TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Housing Action Plan: Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines

Date: November 22, 2024
To: Planning and Housing Committee
From: Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report presents updated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines dated November 2024 to Planning and Housing Committee, shown as Attachment 1 to this report. Staff will apply these updated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines in the evaluation of mid-rise development applications.

At its meeting on November 30, 2023, the Planning and Housing Committee (PHC) requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning make best efforts to report back by the fourth quarter of 2024 with draft consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines that incorporate recommendations resulting from mid-rise monitoring, public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to date, and analysis that amend the performance standards, with the goal of encouraging mid-rise developments that are more economical to build and more environmentally sustainable.

In response to this, City Planning has initiated a review of the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards to remove barriers and facilitate mid-rise developments across the city. This review incorporates updates to the rear transition performance standards adopted at the June 13, 2024 Planning Housing Committee meeting. Supporting mid-rise development will enhance housing supply in walkable, complete communities, offering a wider range of housing options to address current housing challenges.

The updated, consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines include several key changes:

- **Height Increase:** The updated guidelines contemplate height for mid-rise buildings up to 14 storeys (45 meters) adjacent to streets with a 45-meter right-of-way width. On streets of any right-of-way width, additional height, taller than the adjacent ROW width, may be considered on deep sites.
- **Elimination of Angular Planes:** Both front and rear angular plane requirements are removed, simplifying building massing. Certain setback and step-back requirements are included to ensure appropriate building massing.

- **Flexible Massing:** The guidelines offer increased flexibility in building massing promoting a performance-based approach rather than prescriptive standards. This approach supports a simplified built form with increased gross floor area and opportunities for additional residential units.

These changes aim to simplify construction, make buildings more economical to construct, and enhance sustainability in mid-rise developments. The guidelines encourage a mid-rise form that supports intensification through flexible massing, while allowing for access to sunlight, sky view and pedestrian comfort along adjacent sidewalks and public spaces.

The purpose of this report is to provide background on the guidelines, highlight key updates in the consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines, and how and where the guidelines apply as well as identify significant issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to publish the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines on the City Planning website and request The Executive Director, Development Review and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning utilize the updated Guidelines in the evaluation of mid-rise development proposals.

2. The Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to continue to consult the public and stakeholders on the consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines contained in Attachment 1 of this report in conjunction with the on-going Official Plan and Zoning By-law work programs for Avenues, and report back in 2025 with any recommended modifications.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

City Planning 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 IMPACT STATEMENT

The City of Toronto recognizes that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of a person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities. Access to safe, good quality, and affordable housing is an important determinant of physical and mental health, and a fundamental goal of the City's Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan. Adequate and affordable housing is also a cornerstone of inclusive neighbourhoods and

improves the socio-economic status of individuals, families and communities as a whole.

The provision of an appropriate range and mix of housing options is a matter of Provincial interest and a key tenet of the City's Official Plan policies. The City's Housing Action Plan uses a multi-pronged approach to increase housing supply, expand housing choice, and improve affordability for current and future residents. The consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines support these goals by simplifying the mid-rise built form, allowing for greater density, easier construction, and increased affordability.

These initiatives support the creation of a diverse range and mix of housing options to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes, leading to more equitable and inclusive 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 more with the adoption of TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, which includes targets to achieve net-zero emissions in Toronto by 2040 (Item IE26.16).

Provincial policy, including the Provincial Planning Statement, 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. Facilitating the construction of mid-rise buildings 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 within Toronto can reduce the extension of sprawl to accommodate housing needs 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 requiring carbon-intensive infrastructure built elsewhere.

The consolidated Mid-rise Building Design Guidelines incorporate recommendations from the published Urban Design Guidelines Embodied Carbon Study (2024) undertaken by the City of Toronto and the Atmospheric Fund, prepared by Ha/f Climate Design. Proposed updates, including a reduction in step-backs and alignment of step-backs with a building's structural grid, aim to simplify the mid-rise structures and forms, support sustainable structural systems and construction methods, and reduce the need for complex assemblies with higher carbon intensities. These guidelines promote a shift towards buildings designed for net zero operational emissions and prioritize the use of low carbon materials in construction.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 6, 2010, City Council approved a staff report regarding the "Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study and Action Plan", which included the Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards. Council directed staff to monitor the Performance Standards over a two-year period. Council's decisions can be found at: http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.PG39.9

In June 2016, City Council adopted a revised Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards Addendum, for staff to use together with the 2010 approved Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in the preparation of area studies or during the evaluation of development applications, where mid-rise buildings are proposed and Performance Standards are applicable, until such time as City Council adopts updated Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards. Council's decisions can be found at: http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG12.7

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 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. Council's decisions can be found at: https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.CC2.1

On March 21, 2023, Executive Committee endorsed Item EX3.1 - "Housing Action Plan 2022-2026- Priorities and Work Plan" including direction to City Planning to review and update the Rear Transition Performance Standards from the Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study (Standards 5A through 5D) as an initial project and bring subsequent reports with recommended zoning by-law amendments establishing city-wide zoning performance standards to implement as-of-right mid-rise development on Avenues. https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX3.1

On June 1, 2023, Planning and Housing Committee received Item PH4.7 a preliminary report on the "Mid-Rise Buildings Rear Transition Performance Standards Review & Draft Update", and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake public and stakeholder consultation on the Draft Performance Standards, as well as other existing Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards, in the third and fourth quarter of 2023 and report back with final recommendations on the Rear Transition Performance Standards, as well as any additional feedback from the consultation by November 30, 2023. https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH4.7

On November 30, 2023, Planning and Housing Committee received Item PH8.4 a status report on the "Housing Action Plan: Mid-Rise Buildings Rear Transition Performance Standards Review & Update", and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report back in Q2 2024 with the final updated Rear Transition Performance Standards and Zoning By-law Amendments to implement as-of-right permissions, and to make best efforts to report back by Q4 2024 with draft consolidated

Mid-rise Building Design Guidelines incorporating recommendations from monitoring, public and stakeholder consultation, and analysis that amend the performance standards with the goal of encouraging mid-rise developments that are more economical to build and more environmentally sustainable.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH8.4

On February 28, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee received Item PH10.3 – "Housing Action Plan: Avenues Policy Review – Proposals Report", and requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake broad public and stakeholder consultation on proposed policy directions for updating Official Plan Avenues policies, and report back with recommended Official Plan Amendments in Q4 2024; to explore policy and mapping changes for certain City-owned sites adjacent to existing Avenues with potential to support the delivery of housing; and to consider redesignation of lands identified as areas of transition from Neighbourhoods to Mixed Use to better facilitate mid-rise development on Avenues.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH10.3

On June 13, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee received Item PH13.4 – "Housing Action Plan: As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues and Updated Rear Transition Performance Standards - Proposals Report", and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to consult stakeholders and the public on the proposed draft zoning by-law amendment and report back with the final recommended zoning by-law amendment in the third quarter of 2024, and to incorporate the updated Rear Transition Performance Standards in the draft consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines in the fourth quarter of 2024.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH13.4

On November 14, 2024, City Council adopted Item PH16.1 – "Housing Action Plan: As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues and Updated Rear Transition Performance Standards - Final Report" adopting a zoning by-law amendment to provide as-of-right mid-rise zoning permissions along segments of the Avenues, and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to consider various opportunities to enable additional residential intensification through the Housing Action Plan work program, including updates to the mid-rise urban design guidelines to provide flexibility and enable opportunities for taller and denser mid-rise built form along the Avenues and report back to the December 5, 2024 Planning and Housing Committee meeting.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.1

BACKGROUND

Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards

The City Council's adoption of Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study in 2010 was designed to encourage a balanced, mid-rise scale of development, along the city's underutilized Avenues, which are highlighted in the Official Plan. In Chapter 2 of the Official Plan, Avenues are described as "important corridors along major streets where re-urbanization is anticipated and

encouraged.” This re-urbanization aims to provide increased housing and job opportunities, enhance the pedestrian experience, improve street aesthetics, boost local shopping, and strengthen transit services.

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study contains performance standards for mid-rise buildings, addressing issues including maximum allowable building heights, setbacks and step-backs, sunlight and sky-view, and pedestrian realm conditions. The Study has informed development applications on the city's Avenues and in other Mixed Use Areas and Employment Areas where mid-rise built form has been proposed.

In 2016, an addendum to the Mid-Rise Performance Standards was adopted by City Council. This update clarified the use of the standards and was based on the results of the monitoring period. The addendum is now used alongside the 2010 Performance Standards when evaluating development applications for mid-rise buildings.

Considering data between 2010 and 2024, the development pipeline includes 682 mid-rise buildings. Of that pipeline, 28% have been built, which accounts for 189 buildings. Additionally, 39%, or 267 buildings, have their first Planning approval, are “active” within the development approvals process or are under construction, but not yet completed. One-third, or 226 buildings, are classified as under review.

Mid-Rise Buildings Proposed Since 2010, by Pipeline Status (as of 2024 Q3)

Pipeline Status	Number of Mid-Rise Buildings (5-11 st)	Proportion
Under Review	226	33%
Active	267	39%
Built	189	28%
Total	682	100%

Compared to other proposal types, on average, mid-rise developments tend to be completed more quickly than high-rise projects, but less quickly than ground-related units, reflecting their relative size and complexity. Mid-rise residential apartment projects tend to be completed 12 months sooner than high-rise and large projects, all other factors being equal.

Official Plan

Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 of the Official Plan contain policies guiding Built Form, requiring that development be located and organized to fit with its existing and planned context. Buildings will frame and support adjacent streets, lanes, parks and open spaces to promote civic life and the use of the public realm, and to improve the safety, pedestrian comfort, interest and experience, and casual views to these spaces. Development is required to provide good transition in scale between areas of different building heights and/or intensity of use in consideration of the existing and planned contexts of neighbouring properties and the public realm.

When the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study was adopted in 2010, the Official Plan did not include any policies for mid-rise buildings. Through the Official Plan review, OPA 480 (Built Form) came into force in September 2020 recognizing three scales of building types – Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartments, Mid-Rise, and Tall Buildings – for residential, office and mixed use intensification which have emerged in the recent period of development. Official Plan policies 3.1.4.4 through 3.1.4.6 address the design of mid-rise development, heights, street proportion, daylight and privacy, corner sites, and deep sites.

Built Form Policy 3.1.4.4 requires that mid-rise buildings be designed to:

- have heights generally no greater than the width of the right-of-way that it fronts onto;
- maintain street proportion and open views of the sky from the public realm by stepping back building massing generally at a height equivalent to 80 percent of the adjacent right-of-way width; and
- allow for daylight and privacy on occupied ground floor units by providing appropriate facing distances, building heights, angular planes and step-backs.

Map 3 “Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets” of the Official Plan identifies the planned right-of-way width of each major street, providing the reference point for determining the maximum height for a mid-rise building, as well as direction and authority to obtain the dedication of land needed to achieve the ultimate planned corridor width as conditions of development.

Official Plan Update

Amendments to Official Plan Chapter 1, Making Choices, came into force in June 2024, including principles for inclusion. One of the priorities identified in Chapter 1 is providing “varied building heights and form”. Facilitating development in a mid-rise form supports these principles by promoting “a mix of building heights, and urban forms and architectural styles to create an urban landscape that will respond to the need for all types of housing.”

Housing Action Plan

The Housing Action Plan (HAP) priorities for the 2022-2026 term of Council was approved by Council in December 2022, and sets 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 HAP's Avenues, Mid-Rise and Mixed Use Areas group of action items direct staff to identify policy, mapping, zoning and guideline changes that would simplify approvals and facilitate development along Avenues and in Mixed Use Areas. City Planning is actively working to advance these action items in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Collectively, these planning studies and initiatives will expand the areas of the city identified as Avenues, put in place updated Official Plan policies for Avenues to guide intensification and change along Avenues, provide zoning permissions for mid-rise development along Avenues, and update urban design guidelines for mid-rise development.

Official Plan Policy Initiatives

The following summary provides a high-level overview of the Official Plan policy projects underway as part of the Housing Action Plan which will impact and enable mid-rise development:

- Avenues Policy Review
  - Study of Official Plan policies exploring opportunities to streamline study requirements;
  - extend and potentially introduce new Avenues;
  - update the vision and policy direction for how Avenues will develop; and
  - examine options for creating areas of transition between Avenues and Neighbourhoods to enable more housing.

- Expanding Mixed Use Areas Designations
  - Review of the Official Plan's Land Use maps to explore opportunities to expand the Mixed use Areas designation in certain geographies.

Zoning Initiatives for Avenues

The following summary highlights the mid-rise related zoning projects that are advancing under the Housing Action Plan:

- As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues (Avenues without Avenue Studies)
  - Zoning amendments to increase permitted heights and densities for Avenues where an Avenue Study defining area-specific built form policies has been completed and adopted by City council on November 14, 2024.

- As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues (Avenues with completed Avenue Studies but no implementing zoning)
  - Project preparing implementing zoning for Avenues where an Avenue Study has been completed to enable as-of-right development that conforms to the adopted Area-Specific Policies and Urban Design Guidelines.

- As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues (New Avenues and Mixed Use Areas)
  - Project to update zoning permissions for any new or extended Avenues and expanded Mixed Use Areas designated by the HAP Official Plan Policy projects.

Urban Design Guideline Updates

The following summary provides an overview of the projects underway to review and update design guidelines for mid-rise buildings to implement the policy and zoning objectives described above:

- Updated Mid-Rise Building Rear Transition Performance Standards
  - A focused review of these performance standards to create additional opportunities to facilitate the development of mid-rise buildings, supporting increased housing supply in walkable, complete communities.
  - This update has been adopted at PHC in June 2024.

- Updated consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines (subject of this report)
  - A broader review to update and consolidate the existing Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines that incorporate recommendations from mid-rise monitoring, public and stakeholder consultation, and further analysis to promote economical and sustainable mid-rise development.

The new homes enabled by this strategy will contribute to the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes in Toronto by 2031.

How the Housing Action Plan Initiatives for Mid-Rise Buildings Work Together

Together, the Official Plan, zoning, and design guideline initiatives will implement the vision for mid-rise buildings and enable the delivery of more housing in a mid-rise form. The consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines will facilitate development on sites envisioned for mid-rise buildings within the current policy framework. Official Plan initiatives, including updating the vision for Avenues and expanding mixed use land use designations, will update this policy framework. New Official Plan policies will be accompanied or followed by updated zoning by-law standards that implement the policies, incorporate the design guidelines, and introduce new city-wide standards, where appropriate. This coordinated approach will align policy, zoning and guidelines to foster a more predictable and efficient development process, ultimately leading to more housing options and vibrant communities at a mid-rise scale.

CONSULTATION

Staff have undertaken internal workshops, public and industry stakeholder engagement seeking comments on the draft Rear Transition Performance Standards, as well as existing Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards more broadly since early 2023. This includes three virtual stakeholder consultation meetings with CreateTO, experts in mass timber construction, and BILD, two city-wide virtual public consultation meetings, as well as email correspondence and e-updates. This consultation included a diverse range of parties and stakeholders to ensure as many voices as possible were represented in this process.

The consultation summary can be found in November 2023 report entitled, Housing Action Plan: Mid-Rise Buildings Rear Transition Performance Standards Review & Update –Status Report (toronto.ca). Through this report, the Planning and Housing Committee requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning make best efforts to report back by the fourth quarter of 2024 with draft consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines that incorporate recommendations resulting from mid-rise monitoring, public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to date, and analysis that amend the performance standards with the goal of encouraging mid-rise developments that are more economical to build and more environmentally sustainable.

Following the 2023 consultation, the City Planning staff organized a total of 7 online and in-person public consultations, along with one virtual industry consultation, on the rear transition updates in 2024. The consultation summary can be found in the June 2024 report entitled, Housing Action Plan: As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues and Updated Rear Transition Performance Standards - Proposals Report (toronto.ca).

Design Review Panel

The key updates to the draft consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines were presented to the Design Review Panel on September 18th, 2024. The presentation focused on updates to building height, front façade, rear transition, side yard setbacks, pedestrian realm, and site servicing and Urban Design staff sought feedback from the panel members on whether the proposed updates will make mid-rise buildings more affordable and sustainable.

The panel expressed support and appreciation for the intention to update the guidelines to promote the development of mid-rise buildings that are faster, more economical, and more sustainable to construct. They recognized the need for mid-rise buildings across the city and their potential for introducing density at a relatable scale. However, the panel also noted the inherent challenges of this building typology in Toronto and emphasized the need for flexibility to encourage development at this scale.

Feedback focused on the importance of simplicity in building form. The panel generally agreed that the guidelines should be less prescriptive to achieve this. Key comments from the panel included:

- **Building Height:** Consideration to increased building heights as an incentive for sustainable design should be explored.
- **Front Façade:** While removing the front angular plane is positive, overly restrictive front setback requirements (compared to the Tall Building Design Guidelines) could discourage mid-rise development.
- **Rear Transition:** Updates to the rear transition approach are significant and could unlock sites currently deemed too shallow for a reasonable floor plate, streamlining the approvals process. Requiring additional step-backs for upper storeys unnecessarily complicates building design with little benefit on the public realm.

- **Side Yard Setbacks:** Introducing building step-backs in multiple directions increases construction costs and negatively impacts the efficiency and livability of internal layouts.
- **Public Realm:** Urban design should prioritize a beautiful public realm by focusing on high-quality architecture and façades that support viable and welcoming retail. Consideration of how buildings meet the ground should be prioritized. The panel also noted the desire for expansion of the public realm and wider sidewalk zones, while acknowledging the challenges of implementing this on constrained sites.
- **Site Servicing:** Concerns were raised regarding site servicing and accommodating large waste collection trucks on typically constrained mid-rise sites. The panel recommended that the City consider alternatives such as smaller trucks, street pickup, more frequent pickup, or a more nuanced garbage collection policy.

The panel emphasized the importance of collaborating with professionals involved in mid-rise building design—including architects, engineers, and landscape architects—to understand the practical implications of the guidelines. They concluded by suggesting a follow-up workshop where panel members could present representative mid-rise developments, discuss related issues, and offer policy recommendations to help inform the guidelines.

Following the Design Review Panel meeting, Urban Design staff organized an in-person workshop with the panel on October 21, 2024. The workshop facilitated in-depth discussion on key aspects of the guidelines and explored how best to incorporate the panel's feedback.

Urban Design staff presented recommended revisions to the guidelines, including flexible clauses that emphasize context and performance-based approaches. This aimed to reiterate that the guidelines are not one-size-fits-all. The revisions focused on expressing the intent of the guidelines rather than prescribing specific methods of achieving them, allowing flexibility for designers to promote mid-rise development. Workshop discussions also emphasized the need to incorporate the guidelines into zoning and align them with other policy initiatives like the Avenues Policy Review.

COMMENTS

Overview of Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines Key Updates

The consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines introduce new provisions that allow for flexible massing and remove overly restrictive and prescriptive previsions that were contributing to barriers to implementing the vision of mid-rise buildings and expanding housing supply in a mid-rise form. Key updates include:

- Allowing heights up to 14 storeys along streets with 45-metre right-of-way widths

- Consideration of limited additional height, taller than the adjacent ROW width on deep lots, provided that the development meets the objectives of the Official Plan and other guidelines in the document
- Elimination of front and rear angular plane requirements
- Considerations for reduced or increased side yard setbacks depending on the context and site-specific considerations, such as deep lots and narrow lots, while ensuring appropriate facing conditions
- Simplifying building envelopes, with fewer step-backs and encouraging the alignment of step-back locations which results in improved operational performance and provides more options for structural systems and allow for a diversity of construction methods and materials, for example, mass timber construction
- Promotion of sustainable development including encouraging design choices that lead to simplified structures which will reduce or eliminate the need for transfer structures and result in greater decreases in embodied carbon
- Enhanced public realm objectives, including guidance for wide sidewalk zones, prioritizing new tree planting and the preservation of existing mature trees, as well as soft landscaping to create beautiful comfortable, sustainable, safe, and accessible pedestrian environments

These changes aim to simplify mid-rise buildings, making them easier and more economical to build, more affordable, and more sustainable, while supporting access to sunlight, sky view and a comfortable public realm.

The key updates in the consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines are summarized below.

Organization of the Guidelines -Table of Contents

The table of contents in the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines aligns closely with those in the City-Wide Tall Buildings Design Guidelines and Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines. Together, these three documents provide a cohesive set of low, mid, and tall building design guidelines that collectively support the implementation of policies within the Official Plan.

This consistency across guidelines ensures a unified approach to urban form, allowing for seamless integration of design principles across various building typologies and scales. These design frameworks guide development towards sustainable growth while addressing the distinct requirements and characteristics of each building type.

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines are organized into the following sections:

Introduction
1.0 Site Context
2.0 Site Organization
3.0 Mid-rise Building Design
4.0 Pedestrian Realm
5.0 Glossary

Site Context

The Site Context chapter in the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines aligns with the Official Plan Built Form policies and is intended and be consistent with the Tall Buildings Design Guidelines and Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines.

Flexible massing guidelines that promote more economical and sustainable mid-rise buildings must be adaptable to different contexts. Implementing the guidelines through development requires thorough understanding of both existing and planned contexts. This foundation enables a performance-based approach that can be tailored to the unique characteristics and evolving needs of each neighborhood. Site Context chapter identifies existing patterns and opportunities in the surrounding area ad to determine how the proposed development will integrate with and appropriately respond to its context.

The Site Context chapter outlines two typical mid-rise contexts: the main street context and the residential context.

- **Main street context:** This is typically defined by a continuous, pedestrian-scale streetwall with occasional breaks for mid-block connections, parks or open spaces. The fine-grained streetwall pattern is generally articulated by a rhythm of narrow lot frontages and storefronts with recessed entrances and cornices and sign bands, creating a datum line.
- **Residential context:** This is typically defined by a streetwall that is not continuous, but instead includes regular landscaped breaks between buildings to establish a pavilion type rhythm along the street. The streetscape is expanded with landscaped front yard setbacks and breaks between buildings occurring regularly and may also include mid-block connections, parks, and/or open spaces.

A new Cultural Heritage section (1.2) has been included within the Site Context chapter to guide mid-rise developments located on or adjacent to properties individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) as well as those within or adjacent to Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs), designated under Part V of the OHA. Performance Standard 19 in the 2010 Mid-Rise Performance Standards containing guidelines related to heritage and character areas have been reviewed, updated, and incorporated into this section. The updated guidelines do not suggest any building height restrictions with respect to heritage, but focus on better integrating heritage buildings into new developments. Additional context-sensitive guidelines have also been incorporated into various sections of Chapter 3.0, Mid-Rise Building Design, particularly in areas addressing streetwall height, street proportion and pedestrian perception step-back, streetwall design, and façade design and articulation. These guidelines ensure that the proposed mid-rise buildings fit harmoniously within the area context.

Another key update in this chapter is the inclusion of a site typology analysis. Toronto features a variety of mid-rise site conditions, including deep vs. shallow sites, large vs. narrow sites, midblock sites vs. corner sites, and sites with or without rear lanes. Recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all design solution, the analysis highlights several approaches that can be adapted to ensure appropriate site planning and a harmonious built-form relationship based on specific site conditions.

This chapter focuses on two particular site typologies: deep and/or large sites and through lot sites.

- **Site Planning for Deep and/or Large Sites:** Where a mid-rise building is on a site that is deep enough to accommodate new streets or blocks, multiple buildings, and/or buildings with elements oriented perpendicular to the main street frontage, the chapter offers site planning recommendations. Emphasis is placed on evaluating each deep or large site individually to ensure context-sensitive planning.
- **Site Planning for Through Lot Sites:** Through lots on major streets offer unique opportunities and challenges for mid-rise development through the Avenue policy review. These lots, often found in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, offer dual frontages and typically require careful planning to support both adjacent streets. For mid-rise buildings on through lots, this chapter recommends specific guidelines to frame both streets, preserve mature trees on-site, and provide lower-scale massing (up to 6 storeys or 19 meters) facing local streets. This guidance aligns with the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Major Street Zoning By-Law to ensure appropriate transitions in scale.

Mid-Rise Building Height

Consistent with the Official Plan, the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines provide design direction for a form of development that provides a level of intensification at a scale between low-rise and tall building forms. Policy 3.1.4.4 (a) of the Official Plan provides that, “mid-rise buildings will be designed to have heights generally no greater than the width of the right-of-way it fronts onto”. The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines build upon this definition and provide guidance for determining the contextually appropriate height of mid-rise buildings.

The 2010 Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study identified five prevailing ROW widths, ranging from 20m to 36m, with corresponding building heights from 20m (approximately 6 storeys) to a maximum of 36m (approximately 11 storeys). The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines have now been updated to provide guidance for buildings ranging from 16.5m (approximately 5 storeys) to 45m (approximately 14 storeys) in height. The updated mid-rise height range has been identified for two primary reasons:

- To recognize all ROW widths across the City.
    - As identified in Section 3.1.4 of the Official Plan, ROW widths in Toronto vary from 16.5m to over 40m, with Map 3 of the Official Plan specifically identifying 45m ROWs. Furthermore, 45m ROWs, such as portion of Eglinton Avenue West are designated Avenues, other 45m ROWs, such as Lake Shore Boulevard, Keele Street north of Finch Avenue West, are otherwise located in areas where growth is anticipated. As such, the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines consider mid-rise building heights to range from 16.5m (equivalent to approximately 5 storeys) to 45m (equivalent to approximately 14 storeys).
- To recognize and provide guidance for mid-rise buildings with heights above 4 storeys.

- From a built form perspective, low-rise buildings in Toronto are defined by the Official Plan and the Low-Rise Apartment and Townhouse Guidelines to have heights up to 4 storeys. To “fill in the gap” between the 4-storey maximum for low-rise, the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines acknowledge buildings with heights of 5 storeys (16.5m).

Additional Height Taller than the ROW Width on Deep Lots

Since the adoption of the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study in 2010, many mid-rise buildings of various heights and scales have been built across Toronto. In some instances, buildings that are taller than the adjacent right-of-way width, but still present a mid-rise typology, have been approved through site-specific applications. These applications were evaluated with careful consideration of the site context, including proximity to transit and separation from nearby residential and low-rise areas. The assessments also examined how well the proposed built form mitigates impacts and achieves an appropriate fit within the surrounding context.

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines recognize that there may be certain circumstances where buildings that exceed the height associated with the ROW are appropriate.

Additional heights, taller than the adjacent ROW width ratio may be considered on deep lots, provided that the development meets the objectives of the Official Plan and other guidelines in the document, including but not limited to the following criteria:

- Fits with the existing and planned context;
- Maintains an overall mid-rise building scale with good street proportion;
- Meets required sun/shadow performance on the adjacent street and public realm;
- Provides appropriate setbacks, step-backs and separation distances; and
- Provides appropriate transition in scale and massing to adjacent heritage properties and context.

Where height above the adjacent ROW width ratio is appropriate from a built form perspective, the additional height should be located and massed to reduce physical and visual impacts on the public realm and incorporate increased setbacks/step-backs equal to or greater than the additional height.

Consideration for the development of mid-rise buildings greater than the adjacent width of right-of-way should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis and are dependent on the criteria indicated in the guidelines.

The Guidelines define deep lots by establishing the ideal lot depth in the Site Typology section of the Site Context Chapter. The ideal lot depth is the preferred minimum lot depth required to support the intended development that maximizes the efficiency of a site while considering all guidelines in this document, including minimum rear yard setbacks and a front facade designed to meet the five hours sunlight requirement on the street boulevard. The ideal lot depths in Table 1 assume a development comprises a standard double-loaded corridor bar-building oriented parallel to the street, with an

upper storey depth of 18 metres. Properties on the north side of east-west and diagonal streets with no shadow impact on the adjacent street may be able to achieve these requirements on shallower lot depths, based on site-specific conditions.

A deep lot exceeds the ideal lot depth in relation to the adjacent right-of-way width. Additional height taller than the adjacent right-of-way width may be considered on a site-by-site basis, where the development meets the guidelines outlined in the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines.

Table 1: Ideal Lot Depth in relation to the adjacent Right of Way Width and Building Height

R.O.W. WIDTH (Metres)	**IDEAL LOT DEPTH** (Metres)	**BUILDING HEIGHT***	
		Metres	Storeys (Approximate)
20	30	20	6
27	34	27	8
30	34	30	9
36	36	36	11
45	37	45	14

Heights shown in the table may be adjusted based on site conditions and geometry, geographical location in the city (or geographical location relative to proximity to transit), impacts on the public realm and solar orientation as described further in detail in the guidelines. This chart is intended to be read with the guideline document in its entirety.

Street Proportion and Front Façade

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines update the front façade section in the 2010 Mid-Rise Performance Standards, providing a more comprehensive consideration of sun/shadow performance, streetwall height, and pedestrian perception step-backs and setbacks to achieve a good street proportion.

Street Proportion

Street proportion is the ratio of the height of buildings along the edges of the street and the distance between buildings across the street. Street proportion is a fundamental determinant in the character of the street and provides a measure of certain qualities of the street and the buildings that front onto it, in addition to its access to sunlight and sky view. Street proportion is a key consideration when defining the scale of mid-rise buildings. Official Plan Policy 3.1.4.4(b) states that “mid-rise buildings will be designed to maintain street proportion and open views of the sky from the public realm by

stepping back buildings massing generally at a height equivalent to 80% of the adjacent right-of-way width".

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines provide direction on how to achieve this policy by ensuring that existing and planned conditions are considered to determine appropriate heights, scale, streetwall heights, pedestrian perception step-backs, and setbacks of buildings that establish well-proportioned streetscapes and ensure sunlight onto public streets. In addition, mid-rise buildings on both sides of the street should be generally consistent in terms of heights, scale, streetwall heights, and pedestrian perception step-backs and setbacks to create a balanced and comfortable streetscape.

Sun / Shadow Performance

The updated guidelines will replace the front façade angular plane requirements in the existing performance standards, with a performance-based approach that will continue to prioritize access to sunlight on the public realm by ensuring that 5 hours of consecutive sunlight can be achieved on the boulevard. The 5-hour consecutive sunlight window on the street will vary depending on the location of the site and the orientation of the street but will be measured generally between 9:18am and 6:18pm on March 21st and September 21st.

Extensive research about the effects of sunlight on Toronto's sidewalks and open spaces was compiled in "Sun, Wind, and Pedestrian Comfort: A Study of Toronto's Central Area" by Bosselman et al., 1990. Key recommendations of this study support the objective to maintain a minimum of 5-hours of sunlight on Toronto's streets between the spring equinox and fall equinox to enhance pedestrian comfort during the shoulder seasons. In further support of this guideline, the City's ongoing Thermal Comfort Study, which is to update 1990's "Sun, Wind, and Pedestrian Comfort: A Study of Toronto's Central Area", also emphasizes that access to sunlight is essential. It allows all living things, including trees, vegetation, insects and humans, to thrive and also improves the usability and enjoyment of outdoor spaces. Access to sunlight enhances thermal comfort for pedestrians, as is easily observed on Toronto streets, where people prefer to walk on the sunny side of the street, from September to May.

Given that there are buildings as high as, or taller than, the adjacent right-of-way width, the upper storeys of buildings will need to be massed to provide sunlight on the opposite sidewalk. Using a performance-based approach, setting a 5-hour sunlight performance target, helps to ensure that the desired city building outcomes are achieved, while allowing for flexibility and innovation in design.

Streetwall Height and Pedestrian Perception Step-back

The updated Guidelines remove the front angular plane requirement and introduce a minimum 3-metre pedestrian perception step-back above the streetwall height to reinforce pedestrian scale and comfort.

Streetwalls should be designed to fit harmoniously within the existing and/or planned context of neighbouring building heights at the street edge and to respect the scale and proportion of adjacent streets and open spaces. In the absence of an existing or

planned streetwall height context, the Guidelines direct buildings to provide a streetwall height between 3 storeys (10.5m) and 80% of the adjacent street right-of-way width, up to a limit of 8 storeys (25.5m) in height. This approach ensures that streetwalls on wider rights of way maintain an appropriate pedestrian scale and is consistent with the directives for the height and scale of base building guidelines within the Tall Building Design Guidelines.

An increased streetwall height, up to 6 storeys (20m), may be appropriate along the streets with a ROW width of less than 27 metres, provided the development meets other guidelines in the document. This approach allows for flexibility to recognize contexts where it may be appropriate for the streetwall to extend higher to create variation in the streetwall design, and is consistent with EHON Major Streets 6 storey height.

Mid-rise buildings should provide a minimum 3metre pedestrian perception step-back above the streetwall height to reduce the perceived building height and create a comfortable pedestrian experience. The Guidelines encourage aligning this step-back with the building's structural grid to eliminate the need for transfer slabs, thereby reducing embodied carbon and construction costs.

Façade Design

Additional updates to the guidelines acknowledge the important role the streetwall design plays in creating the backdrop for the public realm and animating the street. It includes guidance related to cultural heritage and how to respect heritage properties, and create a comfortable, yet highly animated, pedestrian environment through architectural elements and expressions, including entrances, windows, canopies, steps, and recesses and projections, and other design interventions to reinforce a variety of scales and textures within the streetwall.

Sustainability considerations are embedded in the Guidelines by encouraging the use of bio-based, high-quality, solid materials such as stone, brick or wood to lower embodied carbon and contribute to a human-scaled public realm. Guidance for window-to-wall ratios is also provided, to ensure a maximum of 60% glazed area for ground floors and commercial frontages and a maximum of 40% glazed area for residential façades in order to improve energy efficiency and reduce embodied carbon.

Rear Transition

Updates to the rear transition performance standards were the first steps in revising the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines as part of the Housing Action Plan work plan to deliver on the City's intensification and expanding housing options objectives, while improving sustainability in mid-rise buildings. Most recently, rear transition performance standards for mid-rise buildings were adopted by the Planning and Housing Committee on June 13, 2024, Item PH13.4 – "Housing Action Plan: As-of-Right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on Avenues and Updated Rear Transition Performance Standards - Proposals Report". https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH13.4

The Performance Standards 5A and 5B in the June Report, have been incorporated into the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines and referred to as ‘guidelines’ in keeping with the updates to the structure of the guideline document.

In the June report, mid-rise building height was capped at 11 storeys. This Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines update increases the mid-rise building height to 14 storeys while maintaining the PHC adopted setback and step-back requirements. In addition, a new guideline addresses mid-rise buildings with limited additional height above the 1:1 ratio and/or building frontages exceeding 60 metres. For such buildings, articulation of building massing and additional separation may be required to meet the objectives of the Official Plan and other guidelines in this document.

In December 2023, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake a review of the “no net new shadow” policies within Secondary Plans and Site and Area Specific Policies as appropriate in order to unlock new housing opportunities and expedite, where possible, further amendments to the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines, including the angular plane requirements, and authorize the Mayor to submit these planned enhancements to the City’s application in response to the letter from the Honorable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

The City of Toronto uses “no net new shadow” policies sparingly, and only in areas of high intensity development such as in the downtown core for “Signature Parks / Open Spaces” where there is a limited number of parks and open spaces that play a vital role in the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. As areas of the City continue to steadily intensify, the need to limit the parks and open spaces from shadowing by tall buildings becomes increasingly important. Access to direct sunlight generally improves the usability and enjoyment of parks and helps vegetation flourish. In the Toronto climate, access to direct sunlight in parks can extend the period of comfortable conditions for park users by several months. Also, the policy does not restrict apartments to areas further from parks and schools, it allows for a review of building massing and deployment of height to allow for the parks and schools to continue to have access to sunlight and maintain and enhance the user comfort and experience.

These updated mid-rise guidelines remove both front and rear angular planes and suggest the mid-rise development next to the parks and open spaces should consider maximizing access to sunlight, minimizing shadow impacts and creating comfortable wind conditions on the parks, open spaces, or natural areas through a combination of setbacks and step-backs. The guidelines move away from the angular planes and “no net new shadow” to unlock new housing opportunities.

The updated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines also provide guidelines for development on shallow lots. The purpose of this guideline is to unlock the development potential of shallow sites that would not be able to meet the rear transition standards but would otherwise be appropriate for mid-rise development.

On a site that is appropriate for a mid-rise building but is too shallow to feasibly accommodate the building, consideration will be given to expanding the site to include additional properties to the rear to enable development of the site, while adhering to all

front, rear and side setbacks, and step-backs. Any portion of a development extending onto adjacent properties would be required to comply with the Official Plan land use designation policies for those properties.

This provision would include consideration of an increase to the depth of the site and associated land use designation, allowing for a maximum lot depth of approximately 30 metres for a 6-storey building and 36 metres for an 11-storey building. (This will allow for an approximately 18-metre building depth at the uppermost levels, with application of front and rear setbacks and step-backs). This would allow shallow properties to achieve mid-rise heights with a more regular envelope and floorplate.

This guideline is presented as one solution to developing mid-rise buildings on shallow properties and may not be applicable in all circumstances.

Side Yard Setbacks

The updated guidelines for side yard setbacks acknowledge that mid-rise developments are occurring throughout the city, not just along Avenues and as such, guidance is required for a variety of facing conditions. The updated guidelines define both main street and residential context, recommending that mid-rise buildings respond to their surrounding context in determining the appropriate side yard conditions.

In main street contexts such as Avenues, streetwalls up to 6 storeys may extend to the side property lines. Above the streetwall height, a 5.5-metre side yard step-back is required to improve light penetration and reduce the impact of blank walls. A key update in the guidelines introduces flexibility for sites with constrained conditions, like narrow frontages, that may struggle to meet minimum side yard step-back requirements. In these cases, the guidelines suggest reducing or omitting upper-storey step-backs and considering alternative design solutions, such as lightwells and notched elevations, to support the development of suitable mid-rise buildings on these constrained sites.

While continuous streetwalls are generally desirable, the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines recognize that in many residential contexts, this approach may not be suitable. In these areas, greater separation between buildings and increased landscape coverage offers a more appropriate built form. These mid-rise residential apartment buildings, often referred to as 'pavilion' buildings, feature glazed façades on all sides, with generous side yard setbacks that incorporate soft landscaping and walkways.
In this regard, a key update in the guidelines provides specific side yard setback requirements for residential buildings with side windows. The guidelines recommend:

- A minimum 2.4 metre setback for the side walls with no primary windows, up to 6 storeys, in keeping with the side yard setback requirements in the EHON Major Streets Zoning By-law.
- Above 6 storeys, new mid-rise buildings should ensure a minimum separation distance of 5.5 metres provided between all existing walls with no primary windows and all new walls with no primary windows.
- Where primary windows are located along the side elevations of a new mid-rise building, a minimum side yard setback of 5.5 metres should be provided from the side property line in order to create appropriate facing conditions and maintain

appropriate separation between windows, and to provide sky views and increased sunlight access on the adjacent street and open spaces.
- For mid-rise buildings oriented perpendicular to the street, or with long side elevations with primary windows, a minimum setback of 7.5 metres should be provided from the side property line.

Pedestrian Realm

The updated guidelines related to the pedestrian realm focus on highlighting sustainability and aligning the guidelines with other public realm and streetscape initiatives in the city, that have been introduced since the inception of the original Performance Standards. It is recognized that the pedestrian realm goes beyond the sidewalk zone and streetscape to also include publicly accessible open spaces, mid-block connections and other interventions for site permeability. Additional guidelines that promote the extension and connection of pedestrian routes as well as the creation of new ones are incorporated into the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines in Section 2.0 Site Organization, to ensure these design decisions are considered early in the site design process and in keeping with the document structure of the Low-Rise Apartment and Townhouse Guidelines and Tall Building Design Guidelines.

Sidewalk Zone

One of the key updates include increasing the minimum sidewalk zone from 4.8 metres to 6.0 metres along streets with ROWs less than 30 metres wide to provide adequate space between the front of the building and adjacent street curbs to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian movement, streetscape elements, and activities related to the uses at grade to promote an enhanced public realm. Along the primary street frontages of a mid-rise building site, sidewalk zones should be at least 6.0 metres wide or greater where larger setbacks are established by the existing context or required by the Zoning By-law. The broader sidewalk zone may be entirely public or a combination of public and private property. A wider sidewalk zone, which may include a building setback, is often necessary to properly resolve competing demands for space from pedestrians, street furniture, trees, utilities, and commercial uses. Wider sidewalks can also provide space for grouped bicycle parking, boulevard cafés, public art installations, and other valuable street activities and amenities.

Flexibility is built into the guidelines to provide exceptions to the 6.0-metre sidewalk requirement in various situations, such as where buildings are adjacent to heritage buildings, where the existing setback pattern differs. In these situations, other design solutions, such as carving out a portion of the ground floor, can be explored to meet the 6.0-metre sidewalk guideline on a site-by-site basis.

Streetscapes

The guidelines also seek to ensure that mid-rise buildings provide vibrant pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with the highest level of urban design treatment, to create beautiful, comfortable, sustainable, safe, and accessible pedestrian environments and great places to shop, work, and live for all. A well-designed and vibrant streetscape is

vital to the character and quality of the mid-rise building site and the surrounding public realm, as well as to the livability of the city.

Not only does the streetscape contribute to animating the pedestrian realm, but it also directly contributes to the livability, sustainability and resilience of Toronto by preserving and reintroducing trees, plants and important ecological features such as green infrastructure and permeable materials, that improve air and water quality, enhance the urban forest, expand the tree canopy, increase biodiversity and minimize urban heat island effects.

There is a renewed focus on sustainability, safety and accessibility for streetscape design to ensure alignment with TGS and Green infrastructure standards, such as space for growing trees, including sub-surface soil volumes for root growth, planting bed dimensions and tree clearance requirements, to ensure these requirements are considered from the outset of the design.

Solid Waste Collection

Through the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines update, issues around solid waste collection for small mid-rise developments were raised by both internal staff and industry leaders. Staff are aware of these concerns and recognize the continued need to balance competing priorities amongst divisions, communities and industry to ensure waste is safely and efficiently collected and a high quality public realm is achieved.

Solid waste pickup solutions are crucial to the feasibility of small mid-rise developments and to preserving public safety, accessibility and quality in adjacent public realm space and as such, staff have and will continue to work to update collection guidelines.

How and Where the Guidelines Apply

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines do not determine where mid-rise buildings are permitted. They are intended to be read together with and to implement the relevant Official Plan policies, applicable Zoning By-laws, Heritage Conservation District Plans, area-specific Urban Design Guidelines, the Toronto Green Standard, as well as any other applicable regulations, policies, and guidelines. The Guidelines apply to the design, review, and approval of new mid-rise developments. They will be applied through the evaluation of development proposals and design alternatives in Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Plans of Subdivision, and Site Plan Control applications.

The Guidelines are intended to provide guidance in implementing policy and to provide a degree of certainty and clarity of common interpretation; however, as guidelines, they should also be afforded some flexibility in application, particularly when looked at cumulatively and be balanced against broad city building objectives. In some cases, not all guidelines can be met in full; however, a development may be acceptable when reviewed holistically, achieving the objectives of the Official Plan. The Guidelines should be weighed across the board with other City guidelines to determine whether a development application has successfully met the overall intent of the applicable guidelines, policies, and the Official Plan.

The Guidelines are periodically reviewed and may be revised to reflect new findings or study recommendations that impact the effective evaluation of mid-rise building applications.

CONCLUSION

The updated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines propose a framework to foster more economical and environmentally sustainable mid-rise developments. These Guidelines integrate insights from mid-rise monitoring, public and stakeholder consultations, and an in-depth analysis of performance standards. The result is a set of updated standards and recommendations aimed at simplifying construction, increasing affordability, and enhancing environmental outcomes.

Key recommendations within the Guidelines focus on enabling sustainable building construction, ensuring a good street proportion, pedestrian comfort, and access to sunlight and sky view for adjacent streets, parks and open spaces. A compact building envelope, which includes additional permitted gross floor area, typically up to 30% more, is encouraged, which facilitates quicker, more cost-effective construction. The Guidelines promote mass timber and other sustainable building technologies to lower long-term operational costs, reduce carbon emissions, and enable the possibility of taller, denser mid-rise buildings on deep sites.

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines presented in this report and included in Attachment 1 will be used as the basis for updating Zoning work program items outlined in the report. Aligned with the Avenue policy review and Zoning initiatives for Avenues in the Housing Action Plan, the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines support the development of additional housing to help meet or exceed the provincial target of 285,000 new homes over the next decade. By addressing both housing needs and sustainability, these Guidelines play a critical role in shaping resilient and vibrant communities for the future.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines