropriate and deemed to be compatible with the area context and prevailing building types, townhouse and low-rise apartment buildings can increase the range of housing types and provide grade-related housing in a form that is more intensive than single- and semi-detached houses. Draft Policy 2 of Section 3.1.3 establishes a maximum height of four storeys for this building typology. Draft Policy 3 establishes additional design criteria for townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings including: providing building entrances that have direct access from public streets, pedestrian mews and walkways; integrating new development with and maintaining on site grades at the property line; and, providing appropriate facing distances, angular planes and setbacks between low-rise buildings to ensure adequate sunlight on ground floor units.

### *Mid-Rise Buildings*

Mid-rise buildings are a form of development that provides for good transition and relationship to streets, parks and open spaces. Typically found along *Avenues* and major streets in *Mixed-Use Areas*, they help establish and reinforce an urban environment and support transit infrastructure while maintaining an open view to the sky and good access to sunlight from the public realm.

Draft Policy 4 establishes the height of mid-rise buildings as greater than four storeys with a maximum height generally equivalent to the width of the right-of-way that they front onto. Draft Policy 5 provides design criteria for determining the appropriate height of mid-rise buildings on particular sites, including: providing a streetwall height consistent with the existing and/or planned context; maintaining street proportion and access to skyview using step-backs; and, providing articulation and massing to break up long building facades.

### *Tall Buildings*

One of the policy directions established through public consultation and adopted by PGMC is encouraging thoughtfully designed tall buildings. Section 3.1.3 of the Official Plan recognizes that tall buildings come with larger civic responsibilities and obligations than other buildings, and that not all sites are appropriate for tall buildings. Policy 1 of this section establishes that tall buildings should be designed to consist of three carefully integrated parts: a base building, a middle shaft and a top. Policy 2 of this section states that tall building proposals will address certain key urban design considerations. These policies are proposed to be expanded and strengthened to provide more direction on where tall buildings may be appropriate and the design criteria for each of the three tall building components.

Draft Policy 6 of Section 3.1.3 establishes that tall buildings are generally those buildings greater in height than the width of the adjacent right-of-way. Draft Policy 7 provides design criteria to help determine whether or not a tall building is appropriate for a particular site, including criteria pertaining to maximum floorplate sizes, minimum tower separation distances and visual impacts of tower locations from the public realm and neighbouring properties.

Draft Policy 8 expands on the in-force Policy 1 pertaining to the base, middle and top of tall buildings. The draft policy provides design criteria for each of the three tall building components that contribute to good street proportion, an enhanced public realm and a cohesive skyline.

## **Next Steps**

### *Public Consultation*

Staff received direction from Planning and Growth Management Committee on January 15, 2018 to consult with the public on draft modifications to the Public Realm policies of Section 3.1.1 of the Official Plan. Public consultation on the draft amendments presented in this report can occur in tandem with the Public Realm amendment

consultations scheduled to occur throughout 2018, in accordance with Recommendation 2 of this report.

Conducting public and stakeholder consultation throughout 2018 will ensure that these two substantial citywide policy matters are subject to a thorough and multi-faceted consultation approach. Following the conclusion of the consultation process, a final report including a summary of the public and stakeholder feedback and the proposed Official Plan Amendments for both the Public Realm and Built Form sections is anticipated to be brought forward to PGMC in Q2, 2019.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment  
Attachment 2: Incorporated Draft Policy Revisions with the In-Force Official Plan