May 4, 2023
NOTE:

The following Draft Performance Standards are related to Rear Transition only. All other Performance Standards for front and/or side transitions, or other Performance Standards related to street proportion, access to sunlight on sidewalks and boulevards continue to apply (as well as all other Performance Standards not included in this Draft)

The following Draft Performance Standards will replace existing Performance Standards 5A through 5D on pages 52 to 63 of the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study, once finalized.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 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 façade articulation.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form policies are clear in their direction for development to "… provide good transition in scale between areas of different building heights and/or intensity of use in consideration of both the existing and planned contexts of neighbouring properties and the public realm." Many Mixed Use Areas along the city's Avenues and major streets directly abut low-rise areas to the rear. The transition between a mid-rise building and low-rise areas to the rear can be achieved through building height, horizontal separation such as setbacks and/or step-backs of upper floors, landscaping, and well-scaled façade articulation.

This Performance Standard typically applies to infill sites with one building proposed, although it may apply to deep sites, where the mid-rise building is proposed adjacent to low-rise areas. It is not meant to apply to very deep or large sites, which would include sites that require new streets and blocks, and sites with multiple buildings or buildings that are not a typical double-loaded corridor oriented parallel to the main street frontage.

Performance Standards for setbacks and step-backs are outlined below and vary based on the overall building height. Generally, the taller the mid-rise building, the larger the overall setbacks and step-backs away from the low-rise area should be. The greater the height, the greater the need for transition. A variety or combination of these standards may apply, and should be considered based on the site's existing and planned context.

The rear transition Performance Standards outlined here are intended to apply to buildings up to 36 metres (or approximately 11 storeys), but may be useful for buildings taller than these heights provided additional transition measures also apply.

Performance Standards

a. Provide transition between a mid-rise building and abutting low-rise areas to the rear. The transition includes a minimum setback of 7.5 metres to the building face from the rear property line. The 7.5 metre setback should allow for the creation of rear lanes and/or vehicular access for parking, servicing and loading as well as space for tree plantings and soil volume.

b. For mid-rise buildings up to 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys), no step-backs will be required at the rear (Figure 1).

c. For mid-rise buildings taller than 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys), additional step-backs and/or setbacks at the rear should be provided. These are generally outlined below:
   - For buildings between 21 and 27 metres (or approximately 7 to 9 storeys), a 2.5 metre rear step-back should be introduced between the 3rd and 7th storey (Figure 2).
   - For buildings up to 36 metres (or approximately 11 storeys), there should be two rear step-backs totalling 5 metres – the first between the 3rd and 7th storey, and the second above the 9th storey (Figure 3).

d. On some corner sites, the rear setback for the side street facing portion of the building may be reduced to 2.5 metres if the following conditions apply (Figure 4):
   - there is no opportunity to create or extend a continuous vehicular laneway at the rear
   - vehicular entrances and circulation will be contained within the building or site
   - there are no windows facing the abutting low-rise properties
   - the maximum height within the 7.5 metre setback from the property line is no taller than 4 storeys
   - facing conditions should be informed by appropriate setback conditions, for example, where the existing and/or proposed buildings have windows facing the shared property line.

e. There may be opportunities where an increased building setback from the rear property line and provision of fewer or no step-backs is appropriate. This option should be considered on a site-by-site basis and informed by pedestrian level wind testing (Figures 5 & 6).

f. Where a public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback.

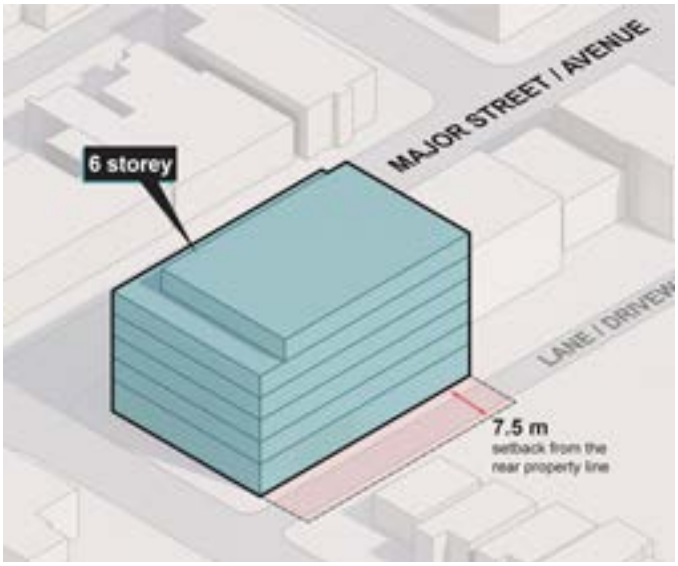

Figure 1: Sample illustration of a 6-storey building with no step-backs required at rear setback line.

Figure 2: Sample illustration of a 9-storey building with one step-back at rear setback line.

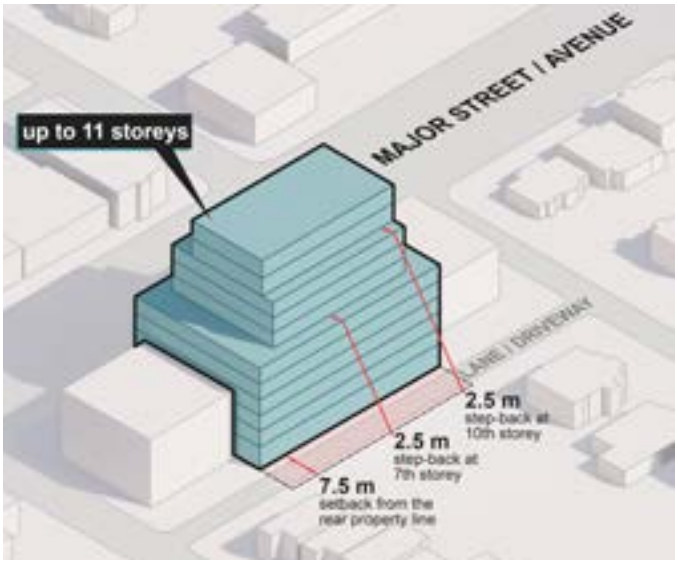

Figure 3: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with two step-backs at rear setback line.

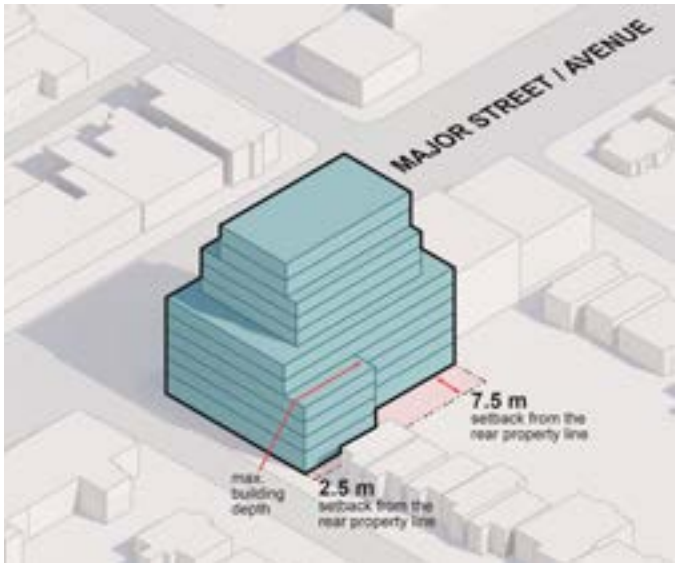

Figure 4: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with two step-backs at the rear for the taller portion of the building and a reduced setback at the rear for the lower portion of the building facing an existing side yard.

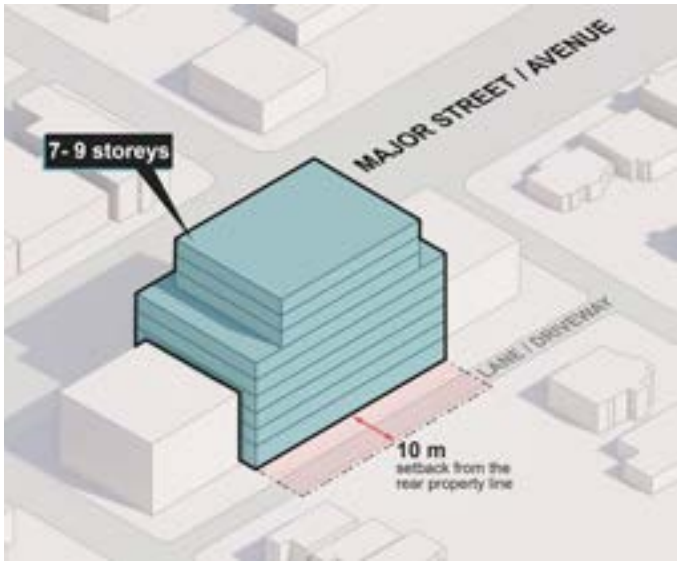

Figure 5: Sample illustration of a 9-storey building with increased setback and no step-backs.

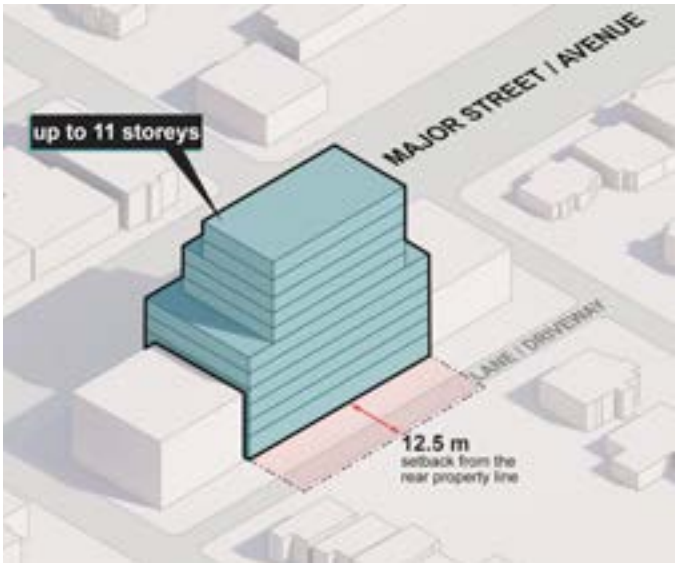

Figure 6: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with increased setback and no step-backs.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5B - REAR TRANSITION TO PARKS & OPEN SPACES

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.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form policies are clear in their direction for the public realm to be safe, comfortable and enjoyable spaces for all. Where a mid-rise building is adjacent to parks, open spaces or natural areas, it should be located and massed to ensure direct sunlight is maximized and adverse shadow impacts are limited. These impacts can be mitigated through the use of setbacks, step-backs and/or angular planes.

The creation of an appropriate transition between a mid-rise building and parks, open spaces or natural areas to the rear, should be "designed to provide good transition in scale to the parks or open spaces to provide access to direct sunlight and daylight" (Official Plan Policy 3.1.3.8). These public realm spaces should be comfortable, with new development scaled and massed to provide thermal comfort, including access to sun for both people and vegetation. Where appropriate, the mid-rise building should provide an active frontage along the park, and vehicular access provided internal to the building or site.

This Performance Standard typically applies to infill sites with one building proposed. Sites large enough to require new streets and blocks, or sites with multiple buildings or buildings that are not a typical double-loaded corridor oriented parallel to the main street frontage may require additional and/or site specific transition measures.

Performance Standards

a. The transition for mid-rise buildings abutting parks, open spaces or natural areas to the rear will include a minimum setback of 10 metres to the building face from the property line. The setback should allow for the extension of existing rear lanes and/or vehicular access for parking, servicing and loading, as well as the creation of a minimum 2.5 metre landscaped, treed setback area (Figure 7).

b. In addition to the 10 metre setback, the transition for mid-rise buildings to adjacent parks, open spaces and/or natural areas, should be based on the location of the mid-rise building relative to the parks, open spaces or natural areas. These are generally outlined below:

   - Where a park or open space is located to the south of a development site, and there are limited shadow impacts, then additional step-backs and/or angular planes may not be required beyond those step-backs identified in Performance Standard 5A for Low-Rise adjacencies.
   - Where there are shadow impacts on adjacent parks, open spaces, or natural areas, additional setbacks, step-backs and/or angular planes should be applied in order to minimize shadow on these spaces.

c. Where there is no public lane, and where vehicular access is not appropriate along the park or open space edge, lower portions of a mid-rise building should provide an active edge at-grade, through grade-related units with individual entrances (residential, non-residential or community uses) or other appropriate design interventions. In this condition, a minimum 5 metre setback at-grade that includes sidewalks and landscaping, and as per Parks, Forestry and Recreations standards. Indoor amenity spaces are not encouraged along park frontages (Figure 8).

d. Where a public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback.

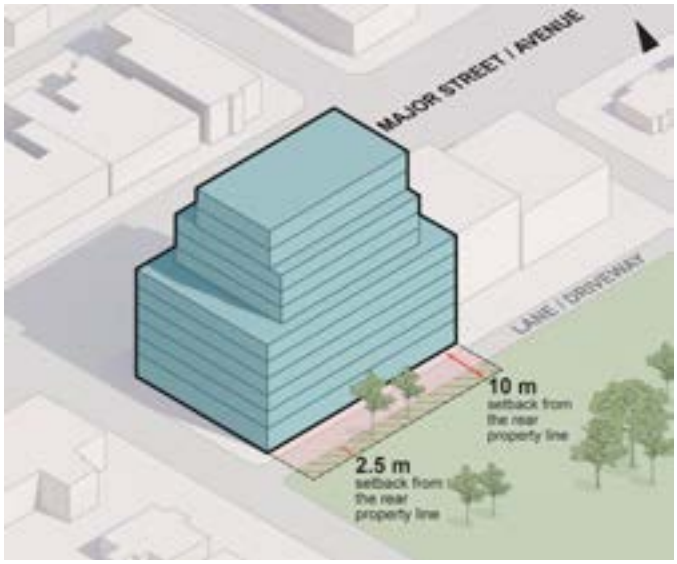

Figure 7: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a park or open space to the rear, with limited shadow impacts identified. The setback at grade includes a landscaped edge.

Figure 8: Image of building with individual units along park edge.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5C - REAR TRANSITION TO MID-RISE & 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 and/or step-backs, ensuring transition to other mid-rise and tall buildings and their supporting open spaces.

Rationale

The liveability of existing and new mid-rise and tall buildings should be supported by appropriate transition between buildings. Official Plan policy 3.1.3.3. supports this direction "Development will protect privacy within adjacent buildings by providing setbacks and separation distances from neighbouring properties and adjacent building walls containing windows."

Transition to sites in Apartment Neighbourhoods may be different from tall buildings on infill sites in Mixed Use Areas, for example. Apartment Neighbourhoods are characterized by their open space and landscape settings, and any mid-rise development adjacent to these sites should provide transition that respects and reinforces the context of these sites.

Performance Standards

a. Provide separation distance for all facing conditions (e.g. front to front, front to side, side to side) between mid-rise buildings and other mid-rise or tall buildings. The separation distance between buildings should be a minimum of 20 metres. This separation distance should be provided to ensure privacy between units and allow access to sky-view and sunlight. This separation distance applies when a mid-rise or tall building is on an adjacent property or proposed as part of the same development as the mid-rise building (Figures 9 and 10).

b. For transition to tall buildings with a lower (e.g. up to 4 storeys) base building, the separation distance may be 15 metres between lower storeys where this a pedestrian only condition, and 20 metres between upper storeys (Figure 11).

c. Provide a 20 metre separation distance between mid-rise or tall buildings in developments that share a base building (Figure 12).

d. For mid-rise buildings taller than 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys), step-backs and/or additional separation distances should be provided. These are generally outlined as:

   - For buildings between 21 and 27 metres (or approximately 7 to 9 storeys), a 2.5 metre rear step-back should be introduced between the 3rd and 7th storey.
   - For buildings up to 36 metres (or approximately 11 storeys), there should be two rear step-backs totalling 5 metres – the first between the 3rd and 7th storey, and the second above the 9th storey.

e. Where a mid-rise building is adjacent to a mid-rise or tall building in an Apartment Neighbourhood, greater separation distance and additional step-backs may be required, in keeping with the existing and planned context of these areas.

f. Where appropriate, the mid-rise building should provide an active edge at-grade along the rear façade, through grade-related units with individual entrances (residential, non-residential or community uses) or other appropriate design interventions, that include sidewalks and landscaping.

g. Ensure that any existing open spaces associated with an existing mid-rise or tall building to the rear are not negatively impacted by new mid-rise buildings by providing appropriate setbacks and mitigation of shadows. Where an adjacent mid-rise or tall building has an associated open space amenity, Performance Standard 5B will apply.

h. Ensure the rear setback allows for a continuous rear lane system where appropriate, while not creating a purely servicing or vehicular access condition along the adjacent property line.

i. Where a public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback.

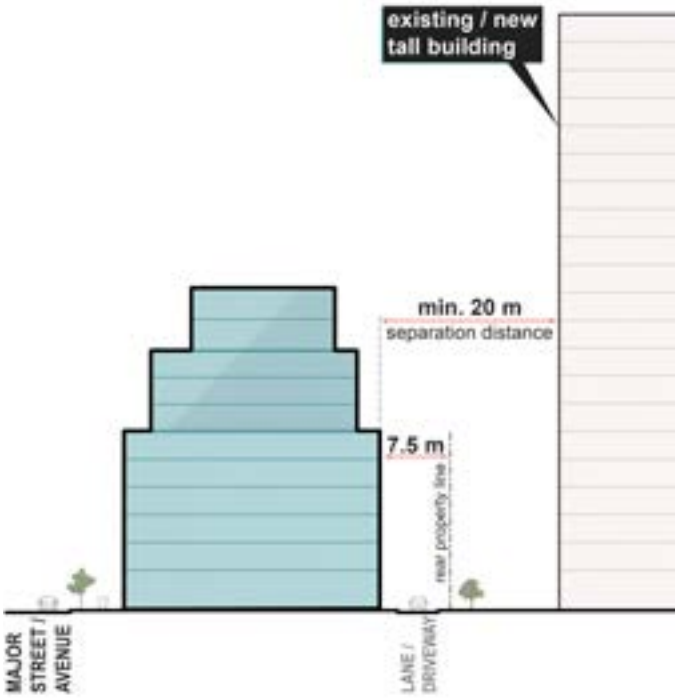

Figure 9: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a new or existing tall building to the rear, showing a minimum 20 metre separation distance, with step-backs applied.

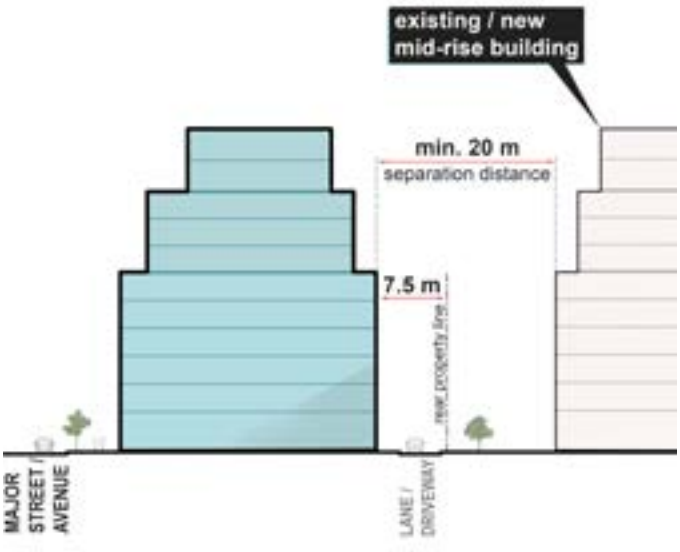

Figure 10: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a mid-rise building to the rear, showing a minimum 20 metre separation distance, with step-backs applied.

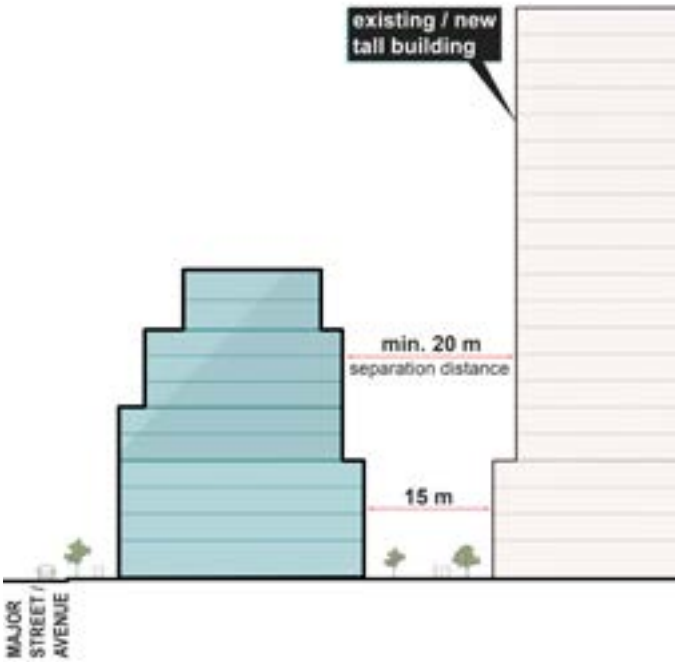

Figure 11: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building abutting a tall building. A 15 metre separation distance is shown between the lower storeys, as a pedestrian-only conditions, and a 20 metre separation distance is shown between the upper storeys of the mid-rise and existing tall building.

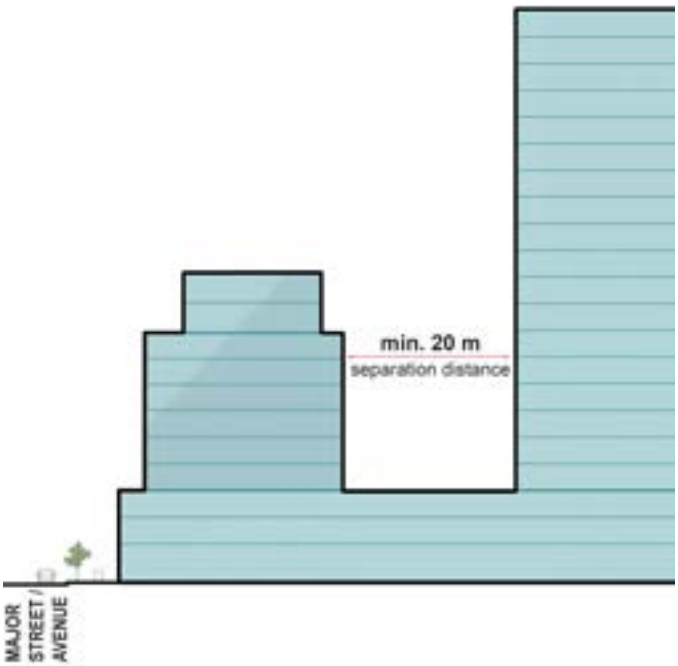

Figure 12: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building that shares a base building with a tall building. A minimum 20 metre separation distance is shown between the mid-rise building and the tall building.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 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 liveability of the mid-rise building.

Rationale

The transition provisions in Performance Standards 5A, 5B and 5C are meant to provide a transition in built form towards uses of varying scales, and/or public spaces that require comfortable conditions, including access to sun for both people and vegetation, sky-view and other liveability considerations. This transition can be different where mid-rise buildings abut non-residential buildings or where the context requires different considerations, such as compatibility and mitigation from Employment Areas. Typically, there are no open or habitable spaces associated with these types of uses however, transition is still required to ensure the liveability of any new mid-rise building abutting these areas.

These Performance Standards generally apply to low or mid-rise non-residential adjacencies. Where the adjacency is a tall non-residential building, Performance Standard 5C should apply. The application of the Performance Standards in this section must work together with appropriate building design and mitigation measures that may be required through compatibility, noise, odour, or other studies.

Performance Standards

a. The transition between a mid-rise building and a non-residential areas to the rear, includes a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the property line to the building face to allow for a rear lane and landscaping (Figure 13).

b. At the 7.5 metre setback line, the building height is permitted up to 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys). All floors above the 6 storey height must step-back an additional 2.5 metres up to the maximum mid-rise height.

c. There may be opportunities where an increased building setback from the rear property line and provision of fewer or no step-backs is appropriate. This option should be considered on a site-by-site basis and informed by pedestrian level wind testing (Figures 14).

d. Where a public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback.

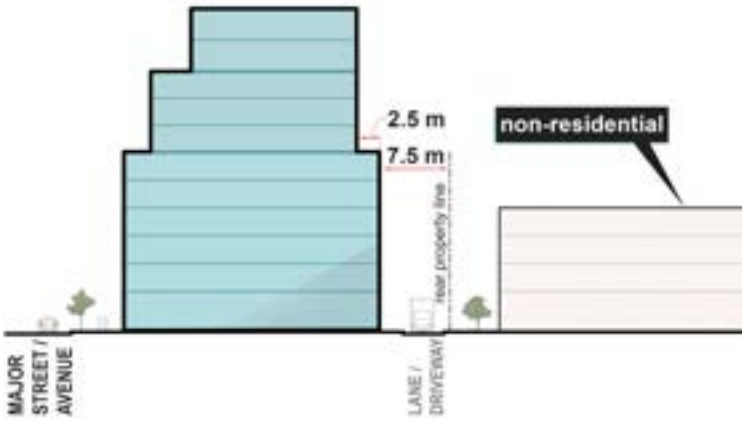

Figure 13: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a low-rise non-residential building to the rear, showing a setback at-grade and step-backs applied to the upper level.

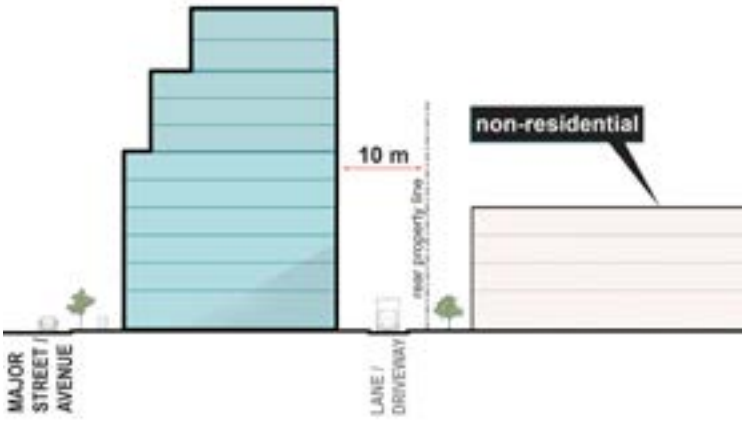

Figure 14: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a low-rise non-residential building to the rear, showing an increased setback at-grade and no step-backs applied to the upper levels.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 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.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form – Mid-Rise policy 3.1.3.5 provides direction for deep sites: "Mid-rise buildings on deep sites should be designed to provide and frame accessible and well-proportioned open spaces that have access to sunlight and daylight."

There are numerous ways in which mid-rise buildings can be sited, massed and designed on a deep site. Rear transition is important for very deep and/or very wide sites, which lend themselves to the design of four-sided or irregularly-shaped buildings and careful consideration should be given to how each façade responds to its context. Some deep sites have provided transition through creation of connected (Figure 15) or standalone low-rise built forms (Figure 16). Often on deep sites, mid-rise buildings are proposed with units facing side lot lines, or as buildings with extensions or "wings" – taking a C, H, L, T or U-shaped configuration in plan. Ensuring appropriate side and rear yard setbacks and separation distance between existing or planned buildings is important for privacy and access to sunlight and sky-view.

Some of the typical mid-rise site conditions are outlined below as Deep Corner sites, Deep Mid-Block sites, and Deep Courtyard sites. All of these types share some attributes and the Performance Standards below may apply in part or in whole. This Performance Standard does not refer to a typical double-loaded corridor building oriented parallel to the main street frontage.

Performance Standards

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to deep and/or large sites, but there are a number of approaches that provide appropriate transition that can be replicated where site conditions allow, including:

a. Incorporating generous public and private landscaped open spaces on the site.

b. Developing a standalone low-rise built form (up to 4 storeys) in between the mid-rise and abutting low-rise areas.

c. Increasing the rear setback beyond 7.5 metres, and providing additional landscaping along the rear property line.

d. Increasing setbacks to allow for active and/or glazed façades along all four sides of the building, particularly where buildings are oriented perpendicular to the main street frontage and provide setbacks that allow for pedestrian connections.

e. Ensure that mid-rise buildings on deep sites with irregular building wing configurations provide for privacy and access to sunlight and sky view through appropriate side yard property line setbacks and separation distance between proposed and potential future wings.

f. Consider inside corner conditions impact on unit privacy and overlook. This can be mitigated through unit layout (e.g. wrap corners), placement and staggering of windows, and/or provision of clerestory windows.

Deep Corner Sites

Official Plan Policy 3.1.3.5. provides direction for mid-rise corner sites: "Mid-rise buildings on corner sites with different right-of-way widths will have building heights along each street edge that relate to their corresponding right-of-way width". The Performance Standards below provide additional direction for these unique sites.

g. Where a mid-rise building is proposed on a deep site with building wing extensions along a local street, the building wing(s) should step down in height from the primary street frontage to the local street after a distance of approximately 30 metres from the primary street. Mid-rise wings on local streets should generally not be taller than the width of local right-of-way (typically 20 metres or 6 storeys).

h. Where a mid-rise building is proposed on a deep corner site, provide additional building setbacks of 2 to 5 metres for approximately 15% of the side lot street frontage. This will allow the mid-rise building to transition to low-rise areas with deeper landscaped setbacks.

i. Other Rear Transition Performance Standards should apply where adjacency is as outlined in 5A through 5D.

Deep Mid-Block Sites

Deep sites in a mid-block location can also accommodate mid-rise wings provided the site is wide enough to accommodate all appropriate setbacks. Mid-rise wings should provide transition down in height from the main street frontage to any low-rise areas to the rear.

j. Provide a minimum 7.5 metres side setback to achieve a minimum 15 metres separation distance between proposed mid-block wing(s) and future development, and to allow for facing windows.

k. Mid-block, mid-rise wings should generally not be taller than 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys).

l. Where a mid-rise wing is located with units and primary windows facing the side property line, setbacks must be provided in order to achieve privacy and allow access to sunlight and sky-view between the proposed wing and future development of adjacent sites.

Figure 15: Image of a mid-rise rear condition on a deep corner site at Avenue Road and Fairlawn Avenue, where a connected low-rise built form was included as part of the transition (source: Google Maps).

Figure 16: Image of a mid-rise rear condition on a deep corner site at Dundas Street West and Manning Street, where a standalone low-rise built form was included as part of the transition (source: Google Maps).

Deep Courtyard Sites

Development sites with wide frontages on either corner or mid-block sites may be able to accommodate courtyard conditions. In this configuration, units with windows may be oriented internally, facing other wings of a building. Official Plan policy 3.1.4.6. provides direction on mid-rise courtyard conditions, "Mid-rise buildings on deep sites should be designed to provide and frame accessible and well-proportioned open spaces that have access to sunlight and daylight".

m. Provide appropriate separation distance between mid-rise wings to achieve privacy and allow access to sunlight and sky-view for units facing the courtyard and within the courtyard. Provide an approximately 1:1 courtyard width to building height proportion (average of the height of both wings), or a minimum of 15 metres, whichever is greater (Figure 17).

n. Where possible, greater separation distance of 1.5:1 courtyard width to building height condition should be considered. This will promote larger, more functional landscaped courtyards with greater access to sunlight.

o. Design the courtyard to provide shared landscape amenity spaces, and limit servicing and parking functions.

Figure 17: Image of a mid-rise courtyard condition on a deep site at Bayview Avenue and Eglinton Avenue East (source: Google Maps).

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5F - REAR TRANSITION FOR SHALLOW SITES

Where a site is too shallow to accommodate an efficient and feasible mid-rise building, land use options that could enable a sufficient building depth will be considered, together with the application of all front, rear and side setbacks and step-backs.

Rationale

Where a site is too shallow to accommodate an efficient and feasible mid-rise development (i.e., an approximately 18 metre building depth is required at the 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. This provision would include consideration of an increase to the depth of the site and associated land use designation, allowing for a maximum lot depth of approximately 30 metres for a 6 storey building and 36 metres for an 11 storey building (this will allow for an approximately 18 metre building depth at the uppermost levels, with application of front and rear setbacks and step-backs). This would allow shallow properties to achieve mid-rise heights with a more regular envelope and floorplate. On very shallow sites, without consideration for increasing lot depth, a mid-rise building could not be achieved or would result in a less feasible floorplate (single loaded corridors) at upper levels. This Performance Standard is meant to allow for a feasible mid-rise development. Any additions to the lot depth would also include the minimum 7.5 metres rear setback to create a continuous rear lane system, extend or widen an existing laneway, or provide sufficient space for vehicular access to the rear of the mid-rise site, as well as landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.

Alternatively, where only the portions of a building above 4 storeys will be inside of a Mixed Use Areas application site, the base of a mid-rise building (up to 4 storeys) may be contained in lands designated Neighbourhoods (Figure 18).

Any new mid-rise building will have to follow the applicable Performance Standards for their respective rear transition condition, as well as other applicable Performance Standards. Support for expanding the Mixed Use Areas designation will be contingent on other Performance Standards being achieved (e.g. widened boulevards and sidewalks, maximum building heights, building setbacks and step-backs, etc.). There are other considerations including, but not limited to, heritage conservation and public realm improvements, which would also be considered to demonstrate the appropriateness of mid-rise building on a site.

This Performance Standard is presented as one solution to developing mid-rise buildings on shallow properties and may not be applicable in all circumstances.

Figure 18: Sample diagram from Danforth Avenue Urban Design Guidelines, illustrating low-rise portion of a building within the Neighbourhoods land use designation.