



Planning and Housing Committee
c/o Nancy Martins
10th Floor West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

April 27, 2023

PH3.16 - Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study - Final Report

Dear Committee Members

We agree that Toronto needs more multiplexes as a way to provide more affordable housing options, particularly in Neighbourhoods where populations are declining and infrastructure exists.

Long Branch housing is 37% Multiplex, small Apartments and our population consists of 53.5% renters and is growing at a rate of 13.1% vs the City of Toronto average rate of 2.3%. However, we have major concerns with the policy and bylaw revisions before you today for Multiplexes and **request that both be sent back to staff for revisions to be considered after the mayoral election.** Here are our major concerns:

1. What was presented in the Public Consultations in Feb 2023 is not what is before you today

We did participate in the consultations held February 21st and 23rd and also spoke with the Phillip Parker and Melanie Melnyk February 22nd to understand the Policy changes. We were told specifically in the public consultations and confirmed in discussions with staff that only the common areas in a multiplex building would not be included in the FSI and the length would increase from the 14m permitted today in Long Branch in our RM zones to what is permitted for single detached (i.e. 17m). We were therefore astonished to find the following changes in the by-laws before you today that Multiplexes would be:

- Permitted to be 19m long, where single detached homes can be a maximum of 17m long
- Completely exempt from FSI
- Have no requirement to be affordable

The draft policies shared with us in February and confirmed in person virtually via City Staff included that FSI and the length of 17m would be maintained in the final policy and

now we see that has been removed with no rationale or explanation. We have attached the slide presented to us during the public consultation.

2. FSI and Building Length are Bylaws and Critical to the Protection of the Existing Tree Canopy

Maintaining a building length of 17m and FSI are bylaw protections that are critical to tree protection in a mature neighbourhood.

As a tradeoff for the removal of FSI and increasing building depth, City Staff propose that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation has the authority to refuse a tree removal permit for the construction of a multiplex even if it as an as-of right building. This is not a bylaw amendment; it is a motion. While that is a nice thing to say, we doubt it will hold up if challenged in court.

The General Manager already has the Authority to refuse a building permit to remove a healthy Tree (Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813 Trees 813-18), but in practice does not exercise this authority for private trees and will issue a permit should the protected tree fall in the as-of right building envelope regardless of the variances required of the application. (Protection of Trees using the COA process).

The General Manager can also issue a tree removal permit to make way for the construction of an as-of-right building (Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813 Trees 813-18)

What this recommendation is proposing is that an as-of-right building can be stopped by a person. A builder with deep enough pockets could take this to court, win, get their tree removal permit and build their multiplex.

This approach has not been tested all the way through to a Community Council hearing or Divisional Court Appeal.

The tradeoff of removal of FSI and significantly increasing building length from what is today prevailing which is written in the Bylaws before you and to replace it with a motion that has not even been tested once, let alone multiple times in various neighbourhood situations, is not an equitable approach between development and environment, specifically mature Tree Protection.

3. Residents in Single Detached areas are Largely Unaware of the Policy Change

There has been only two virtual consultations for the Multiplex Bylaw amendments and OP Policy. Since then, final and significant policy changes were buried in a complicated document that was released to the public just a week ago.

The online survey was also very complex. It required someone to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of by-laws to be able to respond. If the survey participant agreed with the concept of Multiplexing everywhere, despite the consequences, the survey could be completed in 5 minutes. If a participant objected and had meaningful feedback, the survey took over an hour.

There is a need for much more education, awareness and understanding of such significant changes from those living in RD zones who will be most impacted by these bylaws.

4. City Staff have not provided Zoning and Planning tools to better Protect Trees, growing space and future plantable space to grow the Tree Canopy to 40%

Where is the Tree/House Working Group Report Input?

The Tree/House Working Group was supposed to respond by the end of Q1 2023 with a strategy to protect trees before significant densification is approved in Neighbourhoods. Where is this report now that we are staring down the barrel of this significant change in Policy and the Bylaws.

Zoning and planning tools need to be utilized to ensure trees and plantable space are protected to ensure reinvented more dense Neighbourhoods remain liveable.

5. No Requirements for Multiplexes to be affordable – the real housing crisis

Going from 1 housing unit on a lot (the majority situation in single detached neighbourhoods) to 3 units will meet the provincial requirements and allow gentle density which is the goal for becoming the welcoming city of diversity and fight the housing crisis. It will be more affordable to build and encourage existing residents to renovate into multiplexes. Permitting 4 units will just provide more investment opportunities for developers and the few who can afford them and will not generate more affordable rental housing.

Keeping building depth at 17m and keeping FSI will ensure that new multiplexes fit in with single detached neighbourhoods and with existing multiplexes in neighbourhoods that already permit them. Removing FSI and increasing building depth beyond what is currently permitted for multiplexes will encourage developers and investors to tear them down and replace them with newer, larger and much more expensive units prematurely.

6. We are in an Election Cycle

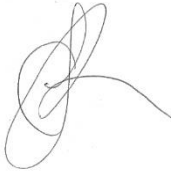
We currently have 50 candidates running for Mayor, including the Chair of this Committee. It is appropriate that such a significant change in policy that will impact so many voters in the upcoming election, be revised and come back to this committee once our new Mayor is elected, who may or may not be any of the currently serving members of City Council.

In Conclusion

We have seen nothing to date in any of the Multiplex OPA and by-laws in front of this Committee 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.

To better utilize existing tools to protect, enhance and grow Toronto's Urban Tree Canopy we respectfully request this committee reinstate the requirement for Multiplexes to be subject to FSI and 17m length zoning regulations that are proven tools to preserve protected size trees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Mercado', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christine Mercado
Chair, Long Branch Neighbourhood
Association

Cc: Councillor Brad Bradford, Chair
Councillor Paula Fletcher, Vice Chair
Councillor Vincent Crisanti
Councillor Ausma Malik
Councillor Jamaal Myers
Councillor Frances Nunziat

Councillor Amber Morley

Multiplex ZBLA: What would stay the same?

- Building depth and height for detached dwellings
- Front yard setbacks
- Rear yard setbacks
- Landscaped open space
- Driveway width
- Lot coverage
- Floor Space Index (FSI)

