

Housing Accelerator Fund: Expanding Permissions in Neighbourhoods for Six Units and Four Storeys – Preliminary Report

Date: November 21, 2024

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

As part of the City's application to the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), City Council directed staff to report back by the second quarter of 2024 on opportunities to enable as-of-right zoning for residential buildings with up to six units and four storeys city-wide. This would build on the recent adoption of permissions for multiplexes with up to four units and the Ward 23 (Scarborough North) Multiplex study exploring six-unit buildings that is currently underway.

This report provides an overview of the current policy context and ongoing work to permit six-unit buildings city-wide; summarizes emerging trends and best practices in other jurisdictions for multi-unit residential buildings; identifies potential barriers; and sets out a proposed workplan to identify opportunities to expand permissions for six-unit and four-storey residential buildings city-wide.

Should Planning and Housing Committee endorse this workplan, staff will undertake further analysis and stakeholder consultation and will report back in Q4 2025 with a proposals report outlining proposed amendments to advance for broader public consultation and implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Planning and Housing Committee direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report to Planning and Housing Committee in Q4 of 2025 with a proposals report to expand zoning permissions to facilitate six-unit buildings city-wide.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the 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 a person and to building healthy, equitable, sustainable, and livable communities. Residents' quality of life, the city's economic competitiveness, social cohesion and diversity also depend on current and future residents being able to access and maintain adequate, suitable and affordable homes.

The City of Toronto's existing housing plans and strategies seek to improve housing outcomes for a range of residents and to support equity and climate resilience. Specifically:

- The HousingTO Plan envisions a city in which all residents have equal opportunity to develop to their full potential and is centred on a human rights-based approach to housing. It is also focused on increasing the supply of new affordable homes, protecting the existing housing stock, and helping renters to achieve and maintain housing stability; and
- The City's Official Plan contains policies relating to the provision of a full range of housing and maintaining and replenishing the affordable and mid-range housing stock within the city.

The opportunities identified in this report align with the priority actions outlined in the Housing Action Plan and support the HousingTO Plan and Official Plan objectives to increase the supply of housing, including purpose-built affordable and market rental housing. They would also contribute to increasing opportunities for people from equity-deserving groups, including those from low-and-moderate-income households, to access safe, healthy, and adequate homes, within inclusive, complete, and equitable communities.

CLIMATE IMPACT

In 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 TransformTO 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. Removing regulatory barriers to creating additional low-rise housing, including those within the city-wide Zoning By-law, is an important intensification strategy that promotes a more efficient use of land and resources. 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.

Smaller forms of infill building types, such as garden suites, multiplexes and low-rise apartments can be designed to achieve net zero operational emissions, and low carbon materials are readily available at this scale. These buildings are also more easily deconstructed and much of the existing material can be salvaged and reused. City Planning will continue to consider zoning changes to enable the full range of housing options in low-rise neighbourhoods using a climate impact lens.

DECISION HISTORY

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 February 15, 2022, Planning and Housing Committee endorsed EHON - Update Report and endorsed City Planning proceeding with public consultation on the basis of the contents of the report.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH31.6>

On December 14, 2022, City Council adopted Item CC2.1- 2023 Housing Action Plan, which directed in Recommendation 1 that the City Manager to develop a Housing Action Plan for the 2022-2026 term of Council that will support the City in achieving or exceeding the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes over the next 10 years. 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 affordable 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 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. As part of this decision, Council directed staff to study the feasibility of permitting six-unit multiplexes in Ward 23.

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

On July 19, 2023, City Council adopted Item EX6.14 EHON – Beaches-East York Pilot Project: Status Update and Directions Report, which included direction for the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, in consultation with the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to study the feasibility of supporting egress in multi-residential buildings of up to four stories.

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

On September 28, 2023, Planning and Housing Committee received Item PH6.4 - EHON: Major Streets Study - Proposals Report and directed staff to continue consultation on the draft OPA and proposed zoning by-law amendments.

<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, which included an update on the Housing Action Plan workplan items.

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

On March 29, 2023, City Council adopted MM5.28 - Moving Fast on the Housing Accelerator Fund, which directed staff to prepare a submission to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Accelerator Fund.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM5.28>

On December 15, 2023, City Council adopted PH 8.3 Housing Action Plan: Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones - Phase 1 Final Report, which adopted zoning by-law amendments to simplify and modernize zoning regulations for low-rise residential buildings. The first phase of amendments included the harmonization of performance standards for low-rise apartment buildings in the R zone with those for Multiplexes.

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

On December 15, 2023, City Council adopted MM13.27 – Federal Housing Accelerator Fund - Supporting Generational Transformation of Toronto's Housing System, which responded to the federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities response to the City's initial Housing Accelerator Fund application. Through this decision, Council directed staff to report back in Q2 2024 on opportunities to permit more low-rise, multi-unit housing development through as-of-right zoning by-laws in neighbourhoods across Toronto, including permissions for four-storey multi-unit residential development, and permissions for residential buildings with up to six dwelling units.

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

BACKGROUND

Work to expand permissions for additional housing opportunities, including multi-unit residential buildings, in Toronto's neighbourhoods has been ongoing since 2018. Key actions as part of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) and Housing Action Plan (HAP) initiatives are summarized below.

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods

The Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative is advancing permissions for “missing middle” housing, ranging from garden suites to low-rise walk-up apartments in residential neighbourhoods across the city. Low-rise neighbourhoods, which make up 35 percent of the city's land area, present a unique opportunity to accommodate more housing options. To provide a wider range of housing types and better serve the diverse needs of Toronto's residents, the city will need to move beyond relying on housing stock turnover in neighbourhoods and focus on building and creating the opportunity for more ground-related housing in neighbourhoods. The Multiplex and Major Streets projects, which are two of the EHON priority projects, address multi-unit residential buildings.

Multiplex Study

The Multiplex study advanced changes to the Official Plan and city-wide Zoning By-law to permit two, three, and four-unit buildings in Neighbourhoods city-wide, expanding housing permissions in many areas where only a detached house was previously permitted. This study also implemented enhanced performance standards for multiplex buildings, to reflect the additional units these buildings contain and to improve financial feasibility. These include permissions for at least three storeys and additional building length and depth on certain lots. However, the general intent for these buildings is to be of a similar scale and format as other low-rise buildings, like detached houses. City Council adopted these amendments in May 2023, which are in full force and effect – staff continue to monitor the implementation.

This study considered permissions for buildings of up to four units as the work was intended to align with existing zoning by-law definitions for multiplex building types (i.e., duplex, triplex, or fourplex). These building types were already permitted in some of Toronto's residential zones and the study was scoped to focus on expanding these permissions city-wide. Buildings with more than four dwelling units were not within the study's scope. Permissions and performance standards for these buildings were intended to be addressed through other initiatives.

Ward 23 Multiplex Study Update

As part of the adoption of Multiplex permissions city-wide in May 2023, City Council directed staff to explore the potential of permitting six-unit multiplexes within Ward 23 (Scarborough North). Community Planning staff in the Scarborough District are leading this work, which involves detailed analysis of lot fabric, built form testing and the development of potential zoning regulations to permit six units in this area, generally in line with the built form permissions for four-unit multiplexes.

Staff collaborated with the University of Toronto School of Cities/Daniels Faculty of Architecture ReHousing team (<https://rehousing.ca/>) to conduct detailed lot analysis and built form testing.

This work aims to understand the optimal lot sizes and configurations for six units in Ward 23. The team is undertaking detailed design exercises to explore potential unit configurations generally following the principles established for four-unit multiplexes. In addition, the option to provide on-site parking is being explored. The resulting unit sizes and layouts will help to inform feasibility analysis and identification of potential policy or regulation changes.

The threshold to accessing low-cost Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation financing is the development of five dwellings. To ensure the financial feasibility of permitting a building with six dwelling units as-of-right, discounted rates or exemptions relating to development charges and park levies, similar to those introduced in relation to recent multiplex permissions, may need to be established. These are being considered through a review in 2025 as part of the Multiplex monitoring study. Any potential alterations to Municipal Code Chapter 415 – Development of Land are more appropriate to explore and apply on a city-wide basis than an area-specific basis.

Staff have been consulting on these potential approaches in Q4 2024 and bringing forward a final report to Planning and Housing Committee with recommendations for implementation in Q1 2025. The report will seek to bring forward Official Plan and City-wide Zoning By-law amendments creating permissions for up to six-unit multiplexes within areas designated as Neighbourhoods in Ward 23.

Major Streets

The Major Streets study introduced permissions for additional intensification on lands designated *Neighbourhoods* located along major streets, as identified in Map 3 of the Official Plan. Permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings, up to six storeys, have been introduced and will enable additional density and new housing forms along the edges of the Neighbourhoods, while maintaining compatibility with low-rise areas.

At the time of writing this report, the EHON Major Streets Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment are under appeal at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

2023 Housing Action Plan

The Housing Action Plan (HAP) priorities for the 2022-2026 term of Council include targeted timelines for the approval and implementation of a wide range of actions, policies and programs to increase the supply of housing within complete, inclusive and sustainable communities with the critical infrastructure to support growth. The HAP actions focus on removing policy and zoning barriers to building housing; leveraging public lands to increase housing supply; preserving existing rental homes; supporting the development of a range of purpose-built rental homes (including market and non-market) through new and strengthened housing policies and programs; and supporting the community sector (including non-profit and co-op housing providers) to modernize and grow their stock. The new homes enabled by this strategy may contribute to the

provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes in Toronto by 2031 and will increase opportunities for ground-related homes across the city.

Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones Study

The Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones study comprises one of the 54 actions that form the Housing Action Plan and supports the City's goal of accelerating the supply of housing within complete, inclusive, and sustainable communities by removing policy and zoning barriers to building housing. This study aims to simplify regulations in Toronto's low-rise residential zones to reduce barriers to as-of-right housing construction.

Study work has been guided by three key themes of simplification, harmonization, and modernization. The first phase of the study focused on simplification and harmonization changes for secondary suites and low-rise apartment buildings in the R zone, and performance standards for flat roof buildings in the R, RS, and RM zones. Future phases of work will focus on simplifying building type definitions and modernizing approaches to regulating building area and footprint.

COMMENTS

In many parts of the city, the lot fabric and existing built form permissions may result in sufficient space to accommodate more than four units within a building. As noted, the recent Multiplex study was aligned with existing building type definitions in Zoning By-law 569-2013 and as a result did not explore permissions for more than four units city-wide. Some zones (R and RM) already permit low-rise apartment buildings which could contain five or more units.

The Ward 23 case study conducted in collaboration with ReHousing provides support to increasing multiplex permissions to six-unit buildings within the Ward. Through analyzing varying lot sizes, unit layouts, and parking configurations, ReHousing developed models to demonstrate that a six-unit multiplex could be built on a lot using the existing multiplex development standards. Based on the existing lot fabric within Ward 23, approximately 61 percent of the residential lots can accommodate a six-unit multiplex similar to those in the case study models.

In addition to lessons learned, staff have identified the following considerations respecting the expansion of six-unit residential buildings city-wide.

Emerging Best Practices

The policy landscape in North America for multi-unit housing is rapidly evolving. Permissions for buildings with more than four units are being implemented in many jurisdictions in Canada, with varying approaches to describing and regulating these buildings. Staff have reviewed emerging approaches in British Columbia and other municipalities in Ontario – refer to Attachment 1 for a detailed summary.

From this review of approaches to permitting multi-unit buildings some emerging best practices are evident. First, many jurisdictions do not refer to multi-unit buildings based on the number of units that they contain. Instead, the building type describes the typology (i.e. multiplex, houseplex, residential building), with the number of units varying based on lot criteria and other considerations. Second, the number of units is often tied to the area of the lot or other dimensional requirements, such as lot frontage. This ensures that additional units are linked to larger lots that may allow greater flexibility in accommodating more units. Finally, permissions for additional units may be tied to specific lot typologies (such as corner lots) or separate zones which can be deployed in locations that may be more appropriate for a greater number of units.

These approaches and emerging best practices will be used to inform development of potential options for implementation of multi-unit buildings with more than four units in Toronto.

Policy and Legislative Framework

Official Plan

The Neighbourhoods land use designation in the Official Plan permits residential buildings of up to four storeys, subject to development criteria and other policies.

The development criteria of Official Plan Policy 4.1.5 may present challenging policy barriers to developing six-unit multiplexes in Neighbourhoods, even if these building types are permitted in the zoning by-law. Typically, if a building type is not already present or does not have a significant presence in a neighbourhood, they are unlikely to be supported by City Planning staff, approved at the Committee of Adjustment, or supported at the Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) based on this policy.

The city-wide Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP) for multiplexes addressed this issue by providing the specific direction that multiplexes containing up to four units (duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) are permitted in Neighbourhoods, subject to development criteria specific for multiplex buildings. As this SASP is limited to buildings containing up to four units, changes to this policy, or the policies in the parent Official Plan, may be necessary to enable six-unit buildings.

Zoning By-law 569-2013

The city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 currently defines buildings based on the number and configuration of dwelling units within the building. For example, a Triplex is a building with three dwelling units, where at least one dwelling unit is entirely or partially above another, whereas a townhouse is a building with three or more dwelling units, with no dwelling unit entirely or partially above another.

Residential buildings with six dwelling units would be classified as apartment buildings, which are buildings with five or more dwelling units, with at least one dwelling unit entirely or partially above another, and each dwelling unit has a separate entrance directly from outside or through a common inside area. As a result, six-unit buildings would meet the definition of an apartment building and would be subject any applicable performance standard for that building type.

Apartment buildings are currently permitted as-of-right in the R and RM zones, subject to performance standards that may differ from those required for a detached house or multiplex. The first phase of the Zoning By-law Simplification and Modernization for Low-rise Residential Zones study harmonized setback and building depth requirements for low-rise apartment buildings (with a height less than 13.0 metres) in the R zone with the requirements for multiplexes and introduced regulations permitting existing detached or semi-detached houses to be converted to contain additional units. These changes reduce barriers to creating buildings with more than four units in many areas within the former City of Toronto.

As part of the proposed workplan for six-unit buildings, staff will explore amendments to the building type definitions and performance standards to ensure that six-unit buildings would be effectively regulated and that additional barriers to their construction are not present in the zoning by-law.

Other Considerations

Financial Feasibility

In order for development projects to proceed, they must be economically viable and generate a satisfactory return on investment. As part of further work, the City will examine potential financial barriers to the creation of six-unit buildings to assess the financial feasibility of projects. This will include an estimation of hard and soft costs, including City fees and charges, expected revenues and anticipated financial returns. This analysis will help to inform the level of financial incentives, if any, that may be warranted to support this form of housing.

Through the implementation of multiplex permissions, staff have also heard from stakeholders a concern that multiplex development may not be able to meet the threshold for accessing Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) financing for rental apartment construction, which is a project scale of at least five units. As a result, many applications have included a fourplex and a garden or laneway suite to meet this threshold and potentially qualify for lower-cost financing. Permitting six-unit buildings could potentially enable more projects to qualify for this financing.

In addition to the development cost inputs identified above, barriers to creating small-scale condominiums were identified through the multiplex study as a potential financial disincentive. As part of the Council's approval of the multiplex final report, staff were directed to review the planning application fees for small-scale condominiums – this work is ongoing. In addition, the need for further changes at the provincial level to make small-scale condominiums more feasible was identified. Any changes made to the condominium process for four-unit multiplexes would likely also be relevant and improve the feasibility of creating six-unit condominiums.

Ontario Building Code Considerations

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) sets out province-wide technical and administrative requirements intended to achieve the objectives of safety, health, and accessibility. The number of exits, fire and life safety systems and provisions for barrier free access are all elements prescribed in the OBC.

In June 2024, Toronto Building reported to the Planning and Housing Committee on the results of a study on the feasibility of supporting a single means of exiting multi-residential buildings of up to four storeys, including additional life safety and other measures which would meet the objectives and intent of the Ontario Building Code. ([PH14.7-Single Exit Stair: Ontario Building Code Feasibility Study](#)) The study determined that an alternative solution to address a single exit stair is feasible if the provision of a single exit is determined to be an acceptable risk as it relates to the exit being blocked or obstructed in an emergency, impacting evacuation from the building and emergency response operations.

Code development work related to single means of egress in residential buildings is underway and anticipated at both the provincial and federal levels. Toronto Building, as requested by City Council, will also engage with industry stakeholders to identify further opportunities to address Building Code-related challenges that may be impeding the design and construction of “missing middle” housing beyond land use planning policy, while addressing safety considerations for both building occupants and first responders, and to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee with recommendations no later than Q3 2025.

As part of the proposed workplan discussed below, built-form testing will be conducted to explore the feasibility of six units within a similar building envelope to the current multiplex permissions. This design testing will include exploration of four-storey options; however, based on the lessons learned from the Multiplex study, inclusion of a fourth storey is unlikely to significantly improve financial feasibility. Should alternative compliance options be developed that would make four-storey building designs more financially feasible, further consideration will be given to expanding height permissions to allow for four storeys in all Neighbourhoods city-wide.

Proposed Workplan

In order to explore opportunities to expand permissions for six-unit buildings city-wide, staff propose the following general workplan.

Built-form testing of six-unit buildings within representative geographies from across the city (case study areas) will be conducted. This work will follow a similar approach to the built form testing undertaken in the Multiplex study and will build on the ongoing work in Ward 23. The lot fabric of each case study area will be examined to determine common lot sizes and characteristics. This information will be used to inform the selection of common lot typologies for detailed built form testing.

The built-form testing will explore unit configurations, internal layouts, and OBC requirements to determine the feasibility of achieving six units. Testing will use the existing multiplex built form permissions as a baseline, and will explore additional parameters that may improve feasibility, such as additional building length or a fourth storey.

As monitoring of the recently adopted multiplex permissions is ongoing, staff will align the exploration of six-unit permissions with any emerging lessons learned. This will help inform potential changes to performance standards to accommodate additional units.

Staff will also engage with industry and technical experts to explore considerations and existing barriers to creating six-unit buildings.

Staff anticipate conducting this research and stakeholder consultation over the course of 2025 and reporting back in Q4 2025 with proposed amendments to advance for broader public consultation and implementation.

CONCLUSION

In order to explore opportunities for additional residential units in Toronto's neighbourhoods, staff propose to build on work that is currently underway to determine where opportunities may exist to permit multi-unit residential buildings with up to six units and four storeys where they are not currently permitted. This work will look at lot fabric and built form permissions in representative areas of the city and will be informed by emerging best practices in other jurisdictions. Further exploration of the issues and barriers identified in this report will also be undertaken and staff will work with other City divisions to explore opportunities to improve the feasibility of multi-unit residential buildings.

Staff will report back to Planning and Housing Committee in Q4 2025 with options for implementation and a public consultation strategy.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Emerging Best Practices for Multi-unit Buildings

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British Columbia

The Province of British Columbia (BC) adopted legislation in Fall 2023 (Bill 44) to mandate that all municipalities of greater than 5000 people permit ‘small scale multi unit housing’ (SSMUH) of up to four units on residential lots larger than 280 square metres. In addition, lots within 400 metres of frequent bus service (every 15 minutes or less) must permit buildings with six units.

In connection with these legislated requirements, the Province introduced a policy manual that contains guidance for performance standards for SSMUH. These performance standards are intended to provide a consistent regulatory approach to ease implementation for municipalities, although municipalities may choose to implement alternative standards provided, they do not prevent the achievement of the required number of units.

Vancouver

The City of Vancouver adopted zoning permissions for multiplex buildings in the most common residential zone (R1-1) in 2023. Multiplex dwellings of up to eight units are permitted based on the area of the lot. Smaller lots (~300 square metres) are eligible for four units, while larger lots (greater than 557 square metres) may accommodate eight units, subject to other performance standards.

Victoria

The City of Victoria adopted zoning permissions for ‘houseplex’ buildings with up to six units in 2023. In addition, townhouses with up to 12 units are permitted on corner lots. The first iteration of these “missing middle” permissions included additional density where affordable or rental units were provided; however, these ‘bonus density’ provisions were removed in December 2023 following limited uptake of “missing middle” housing permissions.

Edmonton

The City of Edmonton’s new city-wide zoning by-law came into effect on January 1, 2024 – this by-law simplifies the number of zones and regulations and expands permissions for multi-unit buildings. The Small Scale Residential zone (RS) permits buildings with up to eight units on interior lots, with the number of units effectively controlled by a minimum lot area per dwelling unit (75 square metres per unit). The Small-Medium Scale Transition Residential zone (RSM) permits three to four storey multi-unit buildings but does not limit the number of units in these buildings. Rather, site requirements and minimum density regulations (units per hectare) regulate the unit yield on a particular site.

Barrie

The City of Barrie's proposed new zoning by-law does not directly define multiplex or apartment building types, rather the by-law defines buildings based on their physical form and relationship to adjacent buildings. These buildings are permitted to contain multiple dwelling units based on the zone variation and performance standards. For example, a 'detached house' may contain between 3 and 11 dwelling units depending on the applicable low-rise zone (Neighbourhood Low 1 to 3).

Oshawa

The City of Oshawa zoning by-law includes a specific definition for a six-unit building - a 'sixplex' is defined as "an apartment building containing only six dwelling units". This definition enables a distinct building typology for six-unit buildings, while ensuring they are not subject to the same standards as other buildings covered by the 'apartment building' definition (any building with three or more units).

Ottawa

The City of Ottawa's zoning by-law includes a specific definition for 'low-rise apartment' to differentiate this building type from larger-scale apartment buildings. The R4 zone, which is used in some inner-urban neighbourhoods, permits 'low-rise apartments' to contain up to eight units on lots with a minimum lot area of 300 square metres. 'Low-rise apartments' on larger lots (greater than 15 metres wide and 450 square metres) may contain nine or more units.