

## **Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Major Streets Study - Supplementary Report**

**Date:** May 21, 2024

**To:** City Council

**From:** Interim Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

---

This report responds to requests by Planning and Housing Committee for reporting on specific matters related to the recommended zoning by-law amendment to permit townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings on lands in neighbourhoods along Toronto's major streets. As a result of further review, staff recommend a revision to the proposed cap on the number of units in a small-scale apartment building from 30 units to 60 units.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

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

1. City Council delete Recommendation 2 from PH12.3 Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Major Streets Study – Final Report dated April 24, 2024 from the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and replace with the following:

City Council amend Zoning By-law 569-2013, as amended, substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law Amendment attached as Attachment 1 to this report; and

2. City Council determine pursuant to Subsection 34 (17) that no further notice is required.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications.

## **BACKGROUND**

---

At its meeting of May 9, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee held a statutory public meeting and adopted staff recommendations to amend the Official Plan and city-wide Zoning By-law to permit townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets, in *Neighbourhoods*, across Toronto. The Committee also moved motions, including a request for staff to report directly to the May 22, 23, 24, 2024 meeting of City Council on the motions passed and whether any further amendments are recommended.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH12.3>

The Planning and Housing Committee requested the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report directly to City Council on the following matters:

- Analysis of the proposed elimination of the circular driveways and their effects on WheelTrans access, in consultation with the TTC;
- Analysis of the merits, including financial feasibility, of increasing the recommended maximum dwelling units in small-scale apartment buildings from 30 dwelling units to 60 dwelling units;
- Analysis of the merits of reducing front yard setbacks, side yard setbacks, landscaping requirements, amenity space requirements, and minimum building separation; and
- Attach the 2023 EHON Major Streets: Financial Feasibility Report to this report.

## **COMMENTS**

---

### ***Driveways and WheelTrans Requirements***

The draft zoning by-law removes requirements for circular driveways for small-scale apartment buildings in the residential zone category on Major Streets. Mixed Use zones in the City of Toronto do not have circular driveways and large-scale development is regularly approved and constructed in Toronto without relying on circular driveways to provide functional and accessible passenger pick-up and drop-off.

Accommodating driveways and other transportation related requirements, such as the spatial needs to facilitate services such as WheelTrans, are requirements that are reviewed and finalized through Site Plan Control. These requirements tend to have more than one method to achieve the necessary space and access requirements, and are by necessity, based on site-specific conditions. City Planning staff have consulted TTC staff with respect to operational requirements for WheelTrans service.

In consultation with the TTC, staff were advised that there are several options available, based on site conditions, to accommodate WheelTrans service. The following are the acceptable options:

- A pick-up / drop-off with a 10-metre radius is preferred to accommodate WheelTrans service;
- When this type of access is not practical on a site, a WheelTrans vehicle can enter and exit the site with a 6 foot (~1.8m) correction (reverse movement); or
- When it is not possible to accommodate WheelTrans vehicles on site, access can be provided on-street, when a set of design criteria for accessibility are met.

No changes are recommended by staff to the recommended zoning by-law amendment. Staff recognize that these considerations will need to be accommodated for those applications which are proposing more than 10 units on a site, as part of the site plan review process.

### ***Unit Cap for Small-scale Apartment Buildings***

This report recommends that the maximum number of dwelling units to be permitted in a small-scale apartment building be increased to 60. This is an increase to the recommended maximum of 30 in the final report considered by Planning and Housing Committee. The revised recommendation in this supplementary report follows further analysis of the building envelope that results from the recommended zoning regulations, additional financial feasibility analysis, and consideration of the impact of increasing the unit cap to permit more flexibility in unit size, design and configuration.

It is appropriate to moderate the scale of apartment buildings located in low-scale neighbourhoods. Regulating maximum unit count is one tool to moderate the overall scale of small-scale apartment buildings in a neighbourhood context, where development is anticipated to provide setbacks and landscaping that break up built form. A maximum unit count of 30 would match the threshold to exempt development from requirements to include a Type G loading space (a large loading space suitable for solid waste collection).

The increase in density from 30 to 60 units will permit more variability of dwelling unit sizes, increasing the financial viability of these building types. However, balancing increased density with considerations of neighbourhood context is important, and the size and scale of the recommended small-scale apartment buildings need to be maintained to moderate the impact of this new building type. The higher unit cap will permit increased variability in unit sizes, design and opportunities to utilize the available building envelope, particularly in situations where a proponent has assembled more than two lots. This is balanced by the other zoning regulations that contribute to maintaining a neighbourhood appropriate scale of these buildings.

Development of small-scale apartment buildings along the edges of neighbourhoods will be a change from what is found in the many neighbourhoods. The introduction of this built form will demonstrate variation in density, building massing and the rhythm of street frontage. As a result, moderation of, building size and scale, as well as

consideration of local setback distances, landscaping and greenspaces, have contributed to the recommended zoning regulations.

The introduction of this type of apartment building along the major streets in *Neighbourhoods* is considered to be proportionate to the neighbourhood context and constitutes a transitional built form between the existing neighbourhoods and those portions of the major streets that are, or are anticipated to be, mid-rise, mixed use areas, with buildings up to 11 storeys. Transitional zones between these areas are an opportunity to provide gradual changes in density and building size, as well as with respect to the relationship of buildings with the street and the public realm. Mixed use, mid-rise buildings often have small or no building separation at the ground level, with building separation introduced where the taller portions of the buildings are above 6 storeys. The recommended permissions for small-scale apartment buildings on major streets would be a transitional building type, complemented by other EHON permissions for multiplex dwellings and townhouses.

Despite support for increasing the number of maximum permitted dwelling units in small-scale apartment buildings, staff recommend maintaining the recommended requirements for loading, setback and amenity provisions, to support the development of apartment buildings that respect the surrounding neighbourhood, support tree protection and growth in the neighbourhoods, ensure sufficient landscaping space to both positively contribute to stormwater infiltration as well as support the quality of life of both the new and existing residents of the neighbourhoods along major streets.

Discussion of solid waste storage and pick up requirements, setbacks, landscaping, and amenity space requirements, as well as of the 2024 Financial Feasibility Analysis are addressed in the following sections of this report.

### ***Solid Waste Onsite Requirements and Exemptions***

Solid waste management is only partially regulated through zoning regulations in By-law 569-2013. Whereas the zoning by-law establishes the requirement for a Type G loading space, Site Plan Control is the tool to ensure functional access to the loading space. Additional operational and site-specific solid waste management requirements are the purview of Solid Waste Management Services, and are set out in the City of Toronto Requirements for Garbage, Recycling and Organics Collection Services for New Developments and Redevelopments (2023). This document provides development requirements that support the Residential Collection By-law (Toronto Municipal Code 844-3 B) and the Commercial Collection By-law (Municipal Code 841-3 I(1)).

### ***Financial Feasibility Analysis***

To support the Major Streets Study, City Planning staff commissioned a review of the financial feasibility of developing the proposed built forms in 2023. The purpose of the review was to provide information as to whether the proposed zoning changes would provide realistic opportunities for development of new housing options. The review included the examination of opportunities to facilitate the development of townhouse and small-scale apartment housing in Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough. Toronto East York was not included in this analysis as applications for the recommended built forms were already being received in this District. As requested by Planning and

Housing Committee, the Financial Feasibility report by Parcel Economics is attached to this report as Attachment 2.

The 2023 Financial Feasibility report tested the recommended townhouse and small-scale apartment building typologies and provided a series of outcomes based on each case study (3 building types in 3 locations). The report provided targeted conclusions specific to the typologies and geographies of the analysis:

- Townhouses were analyzed assuming an assembly of two lots with development of up to 13 townhouses, each with a parking space.
- Stacked townhouses (small apartment buildings with limited circulation and common area requirements and with direct exterior entrances to units) were analyzed assuming an assembly of two lots with development of up to 24 units in five storeys, with a parking ratio of 0.8 residential parking spaces per unit.
- Apartment buildings were analyzed assuming an assembly of two lots with development of up to 30 units in five storeys, with a parking ratio of 0.7 residential parking spaces per unit.

The 2023 report showed that townhouses are an "easy win" across the city. Small-scale apartment buildings showed strong returns in Etobicoke and Scarborough, and stacked townhouses have strong potential in North York. Townhouses are considered to be a lower risk development form, whereas both types of apartment buildings (stacked townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings) carry more risk.

In response to Planning and Housing Committee's request to consider the financial feasibility implications of a change to the unit cap, City Planning staff obtained further analysis to supplement the 2023 Financial Feasibility report. The 2024 supplemental Financial Feasibility report built on the analysis undertaken in 2023. The 2024 review maintained the assumptions from the earlier analysis, including land costs based on assembly of two lots per building, to support direct comparison of the impact of an increased unit count, and smaller unit sizes on overall feasibility. The full set of assumptions used in these analyses can be found in the appendix of the 2023 report, and the modifications for consideration of additional units is stated at the beginning of the 2024 report.

For the purpose of comparison to a site-specific project with similar priorities and conditions, the 2024 analysis used the general unit sizes represented in the EHON Pilot Project at 72 Amroth Avenue. These unit sizes are smaller than those analyzed in 2023 for the Major Streets Study. The resulting analysis was based on small-scale apartment buildings with smaller dwelling units, and additional constructed gross floor area due to inclusion of the permitted 6th storey. The analysis assumed a dwelling unit split of 50% 1-bedroom, 37% 2-bedroom, and 10% 3-bedroom units. The analysis indicated that a higher unit cap would result in more dwelling units (41 rather than 30) and higher profits.

To achieve 60 units within the contemplated building envelopes, the unit mix would need to include only studios and 1-bedroom units. Increasing the gross floor area beyond the contemplated building envelopes would allow for some 2 and 3-bedroom units, however, buildings would need to be taller than 6 storeys or have a larger floor

plate requiring the costly assembly of additional adjacent lots. The improvement in feasibility is evident across all small-scale apartment buildings analyzed.

The 2023 analysis showed a challenge when considering development of these apartments as purpose built rental. However, in the context tested as part of the 2024 analysis, when these buildings are predominantly made up of studios and 1-bedroom units, the units tend to rent at a higher rent per square foot, essentially resulting in more revenue compared to larger units. This increase may result in this building type to be of potential interest to a broader range of developers, including those who may prefer to build for rental, whether non-profit or for-profit.

Similarly, the ability of small-scale apartment buildings to include affordable units was thought to be more likely with increased densities. Discussion of the outcomes of the analysis are included in Attachment 3 of this report. Overall, both analyses showed financial feasibility for the recommended building types across Toronto, with the increase in permitted density resulting in increased profits for small-scale apartment buildings.

The Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative is primarily a market housing initiative, focusing on the expansion of housing options, in a range of formats, within the City's Neighbourhoods. EHON initiatives represent one portion of the City's Housing Action Plan, which also includes a range of efforts to address housing access and affordability in Toronto. While the recommended expansion of land use permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets will not, in itself, result in the creation of affordable housing; instead, new permissions will enable housing forms that support residents with a broader range of incomes and household compositions at various life stages.

The 2023 and 2024 Financial Feasibility reporting documents are provided as Attachments 2 and 3 to this report.

### **Front and Side Yard Setbacks, Building Separation and Landscaping Requirements**

The recommended approach to setbacks and landscaping requirements, reflect a balanced approach to introducing townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets in neighbourhoods. The zoning regulations moderate the scale of small-scale apartment buildings to expand permissions for these building types in a way that is appropriate to a neighbourhood context. This is of increased importance when increasing onsite density as recommended in this report.

The recommended expansion of permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings is intended to strike a balance, with consideration for the importance of expanding housing options, maintaining opportunities for soft landscaping, and, ensuring livability and enjoyment of neighbourhood environments, and planning for sustainability of development through with measures that mitigate summer heat and overland stormwater flow. The recommendations consider City Council priorities represented by the 2020 support for the EHON work program, the 2022 support for the Housing Action Plan for the 2022-2026 term of Council, as well as

the 2019 declaration of a climate emergency, and the 2024 adoption Toronto's Climate Change Readiness Report.

The recommended zoning regulations introduce a landscaping requirement of 30 percent of the area of the lot, with 50 percent of that area required to be soft landscaping. This is recommended to balance building area with the need to provide space for driveways, required visitor and accessible parking and other onsite uses. The recommended by-law does not propose to change the current landscaping regulations as they apply to townhouses in the R and RT zones.

In the context of expanding residential permissions, soft landscaping provisions are vital in achieving a healthy balance between the built and natural environment. The soft landscaping requirements in the recommended ZBLA support on-site stormwater management, which contributes to mitigating flood risk. It also provides space for tree preservation and landscaping, which contribute to mid-summer heat mitigation, provide shade for both residents and those using the public realm. These spaces also provide additional outdoor amenity area that may serve the residents of the building.

Existing low-rise residential zones regulate front and rear yard landscaping separately and do not require a set percentage of the lot area to be landscaping. Regulating the landscaping of individual yards, can lead to variability in the amount of soft landscaping realized on individual lots. The recommended ZBLA includes minimum required setbacks for both the front and rear yards, to contribute to separation for the purpose of ventilation, air circulation and privacy on these lots and between residential buildings.

There is no merit to decreasing these standards as intensification is introduced along the major streets in neighbourhoods. As density and overall lot coverage increases, protecting these vital spaces that support good quality of life, protect both mature trees and space for tree maturation, support stormwater infiltration for flood mitigation, and make space for neighbours are important reflections of good community planning and City Council priorities.

The draft zoning by-law attached to this Supplementary Report does include technical revisions from the previous draft, to appropriately implement the regulations for landscaping, building separation and setbacks anticipating permissions for apartment buildings of up to 60 units rather than 30 units.

### ***Amenity Space Requirements***

The recommended zoning regulations amend the amenity space requirements to support the development of small-scale apartment buildings as brought forward in the EHON Major Streets Study Final Report. The recommended amenity space requirement is intended to balance the need to develop these building types, while recognizing provision of amenity space apartment buildings of a modest scale, can be difficult.

The requirement to provide shared amenity space is of particular importance as the recommended maximum number of permitted dwelling units in small-scale apartment building has increased from 30 to 60. To accommodate the additional units in this built form, the units provided are expected to be smaller than originally modeled, decreasing available private space in individual units. In this context, amenity space for residents is

necessary to support good quality of life for residents in denser buildings. The recommended requirement is consistent in principle with existing amenity space requirements for residential buildings in all other zones.

The recommended ZBLA amends the Residential Zone Category (Chapter 10, Section 5) to apply these requirements to all residential zones for small-scale apartment buildings along major streets. Should an application propose an apartment building with more than 30 units, the in-force requirements for indoor and outdoor amenity space will continue to apply.

### Specific Streets

City Planning staff are cognizant that some stakeholders suggested specific streets or segment of streets should be excluded from the zoning permissions recommended by this report. At the time of drafting this report, 22 requests to exclude specific portions of major streets have been made by Residents' Associations, individual community members and City Councillors in published communications to the Planning and Housing Committee or to City Planning staff.

The major streets are a structural element in the Official Plan, providing identification of streets that connect growth areas, such as Avenues and Urban Growth Centres (Map 2 – Urban Structure). The major streets act as thoroughfares and transportation corridors, as well as the edges and boundaries of land uses, including Neighbourhoods. Their planned right-of-way widths range from 20 metres to 36 metres, and as wide as 45 metres in a few instances.

Each major street likely has unique characteristics, and community histories that have shaped the lived experience of a neighbourhood's residents and their sense of place. However, staff continue to recommend that consistently applying the recommended zoning permissions to the major streets identified on Map 3 of the Official Plan is an appropriate approach to planning for incremental and gentle intensification of Toronto's neighbourhoods. Major streets typically provide transportation access and access to services, accompanied by direct exposure to greater traffic volumes than local streets. Their planned right-of-way widths accommodate space for the public realm. Major streets often form the edges of neighbourhoods, and the scale of development permissions in the recommended by-law will provide for transition between the interior of the neighbourhoods and more intense mid-rise development typically planned for those other segments of major streets with lands designated Mixed Use and identified as Avenues.

**Table 2. Portions of Major Streets Requested to be Excluded from Recommended EHON Major Streets Policies and Regulations**

Request #	Street	Planned ROW	Applicable Zone
1.	Lawrence Ave East (Yonge St. to Bayview Ave)	20 m Non-uniform Width	RD
2.	Mount Pleasant Road (South of Lawrence Ave E)	20 m	RD
3.	Bayview Avenue	36 and 27 m	RD



	(South of Lawrence Ave E)		
4.	Mount Pleasant Road Ravine at Blythwood Road, north to Glen Echo Road)	20 m	RD
5.	Oxton Avenue	20 m	R
6.	Lonsdale Rd West of Avenue Road)	30 m	RD
7.	Avenue Rd (South of Oxton Avenue)	27 m	R
8.	Avenue Road (at Kilbarry Road)	27 m	R
9.	Bayview at Governor's Bridge Neighbourhood	23 m	RD
10.	Bayview (South of Moore Avenue)		
11.	Guildwood Parkway	27 m	RD, RM
12.	Morningside Avenue (Guildwood Parkway to GO Transit – Metrolinx Rail corridor)	27 m and 30 m	RD, RS, RM
13.	Scarborough Golf Club Road (To GO Transit – Metrolinx Rail Corridor)		
14.	Bloor Street West (Markland Drive East to Mississauga)	27 m	RD, RT, ZBL 11,737
15.	Royal York Road (South of the Westway)	27 m	RD
16.	York Mills Road (Bayview to Yonge Street)	27 m	RD, RT
17.	Scarborough Golf Club Road	27 m	RD, RM
18.	Warden (South of Danforth Avenue)	27 m	RD
19.	Huntingwood Drive	27 m	RD, RS, RM
20.	Pharmacy Avenue (Eglinton Ave East to Danforth Rd)	27 m	RD, RS, RT, RM
21.	Birchmount (Eglinton Ave East to Danforth Rd)	27 m	RD, RS, RM
22.	McCowan Road (Eglinton Ave E to Kingston Rd)	27 m	RD, RT

Upon review of the planned rights of way and applicable in force zoning regulations, these streets do not have conditions that are significantly different from those of the other portions of the Map 3 major streets in Neighbourhoods across the city.

## Road Widening

A new regulation has been added to the recommended Zoning By-law Amendment which clarifies the location of the front lot line to protect for future road widening as planned, in keeping with the rights-of-way of Map 3: Right-of-way Widths Associated with Existing major Streets.

## CONCLUSION

---

The EHON Major Streets study addresses a relatively small proportion of the city's Neighbourhoods areas, recommends the expansion of land use permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings on the major streets in Neighbourhoods across Toronto. Support for increasing the maximum permitted dwelling units in small-scale apartment buildings from 30 to 60 is anticipated to provide increased flexibility to support the development of this building type. This is balanced through reinforcing the importance of setbacks, landscaping, tree protection and building separation to support the development of good quality housing along the edges of neighbourhoods.

Providing permission for building types that have been common in the former City of Toronto to enable intensification to be more equitably spread across the city, will contribute to increasing the variety and availability of housing for current and future residents of Toronto. Smoothing residential growth patterns through the introduction of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings will make room for people to move into the neighbourhoods of their choice where existing land, infrastructure and services can be used more efficiently, local neighbourhood retail can be supported, and community vitality is sustained.

## CONTACT

---

Kyle Knoeck, Director, Zoning and Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment, City Planning Division, Tel: 416-392-0871, Email: [Kyle.Knoeck@toronto.ca](mailto:Kyle.Knoeck@toronto.ca)

Brooke Marshall, Senior Planner, Zoning Section  
City Planning Division, Tel: 416-397-4075; Email: [Brooke.Marshall@toronto.ca](mailto:Brooke.Marshall@toronto.ca)

## SIGNATURE

---

Kerri A. Voumvakis  
Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

---

Attachment 1: Recommended Zoning By-law 569-2013 Amendment

Attachment 2: 2023 Financial Feasibility Report

Attachment 3: 2024 Financial Feasibility Report

Attachment 4: Ward Maps of EHON Major Streets Applicable Areas