

Mid-Rise Buildings Rear Transition Performance Standards Review & Draft Update

Date: May 17, 2023

To: Planning & Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its meeting of December 14 – 15, 2022, Council directed the City Manager to develop a "2023 Housing Action Plan", inclusive of a direction to "...*review the City's urban design guidelines, heritage standards and urban forestry policies to ensure they align with the priority of optimizing the delivery [of] housing opportunities for a range of housing forms*". Direction for work in response to these recommendations also emphasized furthering "*Toronto's climate goals and good planning, including enhancing the public realm...*".

In response to this and the other items outlined in the Housing Action Plan recommendations, City Planning has initiated a review of the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards, focussing on the existing Performance Standards for Rear Transitions (5A through 5D). This focussed review of these four Performance Standards identified that providing flexibility in the rear transition of these building types to adjoining areas creates additional opportunities to further facilitate development of mid-rise buildings. Further facilitating development in a mid-rise building form will support increased housing supply in walkable, complete communities, while providing a wider range of housing options to address current housing challenges without compromising the needs of future generations.

The draft updates to Performance Standards for rear transition, recommended to be used as the basis for consultation, provide alternative approaches to rear transition for a variety of adjacent conditions. The draft updates continue to provide transition in built form as directed by the Built Form policies and other development criteria set out in the Official Plan, but with alternative approaches that would reduce or eliminate the continuous step-backs that have often been the result of applying the rear angular plane in the existing Performance Standards. These changes will allow for more regular floorplates, improve constructability, and allow for development in a mid-rise form on some shallow sites that under the existing Performance Standards, would not have accommodated a mid-rise scale of development. The draft updates encourage a mid-rise form that supports generous sunlight on adjacent sidewalks and the public realm,

while also balancing transition to various rear conditions and supporting intensification through flexibility in built form massing.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work to-date on the review of the Performance Standards for Rear Transitions, present draft updates to these Performance Standards, and outline next steps for further engagement and coordination with other work programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Planning and Housing Committee direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake public and stakeholder engagement on the Draft Performance Standards in the third and fourth quarter of 2023 and report back with final recommendations by November 21, 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in the report in the current budget year or in future years.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards encourage well-designed housing in a mid-rise form across the city. The adequate provision of a full range of housing is a matter of Provincial interest and a key tenet of the City's Official Plan policies. Access to high-quality and affordable housing is also an important determinant of physical and mental health and well-being. To this end, the Performance Standards have been effective in positively influencing the design of mid-rise development applications to achieve the Public Realm and Built Form policies of the Official Plan, and updates are intended to further facilitate this building type.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 6, 2010, City Council approved a Staff Report regarding the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study and Action Plan, which included the Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards. Council directed staff to monitor the Performance Standards over a 2-year period.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.PG39.9>)

In June 2016, City Council adopted a revised Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards Addendum, for staff to use together with the 2010 approved Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in the preparation of area studies or during the evaluation of development applications, where mid-rise buildings are proposed and Performance Standards are applicable, until such time as City Council adopts updated Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards. Council's decisions are here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG12.7>

On December 14, 2022, City Council adopted Item CC2.1 - 2023 Housing Action Plan, which directed the City Manager to develop a Housing Action Plan for the 2022-2026 term of Council that will support the City in achieving or exceeding the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes over the next 10 years. The Housing Action Plan is to include targeted timelines for the approval and implementation of a range of policy, program, zoning, and regulatory actions to increase the supply of affordable housing in support of complete communities.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.CC2.1>

COMMENTS

1. Background

Council's adoption of the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study in 2010 intended to build on similar prior initiatives dating to the early 1990s, and encourage a mid-rise scale of development, particularly along the city's underutilized Avenues. Official Plan Chapter 2 describes Avenues as *"important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents. Such reurbanization is subject to the policies contained in this Plan, including in particular the neighbourhood protection policies"*.

Prior to the adoption of the city-wide guidelines, the implementation of the Avenues' vision had been dependant on completion of individual Avenues Studies or Avenue Segment studies. A faster and more pro-active approach was deemed appropriate to help put new housing and jobs close to existing transit and infrastructure. The result was the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study, which built on, and implemented, Official Plan policies by making recommendations, including Performance Standards, to catalyze the re-urbanization of the Avenues while providing transition to adjacent areas.

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study contains performance standards for mid-rise buildings, addressing issues including maximum allowable building heights, setbacks and step-backs, sunlight and sky-view, and pedestrian realm conditions. The link to the Performance Standards is here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/mid-rise-buildings/>

The Study has informed development applications on the city's Avenues and in other *Mixed Use Areas* where a mid-rise built form has been proposed. An extensive monitoring program was undertaken and reported on in 2015 to measure the efficacy of the Performance Standards, and to revise the standards as necessary to ensure both good urban design and intensification were being achieved. At the time, City Planning reported on having received 156 development applications for mid-rise buildings in the period beginning July 2010 and ending December 2014. This current report is not meant to replicate that full monitoring, but does include data on mid-rise applications, demonstrating the continued uptake of a mid-rise form of development.

As part of the city's continued transformation through growth, it is desirable that a full range of housing in all building forms and scales be facilitated to meet the diverse needs of all people. In addition to the evolving nature of low-rise and tall building development, it is important that mid-rise development continue to be facilitated and enabled across the city on Avenues and in other *Mixed Use Areas*. Mid-rise buildings are a transit-supportive form of development that provide a level of intensification at a moderate scale between low-rise and tall building forms.

Mid-rise buildings help establish and reinforce an attractive urban environment through a development form that is repeatable, moderate in scale, has comfortable pedestrian conditions and predictable street proportion, allows for access to midday sunlight in the spring and autumn, allows for open views to the sky from the street, and can support high-quality, accessible open spaces. Mid-rise buildings also provide good transition in scale, with predictable and minimal impacts on adjacent low-scale areas.

To align with current City priorities around the climate emergency and increasing housing supply, City Planning has undertaken a review of the mid-rise Performance Standards for Rear Transition. City Planning regularly undertakes reviews of its planning frameworks, including Urban Design Guidelines, and aligned with Housing Action Plan recommendations, has prioritized a review and draft update to the Mid-Rise Performance Standards for Rear Transition as an opportunity to optimize development potential in a mid-rise form, while balancing the integration of this scale of development with surrounding contexts. With a revised approach to rear transition, mid-rise buildings will continue to support the provision of housing and jobs in accordance with the Provincial targets for growth in Strategic Growth Areas, including in Major Transit Station Areas.

2. Mid-Rise Applications & Buildings

City Planning collected pipeline information on Planning applications for mid-rise buildings received between Council adoption of the Performance Standards on July 6, 2010 and December 31, 2022. Buildings are categorized into three general statuses, based on the status of the development approvals and construction processes reached by the development projects in which they were proposed between July 6, 2010, through to December 31, 2022. Built projects are those which became ready for occupancy and/or were completed during the period. Active projects are those which have received at least one Planning approval and may be under construction, but which

have not yet been completed. Under Review projects are those which have not yet been approved or refused, and those which are under appeal.

The intent of reviewing individual buildings in the development pipeline is to provide a snapshot of the number, location, heights, number of units and tenure of mid-rise proposals over the last twelve-and-a-half-years. This information underscores Toronto as a city in three building scales – low-rise, mid-rise, and tall buildings, and demonstrates that significant development activity continues at a mid-rise scale.

a) Number of Mid-Rise Buildings

Since the Performance Standards were adopted by Council on July 6, 2010, through to December 31, 2022, 639 mid-rise buildings are identified in the pipeline. This result is based on buildings between 5 and 11 storeys. Of the 639 buildings, 514 are residential (may include non-residential at-grade) and 125 are non-residential buildings.

Information on buildings beyond the generally defined mid-rise height of 11 storeys – for buildings 12 to 14 storeys – was also collected as buildings of this height and scale are often still of a mid-rise typology rather than a tall building or point tower form. Within the 12 to 14 storey height range, there are an additional 206 buildings in the pipeline, of which 191 are residential and 15 are non-residential.

b) Location

Mid-rise buildings have been proposed across the city, with 42% of all proposed mid-rise buildings located in Toronto and East York District (for further breakdown, see Figure 9, Attachment 2).

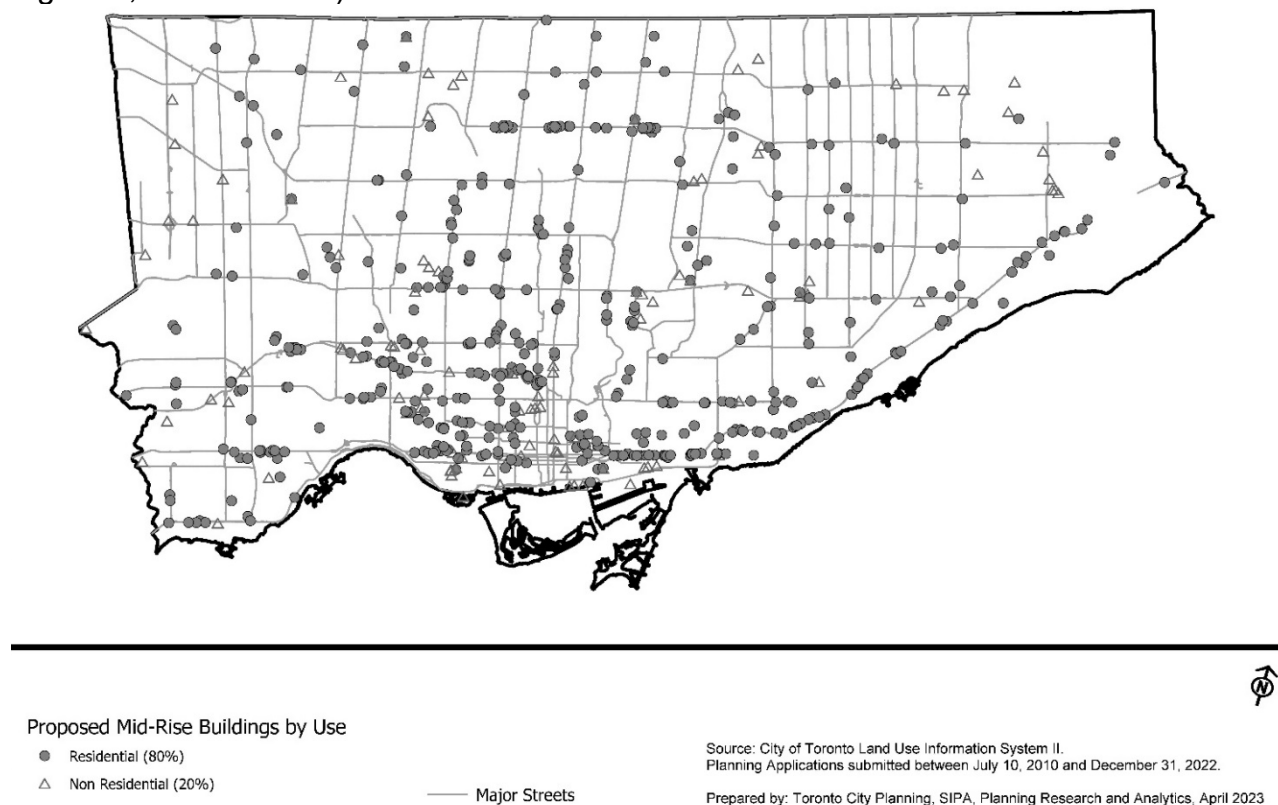


Figure 1: Map of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings

Forty-three percent, or 274 of the 639 in the pipeline, are located along Avenues as identified on Map 2 of the Official Plan, where this building type is anticipated and encouraged. The majority, or 90% of these, are residential buildings (may include non-residential at-grade).

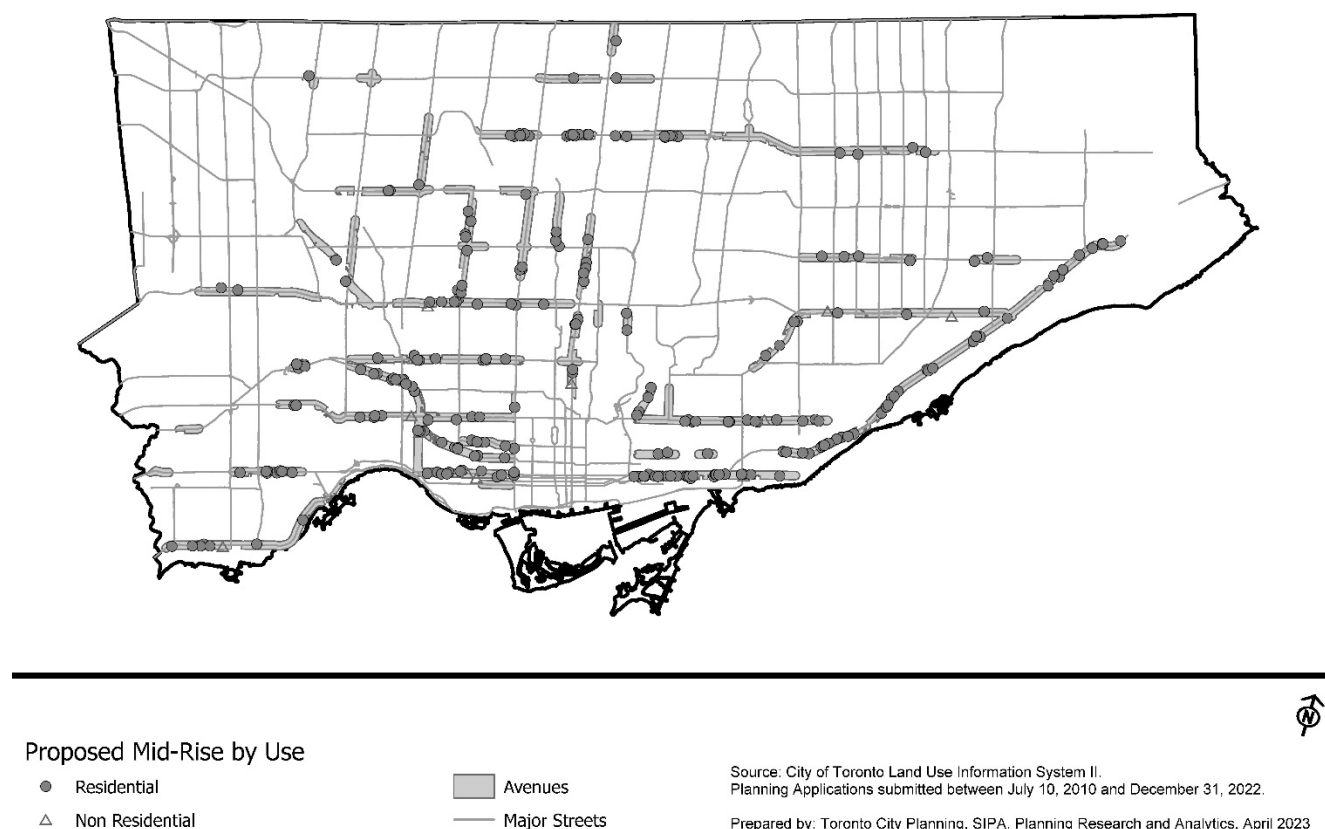


Figure 2: Map of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings located on Avenues

Applications for non-residential buildings are proposed in *Mixed Use Areas* and *General Employment Areas*, while residential buildings are generally proposed in *Mixed Use Areas*.

c) Building Heights

The general breakdown of buildings by height shows a relatively even percentage of buildings between 5 and 11 storeys (see Figure 10, Attachment 2). The various building heights are found across the city, and taller mid-rise buildings are proposed to be located along streets that have a wider right-of-way (e.g. Kingston Road, Eglinton Avenue), as anticipated by the Performance Standards through the 1:1 height to right-of-way relationship.

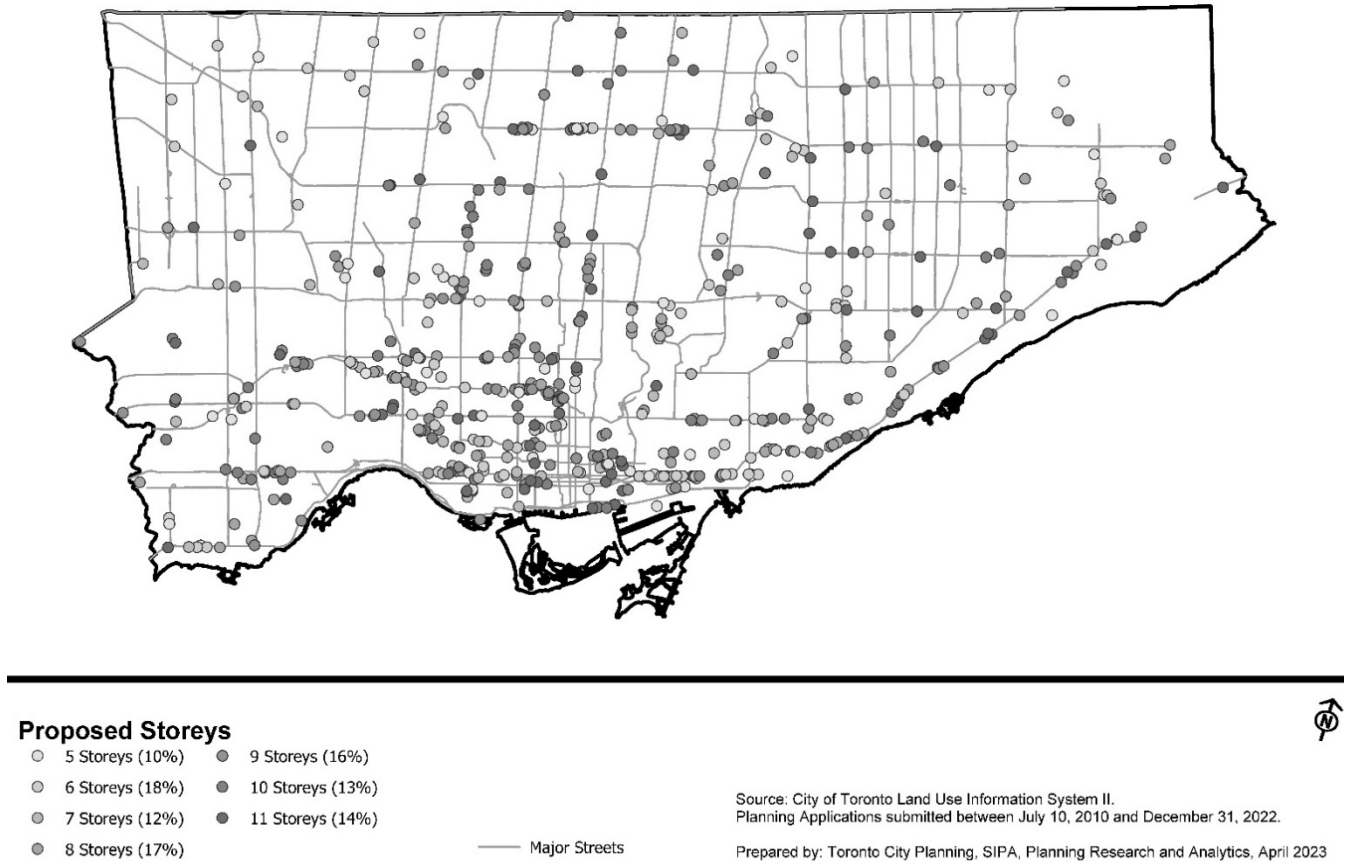


Figure 3: Map of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings broken down by Number of Storeys

d) Number & Type of Units

The 514 residential buildings in the pipeline (for buildings 5 to 11 storeys), include 56,179 units, with an additional 40,724 units in buildings between 12 and 14 storeys. The unit type mix in mid-rise buildings is consistent with the distribution of all Planning applications for development proposals active over the past five years.

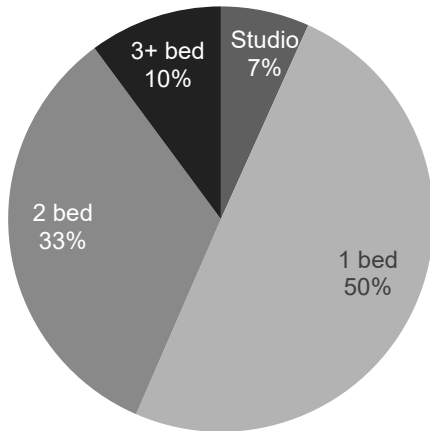


Figure 4: Proposed Unit Breakdown (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

Unit Type	# of Proposed Units	% of Proposed Units
Studio	3,680	7%
1 bedroom	27,203	50%
2 bedroom	18,209	33%
3+ bedroom	5,536	10%
Total	54,628*	100%
* Not all unit types are known at this time as the City has not yet received the detailed unit type information		

Figure 5: Proposed Unit Breakdown table (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

e) Tenure

The review of the pipeline also included tenure of the units. Tenure is reported at the time that the planning application is submitted, and the tenure may change by the end of the development process. While tenure is independent from the content of the Performance Standards, a diversified housing supply is desired. Of the total 56,179 units in the 514 residential buildings proposed city-wide, the majority are condominium, but with almost 15,000 units proposed as rental.

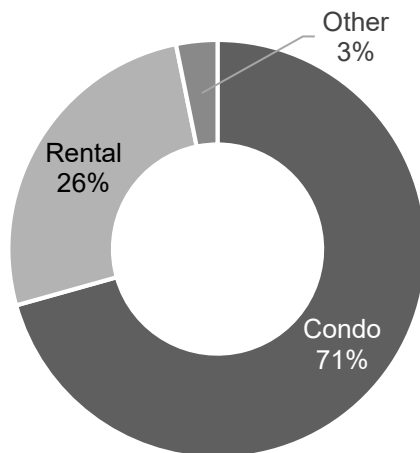


Figure 6: Percent of Tenure for Proposed Units (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

Unit Tenure	# of Proposed Units	% of Proposed Units
Condo	39,695	71%
Rental	14,692	26%
Other	1,792	3%

Figure 7: Number and Percent of Tenure for Proposed Units (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

f) Development Status

Since 2010, 21% of the 639 mid-rise buildings in the pipeline have been built, which accounts for 136 buildings, and one-third, or 211 buildings, have their first Planning approval, are “active” within the development approvals process or are under construction, but not yet built. Just under half are classified as under review.

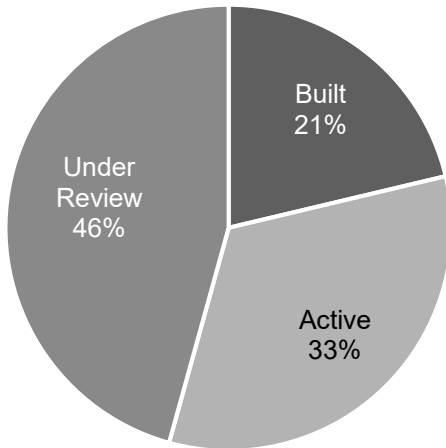


Figure 8: Percent of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings by Development Status
(Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

Development Status	Residential	Non-Residential	Total
Active	165	46	211
Built	115	21	136
Under Review	234	58	292
Total	514	125	639

Figure 9: Number of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings by Development Status (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

3. Alignment with Recent & On-Going Initiatives

The Mid-Rise Performance Standards were adopted by Council in July 2010, and underwent a Monitoring and Update, with an Addendum adopted by Council in June 2016. Since that time, several City directions have become more prominent – addressing housing supply, including affordability, tackling climate change, and building resilience. The draft updates to the Performance Standards, included in Attachment 1 have been prepared to respond to these challenges. The updates to the Rear Transition Performance Standards seek to optimize development, while promoting good planning and urban design, and will align with several recent and on-going work programs and priorities, which are described below.

a) Mid-Rise Addendum (2016)

Revisions to Performance Standards were identified through the Addendum (2016). Through further review and updates, City Planning will consolidate the applicable and Addendum recommendations into the overall Guidelines. One of the outcomes of that work was the recommendation that the Performance Standards should apply to the evaluation of proposed mid-rise developments on Avenues, as well as on sites meeting both of the following criteria: sites with existing land use designations for *Mixed Use Areas*, *Employment*, *Institutional* or some *Apartment Neighbourhoods* where the existing built form context supports mid-rise development; and sites fronting onto Major Streets on Map 3 of the Official Plan with planned rights-of-way at least 20 metres wide.

In this context, future updates to the Performance Standards document will align with this, and other Addendum directions.

b) Official Plan Updates

When the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study was adopted in 2010, the Official Plan did not include any policies for mid-rise buildings. Through the Official Plan review, and as part of [OPA 480 \(Built Form\)](#), a number of mid-rise policies were approved, and came into force in September 2020. These include policies about mid-rise heights, street proportion, daylight and privacy, corner sites, and deep sites (Official Plan policies 3.1.4.4 through 3.1.4.6). Other new policies related to transition are included in the Official Plan Built Form section (Official Plan policies 3.1.3.6 through 3.1.3.8), providing a framework for updates to the Performance Standards. Some of the updates to the draft Performance Standards as attached to this report are being made to align with these policy updates.

[Draft Official Plan Chapter 1 Directions for Consultation](#) adopted with amendments by Planning and Housing Committee on April 27, 2022, included principles for inclusion. Further facilitating development in a mid-rise form supports these principles for inclusion by *“enabling a range of housing types, forms, and tenures to accommodate different households including multi-generational ones”*.

c) Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) is a City Council directed initiative to facilitate more low-rise housing in residential neighbourhoods. The City is working to expand opportunities for “missing middle” housing forms, which are characterized as low-rise housing types ranging from duplexes to low-rise walk-up apartments. The updates to the Performance Standards attached to this report will further facilitate development of the Avenues and Major Streets, and work together with other initiatives, such as EHON, that recognize neighbourhood change.

d) Housing Action Plan

At its meeting of December 14 – 15, 2022, Council directed the City Manager to develop a “2023 Housing Action Plan”. This report is in response to the Official Plan Policy and Regulatory Components, recommendation c: *“review the City’s urban design guidelines, heritage standards and urban forestry policies to ensure they align with the priority of optimizing the delivery [of] housing opportunities for a range of housing forms”*, while furthering *“Toronto’s climate goals and good planning, including enhancing the public realm...”*.

At its meeting of March 21, 2023, Executive Committee approved a [Housing Action Plan 2022-2026 - Priorities and Work Plan Staff report](#). The Report identified other work plan items that will align with updates to the Mid-Rise Rear Transition Performance Standards, including, reviewing the Official Plan to explore opportunities to streamline study requirements for building new housing along Avenues; extending, and potentially introducing new Avenues; and expanding the *Mixed Use Areas* designation across other areas of the city. Additionally, subsequent reports with recommended zoning by-law amendments will advance to Planning and Housing Committee with the goal of

establishing as-of-right zoning for mid-rise developments on more Avenues designated *Mixed Use Areas* city-wide.

4. Encouraging a Mid-Rise Scale

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study's Performance Standard 1 – Maximum Allowable Height, describes mid-rise building heights as being no taller than the width of the right-of-way (1:1 proportion of right-of-way width to building height), and up to a maximum height of 11 storeys (or approximately 36 metres). The 1:1 proportion has generally been accepted and implemented and was recently included in Official Plan Amendment 480 through policy 3.1.4.4 *"Mid-rise buildings will be designed to: a) have heights generally no greater than the width of the right-of-way that it fronts onto"*.

At this time, City Planning has not drafted updates to Performance Standard 1 – Maximum Allowable Height. Toronto is, and will continue to be a city in three building scales – low-rise, mid-rise, and tall buildings. The 1:1 scale of right-of-way width to building height is appropriate in the Toronto context, allowing for access to sunlight and sky-view on main streets, and providing comfortable conditions in the public realm within these vibrant and active areas. Mid-rise buildings provide transit supportive and reasonable densities, at a scale that is appropriate for Avenues and many major streets.

City Planning has always recognized that buildings need not meet all Performance Standards to be contextually appropriate. Furthermore, the City has approved buildings on Avenues and in other *Mixed Use Areas* that are taller than the 1:1 height and still generally of a mid-rise typology. This is appropriate and anticipated, as it is the nature of urban design guidelines to provide flexibility in their application, and to adapt to site-specific circumstances where appropriate. This approach for the application and use of guidelines is supported in Chapter 5 of the Official Plan which states that "... *guidelines are needed to support the Plan's objectives over time and provide more detailed implementation guidance.*"

The 2010 Council adopted Study recognized the varied conditions for different heights and forms, as well as recognizing where there were opportunities to allow for increased heights through further study, including subway nodes and lines, very large sites, sites adjacent to utilities and sites on very wide right-of-ways, for example. Since 2010, many of these conditions have been studied and contextually appropriate solutions recommended. City Planning will continue to generally apply a 1:1 scale for mid-rise buildings, while considering other conditions that may support where additional height can be accommodated.

The review of the Mid-Rise Performance Standards focused on the Performance Standards that have been identified as barriers to implementing the vision of mid-rise buildings along the city's Avenues and in other *Mixed Use Areas*, notably those for rear transition. The overall height of the mid-rise buildings and the general application of the 1:1 relationship has not been identified as a significant barrier to the development of mid-rise.

5. A Focussed Review of Rear Transition for Mid-Rise Buildings

While the approaches included in the Mid-Rise Performance Standards have resulted in many successful mid-rise buildings and proposals, certain challenges have emerged, including the need to increase housing supply that meets the need of more people across the city. The draft updates to the rear transition Performance Standards will reduce barriers to expanding housing supply in a mid-rise form.

The application of the rear angular plane has often resulted in continuous floor-by-floor terracing at the rear. While this terracing does provide transition as required by the Built Form and other transition policies of the Official Plan, strict adherence to this rear angular plane may result in buildings that are more costly and difficult to construct and produce more carbon emissions, during both construction and operations. Further, application of the angular plane precludes mid-rise development on some shallow sites that are otherwise appropriate for mid-rise.

a) Addressing the Climate Emergency

As part of the review of the rear transition Performance Standards' impact on carbon emissions, City Planning retained a team (Ha/f Climate Design) experienced in architecture and carbon emissions, to conduct a life cycle analysis (LCA) of two mid-rise buildings that employed a typical rear transition with step-backs at each storey. Based on a building information model, the team developed simplified massing models of the as-built projects and added building mass in accordance with revised transition approaches (fewer step-backs and no step-backs as a test) as contemplated by the draft updates to the Rear Transition Performance Standards (see models and tables in Attachment 3). From those massing models, gross construction areas (GCA), expected unit counts, and total bedroom counts were developed.

The team then conducted a life cycle analysis of the as-built and revised massing models through representative sections of each building to establish multipliers for the various components of each building's structure and envelope (including parking and below-grade areas, ground floor retail, and residential floors). The breakdown by area accounts for the proportional emissions of each section of the building. The team then multiplied the GCAs of the scenarios by the multipliers to produce total estimated whole life cycle embodied emissions for each scheme. Finally, emission in terms of tonnes of CO₂e per unit, per bedroom, was considered, and then as a factor of total site area in terms of units per hectare, and bedrooms per hectare.

In addition to increasing density on building sites by modelling the revised rear transition approaches, the alternative scenarios serve to reduce upfront emissions of new construction, but only when done in parallel with reducing below-grade parking structures, which the City has allowed for by removing parking minimums. Simply allowing more units on a site would not reduce emissions on a per-unit basis, however reducing and/or eliminating step-backs will have the following benefits that will reduce both embodied and operational emissions:

- Lead to simplified structures which will reduce or eliminate the need for transfer structures and result in greater decreases in initial carbon estimates,
- Provide more options for structural systems and allow for a diversity of construction methods and materials, for example, mass timber construction,
- Simplify building envelopes which results in improved operational performance,
- Reduce total areas of soffit, roof, terrace, and balcony assemblies, which typically have higher carbon intensities than assemblies and materials required for a more regular building envelope.

As a very high-level summary, a reduction of step-backs coupled with reductions of parking provisions, will result in more units and lower carbon emissions per unit per hectare, as well as lowering construction costs. Carbon emissions is one consideration in the approach to the revised Performance Standards for rear transition and must be considered along with good planning and urban design.

b) Industry Consultation

Building on years of mid-rise development experience within the design and development industry, City Planning hosted a roundtable session with a group of architects, urban designers, planners, and developers with experience in the development of mid-rise buildings. A draft of the Rear Transition Performance Standards' update direction was presented to this group, followed by a discussion about both successes and challenges in designing and constructing mid-rise buildings that generally meet the Performance Standards. Comments generally fell under the themes of planning and design issues, constructability and cost, and processes.

Overall, there was support for providing further flexibility for rear transition, and recognition that through EHON and upcoming Transition Zone work, approaches for rear transition to low-rise areas will evolve. Participants reinforced the cost and sustainability implications of multiple building step-backs, as well as the inability to use mass timber and other more sustainable construction methods with this type of envelope. Additionally, from a constructability and cost viewpoint, trade labour that are qualified to do this specialist work are at times, limited and costly.

Discussion about the overall height of mid-rise in the varied city contexts was identified as a key consideration for further review of the Performance Standards. Much like the original Study's findings, the need for certainty and as-of-right zoning for mid-rise, including reducing or removing lengthy planning approvals processes is critical to the feasibility of mid-rise construction. All participants encouraged the City to be bold in any updates to the Performance Standards. City Planning will continue to engage this group and other professionals through refinement of the Performance Standards.

6. Draft Performance Standards

Numerous City objectives, including increasing housing supply and affordability, and tackling climate change and building resilience, have become prominent since the 2010 Council adoption of the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study. The draft updates to the Performance Standards have been prepared responding to these priorities by:

- Providing flexibility in achieving rear transition by including alternative rear transition approaches, and not solely relying on the application of a 45-degree angular plane from the rear property line,
- Simplifying the Performance Standards to optimize the usable floorplate, particularly at upper storeys,
- Simplifying building massing to promote economies in building construction,
- Encouraging more sustainable and efficient building envelopes,
- Allowing for alternative building technologies and materials that have limitations with respect to dimensions and composition, such as mass timber, modular and prefabricated construction, and
- Prioritizing how mid-rise buildings frame streets, particularly providing for good sunlight conditions on sidewalks and within the public realm

The draft updates to the Rear Transition Performance Standards continue to support transition between areas and buildings of differing scales as outlined in the Official Plan. Transition allows for buildings of disparate heights, scale, type and use to have adjacencies yet still be perceived harmoniously from street level and contribute to the overall context and quality of the streetscape. Transition in scale minimizes perceived impacts of large-scale developments on surrounding areas, maintains access to light, views, and privacy for all users, while still delivering on the City's intensification and expanded housing options objectives. Methods of creating transition between buildings, and between buildings and the public realm, include angular planes, stepping height limits, location and orientation of the building, the use of setbacks and step-backs of building mass, as well as separation distances. Effectively, the draft reforms to built form guidance for mid-rise scale improves the balance between the objectives of achieving more housing while minimizing impact on adjacent low rise areas.

There are currently four Performance Standards for Rear Transition. The following is an outline of the draft Performance Standards recommended to replace them:

Current Performance Standards	Draft Performance Standards
5A – Deep Lot (Transition to Neighbourhoods/Parks & Open Spaces)	5A – To Low-Rise Buildings
5B – Shallow Lot / Enhancement Zone (Transition to Neighbourhoods/Parks & Open Spaces)	5B – To Parks & Open Spaces
5C – Employment Areas	5C – To Tall Buildings
5D – Apartment Neighbourhoods	5D – To Non-Residential Buildings
	5E – Deep Sites
	5F – Shallow Sites

Deep/Shallow Site Distinction

The Mid-Rise Performance Standards as adopted by Council in 2010 made distinctions between Deep and Shallow Properties, allowing for a slightly more permissive rear angular plane for shallower properties, to encourage mid-rise development on these sites, and retaining the rear angular planes that existed in the former City of Toronto's zoning by-law.

In updating the Performance Standards for rear transition to low-rise and park or open space adjacencies, the need to provide this distinction between deep and shallow is not necessary, as the draft updates no longer include a strict requirement to apply an angular plane at the rear, although one may be used where there are shadow impacts on parks, open spaces and/or natural areas. The term "deep" in the context of the 2010 Performance Standards was not meant to apply to very large and/or deep sites, or sites so large they required new streets or new on-site parks or open spaces. Through this update, the term deep would be considered to apply to those very deep sites as outlined in a new Performance Standards (5E). The term "shallow" will be used to describe sites that cannot accommodate a typical double-loaded corridor building oriented parallel to the main street frontage.

Draft Performance Standards Overview

A high-level overview of the draft Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Rear Transition is provided below, and the full draft Performance Standards are included in Attachment 1. Performance Standards 5A through 5D below are for the most part, updates to existing Performance Standards 5A through 5D. Performance Standards 5E and 5F below are new and address very deep or shallow sites.

5A Rear Transition to Low-Rise Buildings

The transition between a mid-rise building and low-rise building areas to the rear should be created through a combination of building heights, setbacks and/or step-backs, as well as facade articulation. Updates to this Performance Standard provide opportunities for buildings up to 6 storeys to apply rear transition through a setback. As the mid-rise building gets taller, additional setbacks, step-backs and/or separation distances can be applied as an alternative to the rear angular plane to achieve transition to low-rise areas. The draft Performance Standards generally outline:

- A minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres, allowing space for access and landscaping
- No rear step-backs for mid-rise buildings of up to 6 storeys or approximately 20 metres
- For taller mid-rise buildings, rear step-backs would be required above 6 storeys or approximately 20 metres
- Criteria to consider reduced rear setbacks for corner sites

5B Rear Transition to Parks, Open Spaces or Natural Areas

The transition between a mid-rise building and parks, open spaces or natural areas to the rear should maximize access to sunlight and minimize shadow on the park, open space, or natural area through a combination of setbacks, step-backs and/or angular planes. Updates to this Performance Standard prioritize the impacts on, and relationship with, the public realm. Application of an angular plane is identified as one method by which to achieve transition to parks, open spaces, or natural areas, and mitigation of impacts may be demonstrated through a combination of these transition approaches. The draft Performance Standards generally outline:

- A minimum 10 metre setback from building face to property line, allowing space for access and landscaping
- Transition considerations based on the location of the building relative to the adjacent park, open space, or natural area, and minimizing shadowing on these spaces
- Criteria for providing active edges to frame parks, open spaces, or natural areas

5C Rear Transition to Mid-Rise and Tall Buildings

The transition between a mid-rise building and other mid-rise or tall building areas to the rear should be created through a combination of setbacks, separation distances and/or step-backs, ensuring transition to other mid-rise and tall buildings and their supporting open spaces. Updates to this Performance Standard prioritize the liveability of both existing and new mid-rise and tall buildings, as well as the open spaces and amenities that support them. The draft Performance Standards generally outline:

- A minimum 20 metre separation distance between mid-rise buildings and other mid-rise or tall buildings for all facing conditions, including where there is a shared base building
- Separation may be reduced to 15 metres at lower levels, where tall buildings have a low-scaled (up to 4 storey) base building
- Additional separation beyond 20 metres for the portions of a mid-rise building above 6 storeys or approximately 20 metres

5D Rear Transition to Non-Residential Buildings

The transition between a mid-rise building and non-residential building areas to the rear should be created through a combination of setbacks and step-backs, ensuring the liveability of the new mid-rise building. The draft Performance Standards generally outline:

- A minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres, allowing space for access and landscaping
- No rear step-backs for mid-rise buildings of up to 6 storeys or approximately 20 metres
- For taller mid-rise buildings, rear step-backs would be required above 6 storeys or approximately 20 metres

5E Rear Transition for Deep Sites

Where a mid-rise building is on a site that is deep enough to include new streets or blocks, multiple buildings, and/or buildings with elements oriented perpendicular to the main street frontage, other considerations, such as increased setbacks, step-backs or building orientation should be considered on a site-by-site basis.

From the original Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study, as well as through the 2016 Monitoring report, very deep sites continue to be identified as outliers when it comes to the application of the Performance Standards for rear transition. Since that time, many area specific studies and development applications that included mid-rise building(s) on a deep site have applied alternative transition approaches including, for example, buildings taller than the 1:1 height, deeper setbacks, and separation, as well as the development of new low-rise buildings to provide transition. Many examples of approved and/or built mid-rise buildings on deep sites to-date demonstrate a variety of rear transition conditions, different from those identified in the existing Performance Standards, while still achieving appropriate transition to low-rise areas. There is no one-size fits all approach to these deep and large sites, but there are many approaches that provide transition that can be replicated where site conditions allow. This Performance Standard does not generally apply to sites with one typical double-loaded corridor building oriented parallel to the main street frontage.

5F Rear Transition for Shallow Sites

Where a site is too shallow to accommodate an efficient and feasible mid-rise building (i.e., approximately 18 metre depth at uppermost storeys for a typical double loaded corridor building), staff will consider land use options that could enable a sufficient building depth, including consolidating additional properties within *Neighbourhoods*.

6. Next Steps

The draft Performance Standard updates presented in this report and included in Attachment 1 will be used as the basis for further consultation. Over the next several months, staff will undertake public and other stakeholder engagement on the Draft Performance Standards, together with other related work program items outlined in the Housing Action Plan 2022-2026 - Priorities and Work Plan Report dated March 7, 2023. Following consultation, staff will report to Planning and Housing Committee on the outcomes of the consultation, and with any further updates to the Performance Standards.

Through the drafting of the attached Performance Standards updates, other issues have been raised, related to the updates for Rear Transition Performance Standards. These include Performance Standards 8A through 8D – Side Property Line and 13 – Roofs and Roofscapes. Staff will also continue to work on the concordance of the full Mid-Rise Performance Standards document, reviewing other Performance Standards, consolidating the attached updates, previous Addendums, and other stylistic updates.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Draft Performance Standards 5A through 5F
Attachment 2: Additional Maps & Charts
Attachment 3: Diagrams Supporting Carbon Emissions Modelling

Attachment 1: Draft Performance Standards 5A through 5F

Attachment 2: Additional Maps & Charts

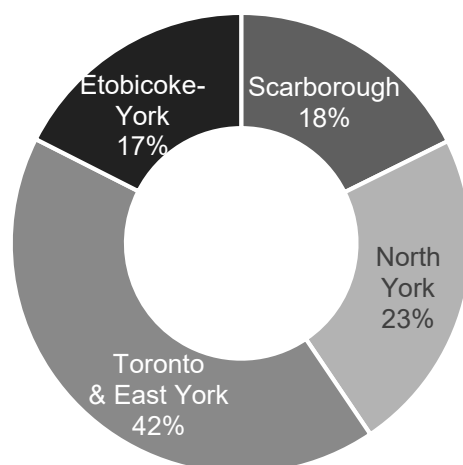


Figure 9: Proportion of Mid-Rise Buildings by Planning District (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

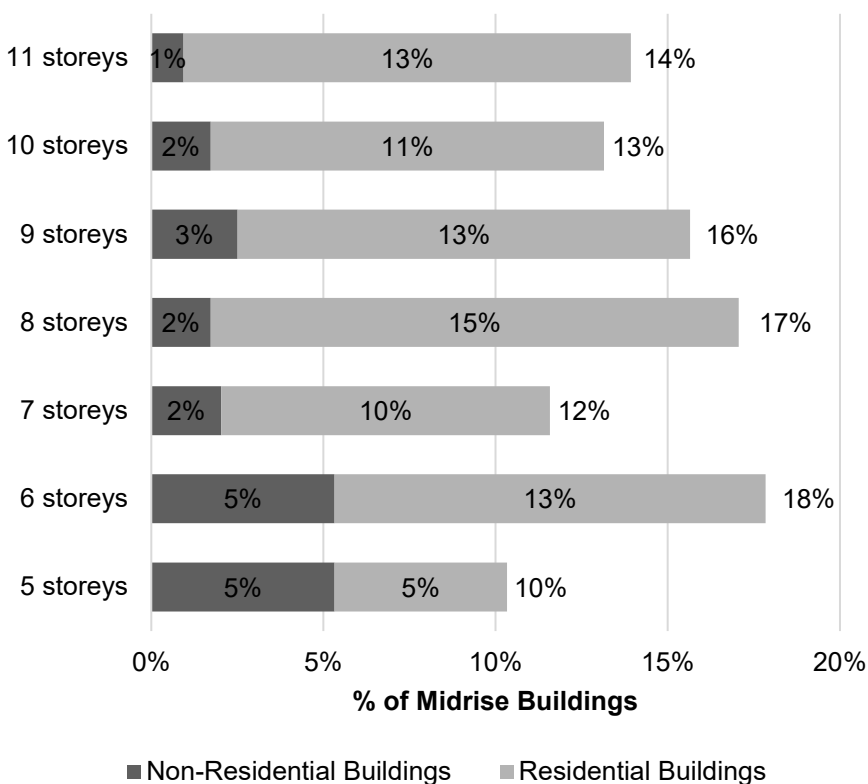


Figure 10: Percentage of Proposed Mid-Rise Buildings by Height (in storeys) (Source: City of Toronto, City Planning: Land Use Information System II)

Attachment 3: Diagrams Supporting Carbon Emissions Modelling

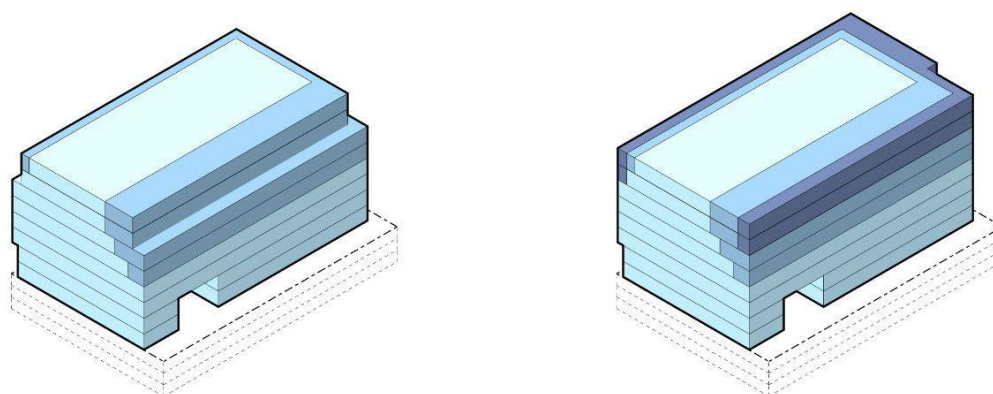


Figure 11: Sample diagram of 8-storey mid-rise building, reflecting application of existing Performance Standards for rear transition (light blue), with revised transition approaches (dark blue) Credit: Ha/f Climate Design

Sample 8-Storey Building		Reflecting application of Existing Performance Standards	Step-Back w/o Additional Parking to accommodate unit increase	No-Step-Back w/o Additional Parking to accommodate unit increase
Project Data	Total GCA (m2)	13,514	14,382	15,000
	Total Units	92	109	113
	Total Bedrooms	113	129	133
	Total Parking Spaces	77	77	77
Estimated Embodied Emissions A1-A5	Total tCO2e	5,199	5,362	5,527
	kgCO2e/m2	385	373	368
	tCO2e/unit	56.5	49.2	48.9
	tCO2e/bed	46.0	41.6	41.6
	tCO2e/unit/ha	326.4	284.19	282.6
	tCO2e/bed/ha	265.8	240.1	240.1

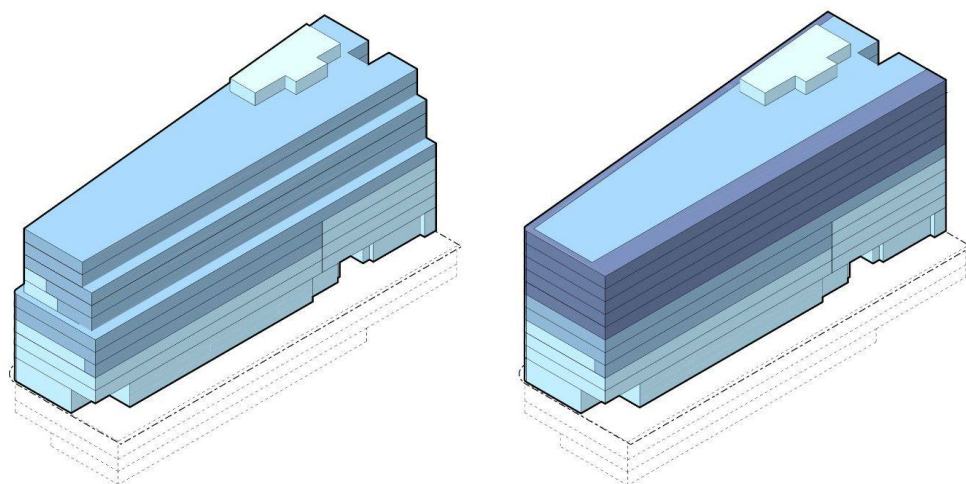


Figure 12: Sample diagram of 11-storey mid-rise building, reflecting application of existing Performance Standards for rear transition (light blue), with revised transition approaches (dark blue) Credit: Ha/f Climate Design

Sample 11-Storey Building		Reflecting application of Existing Performance Standards	Step-Back w/o Additional Parking to accommodate unit increase	No-Step-Back w/o Additional Parking to accommodate unit increase
Project Data	Total GCA (m2)	23,485	31,354	33,862
	Total Units	146	239	254
	Total Bedrooms	239	403	440
	Total Parking Spaces	187*	187	187
Estimated Embodied Emissions A1-A5	Total tCO2e	5,784	6,998	7,386
	kgCO2e/m2	246	223	218
	tCO2e/unit	39.6	29.3	29.1
	tCO2e/bed	24.2	17.4	16.8
	tCO2e/unit/ha	117.8	87.1	86.5
	tCO2e/bed/ha	72.0	51.6	49.9

*146 spaces were required at the time of approvals.