

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

**Date:** April 24, 2024

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

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

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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Toronto is a dynamic, growing city which continues to attract newcomers, with at least 700,000 new Torontonians expected by 2051. To continue to thrive, both current and future residents will need homes that accommodate the diversity of household sizes and compositions across the city, and as a result, Toronto needs a diverse range of housing options. In recent years, the city's housing growth has largely been in mid-rise and high-rise buildings concentrated in densely populated areas like the Downtown, Centres, and Avenues, while the supply of low-rise housing, such as townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings, has not kept up with demand.

Toronto's low-rise Neighbourhoods are changing, but much of this change has come through expanding and rebuilding single-detached homes, through refreshing the existing housing with larger homes. The addition of secondary suites, laneway suites, and garden suites has occurred more slowly. More recently, new permissions for Multiplexes have enabled buildings with up to four units across the city. Introducing additional permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings can allow Neighbourhoods to add more housing that complements existing neighbourhood housing while creating a more intensive edge to the neighbourhoods along the major streets.

Townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings have been providing housing in many Toronto neighbourhoods for generations. By expanding permissions for this type of housing across the city, additional housing can be developed to expand the range of ground-related/low-rise housing options to support those who cannot afford a detached or semi-detached home, but who will contribute to the stability of neighbourhoods and benefit from the access to these stable environments in support of families and young Torontonians that want to set down roots across the city.

Permitting a broader variety of building types along major streets is generally consistent with the Official Plan. The Official Plan recognizes that major streets provide opportunities for additional density along the boundaries of the neighbourhoods. Providing land use permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings will

provide a degree of height and density transition from growth areas to the interior of the Neighbourhoods. This initiative is one component of Toronto's 2022 - 2026 Housing Action Plan, which seeks to increase the supply of housing within complete, inclusive, and sustainable communities with critical infrastructure to support growth. It is in keeping with the [recently adopted new Chapter 1 to the Official Plan vision](#) to eliminate disparities, prioritize climate action, and to become the world's most inclusive city.

To remove barriers and enable the creation of Neighbourhoods related housing, this report proposes an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to permit townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along the major streets in Neighbourhoods areas across the city. A Zoning By-law Amendment is also recommended to implement these permissions as-of-right in all residential zones across Toronto, and to implement appropriate performance standards. As part of the Zoning By-law Amendment, changes are recommended to enhance existing regulations requiring confirmation of adequate water and wastewater servicing for those applications with more than 10 dwelling units.

The recommended amendments will maintain a neighbourhood scale and align moderate density with transportation corridors and transit routes. With as-of-right zoning permissions, this type of housing can be delivered relatively quickly as owners will only be required to obtain a building permit (and Site Plan Approval, when applicable) rather than official plan or zoning by-law approvals. Once enabled, it will remain the choice of the individual property owner whether to exercise these permissions.

The addition of townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings along the edges of Neighbourhoods throughout the city, will provide more diversity of housing, and support neighbourhood facilities and access to amenities. New residents in Toronto's neighbourhoods can help stabilize declining populations, make better use of existing infrastructure, and support local retail establishments and services.

These additional built form permissions introduce housing forms that are already present in many parts of the city into neighbourhoods that have historically been zoned to restrict housing types, helping the city distribute growth more evenly and to accommodate the needs of Toronto's diverse population.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council amend the Official Plan substantially in accordance with the proposed Official Plan Amendment 727, appended as Attachment 1 to this report.
2. City Council amend Zoning By-law 569-2013, as amended, substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law Amendment appended as Attachment 2 to this report.
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the proposed Official Plan and Draft Zoning By-law Amendments as may be required.

4. City Council direct the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to develop an addendum to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Development Guidelines as part of the EHON Major Streets Study Implementation program and address the addition of townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings as introduced through this report to the Neighbourhoods low-rise context.

5. City Council direct the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Official Plan Amendment 727 and the Zoning By-law Amendment in facilitating townhouse and small-scale apartment building development along the major streets, and to report to the Planning and Housing Committee following the earlier of two (2) years following the date the Official Plan Amendment 727 and the Zoning By-law Amendment come into full force and effect, or following the issuance of the 200th building permit for the construction of new small-scale apartment buildings or townhouses along major streets, in order to review and recommend any necessary revisions to the policy, zoning, and/or other changes to improve implementation.

6. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to refuse, at the General Manager's discretion, a permit to injure or destroy a tree protected under Municipal Code Chapters 658, or 813, received in relation to a building permit application to construct townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings, and to advise the applicant to meet with City Planning and Urban Forestry staff as appropriate to consider how the location, massing and design of the proposed building or expansion can be amended to protect the By-law protected tree in question.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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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 information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **EQUITY STATEMENT**

The City of Toronto recognizes that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities. The need for additional, attainable housing is recognized by all levels of government, as a necessity. The City's Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan has as a fundamental goal of providing opportunity to access to safe, good quality and affordable housing as an important determinant of physical and mental health.

In the context of the end of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiatives can directly advance recommendations laid out in the Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto report. Specifically,

Recommendation 68 of the report calls on the City to apply the principle of “build back better” to land use planning and improve the city’s overall built form by prioritizing gentle density that places greater emphasis on a mix of building types and uses – including low-rise residential, retail and services – and that supports transit use.

Expanding housing options in neighbourhoods is an important step toward increasing and accelerating the creation of a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional units and the potential for more affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes. Broadening the types and sizes of units available in low-rise neighbourhoods makes them more accessible to a diverse range of people and need, leading to a more equitable and inclusive community. By extension, the initiative will broaden access to parks, schools, local institutions and small-scale stores within the city’s neighborhoods.

## **CLIMATE IMPACT**

On October 2, 2019, City Council declared a climate emergency for the purpose of "naming, framing and deepening our commitment to protecting our economy, our ecosystems and our community from climate change" (Item MM10.3). This was followed up with the adoption of Transform TO Net Zero Strategy, which includes targets to achieve net-zero emissions in Toronto by 2040 (Item IE26.16).

The Provincial Growth Plan supports intensification and building "compact and complete communities" as a strategy to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plan more adaptive communities that are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Expanding permissions to permit townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings in all Residential zones is an important intensification strategy that promotes a more efficient use of land and resources.

Increasing built form permissions to permit a full set of building types along the major streets that form the edges of the neighbourhoods will contribute to spreading opportunities for intensification across the city, in a form that will be more gradual than has been developed in Toronto for many years. Density within built up areas supports low carbon transportation choices, such as walking, cycling, and public transit. Intensification in Toronto also reduces the need for sprawl to accommodate our housing need in the region, helping to protect agricultural lands, water resources and natural areas. Increasing density in built up areas maximizes the use of existing infrastructure, which avoids carbon-intensive infrastructure built elsewhere.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 418 to encourage the creation of second units to increase the supply and availability of rental housing within neighbourhoods across the city.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG31.4>

On July 16, 2019, City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments permitting Laneway Suites in R, RD, RS, RT and RM zones under Zoning By-law 569-2013 across the city, excepting the residential zones in the Ramsden Park, Asquith-Collier, and Yorkville neighbourhoods.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH7.1>

On July 16, 2019, City Council adopted Member Motion MM9.36 entitled "Expanding Housing Options in Toronto - Tackling the Missing Middle and the Yellowbelt". The motion directed City Planning to report on options and a timeline to increase housing options and planning permissions in areas of Toronto designated as Neighbourhoods in Toronto's Official Plan.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.36>

On July 28, 2020, City Council endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Work Plan Report and endorsed City Planning proceeding with several priority initiatives in 2020-2021, including developing permissions for new types of accessory housing such as Garden Suites.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH15.6>

On January 19, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Beaches-East York Pilot Project report and requested City Planning to work on the design and construction of projects as part of the Beaches-East York Pilot Project.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH20.3>

On June 28, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee requested City Planning to consult on draft Garden Suites regulations and to bring forward a final report detailing Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit Garden Suites to the Planning and Housing Committee Meeting in the fourth quarter of 2021.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH25.15>

On November 25, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Neighbourhood Change and Intensification Bulletin.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.8>

On November 25, 2021, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods - Multiplex Study - Interim Report.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.9>

On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted Zoning By-law amendments to remove parking minimums for most low-rise housing forms, including the missing middle housing forms being considered through the EHON work plan.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.3>

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Update Report (Page 4 of 19). While not specifically identified within the EHON work plan report, the Laneway Suite Monitoring and Review process was undertaken simultaneously with, and has helped inform, various EHON initiatives. On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted Zoning

By-law amendments related to the Laneway Suites review and monitoring work.  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH29.2>

On February 2, 2022, City Council adopted the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Garden Suites – Final Report  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH30.2>

On February 15, 2022, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods - Update report  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.PH31.6>

On May 11 and 12, 2022, City Council adopted Member Motion 43.23 requesting staff to report to Planning and Housing Committee on a strategy to support the conversion of single-unit residences into multiple units, through such measures as eliminating the Condominium application fee, introducing a loan program and standardizing the permit framework.  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.MM43.23>

On July 5, 2022, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the Major Streets – Interim Report.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH35.2>

On July 5, 2022, Planning and Housing Committee received the Multiplex Study: Proposals Report and directed staff to continue consultation on the draft Official Plan Amendment and proposed zoning by-law directions, including residents' associations, industry, technical divisions, and other stakeholders, including Ward 15 residents and stakeholders, and report back with proposed amendments by the first quarter of 2023.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH35.3>

On July 21, 2022, City Council received the Neighbourhood Retail and Services Final Report Phase One, and adopted Official Plan Amendment 612, and Zoning By-law Amendment 820-2022 with respect to home occupation permissions in residential zones.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH35.1>

On December 14, 2022, City Council adopted Item CC2.1 - 2023 Housing Action Plan, which directed the City Manager to develop a Housing Action Plan for the 2022-2026 term of Council. The Housing Action Plan is to include targeted timelines for the approval and implementation of a range of policy, program, zoning and regulatory actions to increase the supply of housing in support of complete communities.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.CC2.1>

On March 21, 2023, Executive Committee received the Housing Action Plan 2022-26: Priorities and Work Plan Report, including the EHON Major Streets study, and directed staff to report annually on its implementation.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX3.1>

On May 10, 2023, City Council adopted Item PH3.16 EHON: Multiplex Study - Final Report, as amended, to amend the Official Plan and city-wide Zoning By-law to permit

duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes city-wide and direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of OPA 649 and ZBLA 474– 2023.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH3.16>

On July 19, 2023, Executive Committee received the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Beaches-East York Pilot Project: Status Update and Directions Report and directed that the property at 72 Amroth Avenue be allocated to the Beaches – East York Pilot Project for the purposes of developing missing middle housing solutions on City-owned, transit – oriented properties.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX6.14>

On September 28, 2023, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the contents of the report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning titled Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Major Streets Study - Proposals Report as the basis to continue consultation on the draft Official Plan Amendment and proposed zoning by-law framework, with outreach to residents' associations, industry, city divisions, and other stakeholders, and report back with recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments in the first quarter of 2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH6.4>

On November 8, 2023, City Council adopted Item EX9.3 - "Generational Transformation of Toronto's Housing System to Urgently Build More Affordable Homes" including direction to the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services to advance early due diligence work on 40 City-owned sites that were identified as potential housing sites as outlined in Confidential Attachment 1 of the report.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX9.3>

On December 13, 2023, City Council adopted Item PH8.3 "Housing Action Plan: Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones – Phase 1 Final Report" which updated and clarified zoning regulations for secondary suites, multiplexes and low-rise apartment buildings, as well as zoning changes to harmonize and align performance standards in the R zone to align requirements for apartment buildings in the context of updated regulations for multiplex buildings across the residential zones in Zoning By-law 569-2013.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH8.3>

On December 13, 2023, City Council adopted Item MM13.27 - " Federal Housing Accelerator Fund - Supporting Generational Transformation of Toronto's Housing System" including direction to the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services, to receive receipt of the Housing Accelerator Fund program funds, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Contribution Agreement and any related agreements, directives or program guidelines.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM13.27>

## **RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS**

This report recommends amendments to Toronto's Official Plan and Zoning By-law 569-2013 to permit city-wide, townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings up to 30



units, to be built on properties designated Neighbourhoods and in the Residential Zone category along the major streets (identified in Map 3 of the Official Plan).

The proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) contains policies that enable townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings to be permitted on lots designated as Neighbourhoods and abutting a major street as shown on Map 3, whereas previously these building types have not consistently been permitted across the city. The OPA recommends amending policies in Section 4.1 - Neighbourhoods of the Official Plan, to enable the development of the recommended building types along major streets. The OPA also provides support for changes to the lot pattern and density along these streets to enable more flexibility in built form and to create an edge along the streets that typically ring the city's individual neighbourhoods.

The proposed policies add support for the proposed building types to be introduced along the major streets in Policies 1 and 7 of Section 4.1, and support intensification along the major streets through modification of the existing lot pattern. The OPA also introduces a new sub-section to the Neighbourhoods policies, Development Criteria in Neighbourhoods for Properties along Major Streets, made up of three new policies. These policies introduce development criteria specific for intensification through development of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along the major streets. The recommended policies also support flexibility of development pattern, such as opportunities to re-orient reverse frontage lots, the maintenance and protection of landscape features, and protection of the established tree canopy.

The OPA includes policy language that maintains consideration and protection of heritage features and buildings, and enables the consideration of zoning variances where they are needed to protect mature trees. Finally, the OPA amends non-policy text, specifically by introducing sidebar language to provide clarity on the role of the Map 3 major streets, and adds language to recognize the recommended building types and densities along major streets.

The recommended Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) permits townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings (up to 30 units and a maximum height of 6 storeys), along major streets where they are not currently permitted: within the RD (Residential Detached), RS (Residential Semi-Detached); RT (Residential Townhouse); and RM (Residential Multiple) zones. To introduce a set of zoning regulations for townhouses and apartment buildings in these four zones, the recommended by-law includes regulations that match many of the in-force zoning regulations from the R (Residential), RT and RM zones.

The proposed ZBLA would also change certain zoning standards to improve the feasibility of townhouse and small-scale apartment building construction at this scale and continue to implement approaches and best practices introduced by the recent Multiplex and Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization ZBLAs. Along major streets, these building types are proposed to be exempt from maximum Floor Space Index regulations (where applicable), but with requirements for maximum lot coverage, minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks, maximum building length, as well as minimum landscaping areas. Additionally, a regulation is recommended to be added to Zoning By-law 5690-2013 to enhance existing regulations requiring confirmation of



adequate water and wastewater servicing for those applications with more than 10 dwelling units.

## **POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

### **Planning Act**

Section 2 of the *Planning Act* establishes matters of provincial interest to which City Council shall have regard, in carrying out its responsibilities, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing; the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians; and the appropriate location of growth and development.

### **Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (“PPS”)**

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong healthy communities, wise use and management of resources, and the protection of public health and safety. The PPS includes enhanced policy direction intended to encourage an increase in the mix and supply of housing; promote opportunities for transit-supportive development; as well as the new term ‘housing options’ and directs planning authorities to permit and facilitate all housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Other policies relating to new housing and residential intensification include: Policy 1.4.3 d) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed; and f) establishing development standards for residential intensification which minimize the cost of housing and facilitate compact form, while maintaining appropriate levels of public health and safety.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has introduced a proposed change to the Growth Plan (2020) and the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), to combine these provincial policy documents into a single policy instrument, the Provincial Planning Statement. At the time of writing, the outcome and policy implications of this initiative are not known.

### **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)**

The Growth Plan (2020) provides a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City of Toronto forms an integral part.

Among the policies and objectives of the Growth Plan (2020) are:

- directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources, and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm;

- directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process; and
- achieving complete communities with access to a diverse range of housing options, protected employment zones, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work.

The Growth Plan (2020) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. In accordance with Section 3 of the *Planning Act* all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform to the Growth Plan (2020).

As of the date of this report, the Growth Plan (2020) remains as relevant provincial plan, to which it is necessary to have Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations conform. As previously stated, the outcome and policy implications of the proposed change to the Growth Plan (2020) and the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), is not known.

### **City of Toronto Official Plan**

The City's Official Plan is founded on a growth management strategy which steers growth and change to some parts of the city, while generally limiting significant change in other areas. The Centres, Avenues, Mixed-Use Areas, Regeneration Areas, Employment Areas and Institutional Areas absorb most of the anticipated increase in jobs and population.

The Neighbourhoods, which comprise 35.4 percent of the city's land area, are described as "stable but not static", with some physical change expected over time.

Neighbourhoods are primarily made up of low-density residential uses in low scale building types, including detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes and various forms of townhouses, as well as interspersed apartment buildings that are no higher than four storeys.

Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, identifies the Major Streets which provide connectivity across the city. Major streets are identified on this map to highlight the significant transportation corridors which support traffic flow planning for surface multi modal transportation, shipping and delivery routes, including planning for public transit. Map 3 also shows the planned widths for these corridors, which demonstrate the possible future width of each major street through their planned right-of-way. These streets, and their planned rights-of-way, are referenced throughout the Official Plan although not directly subject of policy. Instead, the major streets act as a reference point in a number of other policies; for example, Major Streets Rights-of-Way provide the point of reference for permitted heights for mid-rise development in the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards on those portions of major streets which have been identified as Avenues.

On May 10, 2023, City Council adopted the Official Plan amendment to permit multiplexes in Neighbourhoods citywide. On February 2, 2022, City Council adopted the Garden Suites Official Plan amendment, and on July 16, 2019, City Council adopted the

Official Plan amendment to permit Laneway Suites across the city. These completed EHON studies (laneway and garden suites, and multiplexes) now permit these uses in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law 569-2013 and incorporate specific development criteria. These additional residential permissions have been added through city-wide Site and Area Specific Policies. They add these permissions in addition to the existing policies of Chapter 4 of the Official Plan. On May 10, 2023, City Council adopted the Official Plan amendment to permit multiplexes in Neighbourhoods citywide. On February 2, 2022, City Council adopted the Garden Suites Official Plan amendment, and on July 16, 2019, City Council adopted the Official Plan amendment to permit Laneway Suites across the city.

### **Zoning By-law 569-2013**

On May 9, 2013, City Council enacted city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. The purpose of the new city-wide zoning by-law was to harmonize 43 former municipal by-laws from the pre-amalgamated City into one zoning by-law. The city-wide zoning by-law comprehensively regulates all land uses, buildings and structures and applies to most of the City of Toronto.

Chapter 10 of the city-wide Zoning By-law, the Residential Zone Category implements the policies of the Neighbourhoods designation of the Official Plan. This zone category includes a range of residential zones including Residential (R) Zone, Residential Detached (RD) Zone, Residential Semi-Detached (RS) Zone, Residential Townhouse (RT) Zone, and the Residential Multiple (RM) Zone. At this time, Townhouses are permitted in the R and RT zones, and apartment buildings are permitted in the R and RM zones. The residential zones in Zoning By-law 569-2013 reflect many of the existing permissions from the former municipalities that amalgamated into the City of Toronto. As the zoning by-law evolves and new permissions and updated standards are introduced, these differences have lessened.

The residential zones generally include standard regulations that address permitted uses, permitted building types, permitted number of dwelling units, lot size, density, lot coverage, and a range of built-form standards that include height, setbacks, building depth, building length, and soft landscaping.

The EHON initiative intends to equitably distribute housing options across the city, prioritizing built form of residential buildings rather than distinguishing between neighbourhoods based on building type. The Major Streets study is contributing to this change to expand the range of housing options that can be built across Toronto's Neighbourhoods.

### **Urban Design Guidelines**

The Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines were adopted by City Council on March 26, 2018. These guidelines were developed to provide clear direction, with a degree of flexibility, on urban design considerations to support implementation of Official Plan policy and to achieve good design outcomes for townhouses and low-rise apartment development applications across the city. Townhouse and low-rise apartment buildings have been a common building type in Toronto for most of the city's history.

The Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards were adopted by City Council on July 6, 2010. These guidelines introduced urban design guidance for mid-rise buildings on Avenues. The Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards Addendum adopted by City Council on April 20, 2016, expanded the applicability by introducing additional performance standards applicable to Mixed-Use, Employment, Institutional or some Apartment Neighbourhoods where the existing built form context supports mid-rise development, among other criteria.

Unlike the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines, the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards are not intended to apply to Neighbourhoods areas. Instead, these guidelines address building typologies for Mixed-Use areas and those portions of major streets that have been identified as Avenues as part of the Urban Structure of the Official Plan. These guidelines provide an important reference point to frame the scale, built form and design considerations which have guided many of the EHON Major Streets Study recommendations.

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Recommended Official Plan Amendment**

Staff recommend that Council adopt the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) in Attachment 1. The proposed OPA has been structured as an amendment to Official Plan Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods. The OPA would apply to all lands designated Neighbourhoods and located along major streets as identified on Official Plan Map 3.

The purpose and intent of the OPA is to clarify that townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings are permitted building types on lands designated Neighbourhoods along major streets, and to provide development criteria tailored to this context. The amendment includes new policies and non-policy text, as well as additions to existing policies and non-policy text.

Following consultation on the draft OPA, as presented to the Planning and Housing Committee on September 28, 2023, further consideration of the proposed policies was undertaken. Staff have revised the proposal in response to the feedback received from the public and advice from other City Divisions, as follows:

- Amending the introductory text of Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods and Policy 4.1.1 to specify that buildings along major streets would be subject to a maximum height of six storeys rather than four storeys;
- Introducing a development criterion specifically related to tree preservation to reflect the priorities of the public and support the City's sustainability objectives;
- Removing a development criterion encouraging a transition between areas of different development intensity and scale to align with the City's mid-rise building performance standards, avoid policy duplication and support overall development feasibility;

- Removing a policy encouraging the intensification of lands designated Neighbourhoods located along major streets to avoid policy duplication; and
- Addition of a policy that references portions of Official Plan Policy 4.1.5 a), h), and i) to continue to require development to respect and reinforce the patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites, continuation of special landscape or built form features, and conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

Currently, Official Plan Policy 4.1.5 recognizes the potential for more intense forms of development along major streets as compared to the interior areas of Neighbourhoods. However, Policy 4.1.7 explicitly states the Official Plan does not encourage this intensification, and staff have noted that in practice, the development criteria established in Policy 4.1.5 present barriers to introducing more intense forms of development by giving preference to existing building types and physical form. This demonstrates a need for policies that specifically apply to lands along major streets in Neighbourhoods so this opportunity for intensification can be realized.

The recommended OPA is intended to ensure that the existing development criteria in Policy 4.1.5 will no longer apply, except to respect and reinforce the patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites, special landscape or built-form features and the conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes. The intent is that by allowing intensification along major streets in the form of townhouses and apartment buildings as-of-right, more options and opportunities for housing in Neighbourhoods can be provided and development proponents will generally require fewer application processes to achieve a building permit.

The proposed OPA contains three new policies to be added to Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods:

- Proposed Policy 4.1.7 establishes support for the intensification of lands designated Neighbourhoods along major streets and replaces an existing policy stating intensification is not encouraged. As well, it identifies the development criteria these more intense forms of development will be subject to, enabling the assembly of properties and the introduction of townhouses and low scale apartment buildings along major streets. In effect, this differentiates lands designated Neighbourhoods along major streets from lands located in the interior of Neighbourhoods, which are subject to a different set of development criteria.
- Policy 4.1.12 proposes development criteria that would apply to all lands along major streets designated Neighbourhoods. This policy recognizes the need to respect the existing conditions of neighbourhoods as much as possible through various measures, such as preserving existing trees, establishing expectations for setbacks and privacy, and encouraging screening of service, garbage and parking areas. At the same time, it also recognizes the potential to improve the public realm along major streets and diversify housing options.
- Policy 4.1.13 proposes development criteria in relation to rear facing lots and provides new permissions for these parcels to be reoriented, assembled and

intensified. This policy also recognizes the importance of maintaining active residential frontages along the local street, establishes expectations for neighbourhood scale retail and services, and encourages improvements to pedestrian connectivity between local and major streets, while limiting the number of new driveways connecting to the major streets. Notably, rear facing lots will still be subject to the development criteria outlined above in Policy 4.1.12.

By amending the Official Plan through this series of new policies that are geographically limited to lands along major streets, existing policies applying to the interior of neighbourhoods remain unaltered.

The OPA also introduces new non-policy text to serve as the introduction of a new subsection under Official Plan Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods, titled “Properties along Major Streets in Neighbourhoods”. The recommended non-policy text speaks to the specific context and opportunity for intensification along major streets, recognizing how these lands differ from those located in the interior of Neighbourhoods, as well as the potential benefits an increase in density may provide to area residents.

In addition to supporting more housing options and opportunities in Neighbourhoods, the policies of the OPA are intended to assist applicants, City staff and Committee of Adjustment members to evaluate if proposals meet the intent and purpose of the Official Plan.

A new sidebar is recommended as part of the OPA, which describes major streets in the Neighbourhoods context, including the important role they play in the City’s transportation network. The sidebar would correspond with Policies 4.1.12 and 4.1.13 outlined above, under Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods.

Finally, the recommended OPA alters existing policy and non-policy text, specifically by adding “except along major streets where apartments may be no higher than six storeys” to the introduction of Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, 4.1 Neighbourhoods, in addition to Policy 4.1.1. Currently, this policy and non-policy text establishes a maximum building height in Neighbourhoods of four storeys.

Implementation of the recommended OPA will be undertaken through an amendment to Zoning By-law 569-2013, discussed below.

Allowing a broader variety of built forms such as townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings, along major streets, is generally consistent with the Official Plan, which recognizes that physical change within Neighbourhoods will be sensitive, gradual, and fit the existing context. Major streets provide opportunities for additional density along the boundaries of these neighbourhoods while still following this general vision. Providing land use permissions for these building types will provide a degree of height and density transition from growth areas to the interior of the Neighbourhoods, while maintaining a generally low-rise scale and aligning the additional density with transportation corridors and transit routes. Once enabled, it will remain the choice of the individual property owner whether to exercise these permissions, meaning change will occur gradually.

## **Recommended Zoning By-law Amendment**

The recommended Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) is drafted to provide a clear set of requirements and criteria to guide development of townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets in the Neighbourhoods. The draft recommended ZBLA, appended to this report as Attachment 2, includes regulations to address the location, form and scale of townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings. The ZBLA introduces permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings into all Residential zones where these building types are not currently permitted, while applying many of the current built form standards from zones where these building types are already permitted, to promote a neighbourhood scale and fit within the existing context.

The following sections describe the elements of the recommended ZBLA, with summaries of the rationale supporting the new recommended regulations. The recommended ZBLA (Attachment 2) is the result of refinement and revisions to the proposed zoning amendment presented in September 2023, based on input received during the 2023 EHON Major Streets consultation program and further staff analysis.

In addition to the recommended regulations required to introduce townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings as permitted building types along major streets in neighbourhoods, the recommended ZBLA includes amendments to ensure alignment with other zoning by-law amendments (Multiplex and Zoning Simplification) recently adopted by City Council. These include clarification of the permitted maximum height permissions for main walls for residential buildings and the expansion of the applicability of the definition of primary windows.

While the following identifies townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings by type, experience has shown that the actual designs of these building types will continue to evolve. The use of these terms is for zoning convenience to align with existing building type definitions, not to imply a specified design solution. The following discussion of the recommended residential zoning regulations will provide an overview of the regulations and rationale for their selection.

The ZBLA is appended to this report as Attachment 2.

### **Townhouse Permissions**

Zoning By-law 569-2013 permits townhouse buildings to be developed in the Residential (R) and Residential Townhouse (RT) zones, and the recommended ZBLA expands these permissions to the Residential Detached (RD), Residential Semi-detached (RS) and Residential Multiple (RM) zones. This building type has been part of the Toronto housing landscape for generations and is most prevalent within the boundaries of the former City of Toronto, which is reflected through zoning permissions in the R zone. They are also present in all other former municipalities on a more limited basis, primarily reflected in permissions in the RT zone. The regulations in force in the R and RT zones have been referenced and whenever possible, incorporated into the RD, RS, and RM zones, to support the development of townhouses in these residential zones on lots that abut the Map 3 major streets. The recommended regulations are not



intended to modify existing permissions in the residential zones, except as needed to permit townhouses where these buildings have previously not been permitted.

### **Townhouse Building Height Permissions**

The recommended ZBLA adds townhouse regulations from the RT zone into the RD, RS, and RM zones for height and number of storeys, to a maximum height of 13 metres and 4 storeys. Within the height and storey regulations, consideration is given to areas where additional height and number of storeys may currently be permitted beyond those recommended by this report. This is required as there are limited areas of the city where the existing Height Overlay Map may show a height greater than 12 metres or a number of permitted storeys over 4 storeys.

### **Townhouse Building Length and Depth**

Taken together, building length and depth provisions regulate the length and location of a residential building on a lot, to ensure appropriate siting of buildings and consistent patterns of building location and open space. Building length encompasses the entire length of a building and is measured from the front main wall to the rear main wall, whereas building depth is measured from the minimum required front yard setback.

A maximum building length of 19 metres is recommended for townhouses along major streets. The addition of building length for townhouses is a new regulation that will be added to all of the residential zones to provide certainty about the maximum permitted length of this building type in these areas. The overall size of individual townhouse units is also regulated through dwelling unit widths associated with applicable lot frontage widths, which can result in a range of townhouse unit sizes. This approach to building size regulation for townhouses is supported by modeling that incorporates the other proposed built-form standards, particularly minimum front and rear yard setbacks, to ensure adequate open space and separation distances are maintained.

Staff note that the RT zone does not currently include regulations that address building depth. Staff are not recommending that building depth be added to the lot requirements for townhouses in this zone as part of this amendment to preserve existing permissions.

The location of the townhouses on lots along major streets is additionally regulated through applicable separation distances, as well as front, side and rear yard setback requirements, and is further reinforced through the lot coverage maximum of 50 percent as described later in this report. This combination of regulations will assist in the creation of a consistent scale and alignment of new development of the recommended building types and will support soft landscaping, tree planting and separation distances between adjacent buildings.

### **Townhouse Lot Frontage, Lot Area and Dwelling Unit Width**

The recommended ZBLA adds townhouse regulations for lot area and lot frontage into the RD, RS, and RM zones, based on existing standards in the R and RT zones. The ZBLA also incorporates regulations for minimum dwelling unit width from the R and RT zones into the other residential zones. The recommended ZBLA maintains the minimum

individual lot frontage and townhouse dwelling unit width at 6 metres for townhouses with a front driveway and 5 metres for those without a driveway. The intent of this regulation is to support the provision of front yard soft landscaping and active ground floor uses for townhouse units that typically have narrower frontages than other residential building types.

### **Small-Scale Apartment Buildings Permissions**

The recommended ZBLA introduces permissions to facilitate the introduction of small-scale apartment buildings city-wide. The built form considerations, set out below include maximum height and storeys, dwelling unit count and building length. Along major streets, these building types are proposed to be exempt from maximum Floor Space Index regulations, but required to meet minimum lot coverage, minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks and landscaping requirements, as well as maximum height permissions. In the Residential (R) zone, no lot coverage value is recommended to be introduced. In this zone, FSI will no longer apply, but the setback and landscaping requirements, as well as the height permissions and unit count limits will apply.

By-law 569-2013 currently permits apartment buildings to be developed in Residential (R) and Residential Multiple (RM) zones. The R zone permits small apartment buildings, up to 4 storeys, and in some cases taller apartment building towers, reflecting historical permissions in the former City of Toronto. The RM zone provides permission for small apartment buildings, with maximum height permission of 12 metres (approximately 4 storeys) and applies to fewer lots across the city. As with townhouse permissions, these moderate density building types have previously been restricted to limited areas of the city.

The recommended ZBLA applies built form standards in a consistent and predictable way across the city. By applying existing, in force standards wherever possible, the ZBLA maintains regulations with which there is a level of familiarity in the development of townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings prior to the introduction of the EHON Major Streets Study.

However, there are two circumstances in which the recommended regulations differ between the R (Residential) zone, and the RD, RS, RT and RM zones: minimum front yard and side yard setbacks. The R zone generally applies in the portion of the city that was the former City of Toronto. In this area, the historic lot pattern, development pattern and zoning regulations have resulted in small lots, with greater density and as a result tighter physical conditions. However, the recommended approach to smaller front and side yard setbacks is not intended to take away from the quality of life for residents in the R zone, nor to prioritize additional density in this area of the city. Rather, this approach recognizes the existing physical context and in force regulations that apply.

### **Small-Scale Apartment Building Height Permissions**

The recommended ZBLA adds height permissions for small-scale apartment buildings of a maximum height of 19 metres (6 storeys), into the RD, RS, and RT zones, including regulations to introduce a maximum height and number of storeys for this building type. In zones where apartment buildings are already permitted, these height permissions are

also being added, as the proposed small-scale apartment buildings along major streets are recommended to have the same height permissions along major streets. This will introduce small-scale apartment building heights in a consistent way across the residential zones, city wide.

### **Small-Scale Apartment Dwelling Unit Count**

The recommended ZBLA would allow apartment buildings abutting major streets to be developed with dwelling unit counts between 5 and 30 units, across all residential zones. (Buildings with four or fewer units can develop through existing permissions for multiplex dwellings.) The recommended unit count was supported by modelling an apartment building with the proposed built-form performance standards set out in this report and accommodating the arrangement of a double-loaded corridor. Additionally, buildings with 30 dwelling units or less are not subject to loading requirements.

The introduction of a consistent approach to permit dwelling unit counts appropriate for the recommended building types is also proposed. Some neighbourhoods within the R and RM zones are subject to a limit on the maximum number of units on a lot denoted through a “u” value, which is indicated on the applicable zone labels shown on the Zoning By-law Map. In those areas where there is an existing ‘u’ value that is greater than that recommended through this study, the higher value will continue to apply. This type of situation will occur most commonly in the R zone, where existing permissions on some sites allow tower form apartment buildings.

### **Small-Scale Apartment Building Length and Depth**

The recommended ZBLA adds a maximum apartment building length of 25 metres, but does not propose to introduce building depth regulations. The location of apartment buildings on lots along major streets is additionally regulated through minimum separation distances, as well as front, side and rear yard setbacks. It is further reinforced through the lot coverage maximum of 50 percent as described below. This combination of regulations will assist in the creation of a consistent scale and alignment of new development of the recommended building types and will support soft landscaping, tree planting and separation distances between adjacent buildings.

The recommended maximum building length will accommodate the arrangement of a double-loaded corridor (where apartments are accessed from both sides of an internal corridor) and is supported by modeling that incorporates the other proposed built-form standards, particularly minimum front and rear yard setbacks, to ensure adequate open space and separation distances are maintained.

Should a small-scale apartment building be proposed with a building length of greater than 25 metres, the additional building length would be set back a minimum of 7.5 metres from each of the side lot lines. This approach is similar to an existing regulation in the RD Zone that does not regulate building length and depth of residential buildings on lots with wider frontages, provided larger side yard setbacks are maintained.

## **Regulations that Apply to Townhouses and Small-Scale Apartment Buildings**

### **Built Form Standards**

The recommended zoning by-law amendment introduces built form standards for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets. The recommended regulations are based on existing zoning regulations for each built form where they are currently permitted (R and RT for townhouses, R and RM for small-scale apartment buildings), Urban Design modeling, the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines, the Midrise Buildings Performance Standards, and the Bayview Townhouse Design Guidelines, and the input received during the 2023 consultation program.

The recommended ZBLA is intended to apply built form standards in a consistent and predictable way across the city. Utilizing standards, wherever possible, that are currently in force in other zones, relies on Toronto's experience to implement zoning change. The R zone, generally in the portion of the city that was the former City of Toronto, has historic lot and development patterns, as well as previous zoning regulations have resulted in small lots, with higher density and tighter physical conditions than other areas. In this context, the recommended front yard and side yard setbacks are recommended to be different in the R zone from what is recommended for the RD, RS, RT and RM zones.

### **Setbacks and Separation Distance between Buildings on the Same Lot**

With the introduction of zoning permissions for townhouses and apartment buildings on major streets, new regulations for setbacks and for separation distances between buildings are recommended. Front, rear and side yard setback provisions, in conjunction with building height, are the key performance standards that regulate the overall mass of a building, to ensure that scale, separation distances between buildings, and patterns of open space within neighbourhoods are maintained. For clarity, setbacks are minimum distances of a main wall of a building from a lot line, such as the front, side or rear lot lines. Separation distances, by comparison, are the minimum distances between the main wall of one building to the main wall of another building, or another main wall of the same building (such as in a courtyard).

No change is proposed for the front, side and rear yard setback standards brought forward in the September 2023 Proposals Report. The recommended setbacks to be applied to small-scale apartment buildings reflect consideration of primary windows in side walls and of building length. Setbacks provide opportunities for landscaping and tree planting, as well as separation from the major street, or the rear fence line, to provide privacy for residents. Primary windows, which are windows in the main rooms of a dwelling unit, merit additional adjacent space to facilitate privacy, light, and ventilation. As a result, additional setback distances where primary windows located on the side main walls are recommended.

The recommended minimum side yard setback regulations for small-scale apartment buildings, in the RD, RS, RT and RM zones, is 2.4 metres. When primary windows are located on the side main walls of these apartment buildings, it is recommended that the portion of the wall that has a primary window have a minimum side yard setback of 5.5 metres. In those situations where a lot is deeper than 36 metres, it is recommended that

the portion of the main wall that extends beyond the recommended maximum building length of 25 metres have a minimum side yard setback of 7.5m.

In the R zone, apartment buildings with a maximum height of 13 metres are currently required to have a minimum side yard setback of 0.9 metres, and the recommended zoning by-law does not propose to change that requirement. However, recognizing the additional height permissions proposed for 5 and 6-storey apartment buildings, the required minimum side yard setback for main walls without primary windows is recommended to be 1.8 metres for the entire main wall, and a 5.5 metre setback for those portions of a main wall where primary windows are located on side main walls. An additional side yard setback recommended for apartment buildings is a setback of 7.5m that would apply to those portions of a building that are longer than the maximum permitted building length, should a building longer than 25 metres be proposed.

As mentioned above, the historic built form, lot fabric and density of residential buildings is different in the area generally covered by the R zone, the former City of Toronto. In this area, the historic lot pattern, development pattern and zoning regulations have resulted in small lots, with greater density and as a result tighter physical conditions. The recommended setbacks for small-scale apartment buildings in the Residential zone have been developed within this context.

Separation distance regulations, which set the requirements for separation between the main walls of separate buildings, are already found in the RT and RM zones, and these separation distances are recommended to be added to the RD, and RS zones. In the RT and RM zones, minimum separation distances of 5.5 metres apply to main walls where only one main wall has an opening (window or door), and 11 metres if both main walls have openings. This applies to main wall separation for main walls of the same or different buildings on the same lot. This approach is proposed to be undertaken for the three residential zones where townhouse and small-scale apartment building permissions are being added for the first time. As well, these separation distances would apply between small-scale apartment buildings, between townhouses, and between a townhouse and a small-scale apartment building on the same lot.

In the R zone, regulations controlling separation distances between main walls of the same building are already in force. As a result, the recommended ZBLA seeks to introduce regulations to address separation distances between main walls of residential buildings on the same lot, using the same separation distances as recommended for the RD and RS zones.

### **FSI, Lot Coverage and Landscaping**

The recommended ZBLA exempts townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets in Neighbourhoods, from floor space index (FSI) regulations. FSI is used to regulate the density of a building relative to lot size and is expressed as a ratio of a building's gross floor area to the lot area. FSI regulations were carried over from former municipal zoning by-laws and do not currently apply in residential zones in many parts of the city. The recommendation to exempt townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings on major streets from FSI regulations is consistent with the approach of the Multiplex Zoning By-law.

Lot coverage is defined in Zoning By-law 569-2013 as “the portion of the lot that is covered by any part of any building or structure on or above the surface of the lot”. Lot coverage values, applicable to townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings, are recommended to be introduced or amended along major streets in the RD, RS, RT and RM zones. Lot coverage values in the RD and RS zones are typically in the range of 20 to 35 percent for individual residential (detached and semi-detached) buildings in these areas.

The recommended lot coverage is 50 percent for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings. This lot coverage value was selected to facilitate the introduction of these larger and more dense built forms, while placing a limit on the area of a lot that can be occupied by the new development. The recommendation is supported by urban design modeling and was applied as part of the financial feasibility analysis. Lot coverage is complemented by the use of setbacks requirements, as described above, and the regulation of required landscaping and soft landscaping.

In the Residential (R) zone, lot coverage has traditionally not been regulated and is not proposed to be regulated through the recommended ZBLA.

For apartment buildings with 30 dwelling units or less, located along a major street, the recommended ZBLA introduces 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 ZBLA does not propose to change the landscaping regulations as they apply to townhouses in the R and RT zones.

With the introduction of more intensive building types in Neighbourhoods situated along major streets, soft landscaping provisions are vital in achieving a healthy balance between the built and natural environment. The ample soft landscaping requirements in the recommended ZBLA will support on-site stormwater management, tree preservation and landscaping, and provide an opportunity for 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 landscaped. 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, intended to be large enough to accommodate landscaping and support tree planting and growth.

### **Parking and Driveways**

To address considerations of vehicle access onto *Neighbourhoods* lots along the major streets, and to encourage a condition that minimizes vehicle and pedestrian conflicts, the recommended ZBLA includes a regulation to require vehicle access to be from a laneway, or local street, if one exists. This is to limit the number of new driveways onto the major streets. Additionally, for those lots that are on a corner, and do not abut a lane, or for reverse frontage lots, the recommended by-law requires driveway access be provided from abutting streets which are not the major street. The amendment does not

otherwise propose to alter existing regulations for access to parking spaces in the residential zones.

City-wide Zoning By-law, 569-2013, does not require a minimum number of parking spaces for residential development. Staff relied on urban design modelling for consideration of built form standards and for use in consultation; the modelling included parking, to ensure that that a proposal can accommodate parking, at the discretion of the proponent.

The proposed ZBLA, presented at the September 28 PHC meeting, included a regulation to introduce a requirement for a pick-up and drop-off area on each lot. Staff identified potential challenges with this requirement and determined that the addition of this requirement would require more study. The recommended ZLBA does not include regulations addressing this issue.

Zoning By-law 569-2013 includes Residential zone regulations that anticipate apartment buildings to have circular driveways, by requiring unobstructed vehicle access that can accommodate a vehicle to drive forward in one continuous movement. The recommended ZBLA includes a new regulation for apartment buildings with 30 units or fewer, to no longer require this circular driveway in all residential zones. This regulation recommends increasing the number of dwelling units in an apartment building that trigger a requirement for this type of driveway along a major street from 25 to 30 units. This type of driveway is land intensive and would impact the lot coverage and landscaping requirements that support the priorities of housing and permeability and biodiversity.

This report also recommends an amendment to the regulation for hammerhead turn-around driveway dimensions. A hammerhead turn-around assists in vehicle movement in a way that is less land intensive than a circular driveway. By-law 569-2013 permits the use of a hammerhead driveway for vehicle access to apartment buildings up to 25 dwelling units. The recommended ZBLA includes an amendment to raise this threshold from 25 or fewer dwelling units to 30 or fewer dwelling units.

## **Amenities**

The recommended ZBLA amends the amenity space requirements to clarify when amenity space is to be provided for the use of residents of small-scale apartment buildings. There is currently some inconsistency with respect to amenity space requirements for apartment buildings between R zones and RM zones. Apartment building regulations in the R zone have a requirement for amenities to be provided for all buildings with 20 or more dwelling units. However, the apartment building regulations in the RM zone only speak to regulation of balconies and decks and do not include other requirements for amenities.

In the Residential (R) zone, permitted apartment buildings have generally been either low-rise (up to 4 storeys with fewer than 20 units) or towers (over 4 storeys and more than 20 units), with a clear divide between smaller apartment buildings or those much larger. With the addition of permissions for small-scale apartment buildings at a scale that is between the two sets of existing apartment building types in the R zone, the



Major Streets ZBLA recommends an increase to the number of dwelling units that trigger amenity space requirements from 20 to 30 dwelling units. This would apply the current RM zone amenity space standards to the scale of apartment building that will be permitted on major streets.

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.

## **Water and Wastewater Servicing**

The draft ZBLA includes a regulation to ensure that there is a requirement for a review of local servicing capacity that will support applications for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings proposing to develop more than 10 dwelling units. This regulation acknowledges the potential for occasional challenges related to ensuring adequate municipal servicing capacity for development of this scale proceeding under as-of-right zoning permissions. Currently, city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 requires demonstration of servicing connections to the lot line but does not contain a mechanism to confirm adequate capacity.

As discussed in the Zoning By-law Amendment, Regulations that Apply to Townhouses and Small-Scale Apartment Buildings, the recommended regulation introduces a new mechanism to require site specific servicing capacity analysis before a building permit is issued for development applications with as-of-right zoning land use permissions. City Planning will continue to work with Toronto Water to monitor the effectiveness of this regulation, its impact on the financing and timelines for new development.

## **New Definitions in Chapter 800**

The recommended ZLBA adds two new definitions to Chapter 800 of Zoning By-law 569-2013: Major Street and Primary Window.

Zoning By-law 569-2013 includes references to the major streets in zoning regulations in all Zone Categories, and the major streets are represented on the Policy Area Overlay Maps, as well as on the interactive Zoning map on the City of Toronto Webpage. For ease of reference in the recommended EHON Major Streets Zoning By-law Amendment, and future reference in new zoning regulations, a definition of the major streets is recommended to be included in Chapter 800, as follows:

### **(457) Major Street**

means any street identified as “Major Streets” on the Policy Areas Overlay Map found in Section 995.10. For the purpose of this definition, the phrase “major street on the Policy Area Overlay Map” has the same meaning as major street.

The Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones study (through By-law 1313-2023), introduced a definition of primary windows into Zoning By-law 569-2013 in the R zone. This definition is recommended to be expanded across all of the residential zones, to apply to the recommended built form standards for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings. To do this, staff recommended that the definition be moved from the R zone, and instead be introduced into Chapter 800. This will permit primary windows to be a defined term for use throughout the zoning by-law. The recommended definition is:

(600) Primary Window

means a window in a dwelling unit other than a window of a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, hallway, or storage area.

## **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. This review included the exploration of opportunities to facilitate the development of townhouse and small-scale apartment housing located 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.

The Financial Feasibility Analysis modeled townhouse, stacked townhouse (defined as apartment buildings in Zoning By-law 569-2013) and small-scale apartment buildings, in three locations as described above, and each model considered:

- Development timing based on historical patterns and other market research insights.
- Revenue assumptions based on our findings in the background market conditions research/assessment above (i.e., sales / rental rates, etc.).
- Hard construction costs based on industry standards cost ratios, including articulation of any additional cost premiums (or discounts) associated with various elements to be tested in this analysis.
- Soft costs based on a detailed calculation of the appropriate municipal charges and fees, as well as industry standards assumptions (e.g., architectural and engineering fees as a percentage of hard costs, financing, etc.).
- Operating costs based on industry standard ratios for rental housing and other managed commercial real estate, where applicable.
- Profit / return expectations based on industry standards and/or the needs of the municipality, as appropriate.

This modeling of the built forms provided the baseline case studies. The case studies were further reviewed through sensitivity analysis to evaluate potential changes in

macroeconomic conditions, the viability of affordable housing delivery, and the viability of higher tiers of the Toronto Green standard. The analysis also gave consideration to anticipated changes to assumed baseline conditions, such as costs of development increasing after completion of the analysis.

The final Financial Feasibility report provided a series of outcomes based on each case study (3 building types in 3 locations), followed by targeted recommendations specific to the typologies and geographies of the analysis. Generally, townhouse development was found to be feasible across the city. Small-scale apartment buildings (including stacked townhouses) were also found to be feasible, with differences based on land values, and with a recognition of increased risk associated with development of this built form.

The final analysis and recommendations are available for review on the EHON Major Streets Study webpage.

## **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement and consultation on the EHON Major Streets Study proposed OPA and ZBLA occurred between October 2023 and February 2024. This built upon earlier consultations on the Major Streets Study as part of engagement efforts on the overall EHON initiative, which occurred between October 2021 and May 2022.

During the 2023 engagement program, the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, as well as demonstration designs, policy maps and key study outcomes were available for review and comment both as part of staff presentations, static displays, and on-line information.

Members of the public were invited to provide feedback and submit their comments on the proposed amendments by attending an in-person or virtual public consultation meeting, by way of e-mail, or by completing an online survey. Advertising of the consultation opportunities occurred in a newspaper ad run in the Toronto Star, Social Media posts, Councillor newsletters, and information on the City Planning Consultations webpage, as well as through email outreach and the use of the EHON E-update Listserv.

In addition to formal consultation events, an online survey was available on the EHON Major Streets Study webpage. The survey was open from October to December 2023, and received a total of 1986 respondents.

### **Community Consultations**

A total of 17 formal consultation events have provided opportunity for community and industry input. These events included:

- 4 In Person consultation events (1 in each Community Planning District);
- 3 City-wide webinars;
- 6 Ward-based webinars requested by stakeholders;
- 2 Meetings with development and real estate industry representatives (BILD, TRREB);
- 2 Ward based townhall presentations.

The formal consultation events occurred at various times of the day and were arranged to ensure that as diverse a group of people as possible were consulted. A total of 657 people attended the consultation events. This was made up of approximately 81 attendees at the in-person open house events and 576 online at the City-wide, ward and stakeholder webinars. Participants in online consultations were invited to share their views or questions using the Chat and Q&A features in WebEx.

### Email & Telephone Correspondence

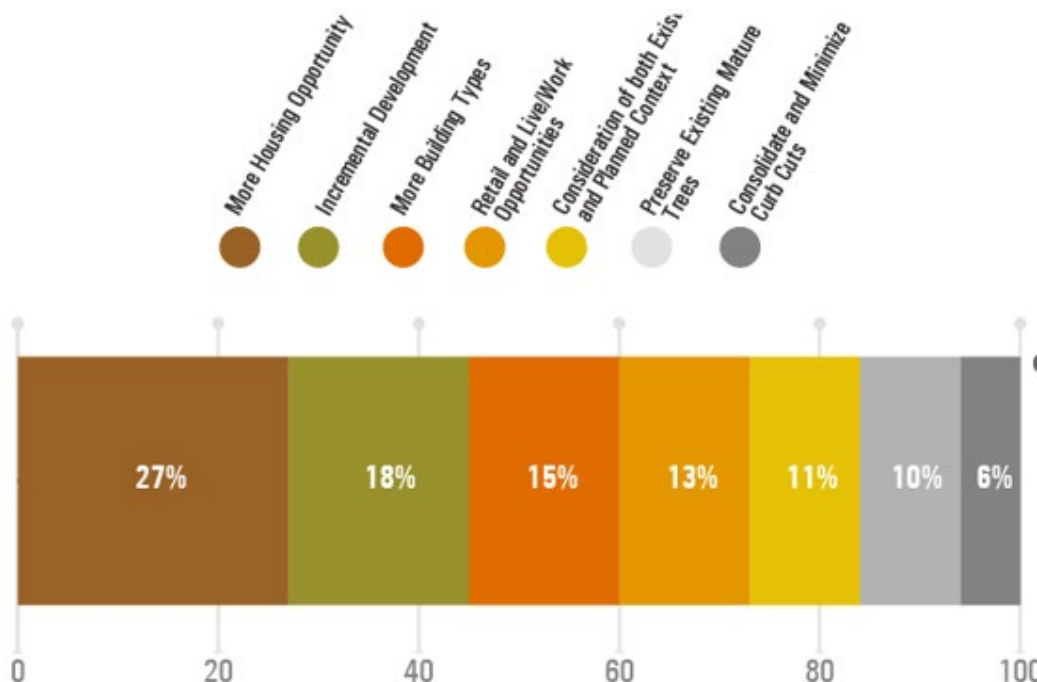
In addition to the formal consultation program, staff received numerous detailed comments by email and telephone from residents, the building industry, resident associations, and other stakeholders, throughout the course of the study. Over 48 emails have been received since the release of the revised draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, both from residents’ associations and individual respondents. This feedback was considered by staff in preparation of this report as well as the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments.

### Online Survey

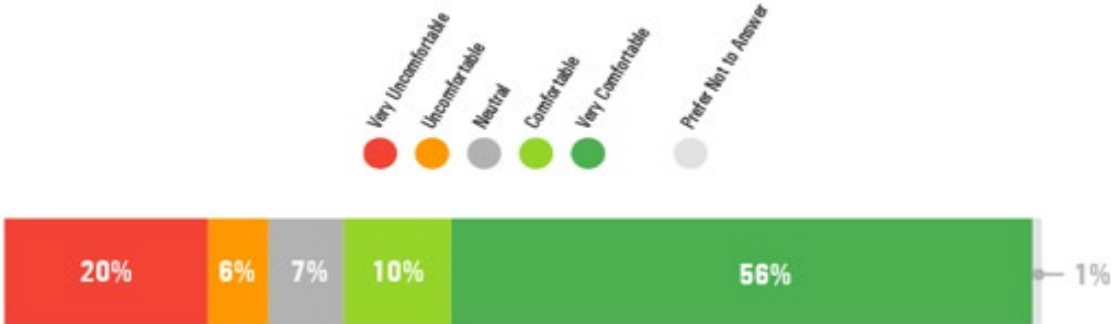
The Major Streets online survey was launched on October 10, 2023, on the City’s Major Streets website to solicit input on the proposed draft Zoning By-law and Official Plan Amendments. Respondents were asked for their opinions on the guiding principles, draft policies and draft Zoning By-law amendments. The survey remained open until December 14, 2023, receiving approximately 1986 respondents.

The following is a summary of the survey results and feedback. Detailed survey results are available in Attachment 3.

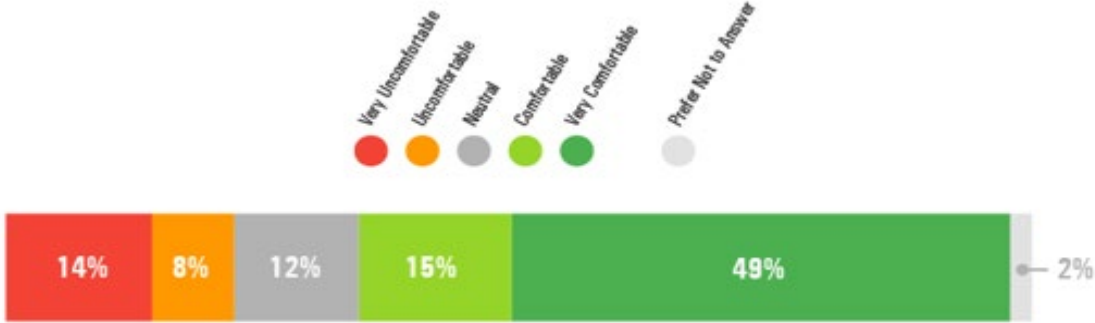
- Respondents identified ‘more housing opportunity’ as the most important principle informing the EHON Major Streets Study.



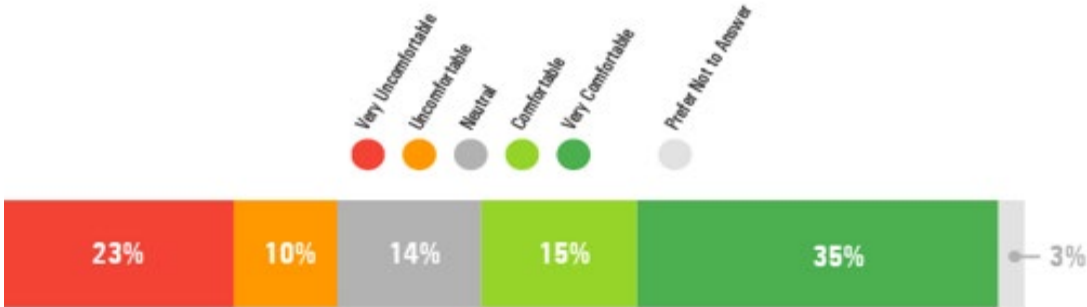
- Approximately 66 percent of respondents were either very comfortable or comfortable with a 6-storey building height for an apartment building within a neighbourhood on a major street. Approximately 26 percent were either very uncomfortable or uncomfortable.



- Approximately 64 percent of respondents were either very comfortable or comfortable with the proposed 1.8 metre minimum distance between a possible townhouse block and a mid-block single detached lot. Approximately 22 percent of respondents were either very uncomfortable or uncomfortable.



- Regarding through lots/reverse frontage lots, approximately 50 percent of respondents were either very comfortable or comfortable with the proposed 4-storey building height along the local street. Approximately 33 percent of respondents were either very uncomfortable or uncomfortable.



A more detailed summary of the input received through the online survey and overall consultation program are available as Attachment 3.

## Community Consultation and Email Correspondence

Comments received through email, as part of the Q&A sessions of webinars, from the long answer portions of the online survey, as well as input received during in-person consultation events have been compiled. These comments were wide ranging in their subjects as well as in their view of the proposed change to the major street edges of the neighbourhoods. Comments were received expressing all possible points of view from those opposed to the proposed changes, those in support and those that would like more permissive standards.

During the consultation process on the proposed amendments, the following general feedback was received, grouped thematically:

### Height and Density

- Height restrictions should be lifted as much as possible. Transition and compatibility are less important than providing more housing given the current housing crisis.
- Higher density buildings should be concentrated in certain areas, while some areas should remain low-density.
- Height permissions along major streets should relate to the width of the street.
- Density is important to mitigate climate change, to create more complete communities and to make active transportation and/or public transit more feasible.
- There should be no cap on the maximum permitted number of units.
- Needed additional housing should be built in industrial areas.
- Increasing density and reduced separation distance is not a big deal and a good trade off for housing supply.
- Building height permissions along major streets should be related to street width.

### Design

- There is importance to providing a full range of housing types that can accommodate various users and family sizes.
- Buildings need to be designed for accessibility and an aging population.
- Shadow impacts need to be considered. Buildings should be massed to maximize sunlight (e.g., incorporation of stepbacks).
- Housing supply and vegetation should be prioritized over building esthetics.
- Facades should be designed not to have multiple entrances but mimic the appearance of neighbouring buildings and to look less like an apartment building or townhouse.
- Architectural expression is more important than building height.
- The architecture of old Toronto with the use of red-brick should be considered instead of glass-cladding.
- Buildings that are well constructed and made of good quality material should be prioritized.

### Setbacks

- Minimum setbacks should be further reduced to accommodate additional floor area in a building and facilitate a greater variety of building options.

- Proposed minimum setbacks to facilitate the technical functionality of the site (e.g., access, garbage, servicing etc.) are adequate.
- A 1.8 metre minimum side yard setback is narrow to provide backyard access and should be increased to 2.0 meters, particularly if there is a fence on the property line.
- Setback requirements should be contextual based on the adjacent uses.
- Narrow pathways can present a risk to public safety.
- Large yards are not important for housing comfort.
- Buildings look better and are more efficient without upper floor setbacks.
- A 6-metre wide side setback to accommodate a driveway for on-site parking should not be prioritized.

### Landscaping

- Tree preservation is critical as trees play an important part in making the city beautiful and in mitigating climate change.
- On-site soft landscaping is less important than optimizing space for additional housing.
- The proposed soft landscaping of 30 percent of the site area is reasonable.
- Open space is important but should not exist at the expense of the provision of more units.
- Trees play an important role in making the city both more beautiful and in moderating climate change, and their preservation is paramount.
- Stormwater concerns and the maintenance of a robust ecology appear to be easily achieved with the proposed landscaping requirement.
- Landscaping should be for vegetation growth and not for vehicular parking.
- More space for trees and vegetation is necessary as it contributes to a healthy environment, wildlife connectivity and people's mental health.
- Mitigate the potential loss of green space with the provision of more green roof area.

### Parking and Transportation

- Reducing curb cuts is desirable for an improved public realm.
- Accommodating parking should be less of a priority than providing more floor area for housing and accommodating trees/vegetation.
- A 6-metre wide side setback to accommodate a driveway for on-site parking should not be prioritized.
- Density, particularly along transit routes, is needed to support retail uses, schools and higher order transit.
- Increased building height permissions help to slow climate change, protect natural areas and make active transportation and public transit more feasible.

### Retail

- There should be no restrictions regarding where in a building retail can be located.
- Development standards (e.g., floor-to ceiling heights) to make retail more viable should be allowed.
- Retail and office uses at ground-level will create street life and increase public safety.



- Retail should not be located next to family homes but other commercial uses.
- For the success of a retail space, it should be in an accessible and visible location in the building.
- Well designed community facilities, restaurants and cafes are important to the vibrancy of our city.
- Creating viable new retail spaces is essential to creating complete communities by allowing residents to access daily necessities comfortably by foot (or by mobility aid).
- Retail is likely to be more successful if at the front of the building.
- The kind of retail should determine appropriate location.

#### Other/General

- The preservation of existing zoning standards is less important than providing relief from the housing crisis.
- The financial feasibility of constructing the proposed building form models may not be realistic.
- There should be no more single-family-only zoning anywhere in Toronto.
- Complete Streets and Vision Zero need to be kept in mind as we consider increasing housing options.
- Together with this building form there is a need for a broader range of purpose-built rental apartments and protections for existing renters.
- Run-down buildings should be the first to be redeveloped into one of these building forms.
- The build-out of this vision for the City has to be done over time in order not to increase the current problems.
- People's ideals need to shift from the desired detached house with a white-picket fence to apartment building living.

## **FUTURE WORK**

### **Monitoring Program**

As with Laneway Suites, Garden Suites, and Multiplexes, Recommendation 5 to this report directs staff to undertake a program to monitor the uptake and implementation of townhouse and small-scale apartment projects in Residential zones following adoption of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. The program will monitor the number of applications for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings along major streets, number and type of net new units achieved, number and type of minor variances requested for these building types, and tree retention and compensation planting. The analysis will include a breakdown of townhouses and small-scale apartment building developments by neighbourhood to monitor the distribution and uptake across the city.

The monitoring period is proposed to extend from the time of adoption until 200 building permits have been issued for either of these building types, and no later than two years following the amendments coming into effect, with a report back to Planning and Housing Committee on findings and recommendations.

## **Amendments to Chapter 900 Zoning Regulations**

The recommended zoning by-law amendment includes regulations to clarify that townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings are permitted despite any restrictive prohibition in Chapter 900 of Zoning By-law 569-2013. Future work will be undertaken to amend Zoning By-law 569-2013 to amend or delete site-specific provisions or prevailing by-laws in Chapter 900 which prohibit these building types, to further simplify building type permissions and eliminate potential interpretation issues arising from the application of site-specific exceptions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods is an initiative that reframes the way we think about our neighbourhood communities. Many neighbourhoods across the city have experienced population decline in the last few decades, while other areas of Toronto such as the Downtown, Centres, and other mixed-use areas have experienced rapid growth.

The edges of the neighbourhoods are Toronto's opportunity to welcome the introduction of long standing building types which have been sparsely permitted in neighbourhood contexts, to meet the needs of current and future residents. Expanding permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings, in a neighbourhood supporting scale, will make space for a wide range of residents and families, and address Official Plan objectives to provide a wide range of housing types in our Neighbourhoods.

Over the last three years, the EHON Major Streets Study has reviewed a variety of approaches to missing middle housing taken in North American cities; undertaken detailed design studies in the Toronto context; and considered feedback from a robust engagement exercise to develop a policy and regulatory framework that balances a range of needs and perspectives.

The EHON Major Streets study addresses a relatively small proportion of the city's Neighbourhoods areas. Despite this, the benefit to the city's neighbourhoods, and the opportunity this initiative will provide to those wishing to live in a neighbourhood, is an important addition to the mosaic of increased housing land use permissions that are being facilitated by the EHON and other Housing Action Plan initiatives. The proposed amendments will open up over 31,000 lots to further potential for housing along major streets in Neighbourhoods.

The recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law 569-2013 Amendments support the introduction of townhouses and small-scale apartments in Neighbourhoods along major streets in Toronto. The recommended policies, development criteria, and performance standards are recommended to balance the objectives of expanding housing options while supporting the city's neighbourhoods and providing more opportunity equally across Toronto.

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**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Recommended Official Plan Amendment  
Attachment 2: Recommended Zoning By-law 569-2013 Amendment  
Attachment 3: Consultation Summary