



**MORE NEIGHBOURS**  
**TORONTO**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

**RE: PH31.6 - Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods - Update Report**

***About More Neighbours Toronto***

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a new volunteer-led organization of housing advocates that believe in building more multi-family homes of all kinds for those who dream of building their lives in Toronto. We advocate for reforms to increase our city's ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are nevertheless committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that dominates Toronto's politics, created an affordability crisis, and has cost burdened a new generation of aspiring residents. We are firmly committed to the principle that housing is a human right and believe Toronto should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

***Summary of Position***

More Neighbours supports the continuation of work on all of EHON's work items, as well as on any public consultations required for them. EHON work items that we strongly endorse include, but are not limited to:

- Neighbourhood Change Research
- Garden Suites
- Multiplex Housing
- Major Street Rezoning
- Local Neighbourhood Retail and Services
- Amending the Official Plan
- Review of Parking Requirements
- Financial Barriers, Municipal Financial Tools, and Other Challenges
- Design Competition and Preapproved Drawings
- Resilient Low Carbon Development in Neighbourhoods
- Establish Metrics and Monitor Outcomes

***Overall Motivation***

Toronto is in a housing crisis. Rents are unaffordable for students, new immigrants, service workers, and nurses, to name a few, and even the upper middle class is encouraged to “drive until they qualify” because homeownership in Toronto is unattainable. While Toronto has doubled in population between 1970 and 2016, the vast majority of Toronto’s neighbourhoods have lost population in that same time frame, with growth limited to the downtown core and other small pockets of land. This is despite many of those neighbourhoods being located very close to jobs and transit, and being very desirable places to live. The recently-released population counts from the 2021 census show a continuation of the same trend.

The exclusion of Toronto’s growth from Toronto’s Neighbourhoods is a primary factor exacerbating the housing crisis, and in turn has consequences for our economy, our environment, and our equity. The EHON initiative is the most direct initiative by the city to address exclusionary zoning, and it’s been long awaited.

The necessity of EHON’s work is underscored by the release of the provincial Housing Affordability Task Force’s report recently. A lot of the recommendations in that report overlap heavily with EHON’s mandate, which goes to show how political pressure is intensifying in favour of the solutions that EHON is exploring as time goes on.

### ***Neighbourhood Change Research***

The Planning and Housing Committee approved a report on Neighbourhood Change and Intensification in November 2021. The report found that population density was higher and population diversity was better in neighbourhoods with more permissive zoning (eg. R, RM, RT) as opposed to neighbourhoods with more restrictive zoning (eg. RD, RS). This comes as no surprise to us, and directly mirrors our lived experiences: unless you’re rich enough to afford a detached house worth over a million dollars, the more restrictive neighbourhoods are outside your reach.

We request the Planning and Housing Committee to encourage this research and any related consultations, and adopt emergent policies that take the city in a more equitable and affordable direction.

### ***Multiplex Housing***

Allowing multiplex housing on existing residential lots in the city - all of them - is a great starting point in tackling the harms of exclusionary zoning. We request the Planning and Housing Committee to support continuing public consultations on this item with the goal to produce a report from EHON with policy recommendations as soon as possible.

### ***Major Streets Rezoning***

This work will consider whether the existing 4-storey limit on major streets in neighbourhoods is still appropriate. Major streets have frequent transit in nearly every neighbourhood in Toronto,

and we encourage EHON to be very ambitious in this space, just like how the Provincial task force recommended as-of-right zoning for midrises up to 11 storeys on these streets. In addition, in well-connected neighbourhoods, we encourage this lens to also be applied to inner streets. After all, apartment dwellers deserve to live on quiet streets too, not just single-detached homeowners.

The scale of the housing crisis necessitates wide-scale solutions beyond just allowing multiplexes; a lot more supply is going to be necessary to make a meaningful difference. 1.5 million more homes need to be built in Ontario, and as Ontario's largest city, Toronto needs to unlock opportunities for high-density housing wherever it makes sense.

### ***Missing Middle Toolkit and Preapproved Drawings***

Process and cost barriers are some of the biggest challenges that inhibit missing-middle housing construction. By pre-approving some multiplex designs and allowing more standardized construction of those, both the approval and the construction side can be streamlined, making it much easier to economically justify missing-middle intensification of this sort.

We recommend the PHC to support this design competition from EHON and to learn from other cities that have embarked on similar projects.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

More Neighbours is glad to be included on the EHON community roundtable as a stakeholder group, and we welcome interim reports of EHON works on the public record like this one. Our members, who span the entirety of the political spectrum, all geographies of Toronto, and a wide variety of age and other demographic groups, have gotten the opportunity to connect directly with the EHON team and provide comments to them. We look forward to doing the same in future public consultations.

We ask the Planning and Housing Committee to receive this report and to encourage the EHON project team to explore emergent policy recommendations.

Bilal Akhtar  
More Neighbours Toronto