



Planning and Housing Committee

July 4, 2022

RE: PH35.3 Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study – Proposals Report

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee

We agree that the Planning Department needs to continue consultation on the Draft OPA and Proposed Zoning By-laws for Multiplexes but would request that the feedback that has been provided already to the Planning Department be incorporated into an updated draft OPA and draft zoning by-laws in advance of the next phase of consultations.

In Chapter One of Toronto's Official Plan, it states that " The Plan is an integrated document. For any individual part to be properly understood, the Plan must be read as a whole."

The LBNA agrees with this statement. There needs to be more transparency and more specifics for appropriate consultation to take place.

The Planning Department has yet to incorporate the learnings from neighbourhoods, such as Long Branch, into this draft material.

1. The report states that some of the City's low-rise Neighbourhoods have lost population. That is not the case for our neighbourhood. Long Branch has grown by over 13% from 2016 – 2021 vs Toronto's much more modest growth of 2.3%
2. The report states that the City wants to see a more equitable approach to growth. Long Branch added 540 low rise housing units from 2016-2021 and many more are in the process of being built. This represents almost 9% of the annual requirements called for in the report. The draft OPA and by-laws should direct growth to communities where growth is needed, which they do not currently do.
3. Long Branch already has RM zones that permit multiplexes. 37% of housing is already multiplexes and small apartments less than 5 storeys. In the past 4 years there have been 32 applications for new builds in our RM zones - all for variances for single detached homes. Only 1 application for a multiplex that, once approved, the owner immediately listed the undeveloped property for \$800,000 more with no intention to build. An unbuilt fourplex where the lot alone is now listed for sale at \$2 Million is unlikely to enable new affordable housing for 1st time home buyers or any other,

We are encouraged to see that City planning will look at growth in neighbourhoods through a climate impact lens but have seen nothing to date in any of the proposed OPA and by-laws to protect, let alone increase, necessary soft landscaping, tree canopy or water permeable surface areas in neighbourhoods. In fact, everything proposed so far will do exactly the opposite.

We would ask this Committee to request from staff an analysis of where there is excess infrastructure, services and school capacity in the City and strongly recommend that growth be directed there instead of continuing to permit growth in areas where the infrastructure is already over capacity or insufficient.

The report does state that the physical scale and character of a neighbourhood is intended to be maintained.

Recently, in January 2018, City Council invested a substantial amount of time and money and unanimously approved the Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guidelines. There is much in these Guidelines that could be used to inform EHON, yet they are noticeably absent in any of the reports. For example, the Guidelines state:

“The stability of our neighbourhoods’ physical character is one of the keys to Toronto’s success”.

“ Neighbourhoods are not intended to be the focus of intensification”

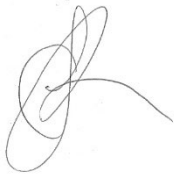
“There is no one-size-fits-all solution...What is compatible in one neighbourhood may be incompatible in another”.

Therefore, there may be some neighbourhoods where four storey residential units may very well be able to be built at a similar scale to single unit homes. But that is certainly not the case for all neighbourhoods nor all streets.

Last week, Mayor John Tory stated that “we are not talking about fundamentally altering the character of neighbourhoods” and “we are not trying to upset stable neighbourhoods”.

What is currently being proposed by the Multiplex OPA and By-laws will do exactly that. We would request that this Committee send these policies back to staff for more work and changes to ensure that this does not occur prior to the next phase of consultations.

Sincerely,



Christine Mercado
Chair
Long Branch Neighbourhood Association



Judy Gibson
Chair, Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Committee
Long Branch Neighbourhood Association