

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study - Interim Report

Date: November 10, 2021

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The Multiplex study is part of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative, intended to support the construction of a range of low-rise housing across the City's low-rise neighbourhoods, increasing both the variety and type of housing available in these areas. The scope of this study includes multiplexes - buildings with two, three, and four units - and low-rise apartment buildings.

This study on expanding Multiplex housing permissions relates to a number of City and Provincial policy objectives to provide a full range of housing options to Torontonians, in a form that makes efficient use of land, infrastructure, and existing services. These low-rise housing forms are compatible with the Official Plan's objective that physical change to *Neighbourhoods* will be sensitive, gradual, and fit the existing physical character.

This report presents research to date on the expansion of multiplex permissions in Toronto's *Neighbourhoods*, initial consultation outcomes, and ideas for further consultation in the fourth quarter of 2021 and first quarter of 2022.

The results of technical review, further research, and feedback provided during the consultation will help shape policy proposals, potential zoning changes, and Official Plan policy amendments to be presented to Planning and Housing Committee in the second quarter of 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Planning and Housing Committee direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to undertake further community and stakeholder consultation and technical review of the ideas presented in this report to facilitate expanded permissions for multiplex building types in *Neighbourhoods*, and report back with recommended policy, zoning and process changes by the end of Q2 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

EQUITY STATEMENT

Access to safe, good quality and affordable housing is an important determinant of physical and mental health, and a fundamental goal of the City's Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan, which was developed after the Government of Canada recognized that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental right affirmed in international law. Adequate and affordable housing is also the cornerstone of inclusive neighbourhoods, supports the environment, and improves the socio-economic status of individuals, families, and communities as a whole. The Toronto Seniors Strategy identifies the need to create housing to facilitate aging in place across the City as part of the Housing TO Action Plan.

As Toronto looks to rebuild and recover after COVID-19, the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative can directly advance recommendations laid out in the Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto report. Specifically, Recommendation 68 of the report calls on the City to apply the principle of “build back better” to land use planning and improve the city's overall built form by prioritizing gentle density that places greater emphasis on a mix of building types and uses – including low-rise residential, retail and services – and that supports transit use.

Expanding housing options in neighbourhoods is an important step towards increasing and accelerating the creation of a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional units and affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes. Broadening the types and sizes of units available in low-rise neighbourhoods makes them more accessible to a diverse range of people and need, leading to a more equitable and inclusive community. By extension, the initiative will broaden access to parks, schools, local institutions and small-scale stores and shops within the city's neighborhoods.

In advance of bringing forward amendments to Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations to facilitate more low-rise housing in residential neighbourhoods, staff will extend engagement efforts to equity-deserving and marginalized groups and organizations including persons with disabilities, low-income households, Black and racialized groups, vulnerable seniors, women, and youth. Staff will also be engaging with indigenous peoples as rights holders and original stewards of Tkaronto.

CLIMATE IMPACT

On October 2, 2019, City Council voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, adopting a stronger emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050 or sooner. In response, the City is currently conducting technical modelling on climate actions for the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, to be presented to City Council in late 2021. Climate and resilience considerations and recommendations are also included in the September 2020 report from the Toronto Office of Recovery & Rebuild.

Permitting multiplexes helps reduce GHG emissions through the efficient use of land and resources. Density within built up areas enables low carbon transportation choices, such as walking, cycling, and public transit. Housing built in Toronto also reduces sprawl and reduces transportation-driven GHG emissions regionally. Density enables the use of existing infrastructure, which avoids carbon-intensive infrastructure built elsewhere. Smaller buildings such as multiplexes and low-rise apartments can more easily achieve net zero operational emissions, and low carbon materials are readily available at this scale. These buildings are also more easily deconstructed and much of the existing material can be salvaged and reused. The City Planning Division will continue to consider expanding housing options in low-rise neighbourhoods through a climate impact lens, and specifically work to mitigate impacts on the City's soft landscaping and water permeable areas and tree canopy.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 418 to encourage the creation of second units to increase the supply and availability of rental housing within neighbourhoods across the city.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG31.4>

On July 16, 2019, City Council adopted the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments permitting Laneway Suites in R, RD, RS, RT and RM zones under Zoning By-law 569-2013 across the city, excepting the residential zones in the Ramsden Park, Asquith-Collier, and Yorkville neighbourhoods.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH7.1>

On July 28, 2020, City Council endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Work Plan Report and endorsed City Planning proceeding with several priority initiatives in 2020-2021, including developing permissions for new types of accessory housing such as Garden Suites.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH15.6>

On January 19, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Beaches-East York Pilot Project report and requested City planning to work on the design and construction of projects as part of the Beaches-East York Pilot Project.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH20.3>

On June 28, 2021 Planning and Housing Committee requested City Planning to consult on draft Garden Suites regulations and to bring forward a final report detailing Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit Garden Suites to the Planning and Housing Committee Meeting in the fourth quarter of 2021.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH25.15>

Toronto Housing Charter and Strategic Plan

The Toronto Housing Charter states:

It is the policy of the City of Toronto that fair access to a full range of housing is fundamental to strengthening Toronto's economy, its environmental efforts, and the health and social well-being of its residents and communities.

The City's Strategic Priorities are the key pillars to improve quality of life for Torontonians. Success in these priorities will result in a more livable, healthy, safe, prosperous, affordable and resilient Toronto.

- Maintain and create housing that's affordable - We are committed to a city where families and individuals live in safe, stable and affordable housing with respect and dignity.
- Keep Toronto moving - We are committed to a city with safe, affordable and accessible transportation choices for people and goods.
- Invest in people and neighbourhoods - We are committed to a city that protects and improves quality of life for all, including safety, health, social and economic wellbeing and inclusion.
- Tackle climate change and build resilience - We are committed to fighting climate change and preparing our city government, our economy, our ecosystems, and our communities, especially the most vulnerable communities, for a changing climate.

Multiplex Study Overview

The Multiplex study is part of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative, which comprises a number of studies being undertaken to develop policy and zoning permissions for 'missing middle' housing types. The intent of this initiative is to support the construction of a range of low-rise housing across the City's low-rise neighbourhoods, specifically areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* in the City's Official Plan, increasing both the variety and type of housing available in these areas. Many types of 'missing middle' housing can be found across the City, but they are also limited in where they can be newly built.

Areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* are shown in yellow on the Official Plan land use maps. This designation makes up approximately 35% of Toronto's total land area. Currently, about 70% of the lands designated *Neighbourhoods* have a zoning permission to allow only detached houses and a secondary suite. Allowing a greater variety of housing to be built across the city is a critical part of addressing Toronto's housing needs, providing more housing options in more locations for a range of household structures, for people at different ages and incomes, for people to move within their current neighbourhoods, and for new residents to find a suitable home.

While not directly addressing housing affordability, an increased supply of units improves access to the city's low-rise neighbourhoods for more residents. Change in *Neighbourhoods* must respond to the housing, mobility, climate, and equity challenges at the centre of Toronto's next decade of growth and beyond.

In July 2020, City Council directed staff to report back on Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments that could advance consideration of several priority projects, including "increasing permissions for additional residential dwelling units generally within currently permitted building envelopes in residential zones". Permitting multiplex housing in more areas of the city will create more opportunities for communities to evolve with additional low-rise housing options, at a scale that is generally consistent with existing structures in low-rise neighbourhoods across Toronto.

What are the opportunities?

The City has a variety of tools to enable additional housing units to be built in low-rise neighbourhoods, including the planning policy and zoning framework, fee structure, and review processes. With respect to multiplexes, these opportunities are:

- Streamlining zoning to make it easier to convert existing buildings to multiplexes and build new multiplex buildings. The City can identify and adjust the zoning regulations that most often limit the building of multiplexes as-of-right.
- Utilizing the building envelopes permitted for single-unit dwelling types to house additional units. In many cases, current zoning permissions for single detached dwellings can yield a gross floor area that can be employed to house multiple units within the same size of buildings.
- Developing a simplified approach that can be applied to a diversity of neighbourhood types, ages and zoning parameters city-wide. The rules and process of adding units to one's property should be easy to understand and navigate for the average homeowner.
- Clarifying the qualities that contribute to livable neighbourhoods which also support the expansion of multiplex permissions. Official Plan policies and zoning regulations manage growth in our city in a manner that not only considers built form characteristics but also the social and environmental aspects that help create vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods.

Study Scope

The City Planning Multiplex team was assembled to advance one of the four priority projects identified in the July 2020 Work Plan endorsed by Council, specifically, increasing permissions for additional residential dwelling units generally within currently permitted building envelopes in residential zones.

For the purpose of this study, a 'multiplex' refers to a building type with more than one unit, which can include duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes containing two, three and four units respectively. A multiplex can be purpose-built or can be created through the conversion of an existing building. A unit in this context means a living accommodation for a person or persons living together as a single housekeeping unit, in which both food

preparation and sanitary facilities are provided for the exclusive use of the occupants of the unit.

As the Multiplex team continues to review appropriate forms of gentle density in neighbourhoods, the scope of the study has expanded to also consider low-rise apartment buildings with five or more units, up to four storeys in height, particularly near rapid transit and amenities. Given the unique design considerations for townhouse development, most recently studied in the City's Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines (2018), the Multiplex team has not extended its focus to this building type.

Initial Findings

The EHON report presented to City Council in July 2020 notes that some areas in Toronto's low-rise neighbourhoods have experienced declining populations or limited growth in recent years. Areas with declining populations have 220,000 fewer people since 2001, with children and early to mid-career adults underrepresented in the current demographics, suggesting that public infrastructure in these areas may be underused. One of goals of the Multiplex study is to better use this existing infrastructure while providing more housing options for Torontonians.

The Multiplex team considered the areas of opportunity where multiplex housing permissions could be expanded at a range of scales: within walking distance (generally 500 metres) of higher-order transit; within walking distance of Toronto's main streets; and within walking distance of any transit stop including along bus routes.

Preliminary analysis found that:

- 19% of the city's *Neighbourhoods* are located within 500 metres of existing and planned subway, LRT, or GO stations (potential Major Transit Station Areas);
- 55% of the city's *Neighbourhoods* are located within 500 metres of Official Plan-designated Major Streets that are also designated *Mixed Use Areas* where retail and other amenities are encouraged; and
- Over 66% of the city's *Neighbourhoods* are located within 500 metres of a bus or streetcar stop on the TTC's frequent Ten-Minute Network, and 96% of *Neighbourhoods* are located within 500 metres of any TTC services.

Further, in 2019, 55% of Toronto's population and employment was located within 500 metres of a cycling route and 87% within 1 kilometre.

The City together with the Provincial and Federal governments are in the midst of multi-year expansions and improvements to the overall transit network and the cycling network.

At present, in residential zones that permit multiplexes, conversions or new construction of multiplex building types occurs at an incremental rate. An analysis of Committee of Adjustment data in Toronto *Neighbourhoods* showed that between 2010-2020, there were only 226 applications for minor variances to construct, legalize/maintain, or add units in multiplex building types, representing approximately 330 net new units. This

analysis suggests that multiplex development is expected to happen gradually over a long period of time, as opportunities arise for property owners to exercise this option.

Given the historical modest rate of development of multiplex housing in zones where the use is currently permitted, initial analysis suggests that permitting multiplexes in all Residential-zoned lands across the city would allow incremental growth to occur within walking distance to TTC service and allow for flexibility in housing types for people in all of Toronto's *Neighbourhoods* while making use of existing infrastructure and amenities for daily living. Within Major Transit Station Areas served by higher-order transit, it may be appropriate to permit low-rise apartment buildings in addition to existing multiplexes. Low-rise apartments can accommodate more units than multiplexes, allowing more people to live within proximity to transit and helping the City achieve provincial minimum density targets around MTSAs.

The following outlines the progress of work done to date to support this initial direction.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Act

The Planning Act was recently amended to require that municipalities in Ontario update their Official Plan policies to allow the use of two residential units in a detached house, semi-detached house, or rowhouse and the use of a residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse.

The Planning Act also restricts the ability to appeal policies or by-laws passed by a municipality which give effect to these additional unit permissions. The Planning Act intends that, at the minimum, residential lots should allow a main dwelling house, an accessory dwelling unit within the house, and an accessory dwelling unit separate from the main house for a total of three units.

Section 2 of the Planning Act establishes matters of provincial interest to which City Council shall have regard in carrying out its responsibilities, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing; the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians; and the appropriate location of growth and development.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 ("PPS")

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong healthy communities, wise use and management of resources, and the protection of public health and safety. The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS includes policies on key issues affecting communities, such as:

- managing and directing land use to achieve efficient and resilient development and land use patterns;
- coordination of planning matters across municipal boundaries and levels of government;
- planning for, protecting, and preserving employment areas;
- providing for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents;
- planning public spaces, recreation, parks, trails and open space to promote healthy, active communities;
- providing infrastructure and public service facilities in an efficient manner that prepares for climate change impacts and projected needs;
- supporting long-term economic prosperity; and
- supporting energy conservation, air quality improvements, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and preparation for climate change impacts.

The PPS came into effect on May 1, 2020 and includes enhanced policy direction intended to encourage an increase in the mix and supply of housing. In support of this goal, the PPS identifies in Policy 1.1.1:

"Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:

b) accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons), employment (including industrial and commercial), institutional (including places of worship, cemeteries and long-term care homes), recreation, park and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs".

Another addition to the PPS 2020 is the new term housing options which specifically includes multiplexes, in addition to other forms of housing. PPS Policy 1.4.3 b), below, directs planning authorities to permit and facilitate all housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Policy 1.4.3 b) of the PPS directs planning authorities to permit and facilitate:

"1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities; and
2. all types of residential intensification, including additional residential units, and redevelopment in accordance with Policy 1.1.3.3."

Other policies relating to new housing and residential intensification include: Policy 1.4.3

d) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed; and Policy 1.4.3

f) establishing development standards for residential intensification which minimize the cost of housing and facilitate compact form, while maintaining appropriate levels of public health and safety.

Policy 4.6 of the PPS recognizes and acknowledges Official Plans as the most important documents for implementing the policies within the PPS.

Unchanged in the PPS are other supportive policy directions providing for an appropriate range and mix of housing types, to be provided for in consideration of the city's long term economic prosperity, growth management planning, land use patterns, transit supportive development, and broader housing needs.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) (the "Growth Plan (2020)") came into effect on August 28, 2020. The Growth Plan (2020) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City of Toronto forms an integral part.

The Growth Plan (2020) establishes policies that require implementation through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), which is a requirement pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan (2020). These policies include the establishment of minimum density targets for and the delineation of strategic growth areas (nodes, corridors and other areas that have been identified by municipalities or the Province to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher density mixed uses in a more compact built form), the conversion of provincially significant employment zones, and others.

Policies not expressly linked to a MCR can be applied as part of the review process for development applications, in advance of the next MCR. These policies include:

- directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources, and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm;
- directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;
- achieving complete communities with access to a diverse range of housing options, protected employment zones, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work;
- retaining viable lands designated as employment areas and ensuring redevelopment of lands outside of employment areas retains space for jobs to be accommodated on site;
- 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.

The Growth Plan (2020) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2020) take precedence over the policies of the

PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform to the Growth Plan (2020). Comments, submissions, or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform to the Growth Plan (2020).

City of Toronto Official Plan

The Official Plan (2006) is founded on a growth management strategy which steers growth and change to some parts of the city while generally protecting others from development pressures. The land use designations that distribute most of the increased jobs and population anticipated by this growth strategy are the *Mixed Use Areas*, *Regeneration Areas*, *Employment Areas* and *Institutional Areas*.

The *Neighbourhoods*, which comprise 35.4% of the city's land area, are described as "stable but not static", with some physical change expected over time. A key objective of the Plan is that new development be sensitive, gradual and "fit" the existing physical character to respect and reinforce the general physical patterns in a *Neighbourhood*. Policy 4.1.5 further specifies that proposed development within a *Neighbourhood* will be materially consistent with the prevailing physical character of properties in both the broader and immediate contexts.

Neighbourhoods are primarily made up of low density residential uses in low-scale building types, including detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes and various forms of townhouses, as well as interspersed apartments that are no higher than four storeys. Stacked townhouses are considered a form of apartment building. Parks, low scale local institutions, home occupations, cultural and recreational facilities and small-scale retail, service and office uses are also provided for in *Neighbourhoods*.

As part of the Official Plan review process initiated in 2011 and in consultation with the public, Council adopted revised Official Plan policies related to the *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* designations through Official Plan Amendment 320 (OPA 320).

These policies were adopted by Council on December 9, 2015 and approved by the LPAT on December 7, 2018 following several appeals. Modified policies related to *Neighbourhoods* in OPA 320 require development proposals to respect and reinforce the existing physical character of each geographic neighbourhood, with reference to characteristics including prevailing heights, massing, scale, densities, and dwelling types of nearby residential properties. The policies also contemplate more intense development on major streets, and provide more flexible criteria for infill development on atypical lots such as school sites, among other policies.

Housing policies in Section 3.2 of the Official Plan state 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." This

includes ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless people and at-risk groups, housing that meets the needs of people with disabilities and housing that makes more efficient use of the existing building stock.

City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013

On May 9, 2013, City Council enacted city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. The purpose of the new city-wide zoning by-law was to harmonize 43 former municipal by-laws from the pre-amalgamated City into one zoning by-law. The city-wide zoning by-law comprehensively regulates all land uses, buildings and structures. Although much of Zoning By-law 569-2013 is in force, some regulations are not in effect due to unresolved appeals at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

Zoning By-law 569-2013 is the relevant by-law to examine the zoning context for multiplex buildings in neighbourhoods, even though certain residential regulations remain under appeal. In a decision issued by the Ontario Land Tribunal on October 12, 2021, amended regulations regarding maximum permitted height, main wall height, basements, first floor height, amongst others, were approved in principle, thereby resolving the majority of outstanding appeals for the residential zone category.

Overview of Residential Zones in Toronto

The residential zone category in City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 permits uses associated with the *Neighbourhoods* designation in the Official Plan. This zone category includes a full range of low-rise residential building types contained within different zones. The residential zone category contains the following zones: Residential (R), Residential Multiple (RM), Residential Townhouse (RT), Residential Semi-Detached (RS), and Residential Detached (RD) and which are categorized by residential building type permissions:

- Residential (R) Zone permits a broad range of low-rise residential building types, including detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and apartment buildings.
- Residential Multiple (RM) Zone permits detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and apartment buildings, however, townhouses are not permitted.
- Residential Townhouse (RT) Zone permits townhouses, as well as detached and semi-detached homes.
- Residential Semi-Detached (RS) Zone permits semi-detached and detached houses.
- Residential Detached (RD) Zone permits only detached houses.

The residential zones generally include standard regulations which are summarized as follows:

- Permitted Uses: Residential uses, parks and some local institutions are generally permitted.

- Permitted Building Types: Each zone permits specific residential building types, with the R zone being the most permissive.
- Permitted Number of Residential Units: Properties may be subject to a restriction on the maximum number of residential units permitted on a lot. The maximum number of units is also limited by permitted building types, which are defined within Chapter 800 of the zoning by-law by unit counts.
- Lot Size: Properties are subject to minimum requirements for lot area, frontage, and depth.
- Density: Areas of the city, such as Toronto-East York, are subject to restrictions for maximum Floor Space Index, which is the ratio of gross floor area relative to the size of the lot.
- Lot Coverage: Areas of the city, such as North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke, are subject to restrictions on the maximum percentage of the lot that may be covered by any part of a building or structure above ground.
- Built Form Standards, which consist of:
 - Setbacks: This includes minimum front yard, side yard and rear yard setback requirements.
 - Height: Maximum height permissions vary across the city and are further differentiated by roof design and building type.
 - Building Length and Depth: Properties are subject to maximum permissions for the length of a building, which can vary according to building type.
- Parking: Parking standards include the minimum number of spaces and location requirements.
- Landscaping: These include minimum requirements regarding the amount of soft landscaping on the lot and within setbacks.

The residential zones in Zoning By-law 569-2013 also contain permissions for secondary suites and laneway suites, which contribute to the range of housing options within neighbourhoods. A secondary suite is a self-contained living accommodation with a kitchen and bathroom for the exclusive use of a household, which must be located within, and subordinate in size to, the primary dwelling unit. To encourage the construction of secondary suites across the city, Council enacted By-law 549-2019 in 2019 which removed minimum unit size requirements, introduced permissions for secondary suites in newly constructed and existing homes and reduced parking requirements. By-law 549-2019 also permits a pedestrian entrance leading exclusively to a secondary suite in the front wall of a town house, but not the front wall of a detached house or semi-detached house.

A laneway suite is a self-contained residential unit with kitchen and bathroom facilities, located in a separate building adjacent to a public laneway that is ancillary to the primary dwelling on the lot. Zoning permissions were introduced for laneway suites in 2018 and initially limited to the area of the city which corresponded to Toronto-East York District. These permissions were later expanded by Council in 2019 to apply on a city-wide basis.

COMMENTS

Approach

The Multiplex study is structured around four interdependent work streams:

- Policy - review and analysis of the existing planning framework governing low-rise residential neighbourhoods in Toronto, including Provincial legislation, Official Plan policies and the City-wide Zoning By-law;
- Design - consideration of practical challenges and opportunities to incorporate multiplex housing within low-rise building envelopes while maintaining liveability of units and responding to neighbourhood character;
- Financial - review of potential financial barriers to developing additional multiplex units and exploration of their reduction or removal; and
- Opportunity Areas – exploration of where, and under what circumstances and conditions the expansion of multiplex buildings is appropriate in *Neighbourhoods*.

The Multiplex study is supported by the development of a consultation strategy to solicit a diversity of views, interests, and real-life experiences in expanding multiplex permissions in Toronto's *Neighbourhoods*.

Review of Policy Context

Revisions included in the PPS and the Growth Plan (2020) have put a renewed emphasis on encouraging an increase in the mix and supply of housing. Specifically, the PPS includes directs municipalities to permit and facilitate all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents as well as all types of residential intensification. The definition of housing options within the PPS explicitly includes multiplexes, among other housing forms, while the definition of residential intensification includes the conversion or expansion of existing residential buildings to create new residential units or accommodation. The Multiplex Study specifically addresses both the PPS and the Growth Plan by examining how multiplexes could be accommodated in all residential zones across the City.

Through the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review, the City is required to delineate the boundaries for each of its Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and to demonstrate that each MTSA is planned for the established minimum target. Many of the City's MTSAs will include significant areas designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. Given their close proximity to rapid transit, it may appropriate to permit a wider range of low-rise housing options, including multiplexes and low-rise apartment buildings, in *Neighbourhoods* within MTSAs. The Multiplex project will ensure that development permissions for *Neighbourhoods* within MTSAs will allow the City to achieve Growth Plan density targets.

Policy Considerations of Introducing Multiplexes

The City's Official Plan is a comprehensive, cohesive, and integrated document which is intended to be read and applied as a whole. The Plan contains supportive language and policies regarding the provision of range of housing types, including multiplex housing,

across the City and within neighbourhoods. Other sections and policies of the Official Plan can, however, be interpreted as contrasting or even contradictory to the Plan's overall housing policy direction by preventing the construction of certain housing types where a range of housing types, including multiplex housing, are not already present as part of an area's prevailing built context. In effect, while the low scale neighbourhoods are intended primarily for residential development up to four storeys, the prevailing built context policies create sub categories where the evolution of housing is cautiously restricted to only what already exists. The weight given to physical form limits achievement of the Official Plan's many other stated objectives. There is room within the overall low scale built form in neighbourhoods to achieve a better balance.

Current Official Plan policy language that often inhibits the introduction of multiplexes is found in Chapter 4.1, within the development criteria that are evaluated when reviewing development in *Neighbourhoods*. Policy 4.1.5 currently reads, in part:

"Development in established *Neighbourhoods* will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of each geographic neighbourhood, including in particular:

- a) patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
- b) prevailing size and configuration of lots;
- c) prevailing heights, massing, scale, density and dwelling type of nearby residential properties;
- d) prevailing building type(s);
- e) prevailing location, design and elevations relative to the grade of driveways and garages;
- f) prevailing setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
- g) prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
- h) continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic neighbourhood; and,
- i) conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes."

Policy 4.1.5 primarily concerns the physical form of buildings and lots within a Neighbourhood. It defines "prevailing" to be the most frequently occurring. This policy also recognizes that there may be neighbourhoods where there is more than one prevailing physical character. The direction in these instances is to look at the immediate context and whether what is being proposed already has a significant presence on properties located in proximity to the development site. Criteria c) and d) noted above present challenging policy barriers to developing multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*, even in areas where multiplex building types are permitted in the zoning by-law. In practice, if multiplexes are not already present or do not have a significant presence (often described as 50%+1) in a neighbourhood, they are unlikely to be supported by City Planning staff, approved at the Committee of Adjustment, or supported at the Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) based on this policy.

Supplementary to understanding Policy 4.1.5, the sidebar entitled "Prevailing Building Types and Lot Patterns" currently reads, in part:

"Many zoning by-laws currently permit only single detached houses. The type of dwellings permitted varies among geographic neighbourhoods and these detailed residential use lists are contained in the established zoning by-laws, which will remain in place and establish the benchmark for what is to be permitted in the future. If, for example, an existing zoning by-law permits only single detached houses in a particular geographic neighbourhood and the prevailing building type in that neighbourhood is single detached dwellings, then the Plan's policies are to be interpreted to allow only single detached dwellings in order to respect and reinforce the established physical character of the neighbourhood ... While most *Neighbourhoods* will have one prevailing building type, some may have more. For example, multiples may prevail at the edge, along major streets, while singles prevail in the interior, along local roads."

This non-policy text guides the interpretation of Policy 4.1.5 to permit only single detached houses where the zoning determines this to be the planned context or what might generally be understood to be the future or anticipated context. However, it is important to note that the intent of the policy is to "respect and reinforce the established physical character of the neighbourhood." In *Neighbourhoods*, this is a low-rise character, generally four storeys or less.

To facilitate multiplex permissions across the City, the Multiplex team is carefully considering where Official Plan policy and interpretation can be revisited to allow more flexibility in building types, and better balance its intended outcomes for healthy, vibrant low-rise neighbourhoods to support broader housing objectives that support evolutionary change in keeping with the stated balance of "stable but not static".

Zoning By-law Considerations

Zoning By-law 569-2013 generally carries forward the land use permissions and residential development standards that were in place under the legacy zoning by-laws of the former municipalities. Development of the zoning by-law was approached primarily as a harmonization exercise with the principal emphasis of developing a common terminology, structure and set of defined zoning terms that apply across the city. In terms of the development performance standards, the city-wide zoning by-law largely preserves existing differences across the city, while continuing to accommodate the important variations in standards. This included a 'best practices' approach to resolving a number of significant definitional issues between the former municipal by-laws, such as: the maximum height of buildings; the density of buildings and how to calculate 'grade' on any given property. Although development of the city-wide zoning by-law did not focus on the modernization of development standards, some new regulations were introduced, including restrictions for main wall height and first floor height. These performance standards were created, in part, to preserve the existing character of neighbourhoods and to ensure that enactment of the new harmonized zoning by-law did not introduce substantial physical change to low-rise residential areas.

The current residential zones within Zoning By-law 569-2013 were modelled after the residential zone categories within the former municipal zoning by-laws, which were differentiated by permitted building types. Properties were assigned to a new residential

zone based on the building types that were originally permitted in the applicable former municipal by-law. As most neighbourhoods in pre-amalgamated Toronto permitted only single detached dwellings, the majority of residential properties in the districts of North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough were assigned to the RD zone in the city-wide zoning by-law. The RM and R zones correspond to residential zoning within the former municipalities of Etobicoke, York, and Toronto-East York, which allowed for a broader range of low-rise, multi-unit buildings, including multiplexes. The residential zoning in Zoning By-law 569-2013 largely reflects the planned vision for neighbourhoods that was implemented decades ago through legacy zoning, where single detached dwellings form the predominant building type and housing option within low-rise residential areas. Zoning generally was put in place concurrently with the planned subdivisions in the post war period while zoning generally came well after the pre-war areas of the former municipalities were developed.

In reviewing the current residential zoning standards in Zoning By-law 569-2013, the following issues currently pose a challenge to expanding the construction of multiplexes on a city-wide basis:

- Residential Zoning standards in Zoning By-law 569-2013 have not been modernized to reflect current housing needs or market demand for expanded housing options, as the development of the by-law was largely based on harmonizing legacy zoning standards.
- Most residential zones within Zoning By-law 569-2013 (RD, RS and RT) are structured around permissions for a predominant building type, and do not allow for a range of different building types in neighbourhoods to reflect varying levels of intensification. As the current approach to residential zoning focuses on building type exclusions rather than a form-based approach, multiplexes are not permitted in most neighbourhoods despite being contextually similar and compatible in many areas of the city.
- The Residential Detached (RD) zone, where detached houses are the only permitted building type, applies to approximately 31% of city's total land area. This zone category applies to the majority of land across the city designated as *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. Multiplexes are not permitted as-of-right in these areas.
- Multiplex buildings are only permitted within the RM and R zones. This constitutes 12% of lands across the city, and are primarily located within the former City of Toronto and Etobicoke.
- Zoning By-law definitions for multiplex building types and secondary suites can be unclear and difficult to interpret. For example, it can be difficult to distinguish between a duplex and a single detached dwelling with a secondary suite, particularly for proposals on larger lots.
- Zoning standards for multiplexes are found in the R zone, which contemplates development on smaller, narrow lots. The R zone standards are based on the Former Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86, which applied originally to Toronto-East York District and a tighter, fine grained lot fabric. As such, the current zoning standards for multiplexes have not been optimized for larger lots found in more suburban areas of the city.
- As properties in the districts of Scarborough, Etobicoke and North York are mostly zoned Residential Detached (RD), there are very few examples of multiplex

buildings in these areas. The lack of built examples of multiplexes within a suburban context makes it challenging to develop performance standards for these buildings on larger lots based on established precedent.

- There are however, examples of smaller post war subdivisions built with semis, and other multi-plex building types.
- The current residential zoning does not include performance standards which may contribute to the livability of multiplexes, including requirements for minimum unit sizes, family-sized units, private and shared amenity areas, sustainability features and bicycle parking requirements.

Precedent Cities – Lessons Learned

The Multiplex team undertook a jurisdictional review of North American cities where missing middle initiatives have recently been implemented, to help shape potential approaches to facilitating multiplex permissions in Toronto's neighbourhoods. The cities studied included Edmonton, Ottawa, Vancouver, Minneapolis, Portland and Seattle, with a particular focus on initiatives to add units in low-scale residential areas. In some cases, this review involved interviews with planning staff from these cities to reflect on successes and areas for improvement. It is important to note that the legislative tools available to these precedent cities in different provinces and in the United States will vary from the Ontario context. Despite these differences and variations in city size, history and rate of current growth, Toronto can learn from the work of these municipalities to identify and respond to opportunities for gentle density in neighbourhoods. The following highlights some of the various lessons learned, organized by theme:

Building and Unit Type Permissions

- All of the six cities include permissions for secondary suites, or accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on residential lands with the equivalent of single-detached zoning.
- Vancouver allows duplexes as-of-right in single-detached zones.
- Portland permits duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in its most common low-density residential zones
- Edmonton introduced a new use called Multi-unit Housing within its low-rise residential zones city-wide, defined as three or more dwellings arranged in any configuration of buildings on a lot with defined minimum site standards for width (7.5 m), depth (30 m) and area (300 m²).
- Ottawa has placed particular focus on the permissive regulation of small, low-rise apartment buildings and stacked dwellings in its inner urban neighbourhoods.
- Seattle applied its Lowrise 1 Zone to targeted neighbourhoods, encouraging infill rowhouse, townhouse and low-rise apartments, described as "similar in character to single-family zones" and the conversion of existing single-detached dwellings into duplexes or triplexes.
- Minneapolis allows for up to three units per residential lot city-wide, with denser multifamily housing to be focused on public transit routes, and higher densities along high-frequency routes and near metro stations.

Approaches to Density

- Portland implemented a sliding scale of FSI permissions based on building type, e.g. Single unit: 0.5 FSI; Duplex: 0.6 FSI; Triplex: 0.7 FSI.
- Edmonton replaced density maximums with minimums in some zones, while controlling maximum lot coverage.
- Seattle regulates the number of units permitted by lot area, e.g. 1 unit per 185 m².

Equity, Affordability and Accessibility

- Vancouver's standards focus on the livability of units, such as minimum unit size; and incentivizes secured rental projects through reduced parking and fees.
- Portland provides a bonus of 500 square feet (46.5 m²) for projects that include 1 affordable unit; in triplexes and fourplexes, at least one unit must be fully accessible.
- Portland offers a deeper affordability bonus allowing up to six units in a low-scale zone, with up to 1.2 FSI, if half are affordable rental units, or priced for affordable purchase.

Parking

- Multiple cities have eliminated, or made optional, minimum parking requirements for residential units.
- Where a lot abuts a lane, Portland requires any required parking to be provided from the lane.
- Seattle does not require off-street parking for accessible dwelling units.

Design Considerations

- Portland allows front doors of basement apartments or secondary units to face the street.
- Edmonton requires a minimum amenity space of 7.5 m² per unit in Multi-unit housing.

Landscaping and Tree Canopy

- In its Small Scale Infill Development Zone, Edmonton allows a lesser front setback if a treed landscaped boulevard is provided at the front of the lot.
- In its Low- and Medium-Rise Apartment Zones, Edmonton allows for parking, loading, storage or waste collection within the side setback if a minimum 1.5m landscaping buffer is provided.
- Ottawa recently revised performance standards for infill development, with a sliding scale of required soft landscape percentage based on the front or corner side yard setback dimensions.
- Design requirements for small-scale housing development in Seattle grant allowances for a larger or taller building where it will result in the retention of exceptional trees.

Other Key Takeaways

- Water and sewer infrastructure age and capacity should be taken into account when considering upzoning.
- Vancouver's "character houses" (those with heritage merit but not listed on City's Register) saw more limited uptake for conversion than new builds, due to project complexity.
- Ottawa identified criteria for allowing variances to permit low-rise apartments (e.g. Reduced side yard setbacks only if adequate storage and bike parking can be provided; reduced soft landscaping only if intensive tree planting provided).
- Reduced community benefit fees provide a powerful incentive but limit municipal revenue for the provision of services.
- Multiple cities have simplified or are exploring the streamlining of residential zoning to fewer categories with simpler regulations and broader housing types.

Review and Analysis of Minor Variance Data

To understand where current zoning by-law regulations may be hindering opportunities for multiplex housing in zones where they are already permitted, City Planning analyzed Minor Variance data for applications submitted across the city between January 2010 and November 2020. Overall, there were 287 applications submitted involving a multiplex type dwelling during the study period, including alterations and additions that did not result in additional units. Of those, 231 of the applications were approved by the Committee of Adjustment and the remaining 56 were refused. There were also 23 appeals of applications, with 21 of those being approved and 2 being refused, either by the OLT or TLAB.

The minor variance applications received were to facilitate multiplex building types through exterior additions to existing dwellings (124), construction of new dwellings (103), interior alterations to existing dwellings (53) and recognizing existing multiplex dwellings (7). Among the variances being sought, the most commonly occurring variances were for:

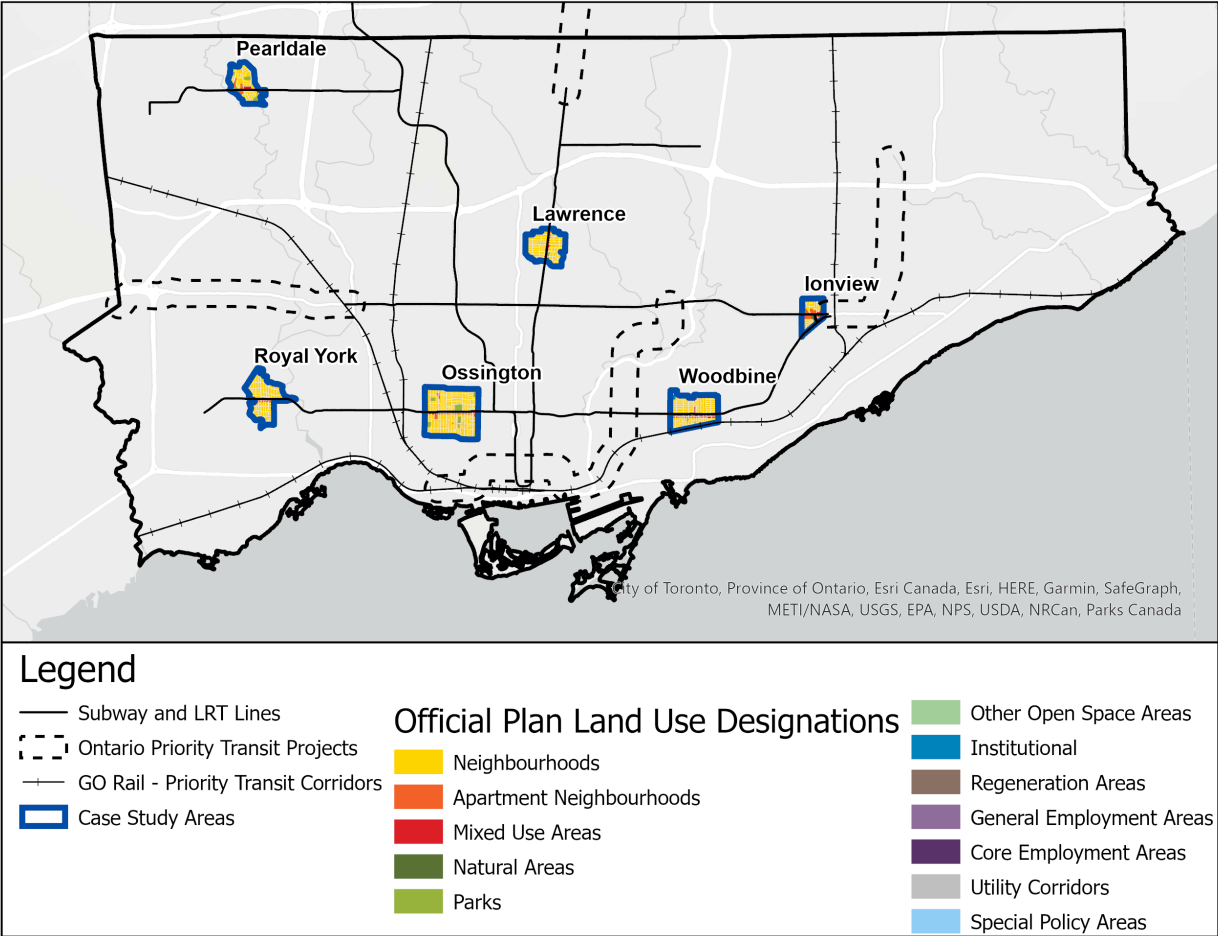
- increases to permitted floor space index, to an average of 1.17 times the lot area;
- reductions of side yard setbacks, by an average of 0.5 metres;
- increases to permitted building depths, to an average depth of 18.76 metres;
- reductions in the number of required parking spaces, by an average of 1.5 spaces;
- increases to permitted main wall heights, to an average height of 9.97 metres; and
- reduction in landscaping provided at the front and rear of dwellings, to averages of 42.2% and 24.4%, respectively.

The frequency of these variances points to the zoning regulations that may require more flexibility to allow for multiplex building types, and to what degree.

Case Study Areas

Toronto comprises of a wide variety of neighbourhoods representing different ages of development, lot patterns, building types, mobility opportunities and access to amenities. While it is desirable to develop a common city-wide approach to expanding

multiplex options in neighbourhoods city-wide, the diversity of neighbourhood types must be taken into consideration. The Multiplex team selected six case study areas across the city to help identify challenges for constructing multiplex dwellings in Toronto's varied neighbourhoods: Ionview, Lawrence, Ossington, Pearldale, Royal York, and Woodbine.



The case study areas are all potential Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), to help align this work with the Municipal Comprehensive Review. MTSAs are defined in the Growth Plan (2020) as areas within an approximate 500-800 metre radius of a transit station and representing a 10-minute walk. Some of the case study areas are already served by higher-order transit while others are located on lines under construction. The Growth Plan (2020) prescribes the following minimum density targets for MTSAs: 200 residents and jobs per hectare for subways; 160 residents and jobs per hectare for light rail transit; and 150 residents and jobs for GO Transit rail.

The case study areas represent *Neighbourhoods* within the former City of Toronto where multiplexes already exist, such as near Ossington, Woodbine, and Lawrence stations; as well as *Neighbourhoods* near stations like Royal York in Etobicoke, Pearldale in North York, and Ionview in Scarborough, which have primarily single unit houses in a more suburban context. The team studied existing conditions across the case study areas, including neighbourhood profiles, built form and lot fabric, current land use designations and zoning, Committee of Adjustment

data, mobility and available park land (excluding ravines and environmentally sensitive areas).

This analysis informed the identification of design opportunities specific to the context of each case study neighbourhood, which include:

- varying building types and layouts;
- varying dates of building construction which represent periods and patterns of development;
- differing lot sizes;
- how lots are accessed and serviced;
- the relationship of soft landscaping in front yard setbacks, in relationship to porches, driveways, and other hardscape elements;
- rooflines and profiles of buildings from the public realm sidewalk;
- the existing tree canopy, and presence of permeable soft landscaping; and
- proximity and walkability access to transit, retail and services.

Initial testing of multiplex designs within these case study areas led to the ideas included in the Ideas for Consultation section of this report. Using feedback from the consultations, built form envelopes will be refined and tested with an aim of creating parameters that can be used to build multiplexes across Toronto's varied *Neighbourhoods*.

A parallel EHON initiative is focusing on establishing permissions for other, potentially more intense forms of low-rise building types in areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* along Major Streets. Each of the case studies includes areas where areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* are along Major Streets so that both EHON initiatives could test concepts in the same case study areas. Except for Pearldale, the case study areas also intersect *Avenues*, as set out in Map 2, Urban Structure, of the Official Plan. In addition, the Woodbine neighbourhood is located within Ward 19 – Beaches-East York, to align with the EHON Pilot study also underway through this initiative.

Pearldale

Pearldale will be an above ground LRT stop on Line 6, Finch West, located in Humber River-Black Creek. This area has a mix of low to mid-rise apartment buildings in *Apartment Neighbourhoods* clustered towards Finch Avenue and an existing local retail plaza along Finch.

Within the *Neighbourhoods*, most houses are semi-detached or row houses, characterized by a pattern of generous landscaped front yard setbacks, shared driveways and tighter lots. The large building footprints and low heights provide opportunities for vertical additions with minimal loss of green open space or tree canopy.

Royal York

Royal York is an existing subway station on Line 2, Bloor-Danforth, located in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. This area is characterized by main street-style retail in *Mixed Use Areas* along Bloor Street with *Neighbourhoods* to the north and south of Bloor.

The *Neighbourhoods* are characterized by single-detached houses on large lots, large setbacks, and generous amounts of open space. This is the only case study area where multiplexes are not currently permitted anywhere.

The large lots and existing buildings of this area provide flexibility for adding additional units within the existing built form. This area has a 12 metre height limit which can allow growth without impacting the green open space or the tree canopy. Large lots backing onto the ravine network also are opportunities for growth with less impact to adjacent neighbours.

Ossington

Ossington is an existing subway station on Line 2, Bloor-Danforth, located in Davenport and University-Rosedale. Similar to the other stations on Line 2, the area is characterized by main street retail uses in *Mixed Use Areas* along Bloor, with much of the remaining area designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan.

This area has the most existing multiplexes and the lowest proportion of detached houses of all of the case studies. The *Neighbourhoods* are characterized by small lots with tightly spaced buildings with small setbacks.

Multiplexes are largely permitted throughout this area, but further analysis of the Committee of Adjustment data is needed to determine whether further zoning changes may be necessary to facilitate more housing in this area. The 12 metre height limit can allow growth without impacting the green open space or the tree canopy and the laneways in the area may also allow for the provision of laneway suites.

Woodbine

Woodbine is an existing subway station on Line 2, Bloor-Danforth, located in Beaches-East York. In addition to main street retail along Bloor, this station area has some *Mixed Use Areas* on Woodbine Avenue, with the majority of the rest of the lands designated *Neighbourhoods*.

The *Neighbourhoods* are characterized by a mix of single-detached and semi-detached houses with existing multiplexes in the area. Over 75% of the buildings in the neighbourhood were built before 1960. The lots are generally small and buildings closely spaced with smaller setbacks.

Similar to Ossington, this area already has an existing context of a mix of housing types, including multiplexes. The 12 metre height limit can allow growth without impacting the green open space or the tree canopy and the laneways in the area may also allow for the provision of laneway and garden suites.

Lawrence

Lawrence is an existing subway station on Line 1, Yonge-University, located in Eglinton-Lawrence and Don Valley West. This area has a mix of retail, apartments, and offices within *Mixed Use Areas* along Yonge Street, with the rest of the area largely designated *Neighbourhoods*.

The *Neighbourhoods* surrounding this station vary widely from large lots with mature landscaping to smaller lots with some existing multiplexes. In the larger lots in areas such as Lawrence Park, large existing buildings and lots provide space for additional design flexibility when adding units. Throughout the area, a 12 metre height limit can allow growth without impacting the green open space or the tree canopy.

Ionview

Ionview will be an above ground LRT stop on Line 5, Eglinton, located in Scarborough Southwest and Scarborough Centre. Eglinton Avenue within this area has a mix of mid-rise apartments and retail plazas within *Apartment Neighbourhoods and Mixed Use Areas* designations.

The *Neighbourhoods* in this area have varied lot sizes, generally larger north of Eglinton Avenue East and smaller to the south. Some lots in this area back onto ravines, which provide an opportunity for intensification with fewer impacts to adjacent neighbours.

Many areas have internal facing lot patterns which are barriers to pedestrian and cycling connections to main streets. Redevelopment of lots, which could allow for through connections, would create an improved active transportation network for pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainability Objectives

The Multiplex team undertook research into approaches to introducing gentle residential intensification while supporting objectives for sustainable development, including green standards, soft landscaping and preservation of tree canopy. This included a review of relevant existing City policies and plans; a jurisdictional scan of other municipalities; and interviews with City staff from Urban Forestry, Toronto Water and Planning – Environment Section. Some initial takeaways include:

- The objective to simplify and streamline multiplex approvals will need to be balanced with the appropriate evaluation of environmental considerations such as tree protection and soft landscaping. This may be assisted by incorporating the evaluation of these matters early in the development application and building permit approval processes.
- The City can provide frameworks, resources and best practices guides for applicants to consider mitigation strategies early in the process.
- Where missing middle housing types will result in decreased soft landscaping and tree canopy cover, solutions such as zoning regulations to support tree planting, soft landscaping awareness initiatives and monitoring programs provide opportunities to contribute to environmental sustainability objectives.

- Relevant City Divisions and programs can collaborate to create a greenspace network map overlay, to help identify opportunities for increasing tree canopy, soft landscaping, green roofs and green infrastructure growth, and consider including targets and metrics at the neighbourhood scale.

The Toronto Green Standard (TGS) for Low-Rise Residential Development applies to housing types with a minimum of five dwelling units. Nevertheless, it provides a helpful benchmark for the consideration of multiplex housing types while directing the standards applicable to more intensive forms of development, such as walk-up apartments. Version 4 of the TGS was adopted by Council in July 2021 and will come into effect in May 2022. Among the relevant Version 4 -Tier 1 standards:

- Provision of electric vehicle charging capacity;
- Readiness for connection to solar energy technologies;
- Water management in accordance with Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines;
- On-site green infrastructure which may include green roofs, 25% of the lot area planted at or above grade with native flowering/pollinator species; at-grade bioretention facilities to capture 75% of runoff from hardscape surfaces; and reforestation of a portion of the site;
- Provision of adequate soil volumes on site to support tree canopy, with a minimum volume of 30m² per tree planting area;
- Mitigation strategies for hardscape reflection;
- Minimum 50% native species planting;
- 100% of roof areas provided as Green Roof, Solar PV and/or Cool Roof;
- Bird-friendly visual markers; and
- Ventilated internal space for waste storage.

Ongoing ideas testing and design analysis will consider the provision of soft landscaping, as well as tree planting and maintenance, in the development of potential zoning regulations.

Parking

The zoning standards for parking in Toronto are found in the harmonized, city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. The last review of the parking standards, completed in 2005, was guided by the principle that the zoning standards should require the minimum responsible amount of parking for a given land use. With respect to multiplexes, the parking standard in ZBL 569-2013 presently require 1.0 parking space for each dwelling unit.

The current parking requirements can be restrictive to supporting an increase in multiplex housing city-wide. This observation is often raised by housing advocates and the development industry. Typically, parking minimums increase the cost of housing by adding to construction costs which may in turn be passed on to residents. With minimum parking requirements, residents and developers do not have the choice to avoid the cost of parking unless granted through a minor variance.

Understanding the challenges associated to requiring minimum parking requirements, Staff are currently conducting a review of the parking standards in ZBL 569-2013. This review is guided by the principle that parking standards should allow only the maximum amount of automobile parking reasonably required for a given use and minimums should be avoided except where necessary to ensure equitable access. No minimum or maximum parking standards are being proposed for housing types that are generally low rise, including secondary suites and the other housing types being explored through the EHON work. The final recommendations of the city-wide parking review will be considered by the Planning and Housing Committee in November 2021.

Through this guiding principle, developers and residents who wish to convert an existing home or build a multiplex should have the option to provide parking that is appropriate for individual contexts. As mentioned in the Review and Analysis of Minor Variance Data section, applications between January 2010 and November 2020 saw reductions in the number of required parking spaces by an average of 1.5 spaces. In practice, residents are already requesting and getting approvals to reduce parking onsite, however the minor variance process adds complexity which may deter people from pursuing small-scale projects. The removal of parking minimums would eliminate the need for a minor variance specific to parking, effectively saving costs and potentially simplifying the process to create new multiplex housing. Ongoing work will consider the impact of reduced or eliminated parking requirements for multiplexes on on-street parking.

Charges and Fees

An important practical consideration with respect to multiplexes pertains to municipal charges and fees associated with their development. Multiplexes, whether newly built or converted from an existing structure, are subject to three main types of charges and fees: Committee of Adjustment application fees, Development Charges, and Parkland Dedication levies. Analysis by the Urban Land Institute's Curtner Leadership Program in 2020 on the financial feasibility and affordability of missing middle housing in Toronto suggested that the current Development Charge and Parkland regimes disincentivize the creation of multiplexes by increasing their cost. Since the commencement of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative, staff have also heard this sentiment echoed through communication from the public and stakeholders. Another critique of the current charges and fees matrix is that conversely, the cost structure incentivizes the construction of larger, single-unit dwellings over the addition of more units.

Committee of Adjustment

Where a proposed use is not permitted by the zoning, or its design exceeds the zoning regulations, an application to permit minor variances through the Committee of adjustment is necessary.

Applications to the Committee of Adjustment for minor variance or consent to sever land requires the payment of a fee based on the type of development proposed. Fees scale upwards with the number of units being proposed and whether the development is considered as an alteration or addition, or new construction. Fees are adjusted every

January 1st. In 2021, the fee for a minor variance application proposing an addition or alteration to an existing dwelling with 3 units or less is \$1,682.90, while the fee for new construction of residential dwellings of the same type is \$3,783.42. Applications for all other residential, commercial, industrial or institutional development, including alterations, additions, and new construction of residential dwellings with more than three units, are charged a fee of \$4,896.70. Based on this definition, an application to construct a new fourplex would cost over \$1100.00 more than a triplex of a similar volume and scale; and an application to convert an existing dwelling to contain four units would cost over \$3200.00 more than the same proposal for three units or less. While this may not represent a significant cost to an overall multiplex project budget, increasing the fee threshold to allow up to four units would align with the directions proposed in this report and reduce incremental costs overall.

Development Charges

Development Charges are intended to pay for increased capital costs associated with the additional service needs arising from development. The *Development Charges Act* authorizes City Council to pass by-laws for the imposition of charges on development that requires, but is not limited to, a rezoning, an amendment to the Official Plan, the approval of a minor variance, the conveyance of land, the approval of a plan of subdivision, and a consent to sever land. The City of Toronto's development charge by-law is contained in Article I of Chapter 415 of the Municipal Code, Development of Land. Effective November 1, 2020, development charges for each one bedroom or bachelor unit in a newly constructed multiplex is \$33,266, while each unit of two or more bedrooms in a newly constructed multiplex is \$66,313. These same rates also apply to the addition of units beyond what the permitted exemptions allow for in already existing structures.

There are some exemptions from development charges for modest housing intensification. Exempt scenarios include when the only effect of development is to:

- enlarge an existing dwelling unit;
- create up to two additional dwelling units in an existing single detached dwelling, or
- create one additional dwelling unit in an existing semi-detached dwelling or other existing residential building.

However, should the gross floor area (GFA) of the additional unit(s) exceed the GFA of the existing dwelling in any of the aforementioned exemption scenarios, development charges will then be imposed.

The City is currently undertaking a review of Development Charges, together with related growth funding tools, in the context of recent legislative changes to eligible services through Bill 108 and Bill 197. Consideration of Development Charge exemptions which may be applicable to EHON-related initiatives will be included in this review, which may result in a streamlined process for projects that do not represent significant population growth. A proposed Development Charges by-law is anticipated in Q2 2022 for Council consideration.

Parkland Dedication

Section 42 of the *Planning Act* authorizes municipalities to pass a by-law requiring the conveyance of land for parkland and other public recreational purposes during land development. The Planning Act also authorizes municipalities to request cash-in-lieu of land conveyance. The City of Toronto's by-law pertaining to parkland dedication is contained in Article III of Chapter 415 of the Municipal Code, Development of Land, and Article IV in the same document for lands within the Former City of North York. With respect to cash-in-lieu of land dedication, Article III provides for up to ten percent of the value of the development site to be charged as payment for sites less than one hectare in size. The same is provided in Article IV with respect to the Former City of North York. In both instances, appraisals of land value are carried out under the direction of the Executive Director, Facilities and Real Estate.

As with development charges, there are certain exemptions for modest housing intensification. Exempt scenarios include where development is limited to:

- the replacement of an existing dwelling unit on an existing lot;
- the enlargement of an existing dwelling unit on an existing lot;
- the creation of a single additional dwelling unit in an existing residential building or the creation of a single Laneway Suite.

Exemptions pertaining to the Former City of North York differ and only include:

- non-profit housing;
- replacement buildings or structures; and
- single detached and semi-detached replacement dwellings.

Unlike development charges however, there are no exemptions for the creation of additional dwelling units in any scenarios and thus there are also no stipulations with respect to gross floor area.

Initial Findings

The existing fee structure can make small scale residential development difficult due to both the cost and complexity of understanding these charges. City Planning is reviewing this fee structure more broadly across all EHON initiatives with an aim of streamlining charges and processes, and seeking a consistent approach for small scale residential development.

Consultation

Consultation efforts to date have included meetings with a range of industry professionals, City Councillors, residents interested in multiplex housing, and housing advocates, as well as a survey intended for the public as a whole. Priorities and issues identified through preliminary consultation with the Toronto Planning Review Panel, registered Community Associations and Ward 19 residents in developing the EHON work program have also informed this work.

A survey designed to solicit general opinions about introducing and expanding multiplex housing in *Neighbourhoods* was published on the City's website on October 19, 2021. The survey is being promoted through the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods website and various social media channels and will be active through December 2021.

As of October 28, 2021, staff have received over 2,100 responses to the survey. A strong majority (88%) of survey respondents thus far support expanding permissions to construct or convert multiplexes in any neighbourhood across the city.

Some comments and questions received in the consultation to date have included:

Location of Multiplexes

- Broad support for permitting multiplexes citywide
- Some support for allowing six-plexes and apartments in *Neighbourhoods*
- Some support for allowing a larger variety of missing middle housing within walking distance of transit or *Avenues*

Zoning Permissions

- As-of-right zoning for multiplexes would be helpful to reduce costs and uncertainty associated with the Committee of Adjustment process
- Support for simplifying approvals process for multiplexes
- Zoning standards which make it easier to build a single unit home than a multi-unit home should be changed (i.e., permitted building depth is 17m for a single unit home, but 14m for multi-unit)
- Consider allowing neighbourhood retail such as grocery / convenience stores in multiplexes

Financial Viability

- Concerns that development charges, application fees, and condo fees make development prohibitive for small scale projects
- Reduce fees for affordable or non-profit housing
- As-of-right zoning for multiplexes would be helpful to reduce costs and uncertainty associated with the Committee of Adjustment process

Design

- Consider standards for noise proofing, especially in converted homes
- Comment that multiplexes can provide good housing for young families
- Promote energy-efficient, sustainable design features

Parking

- Support for reducing or eliminating parking requirements for multiplexes
- Some support for imposing parking maximums on multiplexes

- Support for the provision of bike parking on multiplex sites

Environmental

- Concern that more neighbourhood intensification could lead to a loss of trees or green landscaping
- Consider allowing green roofs to count as open landscaping in the zoning by-law
- Support for incorporating sustainable building practices in multiplexes

Guiding Principles

Based on the research, analysis, policy framework and consultation undertaken in this first phase of the study, the Multiplex Team has developed a series of principles to guide ongoing work. The principles are grounded in these fundamental questions:

Toronto is evolving as it grows. What kind of city do we want?

How can we make room for housing to create the kind of city that we want?

Neighbourhoods for Everyone

The policies of the Official Plan strive for a successful city with an enviable quality of life, for people of all ages and abilities, that is diverse, equitable and inclusive. Toronto will have a range of housing choices available for all people, that meet their needs at all stages of their lives. Multiplex housing provides flexible opportunities for more Torontonians to choose to live in low-rise neighbourhoods, whether they are setting up their first home; subsidizing a mortgage with rental income; accommodating extended family members; aging in place; or countless other circumstances.

City of Neighbourhoods

The Official Plan envisions Toronto as a city with vibrant neighborhoods that are part of complete communities. Our neighbourhoods are diverse and distinctive across the city, and collectively contribute to Toronto's identity. Diversity within neighbourhoods supports their vibrancy and sense of community by providing options for people in all stages of their lives.

Growth and change has occurred through Toronto's settlement history and can continue to occur within neighbourhoods that maintain their overall shape, in a built form that fits within the existing scale of the neighbourhood while adapting to evolving housing needs of our city.

Low-Rise Neighbourhoods

Maintaining lower-scale areas contributes to the variety of residential built form available across the city. Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and in some cases, interspersed walk-up apartments up to four storeys are appropriately scaled building types that fit into low-rise neighbourhoods across the City.

Green and Livable Neighbourhoods

As Toronto grows and evolves, we must also protect and enhance its green character. Multiplex housing offers a more efficient use of land and infrastructure, which needs to be balanced with the management of the city's tree canopy, soft landscaping and sustainability objectives. Modest residential growth in neighbourhoods should maintain adequate access to parks, open spaces and natural heritage features.

Facilitate Multiplexes in Neighbourhoods

We need to make it easier for people to build multiplex housing in Toronto. This includes simplified, as-of-right zoning; simplifying approval processes; reducing financial barriers to small-scale development; and expanding multiplex permissions to more areas across the city.

Ideas for Consultation

The Multiplex team will proceed with a broader public engagement strategy as well as targeted stakeholder meetings on preliminary ideas in Q1 2022. Input received will help shape recommendations for policy and zoning amendments to permit multiplex housing types more broadly throughout Toronto. Based on the background research, policy considerations, analysis and initial consultation efforts outlined above, the team has developed the following ideas for feedback:

Permit all low-rise residential building types across all Neighbourhoods in the City.

- Include a broad range of building types (including detached, semi-detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex) on any Residential-zoned lot.
- Permit more variety of residential low-rise building forms, including townhouse or low-rise apartment buildings up to four storeys, and consider where these are appropriate.

Create/standardize form-based Residential zoning that provides flexibility to allow for up to four units on a lot.

- Explore the introduction of a single “low-rise residential building” definition that permits up to four units in a building.
- Units may include any combination of primary unit, secondary suite, duplex, triplex, or fourplex. A separate garden suite or laneway suite would be in addition to this range of unit types.
- Define key zoning regulations based on typical lot sizes to fit in low-rise neighbourhoods: building height, side yard setbacks, building depth, minimum front and rear yard landscaping; minimum lot size; while adjusting to allow for multiple unit dwellings.

Incentivize the creation of additional units in multiplexes

- Consider density incentives above permitted floor space index maximums for providing additional units, provided built form guidelines are met.
- Explore incentives for creating affordable rental units in multiplexes.
- Adjust Committee of Adjustment fee structure to include residential developments up to four units (from three today) within the lowest fee category.

Revisit Neighbourhood Policies of Official Plan

- Consider the key elements that defines the physical character of buildings, streetscapes, and open space patterns in neighbourhoods and how to determine an appropriate contextual fit for low-rise buildings.
- Refocus policy priorities on quality of life, and providing equitable opportunities for living in low-rise neighbourhoods.

Questions for Design Exploration and Zoning Standard Development

Should multiplexes require two- and three-bedroom units?

- What proportion of units should be required?
- Would this be required for new builds or just conversion?

Should multiplexes require amenity space?

- Should this amenity space be shared or private? Does it matter?

What are appropriate maximum heights for multiplexes?

- How can rooflines maximize potential living space while fitting into the local context?
- Could height permissions be increased if appropriate setback and separation distances are maintained to reflect patterns in the neighbourhood?

Should multiplexes require bicycle parking?

- Should this parking have design standards?
- Should covered parking be required?

Should multiplexes be required to maintain soft landscaping?

- How much is appropriate?
- Should a green roof count towards this requirement?

Should flexibility be given to performance standards if existing trees are preserved?

- Could height permissions be increased to allow additional vertical units rather than increasing the building footprint?

What other design elements contribute to a good quality of life in multiplexes?

- Should garbage storage areas be regulated?
- Should multiplexes avoid having rear / side entrances for safety?

Next Steps

The ideas for consultation presented in this report will form the basis of virtual consultation through the fourth quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022. Staff will consult with future and current residents of low-rise neighbourhoods and other stakeholders, as well as continue a technical review with other City Divisions.

As with the survey, virtual open houses will be promoted through the EHON website and social media channels, with targeted promotion in communities which are typically underrepresented in City Planning consultations.

The results of the technical review, further research, and comments provided during the consultation will help shape policy proposals, zoning changes, and Official Plan policy amendments to be presented to Planning and Housing Committee in the second quarter of 2022.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Map of Case Study Areas

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