

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study - Proposals Report

Date: June 17, 2022

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto is expected to grow by a minimum of 700,000 people by 2051 - how these new Torontonians are housed will shape the City for decades to come. In recent years, the City's growth has been focused on transit rich areas such as the Downtown, Centres, and along Avenues, where the supply of apartments has increased significantly. Conversely, the supply of low-rise housing has not kept up with demand and in some cases, the City's low-rise *Neighbourhoods* have lost population. The City can choose to adopt a more equitable approach to growth across Toronto that sees *Neighbourhoods* adapting to change, remaining vibrant, and providing more Torontonians the option to live within one of our low-rise communities.

By 2051, if current trends continue, Toronto could have a deficit of over 42,000 ground-related units, such as single and semi-detached homes, townhouses, and multiplexes. The City's low-rise *Neighbourhoods*, which make up 35% of its land area, present a unique opportunity to accommodate more of this scale of housing. This report supports City Planning staff's opinion that multiplex housing should be permitted in residential areas throughout the City of Toronto and requests direction to continue consultation on the implementation of this approach.

Multiplex housing means low-rise homes containing two, three, or four residential units built at a similar scale to single unit homes. Multiplex housing can help increase the supply of residential units, support neighbourhood vitality and add sustainable, gentle density to Toronto's existing low-rise neighbourhoods. The Multiplex study is part of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative, intended to increase both the variety and type of housing available in these areas. In future phases, the Multiplex study will continue a focused consideration of low-rise apartment buildings up to four storeys in appropriate locations.

This study responds 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. Allowing for additional units in low-rise housing forms of a similar scale, is generally compatible with the Official Plan's objective that physical change in *Neighbourhoods* will be sensitive, gradual, and fit the existing context.

Many neighbourhoods across the City of Toronto have experienced population decline in the last few decades, while other areas of Toronto such as the Downtown, Centres, and other mixed use areas have experienced rapid growth. Smoothing out some of these growth patterns by permitting multiplexes across the city can allow people to move into neighbourhoods where existing infrastructure and services can be used more efficiently, to support local neighbourhood retail, and to give more Torontonians access to live in low-rise neighbourhoods.

This report presents a draft Official Plan Amendment to permit duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in residential areas across the city. The legalization of these housing types city-wide will help meet the needs of both current and future Torontonians by adding ground-related units. The report also presents proposed zoning directions to implement these policy changes. Consultation is proposed for the remainder of 2022, after which both the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments will be brought together to Planning and Housing Committee for consideration in the first quarter of 2023.

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 continue consultation on draft Official Plan Amendment and proposed zoning by-law directions, including residents' associations, industry, technical divisions, and other stakeholders, and report back with proposed amendments by the first quarter of 2023.

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 a crucial 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 neighbourhoods. As part of the broader Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative staff have engaged, and will continue to engage, equity-deserving and marginalized groups and organizations including persons with disabilities, low-income households, Black and racialized groups, vulnerable seniors, women, and youth. Staff are also working with the Canadian Urban Institute to engage Indigenous communities as part of the initiative.

CLIMATE IMPACT

The City has ambitious goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions to avoid disastrous climate change, as well as become resilient and adapt to the impacts that climate change have on the city and its residents. On October 2, 2019, City Council voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate by adopting stronger emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050 or sooner. In December 2021, City Council adopted a new goal of net zero emissions by 2040. 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 greenhouse gas (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 wood-framed buildings such as multiplexes and low-rise apartments can more easily achieve lower embodied and 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 if greater investments in a circular economy are made. The City Planning Division will continue to consider expanding housing options in low-rise neighbourhoods through a climate impact lens and specifically work to minimize 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 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.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.36>

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 November 25, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee considered the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods - Multiplex Study Interim Report and directed City Planning to undertake further community and stakeholder consultation and technical review of the ideas for consultation to facilitate expanded permissions for multiplex building types in Neighbourhoods, and report back with recommended policy, zoning and process changes by the end of the second quarter of 2022.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.9>

On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted revised parking requirements for new development in Toronto which eliminated minimum parking requirements for multiplex housing.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.3>

On February 2, 2022, City Council adopted amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit Garden Suites in Neighbourhoods citywide.

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

On May 11 and 12, 2022, City Council adopted Member Motion 43.23 requesting staff to report to Planning and Housing Committee on a strategy to support the conversion of

single-unit residences into multiple units, through such measures as eliminating the Condominium application fee, introducing a loan program and standardizing the permit framework.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.MM43.23>

On June 16, 2022, City Council adopted a report on the Development Application Fee Review and directed staff to identify appropriate cost recovery for Committee of Adjustment applications through an evaluation of fee categories, processes and staff level of effort, as part of the follow-on Development Application Fee Review (2023-2024) with recommendations by the fourth quarter of 2024.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.PH34.6>

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.

PROPOSAL: MULTIPLEX STUDY

Official Plan Review: Toronto in 2051

City Planning is currently reviewing Toronto's Official Plan, which sets out the long-term vision, shared values, and policies that guide land development, environmental protection, economic growth, and more. One focus of the review is identifying where and how to direct growth, with the goal of housing a minimum of 700,000 new Torontonians expected to arrive by 2051.

The current Official Plan growth strategy presents a vision for large scale change, where large mixed use areas such as the Centres, Downtown, Avenues and other

mixed use complete communities continue to emerge around a growing transit network. Much of this growth is occurring in Toronto's suburbs, with 60% of growth in the current development pipeline found outside of the former city of Toronto. The new city is emerging fast in a meaningful way – Six Points in Etobicoke, Downsview in North York, and the Golden Mile in Scarborough are just a few examples of newly planned mixed use communities.

While the pipeline focuses on areas of large-scale and significant change in mid- to high-rise forms, we cannot ignore the places between – the low-rise *Neighbourhoods* that make up 35% of the land area of the city. Many of these neighbourhoods have seen little growth in recent years and in some cases, population decline. Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods is a crucial piece of the growth puzzle and can play a vital role in fulfilling the City's vision of an inclusive and sustainable city with a range of housing for Torontonians.

How we evolve is highly consequential. To actively guide the city's evolution, we need to decide what drivers will take precedence if Toronto in 2051 is to be meaningfully more inclusive and resilient. There are many fundamental questions to consider.

Even with emerging change in parts of Toronto's inner suburbs, just under half of the population is living in built environments designed around the automobile. These communities are highly valued by their residents and neighbours, but their current design model - typically only residential, composed of single detached dwellings with a longer walking distance to local amenities and services - will create consequences for everyone: a less climate adapted city, a less socially inclusive city, a less affordable city, and a less competitive city. As many neighbourhoods in Toronto's inner suburbs are younger than other parts of the City, they have undergone fewer stages of evolution - however, they will and must continue to evolve and change to reverse these consequences. Actively guiding their future evolution is an opportunity to embrace positive change.

For economic reasons, the city must continue to attract talent, and this means housing that meets a full spectrum of need and housing at a range of price points.

For climate adaptation, more efficient use of our land area will help to reduce GHG emissions and help to reduce our automobile dependency.

For more efficient and cost-effective delivery of public services and support of public amenities, it is essential to plan for a better relationship between population density and infrastructure and allow a more distributed pattern of growth to occur.

Finally for equity, 35% of our land area is less accessible to Toronto's population because of its zoning. More permissive zoning will support market dynamics that will bring more housing options to a greater number of people with diverse housing needs. All of our housing needs cannot be met by replacing single detached homes with larger single detached homes or by building apartment buildings with 5 or more storeys. New building typologies that include multiplexes and other innovative forms of ground-related housing are required.

For ground-related units such as single and semi-detached homes, townhouses and multiplexes, we need policy, regulations and the market to support and produce at least 42,979 new units by 2051 or 1,228 units a year, every year. These figures are based on comprehensive analysis for the City's Land Needs Assessment as part of the 2022 Municipal Comprehensive Review. To meet our projected and mandated minimum growth targets, we can't just rely on housing stock turnover in neighbourhoods. It actually means building and creating opportunity for more ground-related housing in Neighbourhoods.

Gradual change means adding new choices and options, not taking away permissions that already exist for single detached homes and the amenity of open space character enjoyed in low rise neighbourhoods.

Our neighbourhoods can play a greater role in the growth of the city – a role that contributes meaningfully to climate adaptation, economic and social inclusion, and economic competitiveness. By adopting new approaches, Toronto can evolve to become the world's most inclusive city and a model for intentional growth by the mid-21st century.

Study Scope

This study on expanding Multiplex housing permissions is one component of the broader Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods work program. This component deals specifically with multiplexes – residential buildings with two, three, or four dwelling units – in Toronto's *Neighbourhoods*. The study responds to several 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 generally compatible with the Official Plan's objective that physical change to *Neighbourhoods* will be sensitive, gradual, and fit the existing context.

The November 2021 Interim Report presented initial research and findings and set out a series of questions for consultation and further policy / zoning development. This report presents the results of further research, consultation, and analysis and sets out a draft Official Plan Amendment and proposed zoning directions for further consultation. The intent of this amendment is to permit multiplexes in all *Neighbourhoods* city-wide.

Precedent Cities

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. This initial research, summarized in the November 2021 Multiplex Interim Report, helped the study team to identify common issues and solutions for this type of development.

Of note since the first phase of research, the City of Vancouver has released a draft Official Plan which would permit multiplexes throughout residential areas of the city. The plan emphasizes allowing more housing to be built off arterial streets to reduce exposure to harmful levels of noise and poor air quality. Like the ideas being explored for Toronto, this housing is intended to be provided primarily in ground-oriented, missing middle-type residential buildings. Vancouver's draft policies also aim to support more opportunities to add corner stores and other small scale retail options within residential neighbourhoods; retain trees; integrate ecological landscaping and function into new developments; and improve the public realm.

Housing Supply of Ground-Related Units

City Planning recently published the [Right-Sizing Housing and Generational Turnover](#) bulletin, which examines housing suitability, right-sizing, turnover, and downsizing in Toronto. The bulletin estimates the aging of the generations, how each generation translates into households over time, and how many households there may be of each generation in the future. This in turn enables an estimate of how older generations might turn over their homes and when that may occur, and how much of the future demand for housing this turnover might offset. The results indicate that approximately 60% of the future increase in demand for housing can be fulfilled by the turnover of older generations' housing. The demand for apartments, units with up to two bedrooms, and owned units would be fulfilled by a combination of turnover plus new supply, assuming that historic completion levels remained stable. In contrast, future demand would not be fulfilled for single- or semi-detached houses, units with three or more bedrooms, or purpose-built rental units.

The analysis determined that the growth in younger households seeking ground-related housing would be greater than the turnover of the existing ground-related homes by older generations. Analysis completed for the City's Land Needs Assessment has identified a potential of 107,242 ground-related units of the 150,221 needed by 2051. These studies highlight that the supply of ground-related units would need to grow by about 1,228 units per year until 2051 in order to satisfy this demand for an additional 42,979 ground-related housing units. Contextually, this form of housing would represent an underdevelopment on Avenues where mid-rise building types are typically more appropriate. In 2021, there were 405,360 single-detached, semi-detached, and row homes in Toronto; adding one unit to just under 11% of these homes could yield the required units.

The bulletin also reports that there are over 400,000 households in Toronto which are, for a variety of reasons, occupying housing with a surplus of bedrooms compared to the size of the household. Though some of this overhousing is voluntary, it could indicate that there are opportunities for adding units in homes -- essentially converting unused space to create self-contained units -- while still providing adequate space for the existing households living there. Expanding permissions for multiplex housing would allow homeowners the flexibility to modify their homes as their household changed, such as if children moved out, aging parents needed a place to live, or they wanted to create another unit to help pay the mortgage. The creation of more multiplexes could also help to alleviate conditions for the 135,000 Toronto households which are underhoused.

Through research of existing multiplex developments, staff found that multiplexes are created for a variety of reasons, including: to house family members, to provide another income source to help pay for housing costs, and to develop rental housing. In areas where they are already permitted, multiplex development is incremental and staff expect that this gradual growth would continue if multiplexes are permitted throughout the city. To allow households the flexibility to adapt their homes to their individual needs, it is important to permit multiplexes broadly across all Neighbourhoods in Toronto. Permitting multiplexes across the city will make the planning framework more flexible, able to adapt to a changing population, and help boost supply of these much-needed larger units and purpose-built rental units over the long term. While zoning cannot regulate land ownership, the development of appropriate built form standards can guide growth in Neighbourhoods in a way that balances owner-occupier, neighbour and developer interests.

Case Study Areas

Toronto comprises a wide variety of *Neighbourhoods* representing different ages of development, lot patterns, building types, mobility opportunities and access to amenities. In developing an approach to expanding multiplex options in *Neighbourhoods* city-wide, this diversity of contexts and characteristics must be taken into consideration. Characteristics that help establish physical context include street and block patterns, typical lot sizes, building scale and massing, as well as setbacks from the street and between buildings. Some neighbourhoods may have special landscape or built form features, or heritage attributes that contribute to their distinct physical context.

The Multiplex team selected six case study areas across the city as representative models to help identify challenges and opportunities for constructing multiplex dwellings in Toronto's varied *Neighbourhoods*: Ionview, Lawrence, Ossington, Pearldale, Royal York, and Woodbine. These represent areas within the former City of Toronto where multiplexes already exist, as well as relatively newer *Neighbourhoods* in North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough that have largely single-unit homes in a more inner suburban context. Each of the case study areas includes *Neighbourhoods*-designated lands along Major Streets to provide opportunities for shared understanding with the Major Streets study.

The team researched the existing context and characteristics of each case study area, including:

- 2016 population density
- Lot sizes, residential building types and built form, including heritage listings
- Committee of Adjustment activity and typical variances requested for low-rise dwellings
- Access to transit and modal split between auto use, transit, and active transportation
- On-street parking availability, where applicable
- Parkland provision
- Current zoning permissions

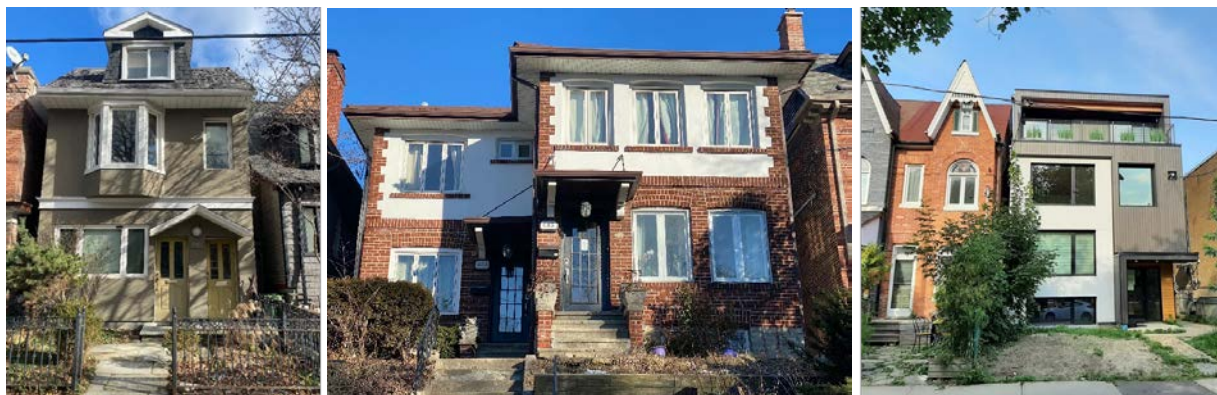
This research assisted in identifying typical lot sizes and building types within the case study areas, which can also be found throughout the city, as a basis for design testing for multiplexes in these contexts. The team worked with a range of lot widths – 5.5m, 7.0m, 10.0m and 16.0m - and a common lot depth of 36.0 metres. Further information about these design studies is provided in the following section of this report. Further review of zoning applicable to these areas, as well as common minor variances requested for relief from those regulations, will assist in the ongoing development of updated zoning standards.

Design Studies

The Design Studies comprised three main components which built upon and informed each other. Firstly, the team analyzed the existing typology of precedents where multiplexes are permitted. Existing multiplexes can be found in many areas such as Long Branch, Mimico, and other parts of South Etobicoke, throughout the former cities of Toronto, York and East York, and areas near Kingston Road. This study focused on a physical analysis to determine best practices and identify where regulatory improvement could provide opportunities and efficiencies for multiplex buildings. In particular, this analysis considered:

- building height and depth;
- front and rear setbacks;
- entrances;
- trees;
- soft landscaping; and
- site access and service elements.

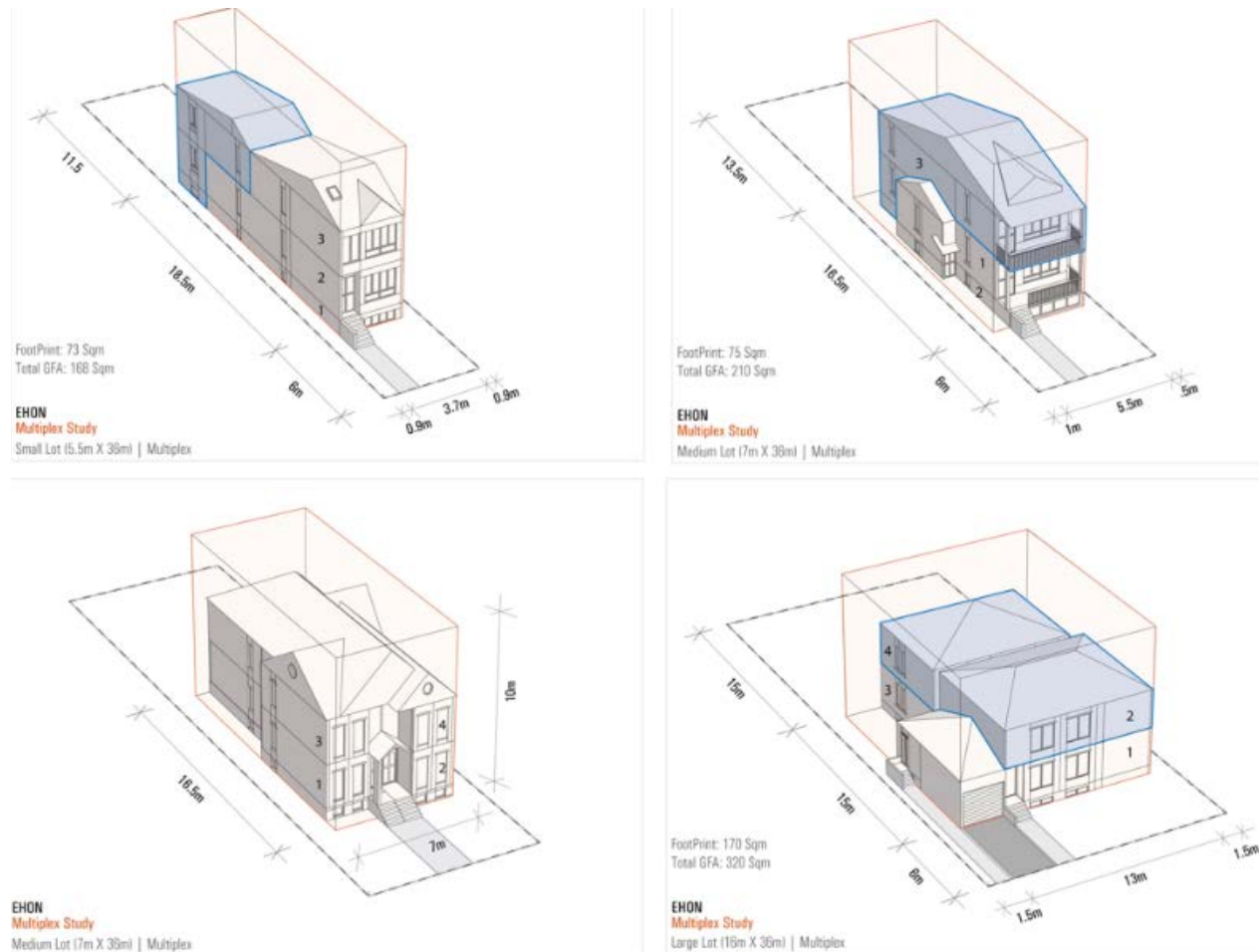
Fig 1. A Variety of Converted and Newly Constructed Multiplexes in a Low-rise Context



Working in conjunction with the typology and multiplex studies emerging from the [EHON Beaches-East York Pilot Project](#), the team modelled multiplexes in various contexts on different lot sizes, primarily in the case study areas described above. Multiplex designs were tested to understand whether they could be built within the permitted zoning envelopes for single-detached homes, with built form elements adjusted to their respective contexts. Each multiplex model also maintained at least one three-bedroom unit to ensure that family-sized units could be provided within the zoning parameters.

The various massing models, tested on a range of typical lot sizes are illustrated below. Further details and illustrations are provided in Attachment 4: Multiplex Design Modelling.

Fig 2. Potential Multiplex Massing Models on Typical Lot Sizes

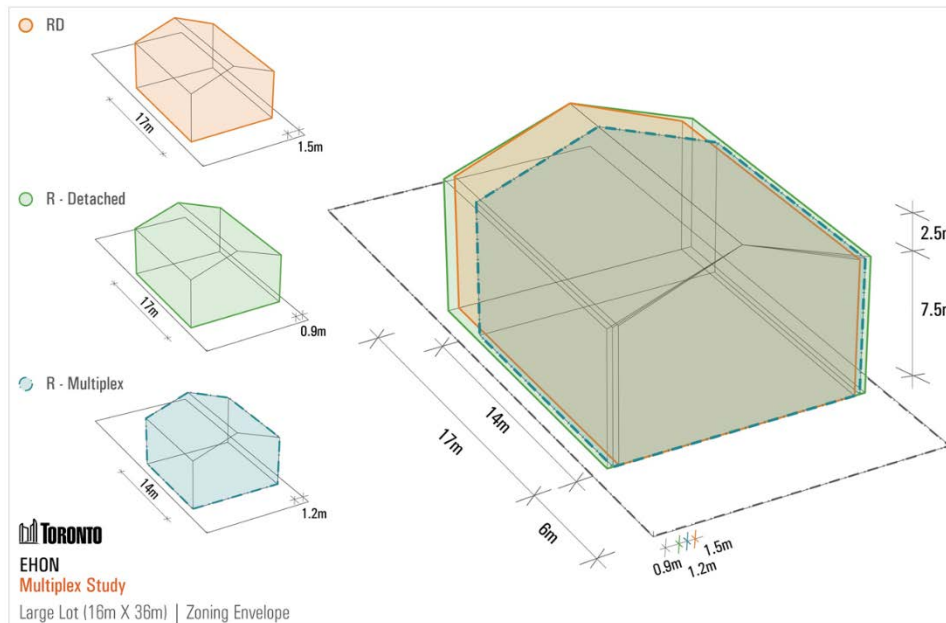


The team also created streetscape renderings to illustrate multiplexes in context from the perspective of a person on the sidewalk. The images in the Zoning section of this report, below, illustrate how a multiplex would appear within the overall streetscape and can seamlessly become part of the neighbourhood, as was observed from the initial precedent research in parts of the city where multiplexes are currently permitted.

Lastly, the team compared the case studies with the existing zoning permissions in the RD, R and RM zones. Through prior research on Committee of Adjustment applications, the team analysed the zoning provisions that typically require variances and tested the removal or adjustment of specific regulations, in order to identify regulations that may limit the creation of efficient and liveable multiplexes. For example, the team had identified a disparity between the permitted R-zoning envelope for a multiplex, notably the building depth, which is 3 metres less than the 17 metres permitted for a single detached dwelling. Similarly, side yard setbacks differ in the R zone, requiring 0.9 metres for a detached dwelling but 1.2 metres for a multiplex. The diagram below illustrates that equalizing the building depth regulation for a multiplex building from 14 to

17 metres, along with the potential adjustment of side yard setback permissions, allows for the creation of more spacious units without significantly modifying the built form envelope.

Fig. 3 Comparative Diagram of Built Form Envelopes Permitted for Single Detached and Multiplex Buildings within the R and Rd Zones



Financial Analysis – Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel

To explore whether multiplexes would be financially viable to build if policy and zoning were changed, staff engaged a technical assistance panel organized by the Urban Land Institute Toronto. The panel was made up of professionals with expertise in architecture and design, planning, development, and financing. The panel evaluated the following questions:

- Is it financially feasible for residents to create a multiplex in different neighbourhoods across Toronto by renovating an existing home or demolishing and building new?
- If yes, under what conditions?
- What would it take to do so while also delivering affordable housing or sustainable design (i.e., waiving of charges, levies, loosening of restrictions)?

The panel looked at three scenarios which included both renovations to existing structures and new build options. The panel found that multiplex projects typically have small profit margins with little ability to absorb unexpected costs. The feasibility of creating a multiplex varies across the city based on land value and quality of construction of the existing home; but in many cases, the added cost of development charges would be the difference between a project becoming feasible or not. To improve the viability of these projects, the panel recommended waiving development charges and fees for multiplexes up to four units, and a reduced fee structure for small scale apartments.

On zoning matters, the panel recommended permitting multiplexes throughout the city, reviewing the maximum permitted building height and depth, and other specific design parameters which will be considered by the team for implementation through amendments to zoning by-law standards. The panel also recommended that simplifying the condo approval process and fees, as well as exploring co-ownership models, should be considered to help first-time homebuyers purchase homes within *Neighbourhoods*. A summary of the key findings is found in Attachment 5: Key Findings from the Urban Land Institute Multiplex Technical Advisory Panel. The full report is posted on the Urban Land Institute - Toronto [website](#).

Low-Rise Apartments in Neighbourhoods – Toronto Metropolitan University Study

The first phase of the multiplex study focused on permitting multiplexes within *Neighbourhoods*, but through consultation and analysis the team found that it may be appropriate to permit low-rise apartment buildings in defined areas as well. For the purposes of this study, low-rise apartments are defined as buildings with five or more units, up to four storeys in height. To assist with the analysis of this type of housing, City Planning staff engaged a team of graduate students in the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) graduate planning studio.

The TMU team produced a research report which recommended permitting low-rise apartments in *Neighbourhoods* along arterial roads and providing built form transition in adjacent blocks into the interior of *Neighbourhoods*. The report stressed the importance of extending as-of-right zoning permissions for low-rise apartments up to four storeys in these areas and recommended using pre-approved design checklists to streamline the approvals process. Like the work done by the Urban Land Institute Toronto, as described above, the TMU team conducted pro-forma analyses of low-rise apartment buildings across the city to determine whether projects would be viable if permitted. The financial analysis found that the cost of providing parking often makes these small projects financially unviable and as a result, it was recommended that underground parking be discouraged, and policies should focus on permitting this form of housing in areas which are well-served by transit, such as in Major Transit Station Areas.

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. These objectives are reflected in the policies of the proposed Official Plan Amendment, described below. Further research and design work is also recommended to inform zoning regulations for soft landscaping, as well as city-wide policies to achieve lower carbon low-rise development, as outlined in the Future Work section below.

Staff from the City Planning and Urban Forestry divisions are co-leading the Growing Space Working Group, an interdivisional working group formed to consider strategies for protecting and enhancing space for plants to grow and the City's tree canopy, while supporting infill housing growth in the City's *Neighbourhoods*. The group also has representatives from Toronto Building, Environment and Energy, Transportation

Services, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Legal Services, and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority.

Design Review Panel Feedback

The Design Review Panel (DRP) is comprised of private sector design professionals who provide independent, objective advice to City staff on both private development and public projects. Staff from all EHON streams collectively presented to DRP on April 14, 2022 and was met with outstanding support and enthusiasm from all panel members. Common feedback related to the multiplex stream included the importance of this initiative for housing affordability and sustainability (environmentally, socially and economically), and how this has been long overdue in the City. Topics raised through other public consultations were also discussed at the DRP, including tree canopy and protection, financial feasibility and viability, and market speculation utilizing the revised zoning envelope to build even larger single-unit dwellings. The panel noted it would be advantageous to provide detailed diagrams and design examples/templates of multiplex buildings to make it more accessible to property owners and non-building professionals to build them. The panel also expressed the importance of including architects in the EHON discussion and analysis who can provide the practical knowledge in constructability, cost, process, and Building Code requirements, among other realities of designing and building low-rise residential building types in Toronto.

Consultation

In October 2021, staff launched a Multiplex survey to gauge response to the concept and reported initial results in the November 2021 interim report. The survey remained open until December 31, 2021, with feedback received as follows:

- In total, 77% of the 7,728 respondents supported multiplexes in any neighbourhood across Toronto. Support was seen across the city, with 61% of respondents from Scarborough, 66% from Etobicoke, 67% from North York, and 82% of respondents from Toronto and East York supporting multiplexes.
- Widespread support was also seen across respondents of all age groups, with the highest level support, 79%, of 20-29 year olds and 30-39 year olds. The age group with the lowest overall support was those who are 65 and older, with 71% support.
- Similarly, support for multiplexes was strong across income groups, with the highest support, 80%, in those with annual household incomes of \$100,000 to \$149,000. The lowest level of support, 73%, was those with annual household incomes of under \$20,000.
- The respondents were nearly split between people living in rented housing (49%) and people living in housing that they owned (51%).

Respondents were asked for the matters they felt most important to address in creating policies for multiplexes. The top response was incorporating sustainable building practices, followed by architectural design, and building height.

Staff have held over 20 consultation events since February 2022 and will continue to actively engage with a diverse range of parties and stakeholders through different methods to ensure as many voices as possible are represented in this discussion. A list

of all the engagements held to date is included in Attachment 3, with a summary of commonly heard themes and topics noted below:

Equity and Environment

- Many felt that EHON is a long-overdue opportunity to provide access to *Neighbourhoods* that have historically been inaccessible to many residents.
- Participants expressed they have been priced out and cannot stay in the same neighbourhood where they grew up.
- There is strong interest in living in low-rise *Neighbourhoods* from people who cannot currently afford housing in these areas.
- Questions and concerns were expressed whether multiplexes would address the housing affordability issue.
- It is imperative to maintain ample soft landscaping and green/open space on residential lots.
- There is strong concern around the increasing risk of "as of right" tree removals, and strong interest around having greater tree protection policies to maintain and increase the tree canopy in residential *Neighbourhoods*.

Neighbourhood Character & Built Form Context

- Some participants felt that the idea of prevailing neighbourhood character should not limit change in an evolving and growing city, and were concerned that *Neighbourhoods* policies prioritize existing residents over the housing needs of others.
- There was a mix of both interest and concern around low-rise apartment buildings being permitted in low-rise *Neighbourhoods*.
- Some felt it was important to regulate floor space index (FSI) in low-rise *Neighbourhoods*, while others thought that built form regulations could be more effective in establishing planned context.
- Many expressed strong concern around developers and investors taking advantage of this opportunity to make a greater profit while disregarding the neighbours and neighbourhood.

Financial Feasibility

- In some parts of the city where multiplexes are already permitted, they are not being built – larger detached dwellings with one unit are being built instead.
- Development charges (and the recent proposed increase of them) continue to make building low-rise residential buildings financially unviable.
- It can be difficult for vulnerable populations to obtain financing/mortgage options for small-scale residential builds, including multiplex projects.

Other

- Existing infrastructure and community facilities (schools, public parks and open spaces, community centres) are already at/over capacity in many *Neighbourhoods*.
- Some expressed concern around the increased traffic and congestion.
- The elimination of parking requirements in zoning has raised concerns that parking will spill onto local streets, specifically in *Neighbourhoods*.

- There was some interest in seeing EHON initiatives piloted in a few *Neighbourhoods* instead of being applied across the city; while others felt that area-based pilots would lead to a continuation of existing inequities.

DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

As part of the EHON work plan, staff propose that multiplex housing be permitted in all *Neighbourhoods* citywide. To implement this policy, staff are consulting on changes to the Official Plan necessary to permit increased missing middle housing options in *Neighbourhoods*, including a review of policies regarding prevailing neighbourhood character. These amendments are being considered both comprehensively, through ongoing work through EHON and the Municipal Comprehensive Review, and on a project-specific basis. In the November 2021 Interim report on the Multiplex study, staff identified where the Official Plan could present policy barriers to multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*.

In early May 2022, following consultation and further analysis, staff released a draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for feedback on the City's EHON website, included as Attachment 1 to this report. The draft OPA included explanatory notes to provide background and rationale for the proposed changes to facilitate multiplexes in the near term, until Official Plan policies are considered more globally through the Municipal Comprehensive Review. The Official Plan Amendment is proposed to be structured as a Site and Area-Specific Policy (SASP), located in Chapter 7 of the Official Plan. The SASP would apply to all lands within the city that have a *Neighbourhoods* land use designation, as shown in yellow on Official Plan Maps 13-23.

The purpose and intent of the SASP is to clarify that multiplexes are a permitted building type in all *Neighbourhoods*, subject to the development criteria that follow, to respect and reinforce the existing and planned physical context of *Neighbourhoods*. Generally speaking, the existing context of any given area refers to what is there now, while the planned context refers to what is intended in the future. It is not intended that the introduction of multi-unit homes will significantly change the low-rise, ground-related nature of our *Neighbourhoods*. Rather, this study recommends that multiplexes continue to be built to the same general scale and zoning standards for low-rise buildings that are permitted today. This means, in part, working with the built form envelope that is allowed for single detached homes and optimizing it to house more units.

Among the development criteria are those currently found in Section 4.1.5 of the Official Plan, including consideration of a neighbourhood's patterns of streets and blocks, lot sizes and configurations, building setbacks, landscaped open space, unique physical characteristics and heritage conservation. It is proposed that certain existing criteria no longer be included - such as those pertaining to prevailing heights, density, dwelling and building type - as they could be interpreted to prohibit multiplexes, even where the physical scale and character of a neighbourhood is intended to be maintained. For example, multiplexes do not currently exist in many *Neighbourhoods* because they have historically not been permitted, and therefore they cannot be considered to be a "prevailing building type". Deleting this criterion removes a policy barrier that stands in the way of multiplexes.

Similarly, the deletion of the prevailing heights, massing, scale, and density criteria is intended to remove a policy barrier to achieving the permitted heights and scale already regulated by the zoning by-law. For example, in many of the areas of the city, existing housing may be made up of mostly single storey bungalows, but the zoning permits development up to three storeys subject to other built form regulations. If a proposal to build a two-storey building were to need a minor variance, it could be refused if the "prevailing" scale in the area were interpreted to reflect what already exists - in this case, one-storey houses. In response to feedback on the draft OPA, staff are considering introducing the concept of "planned height and scale" into the OPA to indicate that the *Neighbourhoods* are generally intended to be low in scale (four storeys or less), with heights regulated by the applicable zoning by-law provisions where they are proposed.

The proposed SASP also includes new criteria for multiplexes that:

- encourage the inclusion of at least one unit that can accommodate larger households;
- support the creation of units that provide universal accessibility to accommodate a range of needs;
- allow for more than one entrance to the building, whether at the front, side or rear;
- maximize contiguous soft landscaping;
- support the protection and expansion of the urban tree canopy;
- encourage sustainable building practices; and
- limit privacy impacts between dwelling units.

The SASP also proposes to delete non-policy sidebar text, which currently states that if an existing zoning by-law permits only single detached dwellings, then the Plan's policies are to be interpreted to allow only single detached dwellings. However, approximately two-thirds of the city's *Neighbourhoods* currently have this zoning, which would not allow multiplexes to be built. Until the zoning by-law can be amended to permit multiplexes in all Residential zones, that text is proposed to be deleted to remove this policy barrier.

Through consultation, concerns have been raised that the proposed approach will only lead to the creation of larger single-unit houses (often referred to as "monster homes"). Based on examples from precedent cities, staff recommend the inclusion of a policy that would allow for limited additional density to be permitted in zoning where a multiplex building type is proposed. The intent is to incentivize the use of permitted building envelopes to house additional units. Proposed approaches to the provision of a density incentive will be brought forward through future consultation phases.

Changes to the Official Plan through this OPA are intended to set the vision for multiplexes across the city. Regulations for multiplexes will be established through the future zoning by-law amendment which will set out the precise requirements for how multiplexes will be permitted to be built.

Feedback to Date

Since the draft OPA was released on May 5, 2022, staff received over 130 email responses from individuals, residents associations, industry groups, and other interested parties across the city. Nearly 80% of respondents support the concept of permitting multiplexes in low-rise residential neighbourhoods, while 11% did not support multiplexes. Many of the comments and concerns received echo what was heard during the live consultation events.

With the majority of respondents supporting multiplexes and the draft OPA in principle, many respondents also felt that the language in Clause 1(b)(i) of the OPA, "respect and reinforce the existing and planned physical character" does not go far enough to support the building of multiplexes in low-rise neighbourhoods, and will still serve as a policy roadblock to their approval. Many respondents were also critical regarding the use of the words "is encouraged" within the OPA, and how this language does not have much clarity or effect.

There has been some confusion about the intent of the OPA with regards to height, with some comments interpreting the OPA as permitting four storey developments in *Neighbourhoods* citywide and expressing concern with this direction. The intent of this OPA was not to permit four storey developments citywide, but rather to defer to the height limits in the zoning by-law. As discussed above, Staff are considering introducing the concept of "planned height and scale" into the OPA which would reiterate that the zoning by-law regulates density and height limits.

Many respondents suggested that the draft zoning by-law amendment should be available for consultation at the same time as the official plan amendment so the effects of the policy could be more fully understood. In line with these comments, staff will be bringing the proposed official plan and zoning by-law amendments together to Planning and Housing Committee in the first quarter of 2023.

Others also noted that the expectations for multiplexes are higher than what is expected for detached dwellings, which, when considered together with development charges, will not realistically help incentivize the construction of many multiplexes in neighbourhoods. Finally, it has been noted that to remove prevailing driveway and garage grades from the development criteria does not serve the intent of the study and may introduce undesirable streetscape conditions and raise basement flooding concerns.

ZONING CONCEPTS

Issues within the Current Zoning Context

The majority of properties in *Neighbourhoods* across the city do not have zoning permissions to construct multiplexes. Most residential zones within Zoning By-law 569-2013 (Residential Detached (RD), Residential Semi-Detached (RS) and Residential Townhouse (RT)) are structured around permissions for a predominant building type, and do not allow for a range of different building types to reflect varying levels of intensification in *Neighbourhoods*. Under Zoning definitions, residential building types

are primarily distinguished by the number of dwelling units within the building. As the current approach to residential zoning in the city-wide zoning by-law focuses on excluding building types 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. Multiplex buildings are only permitted within the Residential Multiple Dwelling (RM) and Residential (R) zones. This constitutes approximately 12% of lands across the city, and are primarily located within the former City of Toronto and Etobicoke. Conversely, the RD zone applies to approximately 31% of city's total land area and permits only single detached houses.

As the primary focus of Zoning By-law 569-2013 was to harmonize zoning regulations to create a common terminology and structure across 43 former municipal zoning by-laws, residential zoning regulations have not been modernized to reflect current housing needs in terms of permissions for residential building types or the constructability of built form standards. The current residential zoning does not contain performance standards specific to multiplexes that could improve livability and enhance environmental performance standards such as requirements for family-sized units, sustainability features, or built form standards which encourage less carbon-intensive methods of construction. Defined terms for multiplex building types are often difficult to interpret and apply in relation to buildings containing secondary suites. For example, a duplex and a detached house with a secondary suite may appear similar, resulting in confusion. A detached house may appear as a detached house but actually contain enough units to function as a multiplex.

Lessons Learned from Precedent Cities

An increasing number of North American cities are re-examining their zoning by-laws and codes to permit multiplexes in single detached communities. Many have also eliminated minimum parking requirements for residential units, or made the provision of parking optional. While cities operate within different legislative frameworks, other key takeaways from precedent research include the following:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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; while Seattle regulates the number of units permitted by lot area, e.g. 1 unit per 185 m².
- Vancouver's standards focus on the livability of units, such as minimum unit size.
- 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.
- 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.

Approach to Zoning Amendments

Expanding Building Type Permissions

To facilitate multiplexes on a city-wide basis, zoning permissions for duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes should be introduced comprehensively within residential zoning across *Neighbourhoods*. The proposed approach to introducing permissions for multiplexes would include amending the building type permissions for the RD, RS and RT zones to include duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. The existing regulations in each zone, including built form standards for height, setbacks, building length and depth, would be amended to apply these same regulations to the multiplex building types to ensure a consistency of scale. This approach expands the range of permitted building types in the RD, RS and RT zones, while maintaining the original structure of performance standards in each zone.

The R and RM zones in Zoning By-law 569-2013 permit duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. Staff considered an approach to rezone areas that do not currently permit multiplexes to the R or RM zones; however, these zones also permit more intense residential building types which are beyond the scope of this study, including townhouses and apartment buildings. Rezoning suburban areas zoned RD to the R zone would result in substantial and unintended physical change, as the performance standards in each residential zone are reflective of the existing built form context and lot patterns found in the *Neighbourhoods* to which the zone applies. For example, 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 R zone standards include smaller setbacks and separation distances between buildings, which may not be appropriate for larger lots found in suburban context, where the established neighbourhood context includes generous spacing between buildings and landscaping within larger setbacks.

Expanding building type permissions in the RD, RS and RT zones to include multiplexes while retaining the framework of standards within each zone would have the effect of generally maintaining existing built form envelopes as currently permitted in the zoning while allowing additional dwelling units within the same, permitted built form. This would permit multiplex building types which fit within the existing context and largely be indistinguishable in scale from detached houses in the same neighbourhood.

For example, in a more suburban neighbourhood with large lots, such as those that exist in Etobicoke and Scarborough, multiplexes could look like an additional storey on top of an existing bungalow to create one or two additional units. This type of development would maintain the existing front and back yards, be built within the existing height limit, and would be in keeping with the existing scale of the area.



The example below shows what a multiplex could look like on a smaller lot in a context more similar to neighbourhoods in the former cities of East York, Toronto, and York where multiplexes may already be permitted.



For more detailed descriptions of these case studies, please see Appendix 4: Multiplex Design Modelling.

Exploring Changes to Existing Zoning Standards

In addition to expanding permissions for multiplex building types across residential zones, additional amendments will be explored to modify certain existing zoning regulations that may otherwise restrict the constructability of multiplexes. These potential amendments, summarized in Attachment 2 to this report, may include:

- Removing restrictions on the maximum number of dwelling units permitted on a lot. These restrictions vary by geography and are implemented in the Residential zone category with a "U" symbol and a numerical value in the zone label, indicating the maximum number of units. For example, the "U" symbol is used in the RM zone to denote permitted residential building types. Amending the zone label to a value of "U 4" for areas permitting three or fewer units will allow for the full range of multiplex buildings to be constructed in those *Neighbourhoods*.
- Amending built form performance standards to enhance the constructability of multiplexes, while maintaining compatibility with the existing context and scale. For example, the maximum permitted building depth for duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes is currently 14 metres in the R zone, whereas the permitted depth for detached houses is 17 metres. To harmonize the building envelopes for multiplexes

and detached houses, staff propose amending the maximum permitted depth for duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes across all residential zones to match the permitted building depth for detached houses in each zone.

- Other performance standards which may be amended include side yard setbacks and main wall height, where it is evident that these could impact the constructability/viability of multiplexes when compared to single-detached houses. Some performance standards in zones which did not previously permit multiplexes, such as the number and location of permitted platforms, may require modifications to address the functionality of buildings with multiple units. Potential amendments to these regulations will be informed by built form analysis and further review of Committee of Adjustment decisions across the city.
- Floor Space Index (FSI) permissions for multiplexes in residential zones require further study to explore how the construction of additional units may be supported. Approaches to modifying the FSI permissions may include increasing the overall density permission per lot or permitting additional density on a per-unit basis for multiplex building types. This tool has been employed by other municipalities across North America which have implemented "missing middle" initiatives to increase housing in low-rise neighbourhoods. For example, 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.
- Maximum height permissions in about 87% of *Neighbourhoods* across the city range from 8.5 to 10.5 metres, or generally permitting 2 to 3 storeys. The team has used these limits in design work and the analysis has shown that there is potential for adding more units without changing the existing height permissions. However, staff have heard through consultation that these height limits may need to be adjusted to accommodate sustainable design features, wood-framed construction, or buildings which do not contain basements.
- Through consultation, staff heard that the requirements for landscaping are important to maintain to keep the green character of *Neighbourhoods* intact. These requirements were not frequently identified as significant barriers to building multiplexes. The current requirements are consistent across all residential zones and vary by lot frontage to reflect the differing conditions throughout the city.

Parking

Revised city-wide parking standards were adopted by City Council on December 15, 2021. The revised standards do not contain minimum or maximum parking standards for low-rise housing including multiplexes.

Developers and residents who wish to convert an existing home or build a multiplex will have the option to provide parking that is appropriate for individual contexts. For example, the November 2021 monitoring report on laneway suites found that though parking was not required, 46% of the laneway suites included parking. 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 eliminates the need for a minor variance specific to parking, effectively saving costs, and potentially simplifying the process to create new multiplex housing. This also allows for more space on multiplex lots to be used for more sustainable design features such as bicycle parking or soft landscaping.

Further work is being undertaken by Transportation Services through the [Parking Strategy](#), which was adopted by [City Council on April 6, 2022](#), which in part will include a comprehensive review of how parking permits are administered, the fee structure, and front yard parking pads.

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 in addition to Building Permit fees: Committee of Adjustment application fees, Development Charges, and Parkland Dedication levies. If the multiplex development is intended to be condominium, it is also subject to a Condominium Approval Fee. 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 consultation with 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. Eliminating the disincentives for creating multiplexes may also improve the cost effectiveness of City service delivery by allowing more people to live within the same service delivery area.

Committee of Adjustment

Where a proposed use is not permitted by 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 an application 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 \$1,716.56, while the fee for new construction of residential dwellings of the same type is \$3,859.09. 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 \$4,994.63. 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.

Future revisions to the zoning by-law are intended to allow more multiplex development to proceed without requiring minor variances. However, in the case that an applicant is still proposing development which requires a variance, the fee structure should be revised to include fourplexes in the least expensive fee category. This will be considered through the Council-directed Development Fee Review occurring in 2023-2024.

Growth Funding Tools

The Province of Ontario introduced legislative changes to the *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act* which necessitates the City to review and update three of its growth-related funding tools: development charges, community benefits charge and alternative parkland dedication rate.

Reports on development charges, community benefits charges and the alternative parkland dedication rate will be presented to the July 12 Executive Committee and then at the July Council meeting. While community benefit charges do not apply to residential projects under five storeys and fewer than 10 residential units, such as multiplex projects, both development charges and alternative parkland dedication do apply to these types of projects.

Given the findings of the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel summarized earlier in this report, it will be important to assess the final growth-related funding tools adopted by Council on multiplex projects and to identify next steps. For example, as part of the Long Term Fiscal Plan review requested by Council to be completed in 2023, a review of the City's discretionary exemptions and financial incentives will be undertaken and brought forward for Council consideration. This will include a comprehensive framework which considers all growth-related funding tools to ensure that incentives are in support of the City's desired outcomes and goals, such as increasing housing opportunities across the city.

Condominium Approval Fees

Consultations identified the condominium approvals process as a barrier to creating owner-occupied housing in multiplexes. Both the City of Toronto and Condominium Act requirements from the Province present challenges to this form of development and the costs and difficulty of pursuing these approvals may discourage development of this type. On May 12, 2022, City Council requested that the Chief Planner report on a strategy to support single-family homeowners to convert their residences into multiple units, including the feasibility of eliminating the Plan of Condominium approval fee of \$10,183.10. The report was requested for the second quarter of 2023. This work will complement the Multiplex Team's research on this topic and will help to address the identified issues.

FUTURE WORK

Staff have identified issues through consultation which will take further work to fully address. The sections below outline the work that will be undertaken in the next phases of the Multiplex project. Some of the work items involve other EHON project teams, City Divisions, or level of governments as identified in the respective sections.

Condominium Approvals Process

In addition to the condominium approval fees noted above, a common theme throughout consultation has been that the condominium approval process makes small-scale condominium projects difficult to construct. Part of this issue is in the control of the City; staff have heard that a separate approvals project for small-scale projects should be explored, with legal support or examples provided to assist with the process. The other main barrier identified is the Ontario Condominium Act, which treats all condominium projects the same, regardless of number of units. A common comment is that Ontario should look at the British Columbia strata model for an example of a more streamlined, easier process for small-scale condominiums.

Low-Rise Apartments

In some *Neighbourhoods* it would be appropriate to permit low-rise apartments in addition to multiplexes, particularly within the city's Major Transit Station Areas which are within walking distance to rapid transit. The next phase of this project will consider how to extend these permissions and the built form regulations that accompany those permissions. Staff will review of the policy recommendations from the Toronto Metropolitan University study and share these with the EHON Major Streets team as many of the recommendations also relate to that team's work program.

Embodied Carbon

Embodied emissions include the "upfront" carbon associated with materials extraction, processing, transport and installation of building materials at construction sites. As electrical grids decarbonize and operational energy codes and standards, such as the Toronto Green Standard, become more stringent, the embodied emissions become a much more significant part of the emissions produced over a building's lifecycle.

Toronto Green Standard (TGS) Version 4 introduces the reporting of embodied carbon for both building and landscape materials. City Planning is currently partnering on two studies funded by The Atmospheric Fund to benchmark embodied carbon in construction materials in the low-rise housing sector and for large residential and non-residential buildings. Although multiplex developments with four or fewer units are not subject to the requirements of the TGS, consultations with and feedback from industry experts have highlighted the opportunity that multiplexes can provide to accommodate more housing in building forms associated with lower material carbon emissions.

In general, low-rise multi-unit housing can be built with some of the lowest embodied carbon impacts of any housing form, due to the ability to use wood frame construction and less reliance on carbon-intensive concrete. In the case of multiplexes, re-using

existing structures and foundations are some of the best ways to reduce environmental impacts of this type of development. The construction and expansion of basements, underground parking structures and transfer slabs are drivers of increased embodied carbon in these structures.

In the interim, this proposed Official Plan Amendment includes a policy encouraging the re-use of existing concrete foundations and/or building components in the construction of multiplexes to minimize basement floor area and reduce new concrete construction where feasible. The benchmark studies will make specific recommendations for the TGS and provide guidance for future policy and urban design on ways to achieve low carbon footprints in typical housing forms.

Secondary Suites

As multiplex permissions are expanded city-wide, further analysis and refinement of the existing secondary suite permissions and performance standards is necessary to reduce confusion and eliminate barriers to constructing additional residential units.

Interpreting the differences between multiplex building types and dwelling units with secondary suites can be challenging. For example, it can be difficult to distinguish between a duplex and a detached house with a secondary suite, particularly for proposals on larger lots. In addition, regulations in the R zone permit some properties to contain more than one secondary suite per dwelling unit, resulting in challenges in differentiating these buildings from apartment buildings. These regulations should be refined to clarify the differences between multiplexes and dwelling units with secondary suites to ensure the correct building type is identified.

Comments received through consultation have suggested that the policy prohibiting the location of secondary suite entrances in the front wall is inequitable and should be reconsidered. Though secondary suites are permitted in residential zones city-wide, secondary suite entrances in the front wall of a residential building are only permitted in a townhouse but not in a detached or semi-detached house. However, residential buildings without a secondary suite do not have this restriction and are permitted to have multiple entrances from the front wall of a house. The by-law permitting only one front door is also inconsistent with the draft Multiplex official plan amendment which would permit multiple front doors, if desired, and should be revised to treat secondary suites consistently with duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.

Capacity Questions: Consultation with Divisional Partners

Questions of infrastructure capacity of services like water, sewers, parks, recreation programs, and schools have been raised throughout the EHON engagement. Prior to reporting on the recommended Official Plan and zoning by-law amendments, staff will continue to consult with divisional partners such as Toronto Water and Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to ensure that the potential incremental growth resulting from these policies can be accommodated.

CONCLUSION

The EHON Multiplex study touches on numerous complex and interconnected issues to achieve a sustainable approach to providing more options for low-rise housing in *Neighbourhoods* across the city. The proposed Official Plan Amendment and zoning directions outlined in this report will be consulted on and developed further to arrive at a planning policy framework that supports the creation of multiplexes in the Toronto context. Based on direction from the Planning and Housing Committee, the Multiplex team will continue its analysis and consultation through Q3-Q4 2022, targeting final recommendations in Q1 2023.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment
Attachment 2: Key Zoning By-law Concepts for Consultation
Attachment 3: List of Engagement Events
Attachment 4: Multiplex Design Modelling
Attachment 5: Key Findings from the Urban Land Institute Multiplex Technical Advisory Panel