

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods

Date: June 26, 2020

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On July 16, 2019, City Council adopted Member Motion MM9.36 entitled "Expanding Housing Options in Toronto - Tackling the Missing Middle and the Yellowbelt". The motion directed City Planning to report on options and a timeline to increase housing options and planning permissions in areas of Toronto designated as Neighbourhoods in Toronto's Official Plan and to consult with registered community associations. In addition, staff were to include opportunities for a missing middle pilot in Ward 19 - Beaches-East York.

The term "missing middle" refers to housing types ranging from duplexes to low-rise walk-up apartments, all of which can be found in many parts of Toronto today, but which are also limited in where they can be newly built.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the recommended approach and work plan described in Attachment 1 - Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods;
2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to consult with the public, various stakeholders including community associations, and equity seeking groups to provide for a broad and inclusive consultation process;
3. City Council endorse the following priority projects for staff to commence work on the work plan and direct staff to report back on Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments that could advance consideration of these matters:
 - a. Increasing permissions for additional residential dwelling units generally within currently permitted building envelopes in residential zones;

- b. permissions for other forms of low-rise housing in areas designated as Neighbourhoods, along Major Streets; and
- c. Allowing garden suites, coach houses, through-lot suites, and other forms of additional units in accessory buildings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in the report in the current budget year.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 16, 2019, City Council adopted MM9.36 - Expanding Housing Options in Toronto- Tackling the Missing Middle and the 'Yellowbelt'
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.36>

At its meeting of October 29 and 30, 2019 City Council adopted PH 9.4 - Focusing on Building Design Improvements
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH9.4>

At its meeting on October 29 and 30, 2019, City Council adopted MM11.27 - Financial Barriers to Legalization of Non-compliant Units in Ground Level Housing
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM11.27>

COMMENTS

Much has changed in the past year, but Toronto still faces substantial housing needs across the spectrum of types, tenures, and levels of affordability. Allowing more variety in the type and form of housing that can be built in the City's neighbourhoods is one solution, among others, to increase housing choice and access for current and future residents of Toronto. This report establishes a work program for reviewing, consulting on, and advancing permissions to allow low-rise housing in neighbourhoods.

The proposed work program consists of short, medium, and longer term options to consider changes to the City's Official Plan, Zoning By-laws, supported by a review of infrastructure capacity and consideration of financial tools to support "gentle density" in Neighbourhoods while considering affordability, resilience, and equity. The work program also includes priority actions intended to be developed quickly in response to the City's demonstrated need for housing options in Neighbourhoods. These priority actions are intended to increase housing options that fit with the current scale of Toronto's residential neighborhoods and include: permitting new types of housing such as garden suites and coach houses; increasing housing types permitted within areas

designated as *Neighbourhoods* on Major Streets, as shown on Official Plan Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets; and allowing duplexes and triplexes in areas of the City where they are currently not permitted. The analysis will determine specific recommendations for how and where to implement these actions. Together, these changes can help facilitate and allow more varied housing while enhancing livability over time.

In developing this work program, City Planning engaged with the Toronto Planning Review Panel, registered Community Associations and residents in Ward 19, a potential missing middle pilot area. A majority of all groups consulted to date were open to a conversation on increasing housing options in *Neighbourhoods* and highlighted both benefits and challenges associated with increased housing options. Feedback from this engagement informed the proposed work program and will continue to inform future consultation.

With the conversation about neighbourhood change ongoing, inclusive public engagement is critical to adapting and implementing this work program. This report takes stock of current housing options and development in neighbourhoods, introduces additional options, and proposes to engage in a robust conversation about these new types of housing with the residents of this city—both those who live in *Neighbourhoods* and those who might like to live in them.

The report focuses on six categories of action: engage, enable, facilitate, study, pilot and monitor. Key actions proposed are:

- public consultation and design exercises;
- enabling additional housing options such as garden suites, additional units within permitted building envelopes, and more dense low-rise housing options on major streets;
- reviewing parking standards, infrastructure capacity, and the financial viability of additional housing options;
- consulting on potential Official Plan amendments;
- pursuing resilient low carbon development; and
- building demonstration projects through design competitions or other site activation initiatives.

Toronto is pushing forward on a range of policy initiatives to broaden and safeguard our housing supply, from secondary suites and laneway suites, to advancing Inclusionary Zoning and protecting dwelling rooms threatened with redevelopment. Exploring further ways to increase housing options is a next phase in this continuum of work. Given the

complexity of Toronto's housing challenges, a multi-faceted approach is required and the adaptability and responsiveness of local government and residents will play a considerable role in our shared success. This initiative represents a generational opportunity to reimagine and evolve Toronto's extensive low rise neighbourhoods as more inclusive places for existing and future residents to call home.

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Expanding Housing Options in *Neighbourhoods*
- Attachment 2: Planning Review Panel - Summary of Advice (December 7, 2019)
- Attachment 3: City Planning Neighbourhood Survey - Consultant Report (June, 2020)