

## Major Streets Study - DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Proposed Policy for Consultation – October 2023

### **AMENDMENT XXX TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN NEIGHBOURHOODS ALONG MAJOR STREETS**

This document provides an annotated reader's guide to the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) developed through the EHON Major Streets Study, to explain the intent and purpose of the proposed policy changes. Draft policies are shown in unshaded text, and shaded text provides an explanation for the proposed changes that follow. The City's Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

**Explanatory Comment:** The proposed OPA is structured as an amendment to Chapter 4: Land Use Designations, Section 4.1 Neighbourhoods, which would add new policies. The policies would apply to all lands within the city that have a *Neighbourhoods* land use designation, and are located along major streets, as shown on Official Plan Map 3.

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

1. Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods, is amended by deleting Policy 7 and replacing the policy as follows:
  7. Intensification of land on major streets in *Neighbourhoods* is encouraged. Any application for intensification on major streets in *Neighbourhoods* will meet the development criteria in Policies 12, 13 and 14.

**Explanatory Comment:** The OPA proposes to introduce new development criteria specific to those portions of the Neighbourhoods that are located along the Map 3 major streets. The non-policy text below sets the context of the proposed Development Criteria in *Neighbourhoods* for Properties along Major Streets policies.

2. Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods is amended by adding the following unshaded introductory text after Policy 11:

#### **Development Criteria in *Neighbourhoods* for Properties along Major Streets**

Properties in *Neighbourhoods* that are located along major streets shown on Map 3 often differ in size, configuration and orientation from those located in the interior of *Neighbourhoods*, providing opportunities for more intense forms of development. Residential development is anticipated to be up to six-storeys in height, providing the opportunity to add more homes in a greater variety of scales and forms to existing *Neighbourhoods*. This intensification can also support increased transit ridership and other elements of complete communities, including small-scale retail, service, office, community and institutional uses serving the needs of area residents.

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 12 permits new development to happen along major streets at a density that is greater than that of the immediate surrounding area of the neighbourhood, and to alter local lot patterns, including through lot assembly, to permit the construction of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings.

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Small scale apartment buildings are those that are taller than 4 storeys (which are often considered to be walk up apartments) but generally at or below 6 storeys.

3. Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods is amended by adding Policies 12, 13 and 14 as follows:

12. Properties in *Neighbourhoods* that are located along major streets shown on Map 3 may intensify beyond the prevailing building type and lot patterns of the geographic neighbourhood to include the development of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings.

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 13 sets out development criteria that provide guidance for new development on properties that are located along the Map 3 major streets that differ from the existing building type and lot pattern

13. For properties in *Neighbourhoods* that are located along major streets shown on Map 3, development proposing intensification beyond the prevailing building type and lot patterns of the geographic neighbourhood will:

**Explanatory Comment:** Policies 13 a) and b) encourage a mix of housing types and sizes, including diverse unit sizes, and permit the assembly of lots to permit the development of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings that may require larger lot areas.

- a. be encouraged to include a diverse mix of housing types and sizes to increase housing options in *Neighbourhoods*, including larger family-sized units;
- b. be permitted to assemble properties along major streets to accommodate more intense forms of development without amendment to this Plan;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policies 13 c), d) and e) set built form limits for new development in *Neighbourhoods* along major streets. These development criteria address maximum building heights, setbacks, and the length of facades to support the development of well designed, neighbourhood scale townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings.

- c. have setbacks that generally meet those permitted by zoning for adjacent residential properties, unless the established development pattern along the major street is predominantly reversed lot frontages, in which case the front yard setback along the major street will be determined in accordance with Policy 14;
- d. break up façades through means such as massing, setbacks and/or architectural articulation;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policies 13 f) and g) provide development criteria to support the privacy, sunlight and sky views of neighbouring properties.

- e. provide adequate privacy, sunlight and sky views for occupants of new and existing buildings by ensuring adequate separation distance between building walls, through appropriate balcony and terrace locations in relation to abutting properties, and by using landscaping, planting and fencing to enhance privacy where needed;

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- f. locate, screen and wherever possible enclose service areas, garbage storage, and parking when required to minimize impact on adjacent properties;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policies 13 h) and i) include criteria to improve the public realm, through accessible walkways, and by encouraging vehicle access to be provided from laneways and local streets wherever possible.

- g. provide safe, accessible pedestrian walkways from public street(s); and
- h. consolidate and minimize driveways on major streets and use other streets or laneways for access where possible.

**Explanatory Comment:** The development criteria in Policy 14 set out guidance for new development on those properties that are located along the Map 3 major streets, and have a reverse lot frontage. These reverse frontage lots are those that currently have an address on a local street and have their rear lot line along the major street.

14. For properties in *Neighbourhoods* that are located along major streets shown on Map 3 and have a reversed or flanking frontage onto a major street, development proposing intensification beyond the prevailing building type and lot patterns of the geographic neighbourhood will:

**Explanatory Comment:** Policies 14 a) through d) establish the criteria for introducing new development of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings on reverse frontage lots. These include the requirement to meet the development criteria in Policy 13, and direction to assist in integrating the new development into the existing block context to maintain the appearance and porosity of the frontage on the local street.

Properties can have different sides of a building facing the major streets.

- Fronting lot: the front door faces the major street.
- Flanking lot: side wall faces the major street.
- Rear facing lot: back door or back yard faces the major street.

- a. meet the development criteria set out in Policy 13;
- b. be oriented to front onto the major street;
- c. ensure an active frontage, such as building entrances, onto the local street;
- d. avoid privacy screening features along the local street;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 14 e) includes criteria to have new development be sensitive to the scale and density of the geographic neighbourhood using setbacks, step downs or other design elements.

- e. locate and mass new buildings to provide a transition between areas of different development intensity and scale, as necessary to achieve the objectives of this Plan, through means such as providing appropriate setbacks and/or a stepping down of heights, particularly towards lower scale;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 14 f) limits the location of neighbourhood retail uses to the portion of new development on reverse frontage lots that are built to front onto the major street, or on those properties that are located on corner lots.

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- f. locate non-residential uses fronting onto the major street, unless the property is a corner lot, in which case the non-residential frontage may extend to the flanking street regardless of whether it is a major street or local street;

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 14 g) encourages the creation of pedestrian connections between the local street and the major street to provide easier access to the major street, and public transit or cycling infrastructure, while also ensuring the quality and accessibility of these connections.

- g. be encouraged to incorporate a mid-block pedestrian connection where pedestrian connectivity is desired and space permits, or where an existing pedestrian connection is removed as a result of lot assembly, subject to the following:
  - i. have clear and direct sight lines for the entire route;
  - ii. be designed to ensure it is well lit, safe, universally accessible and free of obstructions; and
  - iii. be publicly accessible.

**Explanatory Comment:** Policy 14 h) includes criteria for front yard setbacks along major streets that support the public realm and landscaping and tree planting.

- h. establish front-yard setbacks along the major street or streets that complement and enhance the public realm network and support soft landscaping and tree planting wherever possible.

**Explanatory Comment:** The sidebar below is intended to provide a brief description of the Map 3 major streets, and set the context and role of these streets in Toronto.

4. Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods is amended by adding the following sidebar:

### **Major Streets**

Toronto's network of major streets, shown on Map 3, is an important element of the transportation system that connects people and places. Major streets pass through all land uses and vary in width across the network. Major streets often define the edges of geographic neighbourhoods, serving as public spaces that set the stage for daily social interaction, and connecting people from their homes to work, school, shopping, services, and community facilities.