



## Ready, Set Midtown: the Yonge-Eglinton Implementation Initiatives

### Midtown Zoning Review – Apartment Neighbourhoods: June 2023

# Consultation Summary

*This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting, but instead provides a high-level summary of participant feedback. Many of the comments below were captured during a Virtual Community Consultation Event held of June 27, 2023, but also includes feedback received by mail, phone, social media, and other means.*

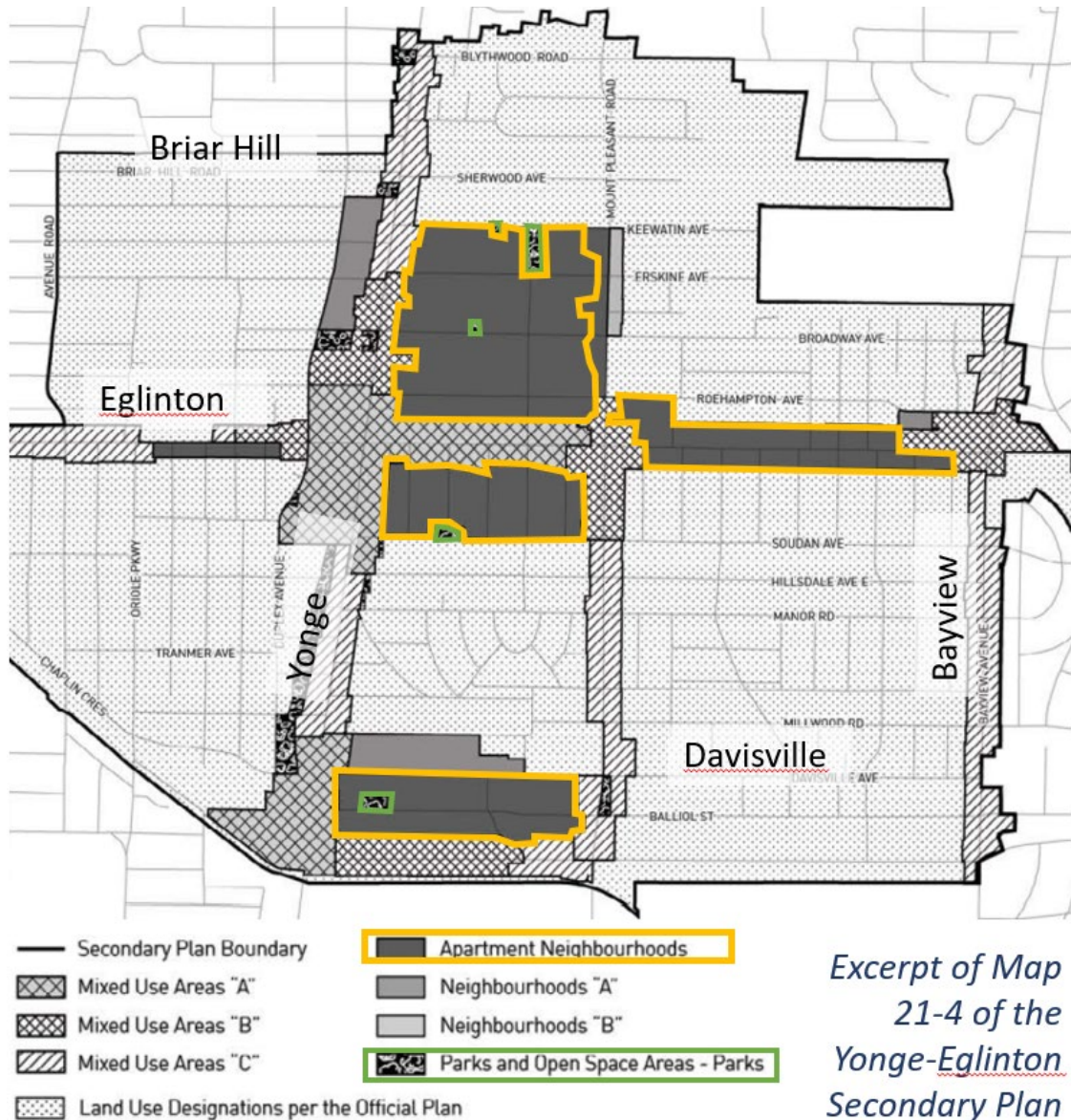
*If you have any questions after reviewing this summary and the appendix, please contact Matt Armstrong, Senior Planner, Strategic Initiatives, City of Toronto at [readysetmidtown@toronto.ca](mailto:readysetmidtown@toronto.ca) or 416-392-3521.*

## Event Overview

On June 27, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted a Virtual Public Consultation Event for the Midtown Zoning Review, for Apartment Neighbourhoods within the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan area. The Midtown Zoning Review (“the Review”) is a component of “Ready, Set, Midtown”, which is a series of three initiatives to implement the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (“the Plan”) (the other two being the Midtown Parks and Public Realm Strategy, and the Midtown Infrastructure Implementation Strategy). The meeting was held online through the WebEx Events platform. Consultation materials are available online at the [project website](http://www.toronto.ca/readysetmidtown): click on “Midtown Zoning Review” (<http://www.toronto.ca/readysetmidtown>).

The purpose of the consultation was:

- To present proposed zoning by-law changes to Apartment Neighbourhoods – refer to Figure 1 for context maps illustrating locations of the subject lands;
- To seek input from the public on the proposed zoning by-law changes for these areas;
- To ensure engagement and awareness of the study by small landowners, businesses, those not previously involved, and the public at large; and
- To incorporate public feedback on the development of a zoning by-law in advance of its drafting.



*Excerpt of Map 21-4 of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan*

Figure 1: Context maps of locations of proposed zoning by-law changes

The event was held between 7:00 p.m. and 8:45 p.m. Approximately 85 people attended the meeting, excluding City Staff, based on the number of individual sign-ins to the virtual meeting from the meeting record. The meeting consisted of a 45 minute presentation followed by approximately one hour of discussion and feedback. Attendees were able to participate by speaking during the meeting, and by entering questions and comments into the Question & Answer box in the online platform. Additionally, feedback was received by email and phone, both in advance of and after the meeting.

## Consultation Details and Promotion

### Promotion

The meeting was promoted in the following ways:

- Through an email that was sent on June 18, 2023, to over 1,200 subscribers on the Ready, Set, Midtown listserv, as well as a reminder email sent on June 26, 2023;
- Through an update to the City of Toronto's dedicated project website, published on June 18, 2023, with the meeting details and registration information; and
- By briefing the three local Councillors in advance of the meeting (who then included it in their newsletters and on their social media).

### Presentation

At the meeting, Staff gave a 45 minute presentation to provide a brief overview of Ready, Set, Midtown, an explanation of what zoning is, why the zoning review is taking place, and the changes that are being proposed. This meeting was specifically focused on presenting proposed zoning by-law changes initiated by the City, to areas designated *Apartment Neighbourhoods* in the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan. In the presentation, Staff described the geographic locations of the subject lands, including any exceptions; outlined applicable policy and current zoning permissions; then explained the proposed zoning changes in detail.

The complete presentation is available on the [project website](http://www.toronto.ca/readyssetmidtown): click on "Midtown Zoning Review" (<http://www.toronto.ca/readyssetmidtown>).

### Summary of Feedback

Feedback was received by attendees during the meeting, and through emails and phone calls prior to and following the meeting. During the question and answer period of the meeting, Staff answered as many questions and comments as possible. Due to a high number of questions and comments, not all were addressed during the meeting, however all questions and comments submitted were reviewed and are reflected in this summary. The following is a summary of the feedback received.

## **General**

Several attendees asked whether there will be access to the presentation after the meeting. All presentation materials have been made available on the [project website](#) (click on "Midtown Zoning Review").

There were many questions raised that related to in-force Secondary Plan policies which are being implemented through the Review. Staff clarified that the purpose and scope of the Review is to implement the in-force Secondary Plan, the policies of which will not be changed at this time. A Secondary Plan is a more detailed plan which applies to a specific area within the city that is or is expected to experience growth. It adds more specificity to the area and builds on the Official Plan.

As this consultation related to Apartment Neighbourhoods, there were questions clarifying what an apartment building is and how it is defined. Staff explained that an apartment building is any building that is over 4 storeys in height and has 5 or more residential units. Staff noted that there are building types (e.g. apartments, houses, townhouses, etc.) and forms of tenure (e.g. rental, leasehold, freehold, condominium, co-operative, etc.). During the meeting, Staff had stated that "all condos are apartments, but not all apartments are condos...". However, more accurately, a condominium is a building tenure and condominiums are not exclusive to apartment building types.

## **Building Height Limits**

During the meeting, there were multiple questions relating to the height limits and ranges being proposed for Apartment Neighbourhoods, how the proposed heights were determined, and whether there was stakeholder consultation on whether they were feasible. Staff responded these heights were determined through extensive consultation and study when developing the Plan from 2012 to 2019, involving the public, developers, Councillors and other local stakeholders, and further modified through Provincial review and approval. The purpose and scope of the Midtown Zoning Review as directed by Council is to implement the heights set out in the Secondary Plan, and not to change them. In response to a question about minimum heights, Staff confirmed a minimum building height of 4 storeys will be set.

There was a question regarding how changes to building heights will impact existing buildings and houses that will no longer fit into the permitted build height ranges. Staff responded that existing buildings will only change if the owner(s) of the building decide to make that change.

There were also many questions about building heights in other areas of the Plan that were not addressed during this consultation. Staff directed attendees to the previous phases of the Review as some of the areas inquired about have already been rezoned. More information on the previous phases of the Review can be found on the [Midtown Zoning Review](#) project website (click on “Previous Phases” accordion). Additionally, policies relating to building height limits can be found in the Plan.

One attendee asked if there is a way to prevent developers or applicants from seeking greater density. Staff clarified that zoning consists of permissions that development applicants do not need to ask for. If an applicant is seeking something different, they must apply for that change, and that application will be evaluated on its merits within its specific context.

### **Zone Categories and Permitted Uses**

There were many questions received related to zone categories and permitted uses, including commercial and retail uses within Residential (or R) zones. Staff explained that future zoning should reflect that small scale retail and services are permitted throughout Apartment Neighbourhoods designated lands. The Secondary Plan encourages commercial and retail uses along Secondary Retail Streets within Apartment Neighbourhoods, specifically Redpath Avenue and Eglinton Avenue. Further, the design of ground floors must protect for future retail and service uses.

Some raised concerns that there are too few spaces for grocery stores across the city, affecting the walkability of the community. Staff explained that the Plan provides for larger scale retail in its Mixed Use Areas and smaller scale, narrow frontage retail in the Villages areas, while Apartment Neighbourhoods have a focus on providing smaller scale retail.

There was also support expressed to having mid- and high-rise residential buildings with retail at ground level.

### **Phasing and Timeline**

During the meeting, there were questions asked about what the boundaries for the zoning of Apartment Neighbourhoods is and why other areas are not being addressed at this time. Staff explained that the Review is a multi phased initiative. Previous phases of the Review have resulted in five by-law amendments, some of which are in force and others that are currently under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. More information on the previous phases of the Review can be found on the [project website](#) (click on “Previous Phases” accordion). The remaining Character Areas will be addressed in future phases of the Review, after this current

phase is complete. Other lands within the Secondary Plan boundaries, outside of the Character Areas (mostly designated *Neighbourhoods*) could see changes in the future through other city initiated by-laws (for example, changes to permit multiplexes) but are not intended to be rezoned through the Review. One attendee asked whether the Review could apply to other areas of the city. Staff responded that the City has numerous secondary plans that apply to specific areas, found in [Chapter 6](#) of the Official Plan.

## **Parking**

Many attendees raised questions about parking in the Secondary Plan area, parking requirements and the allocation of parking spots in buildings. Staff informed the attendees that parking permissions were recently changed in February 2022 on a city-wide basis and generally eliminates minimum parking requirements. Parking rates will be as per zoning by-law 569-2013. The [Recommended Parking Requirements Report](#) that was adopted by Council and [By-law 89-2022](#) are available online. The Plan also includes policy that requires developments to reduce the impact of vehicular activities and prohibits parking above grade (policy 3.1.7.c.).

## **Mobility**

One attendee asked if the width of the streets can accommodate the growth this area will likely experience. Staff explained that growth was estimated and factored into the development of the Plan, and that the City continues to actively monitor actual growth in the area on an annual basis. There were a few questions about Policy 5.3.57, requiring submission of a context plan to ensure connectivity across various lots with multiple property owners, and how new public streets and connections will be implemented. Staff advised that the implementation of this policy through zoning is yet to be determined and welcomed suggestions.

Another person asked whether active mobility has been considered. Staff assured attendees that active mobility has been considered and is a priority across the city. The City's Official Plan acknowledges pedestrian and cyclist mobility as a priority over driving, and the Midtown Public Realm Implementation Strategy provides guidance on improving active modes of transportation. Zoning can require minimum setbacks to support this objective.

## **Park Space**

Some attendees asked how green space and public parks have been considered alongside the estimated growth the area will see. Staff assured attendees that the Plan anticipates improvements to the public realm and expansion of park lands. Through the Review, some



lands will and already have been rezoned to reflect the City's intention to acquire parkland at these locations through redevelopment or purchase. Staff also noted that there have recently been legislative changes that have impacted the City's ability to secure parks and parkland dedication.

## **Midtown Transit Station Areas**

At the meeting there were two questions about Midtown Transit Station Areas, as shown on Map 21-3 of [the Plan](#). One attendee asked for clarification on the difference between 1-250 metres and 250-500 metres away from a transit station and if there is a variation in density between the two. Staff explained that the difference is the built-up zone (1-250 metres) versus the secondary zone (250-500 metres), and that most areas within this phase of the Review are within the secondary zone. Another attendee expressed concerns over a 4 storey minimum height requirement near a transit station. Staff responded that though a minimum height is being set, it is anticipated that building heights will be higher than the minimum requirement, the revised maximum heights are set out in the Plan.

## **Density**

One attendee asked whether the increase in population was considered with the height permissions being proposed in this phase of the Review. Staff confirmed that the people and jobs per hectare were considered in the development of the Plan, as well as the services and infrastructure needed to support such growth. In addition, Staff continue to monitor development applications and population changes on an annual basis to allow for adjustments as needed to the supply and provision of infrastructure into the future. The City has developed the [Midtown Infrastructure Implementation Strategy](#) to address the phasing and coordination of improvements to community facilities, parks, the public realm, local transportation, sewers and watermains in the area over the next 30 years. On a similar note, one attendee asked whether community services, such as preschools and childcare facilities, are being considered within mid- and high-rise buildings. And another attendee asked how schools are being considered to accommodate future students with estimated density and population increases. Staff informed attendees that these uses can be permitted through zoning and would then be secured through the development review process and community policy. However, for clarity, the school boards are separate entities from the City that conduct their own planning for school needs in consultation with the City such as on population growth projections.

## **Built Form**

Some attendees asked about specific built form features, including: concern about the 750 square metre maximum floor plate size, suggested it should be increased; concerns about the use of angular planes; and questions about proposed setbacks being placed and why certain areas have different provisions. Staff explained that these features are being put in place to implement policies in the Plan to achieve certain public realm outcomes. The policies were a result of thorough study and consultation; the implementing details of which have been identified in the Public Realm Implementation Strategy. Staff noted that comments from the attendees will be considered but reiterated that the Review is intended to implement in-force policies, and that changes to policies are not being contemplated at this time. Additionally, Staff explained that if a development proposal does not fit within the limits permitted in zoning, an application can be submitted which will be evaluated on its merits.

One attendee asked if podium building bases are required with concerns of how this impacts the streetscape. Staff informed attendees that the design of tall buildings will include a base building, or podium, and is intended to prevent harsh wind conditions on the street level by redirecting the wind that hits towers, creating an enhanced pedestrian environment.

Another attendee asked if an open sky view has been taken into consideration in this process. Staff assured attendees that they have looked at tower separation to preserve sky views and are still determining how to incorporate this into zoning.

## **Housing and Affordability**

There were many questions received that related to the affordability of Apartment Neighbourhoods, particularly: the potential redevelopment of existing apartment buildings to condominium buildings; whether rent control can be incorporated through the Review; and affordability for families. Staff acknowledged that the question of affordability is a challenge, however rent control cannot be secured through zoning. Similarly, condominium refers to tenure and the type of ownership in a building, which cannot be secured or required through zoning. Staff confirmed that there will be a minimum proportion of 2 and 3 bedroom units and minimum unit sizes set forth in zoning to support the provision of family sized units. Staff also informed attendees that there is existing policy and legislation that helps secure affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning is one of these tools that gives the City the authority to require a developer to have a portion of affordable housing within their development. However, as per legislation, inclusionary zoning policy only applies within Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs). City Council has adopted PMTSAs in the area covered by the Yonge-Eglinton



Secondary Plan area, but the City is waiting for approval from the Province, which is needed prior to the City being able to use the inclusionary zoning tool. As such, inclusionary zoning is not yet in force in the City. In addition, the City's Official Plan has a policy which requires the replacement of rental units where developments are proposing to demolish 6 or more existing rental units where at least one unit has affordable and/or mid-range rents and to replace these units with the same number, size and type of rental units at similar rents for a minimum ten-year period. The Official Plan also has a policy that requires tenant relocation and assistance for tenants living in rental units proposed to be demolished. Staff also commented that amending zoning to implement the Secondary Plan can allow for the development of housing more quickly, as a proposal for development can be constructed "as of right" and may not need to go through the rezoning process, which helps support housing supply.

## **Other Comments**

Several other items were raised, including:

- There was one comment supporting the provisions of allowing the construction of various types of housing. Staff noted this comment.
- There was a question asking what the percentage of City owned buildings there are in the area, but Staff did not have this data to-hand.
- One attendee expressed appreciation for patios and asked how they are being considered on main streets and in Apartment Neighbourhoods. Main streets, such as Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, are typically zoned Commercial Residential (CR) in the city-wide zoning by-law. Outdoor patios are already a permitted use in the CR zone when it is associated with a principal commercial use subject to certain conditions. The City is currently undertaking a review of the zoning permissions for outdoor patios on private property, and more information on this initiative can be found [online](#). This comment has been heard and Staff will try to incorporate this in the zoning of Apartment Neighbourhoods.
- One person asked what it means when a property is indicated as having potential heritage value, with reference to Map 21-10 of the Secondary Plan. Staff replied that these properties may have cultural heritage value and a study may be needed to determine this.
- One attendee expressed concerns on the impact of construction on the local community. Staff noted this comment, and that construction management plans are typically required for development applications but construction impacts are not a zoning matter.

- One attendee asked if zoning can be used to place limits on how much space a construction site can occupy, in relation to road and sidewalk closures. Staff informed that this cannot be regulated through zoning.

## **What happens to this feedback?**

The feedback is one component of input into the Review. Other inputs include planning policy and inputs from the local community, stakeholders, City Divisions, and agencies. Toronto City Planning will consider all this feedback in developing an updated zoning by-law for the area and will then consult on that draft zoning by-law. A recommended updated zoning by-law will be developed following input received through consultation on the draft.